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Ethical Monotheism As The Foundation For National Transformation In Nigeria

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Abstract

Historical and contemporary events seem to indicate that humanity is dealing with the confusion of marriage, sex, standards and values. Other such obstacles include but not limited to; disregard for the sanctity of human life, abuse of human rights and social injustice, religious extremism, ecological crisis, corruption and social inequality. In view of the myriad problems confronting humanity today occasioned by her deplorable moral standard, this paper highlights a credible alternative in the search for the solution. This is anchored on God, the moral Sovereign Creator of the universe who demands ethical behavior. Ethical monotheism is the belief in only one God with consequent ethical implications for human conduct and practical life. Ethical monotheism espouses that people act towards another with justice, peace, mercy, and love as the foundation for national transformation. Accordingly, this paper using descriptive research method reveals that ethical monotheism is the safeguard to mankind's inclination towards evil, subjecting them to temptation, and lustful desires that would pollute their minds, corrupt their spirit, and eventually destroy their bodies. Without mincing words, this paper reveals that God's moral and ethical guidelines creates strong communities free of crime, emotionally strong families, and emphasis on spiritual commitment to God. Therefore, without hesitation, it recommends the adoption of ethical monotheism as a panacea for ills in the contemporary society and for national transformation. This is because man cannot understand himself, his dignity, and vocation without God.

Key Words: Ethics, Ethical Monotheism, Panacea, Secularism, Transformation.

Introduction

Recent attempts at addressing some of the teething problems of our time like bribery and corruption, ethno-religious violence, mismanagement of public funds and property, electoral malpractices, kidnapping, ritual murder and assassinations, secret cult activities, child and women trafficking assume that these problems are caused by injustice, marginalization, maladministration, abuse of power, and disregard for the welfare of the people (Iroanya; 2023). There are also attempts at explaining these phenomena on the basis of deprivation brought about by hunger and lack of access to basic necessities of life. These attempts as useful as they may be appear to “be addressing the symptom of the problem instead of the disease itself” (Asouzu, 2003:5). Accentuating to this, Omeregbe (2002:x) affirms that “our country is sick, morally sick, and it can only be cured through a moral regeneration. Indeed, such regeneration is imperative if the country is to make any meaningful progress in development.”

Regrettably, humanity is dealing with the confusion over marriage, sex, standards and values. This is further complicated with the numerous religions and faith beliefs now on the world scene. It is this scenario for Akanni (2007) in Iroanya (2014:626) that has led to the “ever increasing call for acceptability of worldly perceptions in all spheres of life. Consequently, there is the call for the recognition of same-sex marriages, same-sex families and other strange

doctrines.” At the heart of the family, national and global crisis there exist a pervasive lack of spiritual insight, responsible for the attainment of moral quotient critical to moral leadership in all sector of the society. Our collective mishap, Jimoh (2013) in no less authority than Iroanya (2014:3) punctiliously states is

Traceable to our clear departure from the divine tenets of the Creator and reliving our own crafted ideology in our utopian society. The lack of moral leadership is demonstrated in the continued uncovering of unethical behavior from the family to the highest corridors of power.

Against this background, it is only a moral regeneration that can cure Nigeria and remove the greatest obstacle obstructing her development. Therefore, Osundare (2005) in Oyeranmi (2011:13) advocates that "the evil system that has brought Nigeria to its knees need nothing but the sharp edge of excoriative word; nothing but the truth whose sharpness heals like the surgical knife."

In this regard, nothing short of ethical monotheism could rescue the visibly enfeebled Nigeria, and equally galvanize her into national consciousness for overall transformation. The researcher identified an apparent practical knowledge gap in the prior research concerning ethical monotheism. The prior research did not address ethical monotheism as a foundation for national transformation. This encompasses several unexplored dimensions that have lately attracted research attention in religion, politics, and society (Miles, 2017). To underscore this, Agha (2003) explored religious ethics in a permissive society. Fox (2012) examined ethical monotheism as the reason why Christians cannot rightly back down. Similarly, Prager (2012) espoused the conceptual framework for the phenomenon. No study to date has directly attempted to evaluate ethical monotheism as a foundation for national transformation. Accordingly, ethical monotheism should be explored further to provide an understanding as the foundation for national rebirth and the actualization of the transformation or renewed hope agenda of the present government.

This paper using descriptive research method states that man cannot understand himself, his dignity, and vocation without God. It is in the light of this that the study of this nature becomes absolutely imperative as part of the ongoing efforts towards the historical awakening of Nigerians. This paper will inter-alia provide a conceptual framework of the study. It focuses on the unbreakable nexus between ethical monotheism and national transformation; bringing out the relevance of this link especially in this era of globalization, secularization, materialism, consumerism, and the prioritization of wealth over persons. It will analyze what a country like Nigeria in search of her soul; and the hunger for industrialization among her youth population could gain from such non-materialistic and an uncompromising, relentless, and monolithic monotheism which is the foundation of the three greatest missionary religions of the world, namely: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Conceptual Framework

Here, one shall be concerned with defining four terms that are very central to the discussion in this paper. These are; ethical, monotheism, ethical monotheism, and transformation.

Monotheism

According to Answer.com monotheism is “the belief in One God and One God only; there are no other nor any other external influences on a person other than God” (2012:2).

Perhaps the most succinct definition is that of Albright (n.d) in Packer and Tenney (1980:110) who says that monotheism is “the belief in the existence of only One God, who is the Creator of the world and the giver of all life . . . who is so far superior to all created beings . . . that He remains absolutely unique.” The term commonly refers to Israel’s belief in One God, taken over by the Christian Church. Contrasted with animism, polytheism and henotheism or monolatry, it then characterizes Israel’s religion over against her neighbors.

Hence, in the ancient world, only Israel was fully monotheistic. Israel was thus unique with its belief in One God, who made new things happen, who was the Lord of this world and this life. He was also one who could criticize His people as well as support them. Laying credence to this, Youngblood (1997:9) asserts that the “pure form of monotheism described in the Old Testament (hereafter OT) is unique to biblical religion. The God of the Old Testament is the transcendent Creator of everything that exists. He stands outside the universe; He is not part of it”. There are only three religions in our modern world that share this viewpoint. Significantly, all of them are based on the revealed religion of Israel, namely; Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Therefore, it is one of the inspired insights revealed to the covenant people by the one true God Himself.

Ethical

Looking closely at the term ‘ethical’, one can conclude initially that the term ‘ethic’ is present, connoting that it deals with morals and ethical codes, a way in which an individual can live their lives by abiding to one or perhaps many rules and laws. Analytically, Agha (2003:2) states that ethics is “the science which deals with what a man should desire, and what he should avoid, and this gives the basic application to man’s chief forms or patterns of conduct, what he ought or ought not to do”. On this score, Omoregbe (1990:3) affirms that ethics deals with “the morality of human actions; or that branch of philosophy which studies the norm of human behavior. It is also the systematic study of the fundamental principles of the moral law or as the science of human conduct”. Admittedly, ethical following deals with a set of moral principles or values. Again, being ethical has involvement in deontological ethics as well as teleological ethics too, were absolute morality is established. Impliedly, ethics is universal and unchanging at all times when abided to.

Ethical Monotheism

Ethical monotheism is a term made up in fairly recent times to describe the type of belief system shared by Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The term ethical monotheism is made up of four separate words or parts; ethical, mono, theos, and ism. However, it is easier to split the term into two separate words; ethical and monotheism. Both have very different meanings and together have one meaning that is followed by millions of people today. The clearest teaching of ethical monotheism is that God demands ethical behavior. As Haag (n.d) in Prager (2012:3) describes it, “the invisible God not only insisted on being the only and all powerful God . . . He also developed into a moral God.” More so, ethical monotheism suggests more than that God demands ethical behavior. It means that God’s primary demand is ethical behavior. It means that God cares about how man treats another more than He cares about anything else. Accordingly, ethical monotheism’s message remains as radical today as when it was first promulgated.

For instance, once God told Moses that human sacrifice is wrong, it was wrong. There was no competing god to teach otherwise. “Thou shall not murder” (Ex.20:13) means that murder is wrong for everyone, not just for one culture. It means the killing of a daughter or

sister who lost her virginity prior to marriage, practiced to this day in parts of the Arab world, is immoral. It means that the cutting off of a girl's clitoris (female circumcision), a ritual practiced on almost one hundred million women living today in Africa, is immoral. It means that homosexuality as practiced in some parts of the Western world, is gross indecency and unnatural act (Prager; 2012: 1 - 4). Accordingly, ethical monotheism emphasizes One God and one morality. Ethical monotheism is thus a term used to describe a theological system which distinguishes a rule based and ethic-minded monotheism from other kinds of monotheism that may be more arbitrary, charismatic, or even malevolent ones. It is often believed that all ethical standards are derived from their deity and that they are therefore dependent upon the divine in this way and sometimes that those who do not heed their own religious dictates are also ethically incapable or corrupt.

In particular, ethical monotheism results in "belief in a singular God who establishes a system of moral values and principles" (Answer.com; 2012:2). This means that God's law is perfect and unchanging as well as being universalistic. In order to fulfill the ethical part, one must also follow all laws that are stated to the best of their ability. More so, morality must be good as due to being set by God, who is the highest standard. One cannot go against His decisions as they are simply the highest standard. Moral guidelines are not just a way of living one's life. They link directly into the monotheistic side of the whole term whereby moral behavior is an actual form of worship in itself. Again, ethical monotheism involves the understanding that absolute standards are unchanging and are usually demonstrated in the holiest of scriptures in religions. The law remains always the same. It does not change with circumstances or apply only to some situations and not to others. Accordingly, ethical monotheism is a way of life for all individuals who follow it (Iwe, 1979; Agha, 2013).

Transformation

According to Watkins and Watkins (1992:731) transformation means "to change completely in form, appearance, or nature". Equally, transformation denotes the process of making institutions and organizations more democratic. With the above, transformation entails the transformation of people's minds, lives, and environment in such a way that will increase national consciousness. This transformation can emphasize knowledge and character formation that comes with changing our general orientation in terms of values and attitudes. With sound knowledge of God, man, and society, Nigerians will appreciate the danger of murder, idolatry, and sacrifices to their Idols. The transformation would include acquiring skills and ideas that can change the mind. In the case of Nigeria, national transformation includes: increasing degree of national consciousness of Nigerians, increasing the degree of tolerance of one another by Nigerians, increasing the quantity, and quality of things that make for good life in the socio-economic sectors (Oyeranmi; 2011:6).

With good character formation whereby we imbibe Christian values, we will become major resource for economic and spiritual growth, technologically driven and responsive to environmental concerns. This will minimize corruption, illicit economy, and conflict shock, improve human relations, and increase our productive capacity for personal growth and communal dignity, stability and economic prosperity. From the above conceptual framework, ethical monotheism is the sure foundation for national social engineering. It is the moral way of life, that is, the way of honesty, integrity, altruism, and selfless service which leads to internal harmony, peace of mind, happiness, and self-fulfillment. Ethical monotheism spotlights social responsibility, peace as abstract ideal, and love as the foundation for national transformation.

Overtly, to reject ethical monotheism is to accept the immoral way of life; the way of dishonesty, fraud, selfishness, banditry and kidnapping, electoral and examination malpractices, terrorism, corruption, embezzlement of public funds and property.

It is only against this background that one can possibly explain the incessant chaos, conflict shocks, the 2023 Christmas Eve massacres in Plateau State; and the increasing propensity towards great selfishness and different forms of fraudulent practices now prevalent in contemporary society. With this erosion of ethical monotheism, national transformation becomes stalled for ever. This is the Nigerian situation. It is quite axiomatic that this way can only provoke further national chaos, confusion, infidelity, prevarication, and misery. Secularists who celebrate multiculturalism which in theory is neither original nor offensive tend to forget that in actuality, multiculturalism undermines ethical monotheism. Its underlying assumption is that there is no one universal moral code; all cultures are morally equal. To such relativists, one may ask: is ethical polytheism likely? This opens the door to the components of ethical monotheism.

Components of Ethical Monotheism

The God of ethical monotheism is the God first revealed to the world in the Bible. There is little doubt that any group of people has made so much rapid progress in ethical insight in a short period of time as the Jews. The moral heritage says Breasted (n.d) in Agha (2003:26) has come to us rather through “the Hebrew’s than from any other group. The Hebrew ethics was shaped by God Himself and by their own experiences and their own inner dynamism”. Through it, the study can establish four primary characteristics of God.

God Is Supranatural Rather Than Being Supernatural. This means that God exists not only outside the natural world, but also above it in the sense of being superior to it. This is why Genesis opens with, “In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth” in a world which nearly all people worshipped nature. The Bible’s intention was to emphasize that nature is utterly subservient to God who made it. Obviously, therefore, God is not a part of nature, and nature is not God. Against this backdrop, Youngblood (1997:19) intones that the Bible describes for us the God who, as the Creator of the universe, is also

Its absolute proprietor. He who made it and sustains it also owns it and has the privilege of disposing of it as he desires. No one can dispute His authority in this regard because as He Himself has told us; “Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me” (isa.43:16).

On the strength of the afore-citation, God, the sovereign father of His chosen people, has laid down rules and regulations intended for our greatest good and His greatest glory. If the faithful love Him, they will do their utmost for His highest. By doing so, they demonstrate that they love Him and that they are willing to admit that “His commandments are not burdensome” (I Jn.5:3).

Hence, those who trust in Him can sing with the Psalmist, “my times are in thy hand” (Ps. 31:15). He has created us, He sustains us, and it is to Him alone that man shall someday have to give account of his words and deeds. As God was sovereign in the individual and collective experience of Israel, so is He sovereign in the world today. The failure of our generation to acknowledge that sovereignty does not mean that it no longer exists. Sensitive Jews watched with bated breath as individual sins and national conspiracies were in turn condemned and judge by God. It is true today as it ever was that “He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord has them in derision” (Ps.2:4). If the concept of divine sovereignty makes today’s unbelievers defiant or fearful, it causes the Christian to rejoice. Those who are in Christ know that the Father has delegated all authority to the Son, our Lord Jesus (Eph. 1:22-23).

God is Personal. The second essential characteristics of ethical monotheism is that God is personal. The God of ethical monotheism is not some depersonalized force. God cares about His creatures. Irwin (n.d) in Prager (2012:1) postulates that “the world was to be understood in terms of personality. Its center and essence was not blind force or some sort of cold, inert reality but a personal God”. God is not an Unmoved Mover, not a watch-maker who abandoned His watch after making it, as the Enlightenment Deists would have it. God knows each of us, we are, after all, “created in His image and likeness” (Gen. 1:27). It means that He knows us and cares about us. Caring beings are not created by an uncaring being. The whole point of ethical monotheism is that God’s greatest desire is that we act toward one another with justice and mercy. If Nigerians subscribes to this simple belief which does not entail leaving or joining any specific religion, or giving up any ethnic identity, our nation would experience far less evil. Furthermore, Jesus taught His disciples that God is “My Father, and your Father” (Jn. 20:17). In other words, He showed them that God cared for them personally, just as a human father cares for his children. He dared to speak to God the Creator as a child speaks to his parent, and He told His disciples God had given “Him all things” (Mt.11:27).

Impliedly, God cares for the smallest details of our everyday needs (Mt. 6:28-32). Unlike the gods of Greek and Roman myths who were short-tempered and immoral, “the true God is just and righteous (Lk.18:19). He intervenes to save His people from sin . . . so this holy God does not stand aloof from the affairs of men. He suffers their pain and even submits to the power of death to save His children” (Packer and Tenney; 1980:544). Similarly, Templeton (n.d) in Ziglar (1998:186) posits that believe in God is the assurance that there is a just and loving God

Who has vested interest in me because he created me; that He loves me no matter what and that He hears and answers my prayers. It gives me great peace of mind because my past has been forgiven, God’s presence as my Heavenly Father is assured on a daily basis, and my eternity is guaranteed. It increases my happiness substantially because I believe that one day I will again see my parents, son, brothers, sisters and friends who have passed away.

Accordingly, believing that the Creator will provide you with strength and knowledge when your resources are exhausted lifts the weight of the world from your shoulders. Knowing that you have a never-ending source of strength, love and wisdom that you can rely on is wonderfully comforting. People who lack faith in the God of ethical monotheism often carry hurt, resentment, anger and bitterness towards others. They are seldom if ever, not happy people who have peace of mind.

God Is Good. A third characteristics of ethical monotheism is that God is goodness. If God were not moral, ethical monotheism Prager (2012:1) holds “would be an oxymoron. A God who is not good cannot demand goodness. Unlike all other gods believed in prior to monotheism, the Biblical God rules by moral standard.” In ascription of goodness to God, the fundamental idea is that He is in every way all that He as God should be, and therefore answers "perfectly to the Ideal expressed in the word ‘God’. He is good in the metaphysical sense of the word, absolute perfection and perfect bliss in Himself" (Berkhof; 1994:70). Consequent upon this, God is good in Himself and He is also good for His creatures. Berkhof (1994:70) gives a lucid and insightful expression of this when he remarks that God may therefore be called "*the fons Omnium bonorum*. He is the fountain of all good, . . . All the good things which the creatures enjoy in the present and expect in the future, flow to them out of this inexhaustible fountain." And not only that, but

God is also the *summum bonum*, the highest good. We tend to take a connection between religion and ethics for granted. However, ethical monotheism demands that one's faith ought to help shape one's moral values. It is quite instructive that for much of human history, however, worship meant making the proper sacrifices and following the proper ritual; it might have very little to do with morality.

For instance, Placher (1983:22-23) observes that various gods and goddess punish heroes for failing to offer the proper sacrifices, but they rarely call them to account

For moral failings. The prophet Amos thus proposed a new idea of proper worship when he declared on behalf of Yahweh, "I hate, I spurn your pilgrim - feast; I will not delight in your sacred ceremonies . . . Let justice roll on like a river and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:21-24). Yahweh, the prophets increasing taught, cared about righteousness, not ritual. He had no respect for those "who sell the innocent for silver and the destitute for a pair of shoes . . . grind the heads of the poor into the earth and thrust the humble out of the way" (Amos 2:6), regardless of the sacrifices they performed.

Against this backdrop, therefore, words cannot convey the magnitude of the change wrought by the Judeo-Christian's introduction into the world of a God who rules the universe morally. One ramification is that despite the victories of evil people and the sufferings of good people, a moral God rules the world. Ultimately, the good and evil will receive their just deserts. In this regard, one has never understood how a good secular individual can avoid debilitating despair. To care about goodness, yet to witness the unbearable torments of the good and the innocent; to see many of the evil go unpunished all the while believing that this life is all there is; that we are alone in a universe that hears no child's cry and sees no person's tears, has to be a recipe for despair.

God is Holy. As primary as ethics are, man cannot live by morality alone. We are also instructed to lead holy lives, "you shall be holy because I the Lord your God am holy" (Lev.19:2). God is more than the source of morality; He is the source of holiness. Ethics enables life, holiness ennobles it. Hence, when the Scripture talk about holiness, Stedman (2005:12) says it is truly talking about "wholeness and completeness. And when God says to us, "you are to be holy to me because I, the LORD, am holy," He is telling us that "we are to be as whole and complete as He is. There is no blemish in God. He lives in harmony with Himself." Furthermore, holiness Prager (2012:2) declares is the "elevation of the human being from his animal nature to his being created in the image of God". There is no more solemn statement in all of Scripture referring to the relationship between God and man than in Genesis 1:27, in which we find the Biblical occurrence of the verb create, three times repeated: "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them."

Additionally, in Genesis 1:31 at the end of creation God saw all that He had made and "it was very good" (Youngblood; 1997:20). Apparently, Adam functioned as God intended humanity to function. He bore the beauty and splendor of the image and the likeness of God. Impliedly, human beings were lovingly fashioned by God, and He looked upon man and said that they were very good. But the human race, Stedman (2005:13) notes "has become misshapen and deformed by sin. Yes, God's image is still stamped upon us, but that image has become marred and damaged. We are no longer whole." More fundamentally, the holiness of God has a special ethical aspect in Scripture. Interestingly enough, it is with this aspect of it that the study is more directly concerned. The ethical idea of the divine holiness may not be dissociated from the idea

of God's majesty-holiness. The fundamental idea of the ethical holiness of is also that of separation, but in this case it is separation from moral evil or sin. In virtue of His holiness God can have no communion with sin. Used in this sense, the word 'holiness' points to God's majestic purity, or ethical majesty (Berkhof,1994).

But the idea of ethical holiness is not merely negative (separation from sin). It also has a positive content, namely, that of moral excellence, or ethical perfection. If man reacts to God's majesty-holiness with a feeling of utter insignificance and awe, his reaction to the ethical holiness reveals itself in a sense of sinfulness as in Isaiah 6:5. Accordingly, the call to holiness is the result of the nature of our God: "You are to be holy to me because, I, the LORD, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own" (Lev.20:26 Cf. I Pet. 1:15-16). The fact of God's holiness drives the faithful to seek to be different from "the futile ways" (I Pet. 1:18) of his ancestors and from "the fleeting pleasures of sin" (Heb. 11:25).

They would turn aside from all besetting sins (Heb. 12:1) by the encouragement and strengthening of the Holy Spirit. Also, the holiness of God Fubara-Manuel (2007:115) opines means for our world that God cannot stand sin in any form, that sin will be punished wherever it is found, that "God's holy eyes are "too pure to behold evil" and that God "cannot look on wrong doing" (Hab. 1:13). The holiness of God means that God will execute justice steadfastly . . ." Failure to ground God's holiness in His essential nature, Milne (1991:68) submits is "a primary cause of people's mistaken severance of the holiness from the love of God. If holiness is God's will, His acts of love and pardon must also be holy acts."

Ethical Monotheism And The Decalogue

Religion and ethics are related as foundation to building. The moral demands of the Decalogue are founded on the fact of God's redemptive activity (Ex.20:2); and much of Jesus' moral teaching is presented as deduction from religious premises (Mt.5:43 ff). The revelation of the law in the context of redemptive covenant action indicates that conformity to the law must be a gracious accomplishment of Yahweh, saving from bondage. In this context, Kline (1992:1174) contends that even the preponderantly negative form of the Decalogue serves to "magnify the grace of God, who presents this protest against man's sin not as a final condemnation but summons to the godliness which is the goal of restored covenantal communion". Again, Kline (1992:1174) opines thus "it becomes a divine promise to the redeemed servants of perfect divine triumph over the demonic power that would enslave them in the hell of endless alienation from God." An ethic rooted in such religion possesses the dynamic of faith, hope, and love. More importantly, the biblical ethic is rooted in biblical religion, and biblical religion is not shapeless mysticism but a structured order.

Hence, the very strong emphasis the Old Testament lays on social ethics. The Decalogue's main concern was not to set a fence round abstract ethical ideals, but to cement good relationships between people, and between people and God. So the majority of its specific precepts are couched in the second person rather than the third. Thus, the strongly positive and warm attitude adopted by those under the law towards law-keeping (Ps. 19:7,119: 33 ff); and the recognition that the most serious consequence of law-breaking was not any material punishment but the resulting breakdown in relationships (Hos.1:2). Consequently, concerned as they are with the most fundamental of relationships, the Decalogue set out the basic sanctities governing belief, worship, life, the sanctity of God's being, His worship, His name and His day; and the sanctity of marriage and family, life, property and truth. This is why slaves must be treated generously

because God treated Hebrew slaves with generosity in Egypt (Dt. 15:10 ff). Equally, businessmen are not to weight their scales unfairly, remembering that it was the God of justice who redeemed their ancestors (Lev. 19:36). Strangers are to be treated with the same kindness that the Lord of grace showed to His people “for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Lev.19:33 f).

Put more concretely, God’s demand is “you shall keep my commandments and do them because I am the Lord . . . who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be Your God” (Lev. 22: 31ff). More so, as well as being the fruit of God’s redemptive work, the Decalogue has deep roots in the creation ordinances of Genesis 1 and 2. These are the ordinances of procreation and managerial responsibility for the rest of creation (Gen. 1:28); of the Sabbath (Gen. 2:2 f); of work (Gen. 2:15) and of marriage (Gn. 2:24). Field (1992:353) writes that “ together they touch upon all the main areas of human life and behavior and provide basic guidelines for those seeking a life-style that is in line with the Creator’s ideal.”

On this premise, the Decalogue usually styled the moral law is the rule of life and manners. The Scripture as Chrysostom (n.d.) in Watson (19990:12) says is a Garden and the moral law is "the chief flower in it. It is a banquet, and the moral law is the chief dish in it . . . It is an exact model and platform of religion. It is the standard of truth, the judge of controversies . . ." Accordingly, the Decalogue is unalterable, very illustrious, and full of glory (Mt.5:17; Rom. 13:9; Jas. 2:10 f). As a corollary, the Law of Moses or the Law of God (the Torah) (Neh. 10:29) made Israel a monotheistic ethical bloc in a world invaded and pervaded by polytheism, cultivated superstition, and philosophical rationalism.

Affirming that Jewish religion invokes wonder and perhaps admiration, Iwe (1979:3) posits that

While the Greeks have held a position of originality and primacy in the spheres of the literary arts and philosophy, and the Romans secured a status of imperial pre-eminence in the fields of political wisdom, jurisprudence and military arts and strategem; the Hebrews among the people of the ancient world, enjoyed a position of incontestable and unparalleled excellence and rectitude in the spheres of religion and ethical sanity and probity. . . In the ancient world of religious ignorance, superstition, and fear, and phobia; of mamonism and polymamoism; of moral decadence and universal corruption; the Hebrews remained till today the faithful custodians of primitive revelation and faith in one true God and of sound norms of ethical life.

Gleaning from the above, this religious and ethical element was and has remained the most singular, constant and dynamic factor in, and the animating spirit of, the history of the Jews; in all its tortuous complexities and chaotic vicissitudes. The Jews believed and have never ceased to believe in One God and only One God, in strict monotheism. Consequently, in the midst of a polytheistic and pantheistic world, the Jews professed faith in the One Living God. In this monotheistic belief they as a race have remained religiously impregnable, culturally imperturbable and racially and nationally united (Deut. 4:5-14, 32-40; Ps. 78:5-8). The point being strenuously emphasized is that ethical monotheism enabled the Jews to "maintain a pure and complete lineage, traceable back to Abraham and traceable forward to the Messiah (Mt. 1:1-25; Lk. 3:23-38)"(Stone;3009:34).

Manifestly, therein lies its power as the instrument of Jewish moral and religious education. Iwe (1979:16) clearly presented the position thus;

Its theocratic character and its repeated insistence on the supreme importance of the

inner law of mind and conscience, safeguard it from the deadening effects that is the sure end of all mere codes of right behavior. In this insistence, Jewish law is unique in its aim of personal sanctification.

This assertion surmises that ethical monotheism hinged on the Torah is the impregnable custody of a monotheistic religion, culture, and ethos responsible for the maintenance of essentially sound ethical system in a world of moral aberration and decadence, idol worship, and child sacrifice.

This point is sufficiently significant to stress if only because it is often neglected. Accordingly, that this ethical monotheism survived and developed in a world whose spirit and tendencies were so hostile to it is a phenomenon unique of its kind. On this point, Iwe's (1979) experience is once again pertinent. It is a feat greater than the men who bring it about, and, contrasting as it does with the milieu wherein it is produced; puts the ordinary logic of history to flight.

For this monotheism is with the Jews, the popular belief. Monotheism, this belief in only one God, was and still is the backbone, soul and stamina of Judaism - the religion of the Hebrews; for the religious cult and culture of these people were impregnate with uncompromising, relentless and monolithic monotheism. Fastidiously, these moral and ethical instructions, guidelines, and restrictions reveals the mind of the Creator of the universe concerning how His people should live, treat one another, eat, and think as well as how to be successful in the journey of life (Ex.19:5-6; 20; 31:18; Josh. 1:7-9; Ps. 119:9-11).

Furthermore, it spotlights detailed information that when applied would help extend life, increase physical health, bring emotional stability, build strong families, and strong communities free of crime; and provide wisdom for wealth creation. More importantly, the judicial moral code in the Torah reveals the code of moral, ethical conduct, and civil law decisions involving family, neighbors, civil authority, and business transactions. This view is buttressed by Stone (2009:29) when he said that

The social, ethical, judicial commandments, and guidelines discuss responsibilities to follow blessings for obedience, and penalties for breaking these laws. The family codes enable a person to understand sexual purity, marriage, and raising children. For example, these codes teach: you were not to see the nakedness of nearest kin or family members (Lev. 18:6-18). You were not to have sexual relations outside of marriage (Lev. 18:20). You were not to offer your children to idols (Lev. 18:21). Men were not to have sexual relations with men or with a beast (Lev. 18:22-23). You were to honor and respect your parents and rest once a week (Lev. 19:3) . . . You were not to lie or steal (Lev.19:11). You must show respect for those who are deaf and blind (Lev.19:14). . . and not vex a stranger (Lev.19:32-34).

In this regard, Barker (1995:884) puntilyously states that it was in Israel that "God's righteous statutes and decrees were kept because only in Israel had they been made known. The justice and righteousness of God's rule in Israel have been especially shown in the manner in which He has dealt with their sons"(cf. Ex. 34:6-7; Deut.4:5-8; Ps. 99;147:19-20). The point to note here is that while the Law, or Torah in Hebrew and the Pentateuch in Greek contains history, much of it reveals "specific guidelines and instructions for spiritual, social and moral living; sacrificial procedures and ceremonial applications. The divine instructions in the Torah are often divided into four categories: the law, the commandments, the statutes and the judgments"(Stone; 2009:21). This exploration on ethical monotheism, the Decalogue and the Torah leads to the radical call to the mission of God for humanity.

Ethical Monotheism and Missions

Though Israel right from its birth as a religious community at Sinai considered herself a *bona fide* property, “a son” of Yahweh, the exclusive God of Israel at the expense of other nations regarded as Gentiles. Nonetheless, during the course of the theological development of her faith, it became obvious that Israel implicitly recognized her religion as a universal faith. When God chose Abraham to receive personal redemption, it was not to leave the rest of the people to perish. The purpose of the choice was made clear “in you shall all the families of the earth BE BLESSED” (Gen.12:3)(Emphasize mine). To fortify this, Abe (2000:5) affirms that when Israel was eventually chosen as God’s own people, it was “not to the neglect or detriment of other peoples of the universe. She was to be a light to the Gentiles, to carry out a mission to all nations of the earth.” Again, the prophets saw Yahweh as the God of the whole universe and the God of individuals, who acted in history, guiding, rewarding, or punishing His people. For instance, Amos saw himself as a prophet to both Israel and other nations. To Amos, Yahweh is the God of all nations and of all men. But more importantly, is the prophet’s fundamental conviction that the moral obligations of which all men are aware and christened as Christian duties both to God and neighbors were identical with the personal will of Yahweh, the Universal God who exercises universal sovereignty and holds all people accountable for their conduct.

Furthermore, in the teachings of Jesus, one finds a more conscious return to the intent of the Abrahamic call, a more conscious effort to seeing to it that “all the families of the earth” are blessed. In Jesus, then Bosch (1991:27) opines was “a radical call to the mission of God, to the love of God that seeks all of humanity and all of creation”. This radical view about the nature of the mission of God is “perhaps most clearly encapsulated by the teaching of Jesus on the kingdom of God” (Beasley-Murray; 1986:40). In this kingdom (presently expressed in the Church), God requires His people to live a life of brotherly love. They are to practice the ethics of Christ and work for the redemption of all mankind (Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-18; Acts 1:8). This Great Commission spurred the Early Church to take the Good News to the far corners of the Roman Empire. They had a burning desire to win lost souls for Jesus Christ before the end of time. Hence, God has uniquely called the Church as a group conscious of His will and mind, and as a group that has experienced Him uniquely in Christ to witness to God’s love in the world by joining in this mission to the ends of the earth. The following section is the practical application of the study.

Implications for National Transformation

The practical need for this paper for the Nigerian setting and, indeed for much of the Christianity of the world today arises from at least five factors. These are the sanctity of human life, equality before the law, religious and social dimensions of life are linked, good stewardship of life and creation preservation as well as the promotion of peace.

Respect For The Sanctity of Human life: An indispensable moral ramification of ethical monotheism is the sanctity of human life. Made in the image of God, men and women have pre-eminent places in the social order, with inalienable political, social, legal and economic rights. The fundamental question to ask about social policies according to Ede (2008:14) is “how

beautiful is it to people?" Covertly, creation of man in the image of God carries implications which are “fundamental in forming Christian attitude to abortion, euthanasia and medical experimentation, as well as fuelling Christian anger when distinctions of race, class or gender are used to exploit any individual or group” (Field 1991:233). It is therefore totally forbidden to take another’s life. This is a sin resulting from the violation of the sixth commandment (Ex.20:13 Cf. Gen.4:8 ff). To illustrate the lack of respect for the sanctity of human life with farmers and herders clashes in Nigeria will suffice.

The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. Tajudeen Abbas has said that the incessant clashes between farmers and herders across the country has claimed more lives than any other conflict in Nigeria. The Speaker made the disclosure while declaring open stakeholders interactive session by the House Ad-hoc Committee on Recurring Annual Clashes Between Farmers and Herders in Yamaltu/Debba Local Government Areas of Gombe State and Neighboring Local Government Areas, including Other Regions of the Country with similar Incident on Monday August 28, 2023. According to Hon. Abbas the clashes have resulted in avoidable loss of lives and property. It is estimated that over 60,000 people have been killed since 2001. It ought not to be so. The number of deaths, injuries and kidnapped persons constitutes an alarming situation and poses a serious national challenge for Nigeria's quest to attain food security and alternative earnings from the agricultural sector (Ossai, 2023).

Implicitly, the contemporary Nigerian society has become a theatre of genocide, bloodshed, and insecurity due to the carnage activities of terrorists, unknown gunmen, militants, and separatists agitators. Acts of terrorism are carried out at homes, in schools and religious centers, in busy markets and villages, in government and private offices; and on the roads either by government officials or private individuals (Center For Preventive Action; 2022:1). Accordingly, without hesitation, ethical monotheism is the panacea to suicide bombing, state and non-state sponsored terrorism and genocide going on in various parts of the country.

Stewardship And Creation Preservation: The principle of stewardship, Hillyer (1991:661) posits is closely linked to “the concept of grace; everything comes from God as a gift and is to be administered faithfully on His behalf”. There is thus both stewardship of the earth and stewardship of the gospel; stewardship of personal resources of time, treasure and talents, and stewardship of the resources of church and society. Accordingly, all property has a “Social Mortgage.” The earth and its resources are to be respected. By the work and activity of human beings in continuing the development of our environment, we become co-creators and stewards of God’s bountiful gifts of nature. Responsible management of resources and proper accountability become obligatory. But unfortunately, naked greed, dishonesty and corruption have become “virtues” in our society. Nigeria is a country permeated with corruption in every sector, from government circles, government institutions and parastatals to the private sector. Embezzlement of public funds by those to whom the funds are entrusted, deals with contractors, ten percent “kick-back” from contracts awarded, and other fraudulent practices by government officials are common features dotting every page of our national history since independence (Abiodun, 2023; Iroanya, 2023; Tella, 2023).

In the light of this deplorable moral situation in the country, Omoregbe (2002: xi) quips "it is not at all surprising that the economy of the nation eventually collapsed, resulting in unprecedented suffering for our people." Amid the country's abundant human and natural resources, there is insecurity, poverty, fear, suspicion, disorderliness, hatred, and chaos everywhere. These issues keep rising due principally to bad governance including: rise in poverty, poor economic policies, a fall in the standard of living of the people, an upsurge of ethnic militias, an increase in corruption and criminal activities, an increase in the use of drugs and several factors (Ekwowusi, 2022; Oyelude, 2022). Consequently, highlight of the 2022 Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) survey revealed that "63 per cent of persons living within Nigeria (133 million) are multidimensionally poor. The national MPI is 0.257, indicating that poor people in Nigeria experience just over one quarter of all possible deprivations"(Ichad;2022).

Religious And Social Dimensions of Life Are Linked: The “social” human construction of the world is not “secular” in the sense of being outside of God’s plan but is intimately involved with the dynamic of the “reign of God”(Fox; 2012). Stated more broadly, faith and justice are closely interlinked. Secularists would do well to understand what this Christianity is with which they disagree. Biblical faith asserts uniquely among world religions, that God is personal Creator and Sovereign. He is sovereign because He is Creator. Hence, only a creator can define the reason for existence of something and our reason for existence is the only objective basis for moral obligation. Moral obligation is the foundation of all other including legal obligation.

The great problem resolved by our Biblical, and Anglo-Saxon tradition, culminating in our constitution, Fox (2012:1) affirms is how to submit the near monopoly on coercive force held by civil government "to the moral constraints of truth and righteousness, to obligate civil government to be truthful and righteous, equally toward all. If you do not want that kind of government, the Biblical worldview sooner or later becomes your enemy." Implicated in the above thesis is that most of these virtues are either virtually non- existent or have their existence fraught with fraud in Nigeria. Resultantly, the aspirations of the people to evolve viable nation has remained an effort in futility. The point to note here is that since there is no identifiable source of moral obligation in a secular world, all legal systems without a personal creator God ultimately rest on coercion not on moral legitimacy, for their alleged legal legitimacy.

Promotion of Peace and Economic Justice: Peace is the fruit of justice and is dependent upon the right order among humans and within nations. Idowu (1971:83) argues that peace in religion is not “an abstract concept; nor a mere sentiment. It is an urgent matter of life or death. It is to be bought, pursued, achieved, attained, and maintained.” A correlation to just peace is economic justice. The economy is for the people and the resources of the earth are to be equitably shared by all. Human work is the key to contemporary social security. Labor takes precedence over both capital and technology in the production process. Just wages and the rights of workers to form trade unions are to be guaranteed. This is not the case in Nigeria, where the abuse of good governance ultimately fosters the anger, distrust, severe alienation and multidimensional poverty that are the roots of many Nigerian conflict shocks. The lack of basic infrastructure such as roads, water and sanitation, shelter, electricity and employment opportunities for the teeming youth had given rise to terrorism, militancy, social instability and political violence (Okoronkwo, 2020; Iroanya, 2023).

Ostensibly, unemployment bites harder on Nigeria's youthful population, with 33.3 per cent of the labor force unable to find a job at the prevailing wage. Specifically, youth unemployment is 53.40 per cent and projected to trend around 58 per cent in 2024, while the misery index is 50.68 per cent (Lain, Schoch and Vishwanatti, 2022; NBS; 2023). Inflation of 28.20 per cent in November 2023 is making a mess of household disposable income, couple with poor workers salary and the 2019 minimum wage of thirty thousand naira (#30,000.00) only. In a post COVID-19 economy and the war in Ukraine, stagnation, and poverty have worsened especially in Northern Nigeria where many Nigerians lack education and access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation (Akpata, 2023.). The incidence of poverty has been aggravated by the removal of fuel subsidy by President Bola Tinubu on May 29, 2023, which has led to high cost of food prices, transportation, housing, hike in school fees, and meeting up with other essential needs. In the light of the objective of this study, the questions we must constantly ask the economy is “whether the poor are helped through its decisions . . . Is man at the centre of the economy or at the periphery”? (Ede; 2008:15).

Equality Before The Law: In the Biblical world, the law of God is precisely that which brings all use of coercion under moral law. The law of God is that alone which can give us an “ordered” freedom, an order which applies to those at the top equally with those at the bottom. Without God, we find attempts at “liberal democracy” soon edging toward the principle, as the pigs let it be known in Animal Farm, “all animals are created equal, but some are more equal than others” (Orwell; 1989:92). Ancient paganism and modern secularism are identical in this respect. Hebrew religion, the beginning of ethical monotheism, changed all that. King David understood himself to be under a law higher than him. This explains why Nathan, the prophet, could challenge David when he violated Bathsheba and then killed her husband, Uriah (2 Samuel 11). That amazing scene between Nathan and David as recorded in 2 Samuel 12 could never have happened in Egypt, Babylon, Persia, Greece or Rome. Manifestly, it will not happen in contemporary Nigeria. No prophet would have had the moral ground upon which to stand against the overriding coercive force of the king. Admirably, Fox (2012:1) asserts that “that right of open and reasoned public disagreement is fast eroding everywhere Biblical culture is being subverted.” This is clearly the situation in Nigeria. Apparently, Nigeria's leaders and members of their family are above the law. However, no country makes progress under a system where leaders treat her citizens with contempt.

Conclusion

An informed deduction from the foregoing will show that Israel's great achievement so apparent that mention of it is almost trite was ethical monotheism. It was an achievement that transformed subsequent history. One may raise the question whether any other single contribution from whatever source since human culture emerged from the stone ages has had the far reaching effect upon history that Israel in this regard has exerted both through the mediums of Christianity and Islam and directly through the world of Jewish thinkers themselves? As a corollary, we indicated that any attempts to change the world that do not place God and goodness at their centre will make this world worse. We stressed that ethical monotheism is the only truly effective answer to moral relativism, to racism, to nationalism, to worshipping art, law or success. It must therefore be emphasized that man cannot understand himself, his dignity and vocation on

earth without God. May His Holy Spirit accompany us in the search for credible solution to the manifold and pressing needs and challenges confronting the contemporary society.

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Dauda Kahutu Rarara's "continuity Tinubu": A Political Song that Sparks Conversation on Northern Region Loyalty in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examines the emergence and sociocultural impact of Dauda Kahutu Rarara's song "Continuity Tinubu", a pro-Bola Tinubu campaign song released in March 2025 on the political landscape of Nigeria, particularly in the context of regional loyalty in the North amid anticipations for the 2027 elections. The primary objectives are to analyze the song's lyrical content and rhetorical strategies in fostering political continuity, assess its reception on social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok, and evaluate its role in shaping discourses on Northern loyalty to the Southwestern Yoruba-led administration of President Tinubu. A mixed methods approach was employed: thematic content analysis of the song's lyrics and associated commentaries, quantitative tracking of engagement metrics (views, shares, sentiment scores) on YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook. The song "Continuity Tinubu, We love you Tinubu, We thank you Tinubu", employs Hausa-inflected praise-singing (waka) traditions to invoke gratitude for economic reforms and security initiatives, while subtly addressing regional grievances like fuel subsidy removal. It has garnered millions of views, polarizing Northern audiences: supporters hail it as a symbol of cross-ethnic unity and loyalty to Tinubu's "Renewed Hope" agenda, evidenced by endorsements from groups like the Northern Nigeria Women Support for Continuity Tinubu/Kashim 2027. Critics, however, decry it as performative allegiance, sparking debates on elite co-optation and youth disillusionment. In conclusion, "Continuity Tinubu" exemplifies music's potency as a tool for political mobilization in Nigeria's multi-ethnic democracy, bridging North-South divides while exposing fissures in regional solidarity. It underscores Tinubu's strategic cultivation of Northern patronage, potentially solidifying his re-election prospects. Recommendations include leveraging indigenous genres for inclusive campaigning, investing in digital literacy to counter misinformation in political songs, and conducting longitudinal studies on music's influence on voter turnout in Northern states.

Keywords: Political Song, Regional Loyalty, National Identity, Hausa Music, Nigerian Politics.

Introduction

The relationship between music and politics in Nigeria is deeply layered and multidimensional, with music serving as a powerful tool for political activism, mobilization, and social commentary, often blurring the lines between artistic expression and governance. According to Ihejirika (2023), Nigerian artists, as citizens first, leverage genres like Afrobeats and reggae to protest against corruption, poor policies, and leadership failures, as exemplified in historical tracks by Fela Kuti and contemporary anthems during the EndSARS movement. This symbiotic relationship allows politicians to harness music for image-building and voter persuasion, while

musicians risk backlash but gain platforms for advocacy. Sulaiman (2024) further argues that political songs significantly influence young voters' candidate choices, ideologies, and party loyalty, especially among those with weaker affiliations, as evidenced in Nigeria's 2023 elections. In this vein, in early April 2025, as Nigeria approached the midpoint of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's first term, renowned Hausa political praise-singer Dauda Kahutu Rarara released a new campaign song titled "Continuity Tinubu." The song, uploaded to YouTube and rapidly disseminated across TikTok, Instagram Reels, and WhatsApp, quickly amassed millions of views and sparked intense online debates about Northern regional loyalty to a Southwestern Yoruba-led administration. Building on Rarara's earlier pro-Tinubu tracks such as "Tinubu Shugaban Kasa" and "Sai Kashim Sai Tinubu," "Continuity Tinubu" arrived at a politically charged moment. With speculation mounting over the 2027 presidential election, economic hardships stemming from fuel subsidy removal and naira flotation still resonating in the North, and youth discontent simmering across the region, the song's timing appeared strategic. Its simple, repetitive chorus "Continuity Tinubu! We love you Tinubu! We thank you Tinubu!" delivered in upbeat Hausa waka style. It was composed for easy memorization and viral sharing.

The release immediately polarized public opinion. Supporters, including APC loyalists and groups like the Northern Nigeria Women Support for Continuity Tinubu/Kashim 2027, celebrated it as evidence of enduring cross-ethnic solidarity and gratitude for Tinubu's "Renewed Hope" agenda. Critics, however, dismissed it as opportunistic praise-singing that masked widespread Northern disillusionment. Within weeks, the song became a focal point for broader conversations about political patronage, and the shifting dynamics of North-South alliances in Nigerian politics. This introduction sets the stage for examining how a single musical piece can both reflect and influence the complex terrain of regional loyalty in contemporary Nigeria.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach combining content analysis, discourse analysis, and digital ethnography to investigate Dauda Kahutu Rarara's song "Continuity Tinubu" (released April 2025) and its role in sparking debates on Northern Nigerian loyalty to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration ahead of potential 2027 elections. Primary data consist of the song itself (official YouTube video and lyrics transcribed from the audio release) and user-generated content reflecting public reception. Secondary data include scholarly articles on Nigerian political music, Hausa praise-singing traditions, and regional politics.

Biography of Dauda Kahutu Rarara



Source: Dauda Kahutu Rarara - FULBE - Official Audio 2023 (youtube.com)

According to the CityCeleb (2024), Dauda Adamu Kahutu, popularly known as Rarara, is a prominent Nigerian Hausa musician, singer, songwriter, and political praise-singer (maroki). Born on September 13, 1986, in Kahutu village, Danja Local Government Area, Katsina State, Nigeria, he is currently 39 years old (as at December 2025). A proud Hausa and devout Muslim, Rarara grew up in a close-knit family with parents Alhaji Adamu Kahutu and Hajiya Halima Adamu, alongside a brother and sister who supported his early interest in music. He resides primarily in Kano State, where much of his career has unfolded.

Rarara attended primary and secondary schools in his hometown, excelling academically while nurturing his musical talents. He later moved to Kano to study Islamic knowledge and Arabic at a Qur'anic school, which deeply influenced his faith-integrated lyrics. Based in Kano, he transitioned from Islamic studies to a full-time music career, blending traditional Hausa sounds with contemporary elements.

His breakthrough came during the 2015 Nigerian general elections, where his songs strongly supported the All-Progressives Congress (APC), particularly Muhammadu Buhari and Katsina Governor Aminu Bello Masari. Hits like "Masu Gudu Su Gudu" earned him the nickname "Buhari's singer." Rarara has shifted allegiances over time—supporting figures like Rabiu Kwankwaso earlier but remained a key APC mobilizer. In recent years, he has praised President Bola Ahmed Tinubu with songs such as "Tinubu Shugaban Kasa," "Sai Kashim Sai Tinubu," "Omo Ologo" (meaning "Child of Glory" in Yoruba), and the 2025 pro-continuity track that sparked debates on Northern loyalty.

Beyond music, Rarara leads the 13×13 Kannywood youth mentoring group, has gifted cars to colleagues, and owns Rarara Musical Studio. He keeps his personal life private; reports indicate he is married (possibly polygamously) with children. Controversies include a disputed honorary

degree in 2025 and criticisms of political opportunism. His net worth is estimated between \$100,000–\$200,000, derived from music, performances, and political patronage. Rarara remains one of Northern Nigeria's most influential political musicians, using his art to shape public opinion and mobilize voters.

Lyrical and Musical Analysis of the Song

"Continuity Tinubu" is a 2025 political praise song by a Northern Nigerian musician Dauda Kahutu Rarara, primarily in Hausa with English elements, designed for viral appeal and mobilization ahead of potential 2027 elections. Full lyrics are not widely transcribed online yet (as it's a recent release), but the core repetitive chorus and key phrases, as shared across social media clips and viral posts, are:

Chorus Response (repeated extensively):

Continuity Tinubu!

Continuity Tinubu!

Solo call:

We love you Tinubu!

We love you Tinubu!

Chorus Response:

Continuity Tinubu!

Continuity Tinubu!

Solo call:

We thank you Tinubu!

We thank you Tinubu!

Chorus Response:

Continuity Tinubu!

Continuity Tinubu!

Solo call:

Awa dupe Tinubu!

Awa dupe Tinubu!

Chorus Response:

Continuity Tinubu!

Continuity Tinubu!

Solo call:

Asiwaju Tinubu!

Asiwaju Tinubu!

Chorus Response:

Continuity Tinubu!

Continuity Tinubu!

The song employs traditional Hausa waka (praise-singing) style with upbeat instrumentation, emphasizing gratitude for President Bola Tinubu's policies, calls for continuity ("ci gaba da Tinubu"), and themes of unity, renewal, and support from the North, improvised praises referencing reforms, security, and cross-regional loyalty, typical of Rarara's political tracks.

For the full audio/visual experience, the song can be accessed through the Viral video: [Dauda Kahutu Rarara Continuity Tinubu] (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LTvL7fECUQE>)

[RARARA Tinubu Continuity] (<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/izeb41pyC7s>)

Lyrics structure and Language

The lyrics are organized around recurring praise motifs and blend Hausa, Yoruba, and English through multilingual code switching showcasing Nigeria's linguistic diversity and Rarara's ability to connect with a broad audience. These repetitions make it highly catchy, fueling debates on Northern political alignment. Transcriptions of the lyrics may vary slightly due to oral improvisation in performances. The use of local languages and praise elements creates a sense of familiarity and shared identity, making the message more relatable and impactful.

The song's rhetorical strategies combine gratitude for perceived reforms, repeated calls for continuity, and a clear ideological message that frames Tinubu's agenda as the North's path forward.

Political Context and Motivations

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration has pursued ambitious economic reforms since 2023, including the elimination of fuel subsidies and unification of exchange rates, intended to stabilize Nigeria's economy and attract investment. However, these measures have exacerbated socioeconomic challenges in Northern Nigeria, a region already grappling with high poverty levels, persistent banditry, and food insecurity (Channels Television, 2025). Inflation and rising living costs have fueled public discontent, prompting debates about the equitable distribution of reform burdens across regions. Against this backdrop, speculation about the 2027 presidential election has intensified, with early signals of campaign activities emerging by mid-2025. The song: "Continuity Tinubu" aligns with efforts to consolidate support in the North, a critical voting bloc that contributed significantly to Tinubu's 2023 victory despite his Yoruba origins.

Dauda Kahutu Rarara's motivations appear rooted in the longstanding Hausa tradition of political praise-singing (*roko* or *waka*), where musicians serve as oral historians and mobilizers, often in exchange for patronage from political elites. Sulaiman (2024) highlights how political songs in Nigeria function as persuasive tools, influencing candidate preferences, ideological alignment, and party loyalty, particularly among youth with fluid political affiliations. In Rarara's case, the song extends his pattern of aligning with incumbent power, previously with Muhammadu Buhari and now Tinubu potentially reflecting strategic opportunism or conviction in the administration's vision. A discourse analysis of similar pro-Tinubu tracks by Rarara underscores how such music constructs ideological narratives, promoting literacy in political agendas while reinforcing power structures through linguistic and cultural resonance (Abdulwaheed & Maikanti, 2025). Ultimately, the release timing suggests an intent to counter Northern grievances, foster gratitude for perceived progress, and mobilize grassroots enthusiasm for continuity.

Public Reception and Social Media Impact

The release of "Continuity Tinubu" triggered a swift and polarized response across digital platforms, reflecting the song's ability to capture both enthusiasm and skepticism among Northern Nigerian audiences. Within days of its upload in April 2025, the official YouTube video surpassed several million views, while short clips proliferated on TikTok, Instagram Reels, and Facebook, often accompanied by hashtags such as #ContinuityTinubu, #SaiTinubu2027, and #NorthernSupportTinubu.

Supporters, particularly within the All Progressives Congress (APC) base and women's groups such as the Northern Nigeria Women Support for Continuity Tinubu/Kashim 2027, embraced the song as an authentic expression of regional gratitude. Many praised Rarara for highlighting perceived gains under President Tinubu, including infrastructure projects, security improvements in some states, and efforts to unify the country across ethnic lines. Social media comments frequently described the track as heartfelt and patriotic, with users sharing videos of themselves

dancing or singing along at local gatherings.

Conversely, a significant segment of online commentators expressed strong disapproval. Critics accused Rarara of opportunism, labeling the song as “paid propaganda” designed to mask widespread hardship in the North. Detractors pointed to the lingering effects of fuel subsidy removal, rising food prices, and persistent insecurity, arguing that the song misrepresented the true sentiment of the region. Some users mocked the lyrics as overly simplistic or out of touch, while others questioned whether Rarara’s repeated shifts in political allegiance reflected genuine conviction or financial incentives.

This digital divide underscores the song’s broader significance: it not only amplified pro-Tinubu messaging but also exposed underlying tensions in Northern political discourse. The rapid spread and heated reactions illustrate how political music continues to serve as an indicator of public opinion and a catalyst for debate in Nigeria’s increasingly digital political landscape.

Debates on Northern Loyalty

The release of “Continuity Tinubu” intensified ongoing debates about Northern Nigeria's political loyalty to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, a Yoruba Southerner leading a nation historically marked by North-South power rotations. While Tinubu secured substantial Northern votes in 2023, approximately 63% according to some analysis, the song's portrayal of unwavering support and gratitude has highlighted fractures in regional solidarity amid economic reforms and persistent insecurity (NigerianEye, 2025; Abdulwaheed & Maikanti, 2025). Proponents of continued Northern backing argue that loyalty stems from strategic alliances, policy benefits, and the need for governmental continuity. Figures like former Senate President Ahmad Lawan have projected over 75% Northern votes for Tinubu in 2027, citing infrastructure projects, security initiatives, and commissions targeting regional development as evidence of equitable governance (NigerianEye, 2025).

Critics, however, contend that the song oversimplifies a region grappling with disproportionate hardship from subsidy removal and inflation, portraying it as performative propaganda that ignores youth disillusionment and elite opportunism. Previous Rarara tracks faced mass reporting and account deletions on social media due to claims perceived as detached from realities like poverty and banditry (Peoples Gazette, 2024). Analysts note deepening divisions, with emerging opposition coalitions and defections signaling potential shifts away from Tinubu (SBM Intelligence, 2024).

Ultimately, the political song “Continuity Tinubu” serves as a microcosm of Nigeria's polarized politics: for some, a bridge for national cohesion; for others, a reminder of unresolved regional grievances (Sulaiman, 2024). These debates underscore music's enduring role in shaping perceptions of loyalty in a multi-ethnic democracy.

Broader Implications for Nigerian Political Music

The release of “Continuity Tinubu” by Dauda Kahutu Rarara highlights the persistent and transformative influence of music in Nigerian politics, where songs serve as instruments for endorsement, resistance, and ideological shaping in a diverse democracy. From Fela Kuti's Afrobeat protests against authoritarianism to contemporary praise-singing in Hausa traditions, political music has historically mobilized publics, critiqued power, and reinforced alliances (Waterman, 1990; Osiebe, 2021). Rarara's work exemplifies how Hausa waka and praise-singing (roko) adapt to modern campaigns, constructing narratives of gratitude and continuity while navigating ethnic dynamics (Furniss, 1996; Abdulwaheed & Maikanti, 2025). This genre's rhetorical strategies: repetition, code-switching, and ideological polarization enhance political

literacy and sway voter preferences, especially among youth with loose affiliations (Sulaiman, 2024; Ezeugwu & Sylvanus, 2024).

Broader implications include music's role in amplifying or bridging regional divides: pro-establishment tracks like Rarara's may foster perceived North-South unity but risk deepening grievances amid economic reforms (Adedeji, 2015). In the digital era, viral dissemination accelerates mobilization yet invites counter-discourses, as seen in protest songs during movements like EndSARS (Ihejirika, 2023; Gago, 2024;).

Furthermore, such music reflects patronage systems, where artists gain visibility through elite alignment, raising questions about authenticity versus opportunism (Omojola, 2019). Ultimately, "Continuity Tinubu" exemplifies music's dual role in Nigerian politics: it can empower democratic engagement by amplifying grassroots voices and fostering debate, or entrench power asymmetries through elite patronage and ideological framing, thus requiring ongoing critical analysis to ensure more inclusive and equitable political discourse.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Dauda Kahutu Rarara's "Continuity Tinubu" represents a significant intervention in Nigeria's contemporary political soundscape, illustrating the enduring potency of music as a medium for ideological persuasion and electoral mobilization. Through its repetitive praise motifs and strategic deployment of Hausa waka traditions, the song seeks to cultivate narratives of gratitude, continuity, and cross-regional solidarity amid President Bola Tinubu's transformative yet contentious. While it has resonated with segments of the Northern populace and APC loyalists as an affirmation of political alliance, its polarized reception marked by viral acclaim on one hand and vehement criticism on the other reveals deeper fissures in regional loyalty, exacerbated by socioeconomic hardships and perceptions of elite opportunism. Ultimately, this case underscores the dual-edged nature of political music in Nigeria: it can foster national cohesion and democratic participation, yet simultaneously risk entrenching power asymmetries and suppress dissenting voices when aligned with incumbent interests. As digital platforms amplify such cultural artifacts, their influence on voter ideology and inter-ethnic relations warrants sustained scholarly attention. Future research should explore longitudinal effects on electoral behavior and comparative analyses across Nigeria's diverse linguistic groups to better understand music's role in shaping democratic discourse in multi-ethnic societies.

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The Unbroken Candle: Ngugi wa Thiong'o's Journey from Detention to Global Icon

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Abstract

This research aims to critically analyze the pivotal metamorphosis of Ngugi wa Thiong'o from a detained dissident into a global icon. Its specific objectives are to: examine the catalytic role of his 1977-78 Kamiti detention in solidifying his ideological rupture; analyze the strategic construction of his global iconography during exile; argue for the intellectual coherence of his pre- and post-detention output; and probe the tensions between his radical message and his institutional acceptance within the Western academy. The study employs a multi-methodological framework grounded in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This involves a comparative textual analysis of Ngugi's oeuvre across three phases, a historical-contextual reconstruction of Kenyan politics and global solidarity networks, and a reception study mapping his canonization through academic curricula, prizes, and institutional appointments. Theoretical lenses from postcolonial studies and the sociology of intellectuals guide the interpretation. The analysis reveals that Kamiti Prison was a generative crucible, transforming personal trauma into the decolonial theory of *Decolonising the Mind*. His exile facilitated the global dissemination and institutional branding of this radical core, creating the paradoxical icon celebrated today. Contrary to readings of disconnected phases, his work demonstrates profound thematic and aesthetic coherence as a single, evolving liberation project. His contemporary status is defined by a productive tension where he strategically leverages institutional platforms to advance his critique, even as those platforms risk commodifying his radical politics. Ngugi's metamorphosis is a contested making, not an inevitable rise. His iconicity lies in maintaining an unresolved dialectic between radical critique and global acclaim. The study concludes that faithful engagement with his legacy requires a refusal of comfortable hagiography. It recommends that scholars prioritize his Gikuyu texts, that institutions aligning with his work materially support African languages, and that public understanding embrace the instructive paradox of his position as a strategic insurgent within the very systems he challenges.

Keywords: Decolonization, Detention, Language, Resistance, Global Iconicity

Introduction

This paper aims to perform a critical analysis of the pivotal metamorphosis of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o from a state-detained dissident to a global literary and intellectual icon. Moving beyond a simple biographical timeline, the study seeks to interrogate the complex interplay of personal resolve, theoretical evolution, and historical context that enabled this transformation. The specific objectives are to: examine the catalytic role of Ngũgĩ's 1977 detention at Kamiti Maximum Security Prison in solidifying his ideological and literary rupture with colonial linguistic and narrative traditions. This involves analyzing how the experience of state silencing became a generative site for his seminal theoretical work, *Decolonising the Mind*, and his radical turn to writing in Gikuyu. As Ngugi himself frames it, prison was where he realized that "the bullet was the means of the physical subjugation. Language was the means of the spiritual subjugation" (Ngugi, *Decolonising* 9). The study will trace how this period transformed him from a critic of the post-colonial state into a systematic theorist of cultural decolonization in the following order:

Analyze the strategic construction of a global iconography around Ngugi's person and work during his exile (1982-2002), focusing on the mechanisms of transnational solidarity and academic canonization. This objective investigates how his plight and ideas were disseminated and embraced by international human rights organizations, academic institutions, and literary circles in Europe and America. It will assess how texts like *Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary* and *Moving the Centre* were mobilized to build his profile as a symbol of intellectual resistance, examining what Gikandi calls "the paradox of his local insistence and global celebrity" (Gikandi 127).

Evaluate the intellectual and aesthetic coherence between Ngugi's pre-detention, carceral, and post-exile output, arguing for a consistent, evolving project rather than a series of disconnected phases. The study will map the theoretical through-line from his early novels and the play *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* (co-written with Micere Githae Mugo) through his prison-born novel *Caitani Mutharaba-Ini* (Devil on the Cross) and his later epic, *Murogi wa Kagogo* (Wizard of the Crow). The objective is to demonstrate how his advocacy for linguistic liberation and a "rediscovered and revalued relationship between myself and my language" (Ngugi, *Decolonising* 6) forms the core of his unbroken intellectual trajectory.

Critically assess Ngugi's contemporary status as a global icon, probing the tensions between his radical, anti-imperialist message and his institutional acceptance within the Western academy. This final objective will explore the potential contradictions in his canonization. It will question how his forceful critique of cultural imperialism, which posits that "the oppressed and the exploited of the earth maintain their defiance: liberty from theft" (Ngugi, *Wizard* 768), is reconciled with his presence as a celebrated figure in global literary and cultural studies, drawing on critiques from scholars like Achille Mbembe on the "commodification of resistance."

By fulfilling these objectives, the chapter will provide a nuanced, intertextual understanding of Ngugi's journey, framing it not as a simple triumph narrative but as a complex case study in the making of a global intellectual from the crucible of state repression.

The Crucible of Silence: Kamiti Prison and the Forging of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's Decolonial Project

The trajectory of Ngugi wa Thiong'o from a celebrated English-language novelist to a global icon of linguistic decolonization is punctuated by a definitive, brutal event: his detention without trial at Kamiti Maximum Security Prison from December 1977 to December 1978. While his critique of Kenya's neocolonial elite was already evident in works like *Petals of Blood*, it was within Kamiti's walls that dissent crystallized into a comprehensive ideological and literary rupture. The prison, intended as an instrument of state silencing, functioned paradoxically as a generative epistemic site; a crucible where Ngugi's theory and practice fused, forcing a radical break from colonial linguistic and narrative traditions and birthing his seminal manifesto, *Decolonising the Mind*. This essay argues that Kamiti detention was the catalytic trauma that transformed Ngugi from a critical observer into a systematic theorist, fundamentally reorienting his work towards the recuperation of Gikuyu as the foundational medium for cultural and political liberation.

Kamiti's primary function was to physically and psychologically nullify a dissident voice. Yet, in imposing a regime of silence and isolation, the state unwittingly created the conditions for profound intellectual synthesis. Stripped of his public platform, Ngugi turned inward, embarking on a rigorous interrogation of the very tools of his craft. The prison became a laboratory for understanding the mechanics of power beyond the obvious violence of the cell. His pivotal revelation, as later articulated in *Decolonising the Mind*, was that colonial dominance operated on a dual register: "the bullet was the means of the physical subjugation. language was the means of the spiritual subjugation" (9). This epiphany marked a critical evolution from his pre-detention focus. Where *Petals of Blood* critiqued economic betrayal, Kamiti forced him to trace that betrayal to its cultural and psychological roots. The enforced solitude allowed him to connect the immediate political repression he was suffering to the broader, historical violence inflicted by the colonial "cultural bomb," which he defines as the process that "annihilate(s) a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment" (3). Thus, the prison experience did not introduce new concerns but provided the violent clarity necessary to systematize them into a coherent theory of cultural imperialism, where language is the central battlefield.

This theoretical awakening found its most potent and symbolic expression not in a treatise written in English, but in a creative act of material and linguistic defiance: the composition of *Caitani Mutharaba-Ini* (Devil on the Cross) on prison-issued toilet paper. This decision was far more than a practical adaptation to scarcity; it was a performative rupture with the entire colonial literary tradition. Writing in Gikuyu on this most marginal of materials constituted a deliberate rejection of the sanctioned tools of the "civilized" writer; the English language and bound books. It embodied a literal *writing back* from the abject margins of the state's control system. The novel itself, an allegorical satire of a Kenyan "Devil's Feast" where the comprador elite auction the nation, is inextricably linked to its medium. Its form; a *gicaandi* (a Gikuyu poetic genre) narrative and its language enacted the very cultural autonomy its plot advocated. As he later stated, this was part of a conscious "quest for relevance" that required a return to the "fount" of his native tongue (*Moving the Centre* 87). The toilet paper manuscript thus stands as a tangible artefact of this rupture, proving that the generative power of his culture could flourish

even in the space designed for its annihilation.

Consequently, Kamiti engineered a fundamental shift in Ngugi's intellectual identity. The pre-detention Ngugi, despite his radical politics, largely worked within the inherited form of the European novel, using the master's tools to critique the master's house. Post-Kamiti, he emerged as a theorist determined to dismantle that house and build anew from indigenous materials. The detention provided the existential break that allowed him to see the English language not as a neutral tool but as a constitutive part of the colonial superstructure, carrying what he called "a colonial baggage" of aesthetic and epistemic assumptions (*Decolonising* 87). His subsequent work, from the essays in *Decolonising the Mind* to the epic *Murogi wa Kagogo* (Wizard of the Crow), constitutes a unified project aimed at what he terms "a total liberation of the entire continent" from mental and material bondage (108). This systematic vision; linking the politics of language to education, theatre, and economic justice; is the direct legacy of the Kamiti synthesis. The prison, therefore, did not silence a writer; it forged a philosopher of decolonization whose global iconicity is rooted in this very act of radical, principled rupture.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o's detention at Kamiti Maximum Security Prison was the indispensable catalyst for his definitive break from colonial traditions. By transforming a site of intended silencing into a space of revolutionary intellectual production, Ngugi inverted the logic of his oppressors. The twin births of the theoretical framework in *Decolonising the Mind* and the practical exemplar in *Caitani Mutharaba-Ini* on toilet paper represent the dual offspring of this catalytic period. They mark the moment his critique transcended the specific failures of the Kenyan post-colony to engage with the global systems of psychic colonization. Thus, Kamiti stands not as a footnote in his biography, but as the constitutive event that solidified his ideological stance and determined the future trajectory of his work, making him not just a writer who was imprisoned, but a writer fundamentally remade; and radicalized by the prison itself.

Manufactured Icon or Authentic Emblem? The Transnational Making of Ngugi wa Thiong'o in Exile (1982-2002)

Ngugi wa Thiong'o's forced exile from Kenya in 1982, following the suppression of his Gikuyu-language theatre and the threat of re-detention, marked the beginning of a complex second act. No longer simply a national dissident, he entered a global arena where his person and politics were reframed through the mechanisms of Western academia and transnational solidarity networks. The period from 1982 to his return in 2002 witnessed the strategic construction of Ngugi as a global icon; a process not of his singular authorship, but of a confluence of forces that translated his radical, local insistence into a language of universal intellectual resistance. This essay argues that Ngugi's global iconography was forged through a dual process: his own deliberate intellectual production in exile, which provided the coherent text of resistance, and the Western academy's canonizing machinery, which often commodified that text, creating a paradoxical figure who critiqued cultural imperialism from within its prestigious institutions.

The foundational text for Ngugi's global iconicity is undoubtedly *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (1986). Published from exile, this polemical farewell to English as a creative medium served as both manifesto and brand. It provided a clear,

transferrable thesis for Western academic consumption: the argument that “language was the means of the spiritual subjugation” of colonized peoples (9). This powerful soundbite, alongside his personal narrative of detention, offered a compelling package. His earlier prison memoir, *Detained: A Writer’s Prison Diary* (1981), had already cast him in the mold of the archetypal dissident intellectual, a figure with deep resonance in Western liberal humanist circles. In exile, Ngũgĩ actively extended this project, producing works like *Moving the Centre* (1993), which argued for the linguistic and cultural decentralization of the world. These texts constructed a consistent, portable persona: the theorist-practitioner of decolonization. As Simon Gikandi notes, this created “the paradox of his local insistence and global celebrity,” where his “attack on the institutions that valorize him” became central to his appeal (127). His iconography was thus built on a perceived authenticity; the intellectual who lived his theory, even at great personal cost.

This carefully articulated stance was eagerly received and amplified by powerful transnational networks. Western universities, particularly in the United States and Britain, played a crucial role in institutionalizing his iconicity. Appointments at prestigious institutions like Yale, New York University, and eventually the University of California, Irvine, did more than offer sanctuary; they conferred legitimacy and provided a global platform. His ideas became central to the burgeoning fields of postcolonial studies, cultural studies, and diaspora studies. The academy performed a canonizing function, elevating his works to required reading, a process that, as scholar James Ogude observes, can “domesticate radical politics by turning them into objects of academic analysis” (45). Furthermore, international human rights organizations and literary advocacy groups, such as PEN International, framed his story within a universal narrative of the writer confronting state tyranny. This framing, while vital for his safety and reach, inevitably abstracted his specific critique of the *post-colonial* Kenyan state into a more generalized and for Western audiences, more palatable; story of political dissent.

However, this process of canonization was not without its profound ironies and tensions. Ngũgĩ’s iconic status became fraught with the very contradictions he theorized. He became a celebrated fixture on the international lecture circuit, speaking against cultural imperialism from within some of its most hallowed halls. His radical call to abandon English was debated and celebrated overwhelmingly *in English*, within the very epistemological frameworks he sought to dismantle. This points to what Achille Mbembe might critique as a form of “commodification of resistance,” where radical alterity is absorbed and displayed by the system it opposes (Mbembe 104). The global icon “Ngugi” risked becoming a symbolic vessel, his specific political demands softened into a broader metaphor for struggle. His material, grounded fight for Gikuyu was sometimes lost in the theoretical celebration of “linguistic heterogeneity.” Yet, to view this solely as co-option is reductive. Ngũgĩ demonstrated agency within this paradox, using his institutional perch to fund and promote the actual publication and study of African languages, turning the resources of the center towards the project of moving it.

The global iconography of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o was strategically constructed during his exile through a dynamic interplay between his own unwavering intellectual production and the assimilative, canonizing machinery of the transnational academy and solidarity networks. While this process ensured his survival, amplified his message, and solidified his stature as a thinker of global significance, it also created an enduring tension. The icon that emerged is a complex

composite: both an authentic emblem of decolonial resistance and a curated subject of Western academic discourse. His exile, therefore, was not merely a period of displacement but a productive phase of image-making, where the “writer in politics” was recast as the “politician in global culture.” The true measure of his iconicity lies not in its flawless consistency, but in its power to sustain this critical tension, forcing the very institutions that celebrate him to continually confront the uncomfortable, revolutionary core of his work.

The Unbroken Thread: Intellectual and Aesthetic Coherence in the Work of Ngugi wa Thiong’o

A superficial reading of Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s prolific career might suggest a series of dramatic, disconnected phases: the early realist novelist writing in English, the radical prisoner penning allegory in Gikuyu on toilet paper, and the post-exile theorist producing epic satire from American universities. Such a view, however, obscures the profound intellectual and aesthetic coherence that unites his oeuvre. While his detention (1977-78) and exile (1982-2002) were undeniably catalytic, intensifying and redirecting his focus, they did not constitute a rupture with his foundational concerns. Rather, Ngugi’s career represents a single, evolving project: a sustained critique of imperial and neocolonial power structures and a relentless quest for a liberated African consciousness, expressed through an aesthetic that progressively seeks to embody that liberation in its very form and language.

Ngugi’s pre-detention work, culminating in the novel *Petals of Blood* (1977), establishes the core political and economic critique that would define his life’s work. This period is not one of ideological neutrality but of building a materialist analysis. *Petals of Blood* is a sweeping indictment of the post-colonial Kenyan “comprador” elite, whose betrayal of the independence struggle reduces the populace to new forms of exploitation. The novel meticulously traces the links between international capital, political corruption, and cultural alienation. As the character Karega concludes, the struggle is against “the alliance of foreign capital and its domestic watchmen” (Ngugi, *Petals* 344). This focus on economic injustice and class betrayal provides the essential substrate for his later, more culturally focused theories. The aesthetic here is largely social realism, a mode chosen for its capacity to diagnose societal ills. Yet, even within this English-language framework, there is a burgeoning awareness of cultural displacement, hinted at through the characters’ fraught relationship with their past and traditions. The phase is not a pre-political beginning but the essential groundwork, asking *what* is wrong before the later work would deeply interrogate *why* it is wrong and *how* to heal it.

The carceral period, far from being a disconnected hiatus, acted as a pressure cooker that distilled and radicalized these pre-existing concerns, forging a direct link between political economy and cultural identity. In the silence of Kamiti Prison, the “what” of *Petals of Blood* crystallized into the “why” of *Decolonising the Mind*. His seminal epiphany; that “the bullet was the means of the physical subjugation. Language was the means of the spiritual subjugation” (Ngugi, *Decolonising* 9) did not introduce a new enemy but identified a deeper, previously theorized mechanism of the same oppressive alliance. His decision to write *Caitani Mũtharaba-Inĩ* (Devil on the Cross) in Gikuyu was the logical, radical extension of this insight into aesthetic practice. The novel itself is a direct allegorical successor to *Petals of Blood*; where

the latter realistically depicts the “Devil’s Feast” of neo-colonialism, the former literalizes it in a grotesque satirical fantasy. The aesthetic shifts from realism to allegory and satire, not as a break, but as a formally appropriate response to the heightened, absurd reality of state repression and his newly clarified cultural mission. The coherence is thematic and intensifying: the critique of the elite continues, but is now understood as a symptom of a deeper cultural schism.

The post-exile output demonstrates the maturation and systematization of this unified project, not its abandonment. The monumental novel *Murogi wa Kagogo* (Wizard of the Crow) (2004), written in Gikuyu and translated by the author, is the magnum opus that synthesizes all prior phases. It encompasses the detailed social critique of *Petals of Blood*, the allegorical and satirical modes of *Devil on the Cross*, and the linguistic commitment championed in *Decolonising the Mind*. The novel’s target; the grotesque, globalized dictatorship of the Ruler and the “Global Bank” is the fullest fictional exploration of the “alliance” he first named in the 1970s. Its aesthetic is a masterful hybrid, blending magical realism, biblical parody, and folk tale, creating what critic Simon Gikandi calls a “consciously post-realist narrative” that mirrors the fragmented, surreal nature of contemporary power (Gikandi 214). Simultaneously, his theoretical works in exile, like *Penpoints, Gunpoints, and Dreams* (1998), further elaborate the role of the artist in this struggle, framing it as a “war of images and dreams” (Ngugi 37). This is not a new war, but the same one he has always fought, now understood with greater philosophical depth and expressive range. The exile provided the distance to see the system as global, and his aesthetic evolved accordingly to match its scale and complexity.

Viewing Ngugi’s career as a sequence of disconnected phases misreads the profound continuity at its heart. His work forms a coherent, escalating project of decolonization, each stage building upon the last. The pre-detention period establishes the materialist and historical critique; the carceral experience radicalizes it by identifying culture and language as the central battlegrounds, prompting an aesthetic rupture that is itself a political act; the post-exile period synthesizes and globalizes these insights into epic theoretical and fictional forms. From the realist landscapes of Ilmorog to the fantastical throes of Aburiria, and from the English prose of his early novels to the Gikuyu richness of his later ones, Ngugi has been engaged in a single, monumental task: diagnosing and resisting the multi-faceted beast of oppression. His evolution is not a series of turns but a relentless deepening, an unbroken thread of resistance woven through varying contexts, each demanding and producing its own potent aesthetic expression.

The Icon in the Temple: Ngugi wa Thiong’o and the Paradox of Radical Canonization

Ngugi wa Thiong’o stands today as a preeminent global intellectual icon, a status affirmed by prestigious academic posts, a cascade of international literary prizes, and his ubiquitous presence on university syllabi worldwide. This institutional embrace, however, exists in a state of profound and productive tension with the core tenets of his life’s work: a radical, anti-imperialist critique that explicitly targets the very cultural and epistemological foundations of the Western academy that now celebrates him. Ngugi’s contemporary stature thus presents a critical paradox; the quintessential “writer in politics” has become a tenured professor in the heart of the empire he dissects. This essay argues that Ngugi’s global iconicity is not a simple triumph narrative but a complex dialectic, where his institutional acceptance risks domesticating his revolutionary

message, even as he strategically leverages that same platform to advance his decolonial project.

The foundation of this tension lies in Ngugi's own seminal thesis, articulated from exile in *Decolonising the Mind* (1986). His central argument is that cultural imperialism, executed through the imposition of colonial languages, effects a "spiritual subjugation" more lasting and insidious than physical conquest (9). He lambasts the "cultural bomb" that annihilates a people's belief in their own linguistic heritage, and he implicates Western education as a primary detonator (3). The academy, in this view, is not a neutral temple of knowledge but an archive of Eurocentric epistemic power. It is therefore deeply ironic that his canonization; his transformation into a "subject" of postcolonial studies, his works analyzed in English literature departments, his theories debated in academic conferences using the very language he renounced mirrors the process of absorption he critiques. As critic Revathi Krishnaswamy observes, the risk is that "radical opposition is transmuted into a discursive commodity" within the multicultural marketplace of the Western university (Krishnaswamy 128). The institutional machinery that confers his icon status can simultaneously sanitize his politics, turning a call to dismantle systems into an object for scholarly contemplation.

Ngugi himself is acutely aware of this paradox. His career in the American academy; from Yale to NYU to his distinguished professorship at the University of California, Irvine has been marked not by quiet assimilation but by a persistent effort to weaponize his position. He has used his institutional security and resources to fund projects that materially support his philosophy, most notably the establishment of the International Centre for Writing and Translation at Irvine, which explicitly champions marginalized languages. In his lectures and later works, he continues to issue uncomfortable challenges from within the citadel. In *Something Torn and New* (2009), he extends his critique to the very structure of knowledge, calling for a "re-membering" of fragmented African cultures and warning against the "cultural lynching" perpetuated by Eurocentric thought (5). This suggests a strategic engagement where the icon uses his platform to keep the radical message alive and funded. However, this practice generates its own contradictions. His powerful advocacy for linguistic decolonization is performed almost exclusively on a global stage where English remains the *lingua franca*. His critique of the "global intellectual empire," as he terms it, is delivered from some of its most prestigious endowed chairs (Ngugi, *Globalectics* 10).

This dynamic creates a fraught relationship between the icon and his audience. For many in the West, Ngugi's symbolic power may reside more in his biography; the imprisoned dissident, the brave exile than in the disruptive practical implications of his theory. Celebrating his call to abandon English is easier than actually dismantling the Anglophone hegemony of one's own department or journal. His institutional acceptance can thus facilitate a form of what philosopher Achille Mbembe might call "guilty admiration," where the academy acknowledges its historical sins through the veneration of a critic, thereby achieving a symbolic absolution without enacting the structural changes his work demands (Mbembe 104). The danger is that the radical nature of his project is softened into a liberal pluralism; a celebration of "diversity" that can accommodate a Gikuyu novel as a fascinating artefact without fundamentally challenging the English-language framework that contains it.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o's status as a global icon exists in a state of deliberate and unresolved tension. He is neither a co-opted figure nor an unblemished rebel outside the gates. Instead, his position embodies the central dilemma of radical postcolonial critique in a globalized intellectual economy. The Western academy, by canonizing him, seeks to demonstrate its inclusivity and capacity for self-critique. Ngugi, by accepting this canonization on his own terms, gains a powerful platform to persistently interrogate the foundations of the institution that hosts him. His iconicity, therefore, is not a static achievement but an ongoing negotiation; a living critique of the very systems that confer prestige upon him. The true power of his global stature lies in its uncomfortable, instructive paradox: the most potent testimony to his enduring radicalism may be the fact that his revolutionary message remains profoundly disruptive, even from within the hallowed halls that have officially enshrined him as an icon.

Methodology

This study employs a multi-layered methodological framework designed to interrogate the complex and non-linear process of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's metamorphosis from a detained dissident to a global icon. Moving beyond a conventional literary biography, the research is grounded in a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach, informed by postcolonial theory and the sociology of intellectuals, to analyze the interplay between textual production, historical context, and institutional power. The methodology is structured across four interconnected strands:

Archival and Textual Analysis:

The primary evidence for this study is drawn from a close, comparative reading of Ngugi's oeuvre across three defined periods: pre-detention (e.g., *Petals of Blood*, 1977), carceral (e.g., *Devil on the Cross (Caitani Mutharaba-Ini)*, 1980, and *Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary*, 1981), and post-exile (e.g., *Wizard of the Crow (Mũrogi wa Kagogo)*, 2004, and theoretical works like *Decolonising the Mind*, 1986). This analysis will not treat texts in isolation but will trace the evolution of key conceptual metaphors (e.g., the "cultural bomb," "spiritual subjugation"), narrative strategies (from realism to allegory and satire), and political arguments. Special attention will be paid to paratextual materials; prefaces, interviews, author's notes where Ngugi directly reflects on his own intellectual journey and public persona.

Historical-Contextual Reconstruction:

This strand situates Ngugi's personal narrative within the broader political history of Kenya (the decay of Kenyatta's and rise of Moi's authoritarianism) and the global currents of the Cold War and the rise of postcolonial studies. It involves examining state documents (where available), historical accounts of the 1977 Kamiti detention and the 1982 exile, and the records of transnational solidarity movements (e.g., Amnesty International, PEN International reports). This contextual layer is crucial for understanding the material pressures and political catalysts that shaped each phase of his metamorphosis.

Reception Study and Institutional Mapping:

To analyze the “construction” of the global icon, this study investigates the mechanisms of Ngũgĩ’s reception and canonization. This involves:

Academic Canonization: Tracking the inclusion and framing of his works in university syllabi, scholarly journals, and critical anthologies, particularly in Western institutions from the 1980s onward. Citation analysis and reviews in major publications (e.g., *The New York Review of Books*, *The Times Literary Supplement*) will be examined.

Institutional Affiliations: Mapping his appointments at universities (Yale, NYU, UC Irvine) and analyzing the public discourse surrounding these appointments; how he was introduced, praised, and framed by these institutions.

Prize Culture: Analyzing the discourse of award citations (e.g., the 2001 Nonino International Prize, the 2016 Park Kyong-ni Prize) to understand how global literary institutions articulate the value and symbolism of his work.

Critical Theory and Conceptual Framework:

The interpretation of the gathered data will be guided by a synthesis of theoretical lenses:

Postcolonial Theory, particularly the work on hybridity, mimicry, and the critique of Eurocentrism (Said, Bhabha, Spivak), will frame the analysis of his linguistic turn and anti-imperialist critique.

The **Sociology of Intellectuals** (drawing on Bourdieu’s concepts of ‘cultural capital’ and ‘field’) will be used to analyze Ngũgĩ’s navigation of the ‘field’ of global academia and literary prestige.

Theories of Iconicity and Celebrity Culture will help probe the paradoxes of his status, examining how his radical message is mediated, commodified, or sustained by his public image

Findings

This paper’s multi-methodological investigation reveals that Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s metamorphosis from detained dissident to global icon is not a linear success story but a complex dialectic of radical self-fashioning, institutional appropriation, and strategic negotiation. The findings are organized according to the catalytic phases of his journey and the paradoxical nature of his contemporary stature.

1. Kamiti Prison as the Constitutive Crucible

The analysis confirms that the 1977-78 detention was the definitive, transformative event that catalyzed a theoretical and aesthetic rupture. Pre-detention works like *Petals of Blood* established a materialist critique of the neocolonial elite, but Kamiti provided the epistemic space to diagnose the deeper malady. As Ngugi writes, it was here he realized “the bullet was the means of the physical subjugation. Language was the means of the spiritual

subjugation” (*Decolonising the Mind* 9). This epiphany did not introduce a new concern but radicalized an existing one, shifting his focus from *what* was wrong to the foundational *why*.

The material act of writing *Caitani Mutharaba-Ini* (Devil on the Cross) on toilet paper was found to be the performative core of this rupture. It was not merely adaptation but a symbolic rejection of the tools of colonial literature; the English language and sanctioned materials and an embodiment of writing from the margins. The novel’s allegorical satire directly extends the critique of *Petals of Blood*, demonstrating thematic coherence through aesthetic transformation.

2. Exile and the Strategic Construction of Iconicity

The period of exile (1982-2002) was characterized by the systematic articulation of a portable intellectual brand and its reception by global networks.

Self-Fashioning: Ngugi’s exile publications, particularly *Decolonising the Mind* (1986) and *Moving the Centre* (1993), packaged his Kamiti-born theories into a coherent, transferrable manifesto for Western academic and activist audiences. He consciously framed himself as a theorist-practitioner of decolonization.

Institutional Canonization: Western academia played a central role in elevating his status. Prestigious appointments (Yale, NYU, UC Irvine) provided legitimacy and a global platform, embedding his work in the canon of postcolonial studies. Simultaneously, human rights organizations (Amnesty International, PEN) framed his story within a universal narrative of the persecuted writer, abstracting his specific critique of the Kenyan state into a broader symbol of dissent.

The Emergence of Paradox: This process created the central paradox Simon Gikandi identifies: “the paradox of his local insistence and global celebrity” (*Ngugi wa Thiong’o* 127). His iconography became built on an attack on the very institutions that valorized him.

3. Coherence in Evolution: An Unbroken Project

Contrary to readings of disconnected phases, a comparative textual analysis reveals profound intellectual and aesthetic coherence. His career constitutes a single, evolving project of liberation.

Thematic Continuity: The critique of the alliance between global capital and a comprador elite, first detailed in *Petals of Blood*, remains the target in the exile epic *Murogi wa Kagogo* (Wizard of the Crow). The enemy remains consistent; the analysis simply deepens and globalizes.

Aesthetic Evolution: The shift from social realism to allegory, satire, and magical realism is not a break but a formal escalation matching the intensifying absurdity of power he critiques. Each aesthetic mode is strategically deployed to serve the consistent political project.

4. The Icon in the Temple: Enduring Tensions of Canonization

Ngugi’s contemporary status is defined by a productive yet fraught tension between radical

message and institutional acceptance.

5. Risk of Commodification: His canonization within the Western academy risks transmuting his radical call to dismantle epistemic systems into a discursive commodity for scholarly consumption, a form of what Revathi Krishnaswamy terms the domestication of oppositional politics.

Strategic Leverage: However, findings show Ngugi has actively leveraged his institutional security to advance his project materially; most notably through founding the International Centre for Writing and Translation at UC Irvine, which channels institutional resources toward marginalized languages.

The Central Paradox Sustained: Thus, the icon operates within a critical bind. His powerful advocacy for abandoning linguistic imperialism is delivered in English from endowed chairs at elite universities. This positions him not as a co-opted figure but as a strategic insurgent within the citadel, using his platform to persistently interrogate its foundations. His enduring radicalism is evidenced by the fact that his message remains disruptive even from within the halls that celebrate him.

Conclusion and Findings

Ngugi wa Thiong'o's metamorphosis was not an inevitable rise but a contested making. Kamiti Prison forged the radical core of his decolonial theory and practice. Exile facilitated the global dissemination and institutional branding of that core, a process that created the paradoxical icon celebrated today. The "unbroken candle" is thus a dual symbol: of an unwavering radical flame lit in a prison cell, and of the complex, sometimes distorting, global spotlight that now illuminates it. His iconicity lies precisely in maintaining the uncomfortable, critical heat between these two points.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, which reveal Ngugi wa Thiong'o's metamorphosis as a complex interplay of radical self-fashioning, institutional appropriation, and strategic negotiation, the following recommendations are proposed for scholars, cultural institutions, and readers engaging with his legacy and the broader field of postcolonial iconography:

For Scholarly Engagement: Move Beyond the Symbol to the Praxis.

Scholarship must consciously work against the domestication of Ngugi's radical project. This requires:

Prioritizing the Gikuyu Text: Critical studies should, where possible, engage directly with the original Gikuyu texts (e.g., *Caitani Mutharaba-Ini*, *Murogi wa Kagogo*) rather than relying solely on English translations. Research should analyze how his theories of decolonization are enacted *aesthetically and linguistically* within these works, not just

argued in his English-language polemics.

Contextualizing the Icon: Academic courses and analyses must rigorously situate his work within the specific history of Kenyan authoritarian politics and the material conditions of his detention and exile. This counters the abstraction of his dissent into a universal metaphor and restores its concrete political stakes.

Interrogate the Institutional Frame: Future research should explicitly investigate the economics and politics of his canonization. This includes studying the role of publishers, prize committees, and university hiring committees in shaping his global profile, applying a critical lens to the very systems that have enabled his visibility.

For Cultural and Educational Institutions: Embody the Decolonial Challenge. Institutions that celebrate Ngugi must be urged to align their practices with the principles he advocates:

Language Policy Reform: Universities, especially those where he has held positions, should move beyond offering courses on his work and actively support the institutional teaching and research of African languages, including Gikuyu. This means funding language programs, supporting publications in indigenous languages, and valuing such scholarship in tenure and promotion cases.

Reframe Public Engagement: When hosting figures like Ngugi, institutions should design events that foreground the uncomfortable questions his work poses. This involves pairing readings with forums on institutional racism, linguistic hegemony in academia, and the politics of knowledge production, rather than hosting celebratory events that risk mere hagiography.

Resource Redirection: Foundations and literary prizes that honour him should consider dedicating a portion of award funds or creating parallel grants specifically earmarked for the publication and translation of works in African languages, thereby materializing their support for his core philosophy.

For a Nuanced Public Understanding: Embrace the Paradox.

Readers, students, and the broader public should be encouraged to engage with the full complexity of his legacy:

Teach the Contradiction: Educational materials should present his status not as a simple triumph but as a central case study in the paradox of global intellectual dissent. Understanding the tension between his radical anti-imperialism and his Western institutional acceptance is key to a mature appreciation of his work and its contemporary relevance.

Promote Critical Literacy: Public literary discourse should move beyond summarizing

his arguments for linguistic decolonization to critically examining how those arguments are received, commodified, or diluted in a global market. This fosters a more discerning engagement with all “iconic” political artists.

Connect to Contemporary Movements: Ngugi’s journey should be actively linked to ongoing decolonial struggles in education, museum curation, and language revitalization projects globally. This frames him not as a historical figure but as a living interlocutor in current debates, ensuring his work remains a tool for analysis and action, not merely an object of admiration.

In essence, the ultimate recommendation arising from “The Unbroken Candle” is to refuse a comfortable iconography. The most faithful way to honour Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s metamorphosis is to perpetuate its critical energy; to use his institutional platform to challenge those very institutions, to leverage his symbolic capital to fund marginalized voices, and to treat his complex position not as a contradiction to be resolved, but as a vital lens through which to examine the enduring struggles between power, resistance, and the making of global meaning.

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Performing Patriarchy: Symbolic And Material Dimensions Of Female Commodification In Efua T. Sutherland’S *The Marriage Of Anansewa*

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Abstract

This study explores Efua T. Sutherland’s *The Marriage of Anansewa* stages and reinforces patriarchal power through symbolic and material performances of female commodification, using Radical Feminist Literary Theory as its interpretative framework. The analysis argues that the play represent patriarchy not merely as individual male dominance but as a systematic structure enacted through cultural rituals, economic transactions and parental authority. By examining Ananse’s orchestrated marriage negotiations, the paper reveals how female identity becomes a site of patriarchal performance in which the daughter is transformed into an object of exchange, valued for her economic utility rather than her agency. The study highlights both the symbolic dimensions – such as cultural expectations, ritualized displays and gendered scripts – and the material dimensions including bridewealth, financial motivations and the commodification of the female body. Through the lens of radical feminism, the paper contends that Efua T. Sutherland’s play exposes deeply entrenched patriarchal mechanisms that normalize the reduction of woman to property within social, familial and economic spheres. Ultimately, the research demonstrates that *The Marriage of Anansewa* critiques the pervasive and performative nature of patriarchal control while calling attention to the enduring implications of these gendered power structures in African societies.

Keywords: Patriarchy, Commodification, Culture, Property, Control

Introduction

In many African societies, marriage is not simply a union of individuals but a transactional institution embedded in cultural, economic and patriarchal systems. Practices such as bridewealth or bride-price often constrain women’s autonomy by embedding female identity into a framework of economic exchange. As Akurugu, Benjamin T., et al (2022: 3) observe, “the marriage payment (bridewealth) frequently “sculpt(s) women’s identities and their social positioning in patrilineal and patriarchal societies. This transforms a women’s social status from daughter to wife, a shift that often diminishes her agency within the marital home.

Efua T. Sutherland dramatizes this dynamics in *The Marriage of Anansewa*, transforming traditional Akan folklore into a criticism of patriarchy, economic desperation and the commodification of female bodies. Ernest Mensah and Biney Eradzi (2021: 6) note in the play, “the female body assumes an exchange value status”. When economic or social wealth is absent. The father, Ananse, treats his daughter not as an autonomous individual but as an asset to be negotiated through marriage. Similarly, a study analyzing African cultural practices observes that,

“women in most African cultures are seen as commodities, where they are being given out in marriage against their will” (Chikwuye Okonjo Ogunyemi 2018:6).

In *The Marriage of Anansewa*, female commodification demonstrate in two interrelated dimensions. First, symbolic commodification is evident in the cultural rituals, traditional expectations and gendered performances that assign women a social value defined by their exchange-worth. Second, material commodification is illustrated through economic transactions – bride-price negotiations, gifts and material exchanges- that concretize the female body as property. A study on bride-price among the Mambwe people in Zambia notes that “men dominated women ... with decision making in marriage”, highlighting how material practices reinforce male authority.

By analyzing Efua T. Sutherland’s narrative, character dynamics and dramatic devices, this paper demonstrates how the play exposes systemic and performative patriarchy. It shows that women’s commodification is both symbolic and material, reflecting broader societal mechanisms that normalize male dominance. In doing so, *The Marriage of Anansewa* criticizes entrenched cultural practices and the reduction of women to property, emphasizing the ongoing relevance of gendered power structures in societies in Africa.

Brief Synopsis of the Play

The Marriage of Anansewa by Efua T. Sutherland is a satirical drama grounded in Ghanaian oral narrative traditions, particularly the Ananse folktale cycle. The play focuses on Ananse, a calculating father who treats his daughter’s marriage as a strategic means of achieving economic and social mobility. Rather than selecting a single suitor, Ananse simultaneously cultivate relationships with several wealthy and influential men, exploiting customary marriage negotiations for personal gain.

As Ananse’s deception escalates, he engineers an elaborate stratagem to resolve the conflict created by his actions. This scheme exposes the ethical contradictions inherent in his behavior and places the suitor within a complex social and moral framework. Through irony and humour, Efua T. Sutherland interrogates themes such as materialism, patriarchal authority and the commercialization of marriage, while also examining the tension between traditional customs and contemporary social change. The play’s integration of music, narration and audience participation reflects its roots in African performance aesthetics and reinforce its critical and pedagogical intent.

Theoretical Framework

This research applies Radical Feminist Literary Theory, which posits that patriarchy is a pervasive, systemic structure embedded in cultural, economic and familial institutions, rather than a collection of isolated acts of male dominance. Within this framework, transactional marriages, bride-price payments and parental control over daughters marriages are tools by which patriarchal societies maintain control over women’s bodies and lives. As one study notes, in several African contexts, “the payment of bridewealth curtails wives’ independence in decision-making”.

Literature Review

The father, Ananse treats his daughter, Anansewa not as an autonomous individual but as a transactional asset, reflecting broader societal norms that assign women value primarily in relation to marriage and male acquisition. Such literary representation aligns with ethnographic studies across African contexts. For instance, Sara Lowes and Nathan Nunn (2017: 6) analysis of

bride price demonstrates that its presence can exacerbate gender inequality by reducing women's bargaining power and autonomy within marriage. These empirical findings provide a social and economic backdrop to Efua T. Sutherland's criticism of patriarchal commodification.

The legal and rights-based dimensions of female commodification are further highlighted in studies addressing bride price and women's reproductive autonomy. Oluwakemi Eniola, et al (2021: 4) affirms that in both South African and Nigerian contexts, bride price "intersects with women's sexual and reproductive rights, often constraining decision making and reinforcing male authority". This suggests that commodification extends beyond symbolic valuation to tangible restrictions on bodily autonomy, an idea mirrored in Efua T. Sutherland's depiction of Anansewa's constrained agency. Similarly, Masele's ethnographic research among the Sukuma of Tanzania identifies that bridewealth, "renders the married woman a man's product", signaling the cultural legitimization of female commodification through social and performative norms.

The symbolic dimension of female commodification is not limited to material exchange. Togarasei and Chitando's edited volume, *Lobola (Bridewealth) in Contemporary Southern Africa*, reinforces how the bridewealth rituals operate as markers of social and cultural validation, reinforcing gendered expectations and justifying patriarchal authority. These cultural scripts, they argue, performatively inscribe women into social hierarchies, assigning them value in accordance with their sustainability for marriage rather than individual agency. In this light, Efua T. Sutherland's play exemplifies both material and symbolic commodification: the negotiation of Anansewa's marriage and the dramatization of her perceived value illustrate how patriarchal structures are enacted and maintained through performative practices.

Moreover, sociological studies reveal the broader implication of bride price on women's autonomy. The *Population Association* reports "Bought and Bound" reveals that bride price payments can institutionalize gendered obligations and limit women's decision-making in the household, affectively rendering them subordinate within marital and social hierarchies. This reinforces the argument that economic and cultural transactions, far from being neutral, serve as instruments of systemic patriarchal control, a concept central to Radical feminist Literary Theory. By integrating these insights, the literature review collectively emphasizes that female commodification in African societies is both a material and symbolic process. Materially, bride price, gifts and economic negotiations objectify women and restrict their autonomy; symbolically, cultural rituals and social expectations surfaces patriarchal authority. Efua T. Sutherland's *The Marriage of Anansewa* becomes a critical lens for the intersection of economic necessity, cultural expectation and patriarchal domination, offering a narrative that both critique and illuminates systemic inequalities.

From Property to Personhood: Radical Feminist Readings of Female Commodification in *The Marriage of Anansewa*

In *The Marriage of Anansewa*, Efua T. Sutherland uses traditional theatrical conventions and folkloric elements to stage a biting criticism of patriarchy and the commodification of the female gender.

1. Folklore, Theatrical Form and Social Critique

Efua T. Sutherland's use of the traditional Akan storytelling mode-the so called "Anansegoro" which integrates music, dance, communal participation and audience interaction – creates a public forum where private acts (marriage, negotiations, commodification of daughters) are laid bare in full view. The theatrical tradition itself becomes a tool of resistance and critique:

ANANSE:

The time is up, My soul, Kweku, support me, for I'm weary. Life is really a struggle. Should this moment in which I'm trapped by any chance miscarry, I'm finished. And if care is not taken, I' will moreover, strike the fortune from my daughter's lips and spill it completely. Man is pathetic.

As I stand here, the fear attacking me is overwhelming; still I will take it this way, that's I have seized hold of the fall of a wild beast who will bite me if I let go. So I'm holding on to it. What can else can I do?

I know that not all my ways can be considered straight. But, before God, I'm not motivated by bad thoughts at this moment. I have a deep fatherly concern for this only child of mine. If the world were not what it is, I would not gamble with such a priceless possession (67).

Rather than use Western realist drama, Efua T. Sutherland root her play on local cultural forms to challenge social injustice. Friday Akporherhe and Peter Oghenerioborue Udi (2025: 112) asserts, the dramatist, "incorporate elements of folklore to add flavor and portray their authenticity", while at the same time adopt it to, "expose the exploitation and objectification of the female gender".

By situating commodification within a familiar folkloric framework, the play prompts its audience often drawn from the same cultural contexts that value bride price and patriarchal marriage practices to reflect on how cultural tradition can be used to perpetuate injustice. In effect, Efua T. Sutherland turns tradition against itself: the satiric folkloric medium that binds the community becomes the stage for its moral interrogation.

2. Commodification and Parental Authority; Ananse as Patriarchal Trader

At the core of the play is the character Ananse, whose decision to use his daughter as a vehicle for economic gain, deepen the patriarchal logic that equates daughters with property and social transaction. Critical scholarship argues that Efua T. Sutherland portrays Ananse's action as part of a broader socio-cultural pattern, not merely as an individual moral falling. For instance, as discussed in a recent feminist reading, in the absence of wealth or personal property, the female body assumes an exchange-value status.

This statement captures the essence of material commodification: in a context where wealth is scarce, women's bodies- their reproductive capacity, social acceptability and marital potential – become the currency through which men negotiate economic survival and social mobility:

ANANSEWA: (*Recalling*)

Ah-h, that is why! That's why you went to so much trouble to get my photograph taken. You made such a fuss. 'take one of her, full height sit down this time, Anansewa, and turn your face slightly to the right', Oh father, there's cunning in your head. You are to be feared (11).

ANASE: (*Flattered*)

I am glad you don't underestimate me (11).

ANANSEWA:

I have found you out. The week after those photographs were taken – that was when you travelled. I’ve found you out; you went on tour to see your chiefs (11).

Ananse’s orchestration of Anansewa’s suitors and bride-price negotiation transforms marriage from a union of individual’s into a market transaction.

Moreover, this dynamic is not uniquely fictional. Empirical studies in African societies confirms that the institution of bride price often constrains women’s autonomy and entrenched gender inequality. One ethnographic study finds that a ‘marriage payment’ functions to limit women’s power and reinforce patriarchal social order. By reflecting these real social structures through drama, Efua T. Sutherland’s play criticizes how cultural customs institutionalize women’s commodification.

3. Symbolic Dehumanization: Women as Objects of Exchange

Beyond material transactions, the play also dramatizes the symbolic dehumanization of women inherent in patriarchal practices. In the study of the play and its contexts, one critic argues that many African cultural practices treat women as “mere commodities” given out in marriage against their will.

In *The Marriage of Anansewa*, Ananse treats his daughter not as a human with desires, dreams or agency but as a bargaining chip to satisfy his greed and social ambition.

ANANSE:

Stop just there. You are holding in your hand almost all of the full amount of that thing. That ‘thing’ is the first solid proof that Chief-Who-Is Chief is not just showing interest with his mouth. He is willing and eager to oil the wheels of custom, and therefore he has sent something for the maintenance of the object of his interest (13).

The repeated references to her “value” the letters to suitors, the disguise, and ultimately the staged “death” – all serves to highlight how female identity is reduced to exchange-value. This dramatization forces the audience to confront the logic underlying this reduction, that a woman’s worth is measured by her bride price, her suitability, her capacity to bring wealth or status – not by her humanity:

STORYTELLER:

There you are. As I was saying, it is possible for Ananse to profit from the gifts his daughter’s suitors bring, and not be bound by any obligation at all.

What craftiness. Also, he has been careful to explain what his daughter Anansewa stand to gain from his design, but nobody has heard him making any direct hints about what he personally will gain (19).

By doing so, the play aligns with feminist condemnation of patriarchal systems that treat women as objects rather than subjects. Efua T. Sutherland uses dramatic techniques – characterization stage directions and symbolism – to show both the commodification and the possibility of resistance.

4. Resistance, Agency and Ambiguous Liberation

Importantly – and unlike a purely pessimistic critique – the play also gestures toward female resistance and reclamation of agency. In the feminist reading of Raphael Junior Mensah and

Charlotte Biney Evadzi (2025: 322), they note that Ananse's "staged death", her songs and certain symbolic acts within the play shows attempt to reclaim her humanity and assert autonomy in a system that seeks to commodify her.

This ambivalence complicates a purely reductive reading of women as property: Efua T. Sutherland suggests that even within oppressive patriarchal structures, women may resist, subvert and claim their personhood.

ANANSEWA:

I repeat, over my dead body. How can they claim me as their own? (*Laughter chokes her*). They are coming to claim me as their own indeed

They dare not (47).

The performative form of Anansegoro-communal rhythmic participatory-itself allows space for communal reflection and moral questioning, offering not just criticism but possibility for transformation.

5. Theatrical Satire and Audience Confrontation

The play's tone – combining humour, satire and traditional performance-enhances its critical impact. Scholars note that the comedic aspects of the drama engage audiences deeply, making the bitter critique of commodification more accessible and resonant.

ANANSE:

Ah! Togbe Klu. You whom I even forgot sometimes to count among those in the race, lo and behold, it is who turns out to be the one with such good intentions. You should have given me that understanding, for I had no idea it was your desire to live with my child. (*He thinks*).

Have I allowed your messengers to depart? What if Chief-Who-Is-Chief does not come? And if he does, supposing he comes in the manner in which the Mines people and Sapaase people came? What would I do them? If in desperation and torment, I push my child into his hands in that event, I would be pushing her into catastrophe. Oh, has trouble so turned into a fallen tree across my road? Is there no rest at all in this life? Hmm, my mind is exhausted (74).

This use of satire-turning the grotesque logic of patriarchal commodification into comedy-destabilizes entrenched social norms: by laughing at Ananse's schemes, the audience implicitly questions the legitimacy of treating women as tradable assets. The laughter becomes a tool of critical awareness. Theatrical form thus becomes inseparable from social message: the structure, language and performance technique all amplify the play's feminist critique.

Conclusion

Efua T Sutherland's *The Marriage of Anansewa* offers a nuanced and penetrating critique of how patriarchal culture structures the lives of women through systems of material exchange and symbolic valuation. Through a Radical feminist reading, this research has demonstrated that the play dramatizes the interconnected ways in which women's bodies, labour, sexuality and futures are appropriated for male benefit. The manipulation of marriage customs, particularly bride-price, reveals patriarchy not as an abstract ideology but as a lived economic practice that transforms women into commodities circulating within networks of male power. In foregrounding these practices, the playwright exposes the everyday performance of patriarchy: the negotiations,

cultural rituals and social expectations that naturalize female subordination.

The analysis further established that the symbolic and material dimensions of commodification in the play represents broader African sociocultural realities documented in contemporary research. Studies on bride-price in various African contexts consistently show reduced female autonomy, legitimized male authority and the normalization of gendered hierarchies. By situating Efua T. Sutherland's dramaturgy alongside these empirical accounts, this research highlights the continued resonance of her critique and its relevance to ongoing debates about women's rights, agency and bodily autonomy across the continent.

In essence, this study shows that *The Marriage of Anansewa* is a powerful literary site for examining the persistent entanglement of patriarchy, culture and economic exchange. The play underscores how systems of bride-price and marriage negotiation shape women's identities, determine their social value and restrict their freedom. By reading the text through Radical Feminist Literary Theory, this research has emphasized the urgency of confronting these structures and imagining alternatives in which women are recognized not as property or social capital but as autonomous subjects. Efua T. Sutherland's *The Marriage of Anansewa* remains a compelling call for this transformation, inviting readers and audiences alike to envision a world in which personhood is not contingent upon patriarchal performance but grounded in dignity, equality and self-determination.

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Reframing the Narrative: Africa's Transnational Reawakening and the shattering of Historical Amnesia (1960s-2010s West Africa and its Diaspora)

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Abstract

Africa's post-independence history has often been narrated through Eurocentric, crisis-centred, and state-failure frameworks that marginalise African and diasporic agency. This narrative review reframes that historiography by examining Africa's transnational reawakening from the 1960s to the 2010s, with a particular focus on West Africa and its diaspora in the Caribbean, North America, and Europe. Drawing on interdisciplinary scholarship, the review interrogates the production of historical amnesia and demonstrates how African political, intellectual, cultural, and economic networks have persistently shaped global processes despite periods of disruption and silencing. Using a narrative review methodology approach, the study synthesises literature across three interconnected phases: post-independence Pan-African mobilisation and global Black solidarity in the 1960s–1970s; fragmentation under neoliberal restructuring and Afro-pessimist discourses in the 1980s–1990s; and reawakening through digital transnationalism, cultural soft power, and renewed diaspora engagement in the 2000s–2010s. The analysis reveals enduring continuity in people-centred transnational agency, even when state-led initiatives weakened. By foregrounding memory, identity, and power, the review challenges linear decline narratives and reframes Africa as an ideational and cultural actor in global history. In doing so, it contributes to the decolonisation of African and diaspora historiography and offers a more inclusive understanding of Africa's place in the world.

Keywords: Africa, Transnationalism, African diaspora, Pan-Africanism, Historical amnesia, Post-colonial theory, Global Africanity

Introduction

Africa's post-independence moment of the 1960s marked one of the most significant political ruptures of the twentieth century, as more than thirty African states, many of them in West Africa, attained sovereignty within a single decade (Cooper, 2002). This period was not merely a transition from colonial rule to statehood but a profound reconfiguration of Africa's relationship with the world. Newly independent West African states such as Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal

emerged as hubs of transnational political, intellectual, and cultural networks, linking African actors with Black and African-descended populations in the Caribbean, North America, and Europe (Nkrumah, 1963; Adi, 2018). These networks were sustained through Pan-African congresses, student movements, literary circles, trade unions, and liberation struggles, collectively articulating a global vision of African freedom and dignity. From the outset, therefore, Africa's post-independence trajectory was inherently transnational rather than territorially bounded. However, despite this historically grounded interconnectedness, dominant global narratives have frequently marginalised African agency through what scholars describe as historical amnesia. Historical amnesia refers to the systematic forgetting, erasure, or depoliticisation of Africa's past contributions to global political thought, cultural production, and international order (Trouillot, 1995; Mbembe, 2001). Within African and diaspora studies, historical amnesia manifests in the selective remembrance of crises such as coups, debt, and conflict while overlooking sustained traditions of resistance, solidarity, and global engagement. This erasure has been reinforced by the persistence of colonial epistemologies, defined as modes of knowledge production that privilege Euro-American experiences as universal while relegating African histories to the margins of theory and global history (Said, 1978; Quijano, 2000). As a result, Africa is often positioned as a passive recipient of global forces rather than an active co-producer of transnational ideas and movements. The problem this review addresses is threefold. First, African transnational agency remains marginalised within dominant historical and international relations scholarship, which continues to privilege state-centric and Eurocentric analytical frameworks (Bayart, 2007). Second, African and diaspora historiographies have often developed in parallel rather than in dialogue, leading to fragmented interpretations of shared political, cultural, and intellectual histories (Gilroy, 1993). Third, there has been an overemphasis on state failure narratives, particularly from the 1980s onward, which frame Africa primarily through lenses of collapse, dependency, and dysfunction (Chabal & Daloz, 1999). While structural adjustment programmes and economic crises were undeniably consequential, the dominance of these narratives has obscured enduring forms of transnational solidarity, including diaspora remittances, cultural exchange, and political mobilisation. For instance, diaspora remittances to Sub-Saharan Africa grew from approximately US\$8 billion in 2000 to over US\$54 billion by 2019, underscoring the material significance of transnational African connections (World Bank, 2020). Against this backdrop, the aim of this narrative review is threefold. First, it seeks to synthesise interdisciplinary literature on African transnational reawakening from the 1960s to the 2010s, with particular attention to West Africa and its diaspora. Second, it interrogates how historical amnesia has shaped global understandings of Africa by tracing shifts in scholarly and policy discourses across five decades. Third, it aims to bridge African and diaspora perspectives within a single analytical framework, demonstrating their mutual constitution rather than treating them as separate historical trajectories. In doing so, the review foregrounds transnationalism as both a historical reality and an analytical lens for rethinking Africa's global position. The scope of this review is geographically centred on West Africa and its diaspora, specifically in the Caribbean, North America, and Europe, regions historically connected through slavery, colonialism, migration, and post-independence exchange (Adi, 2018). Temporally, the review spans the 1960s to the 2010s, enabling analysis of continuity and transformation across the independence era, the neoliberal restructuring of the 1980s–1990s, and the digital and cultural reawakening of the twenty-first century. Thematically, it focuses on political, intellectual, cultural, and economic transnationalism, encompassing state

actors, non-state movements, and grassroots networks. The significance of this review lies in its contribution to post-colonial historiography and contemporary debates on African global agency and identity. By challenging linear decline narratives, the review aligns with scholarship that repositions Africa as a site of innovation, critique, and global influence (Mbembe, 2017). Moreover, the analysis has implications for foreign policy and global governance, particularly as African states and diasporas increasingly engage in cultural diplomacy, South–South cooperation, and transnational advocacy. In this sense, reframing Africa’s transnational history is not merely an academic exercise but a necessary intervention in how Africa’s role in the world is conceptualised. Guided by this rationale, the review is structured around the following objectives and review questions. The objectives of this review are to examine how transnational African networks have evolved from the 1960s to the 2010s, to analyse the mechanisms through which historical amnesia has shaped dominant narratives about Africa, and to integrate African and diaspora perspectives into a cohesive transnational analytical framework. This review is guided by the following questions: how have African transnational political, intellectual, and cultural networks been represented in existing scholarship, in what ways has historical amnesia influenced global understandings of Africa’s post-independence trajectory, and how can a transnational lens reshape interpretations of Africa’s global agency from the 1960s to the 2010s?

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

This section outlines the conceptual and theoretical framework guiding the narrative synthesis of this review. It establishes the key concepts and theoretical traditions through which Africa’s transnational reawakening and the production of historical amnesia are interpreted across time. By integrating transnationalism, diaspora, global Africanity, and post-colonial and Pan-African theoretical perspectives, the framework provides an analytical lens for examining how memory, identity, and power are produced and contested through transnational networks. This framework informs the organisation, interpretation, and critical evaluation of the literature reviewed. Scholars define transnationalism as sustained social, political, economic, and cultural practices that extend beyond and connect multiple nation-states, creating overlapping fields of interaction that cannot be fully explained by state boundaries alone (Vertovec, 2009). In African studies, transnationalism captures the dense networks linking West Africa to its diaspora through migration, remittances, intellectual exchange, and cultural production. The concept of diaspora refers to populations dispersed from an original homeland who maintain material, emotional, and political ties across borders, often shaping both host and origin societies (Safran, 1991). Extending these ideas, global Africanity denotes a shared, evolving sense of African identity produced through historical experiences of enslavement, colonialism, resistance, and post-independence mobility, rather than through fixed territorial belonging (Gilroy, 1993). Together, these concepts foreground Africa and its diaspora as co-constitutive actors in global history. Scholars distinguish between state-centric transnationalism, which privileges diplomatic relations, regional organisations, and formal interstate cooperation, and people-centred transnationalism, which emphasises grassroots actors such as migrants, artists, intellectuals, activists, and religious movements (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). In the African context, people-centred transnationalism has often been more resilient than state-led projects, particularly during periods of economic crisis. For example, empirical evidence indicates that remittances to Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for over 3% of regional GDP by the late 2010s, surpassing

official development assistance in several West African countries (World Bank, 2020). This highlights the analytical necessity of moving beyond state-centric lenses to capture the full scope of African transnational agency. The concept of historical amnesia provides a critical analytical lens for understanding why these transnational dynamics remain underrepresented in dominant scholarship. Scholars trace the origins of historical amnesia to colonial knowledge systems that framed Africa as ahistorical or derivative, thereby legitimising imperial rule (Said, 1978). During the Cold War, African politics were further interpreted primarily through superpower rivalry, reducing African actors to proxies rather than autonomous agents (Westad, 2005). Mechanisms of erasure include selective archival practices, crisis-driven media narratives, and development discourses that foreground failure while obscuring long-standing traditions of solidarity and innovation (Trouillot, 1995; Mbembe, 2001). These mechanisms depoliticise African agency by disconnecting contemporary practices from their historical roots. The theoretical foundations of this review draw on multiple, complementary traditions. Post-colonial theory, as articulated by Fanon (1961), Said (1978), and Mbembe (2001), interrogates how power operates through knowledge and representation, revealing how colonial epistemologies persist in contemporary global narratives. Pan-African thought, advanced by Du Bois (1903), Nkrumah (1963), and Rodney (1972), provides an explicitly transnational political vision that centres African unity and diaspora solidarity as tools of liberation. Global South and decolonial theories further challenge Eurocentric universalisms by situating Africa within interconnected histories of capitalism, empire, and resistance (Quijano, 2000). Where relevant, middle power and ideational power theories help explain how African states and diasporic actors exert influence through norms, culture, and ideas rather than material dominance alone (Cooper, 2014). Integrating these perspectives, the analytical framework for this review links memory, identity, power, and transnational networks. Memory shapes identity by determining which histories are remembered or forgotten; identity informs power by legitimising claims to voice and agency; and transnational networks operationalise power across borders. A narrative synthesis is justified over a systematic review because the research questions are interpretive, historical, and interdisciplinary, requiring critical engagement with theory, context, and meaning rather than statistical aggregation (Greenhalgh et al., 2018). This approach enables a coherent reconstruction of Africa’s transnational reawakening while directly confronting the epistemic silences produced by historical amnesia. *To ensure conceptual clarity, the central concepts underpinning this narrative synthesis are defined and analytically situated in Table 1.*

Table 1

Key Concepts, Definitions, and Analytical Relevance

Concept	Definition	Key Scholars	Analytical Relevance to This Review
Transnationalism	Sustained social, political, economic, and cultural practices that extend across and connect multiple nation-states, producing overlapping fields of interaction beyond territorial boundaries.	Vertovec (2009); Levitt & Glick Schiller (2004)	Provides the primary analytical lens for examining Africa–diaspora connections beyond state-centric explanations.

Concept	Definition	Key Scholars	Analytical Relevance to This Review
Diaspora	Populations dispersed from an original homeland who maintain material, emotional, cultural, and political ties across borders, shaping both origin and host societies.	Safran (1991); Cohen (2008)	Enables integration of African and diasporic experiences as co-constitutive rather than separate historical trajectories.
Historical Amnesia	The systematic erasure, silencing, or depoliticisation of certain pasts within dominant historical and scholarly narratives, often through selective memory and archival exclusion.	Trouillot (1995); Mbembe (2001)	Explains the marginalisation of African transnational agency and the dominance of crisis-centred narratives.
Pan-Africanism	A political, intellectual, and cultural movement advocating unity and solidarity among African peoples on the continent and in the diaspora.	Du Bois (1903); Nkrumah (1963); Rodney (1972)	Anchors early post-independence transnational solidarities and provides historical continuity across periods.
Global Africanity	A shared, evolving sense of African identity produced through transnational histories of enslavement, colonialism, migration, and resistance rather than fixed territorial belonging.	Gilroy (1993); Zeleza (2010)	Conceptually links Africa and its diaspora within a single global analytical framework.
People-centred Transnationalism	Forms of transnational engagement driven by non-state actors such as migrants, artists, activists, intellectuals, and digital communities.	Levitt & Glick Schiller (2004); Vertovec (2009)	Highlights grassroots agency that persists despite state withdrawal or institutional fragmentation.
State-centric Transnationalism	Transnational practices mediated primarily through formal state institutions, diplomacy, and intergovernmental organisations.	Bayart (2007); Cooper (2014)	Enables comparison between elite-driven and grassroots modes of African transnational engagement.
Ideational / Cultural Power	The capacity to influence global norms, identities, and imaginaries through ideas, values, and cultural production rather than coercion or material dominance.	Nye (2004); Mbembe (2017)	Supports the argument that Africa exercises global influence through culture, memory, and symbolic production.

3. The Post-Independence Moment and Transnational Awakening (1960s–1970s).

The 1960s–1970s constituted a foundational era in Africa’s transnational awakening, marked by political independence, ideological experimentation, and renewed global Black solidarity (Cooper, 2002). In West Africa, independence was understood not merely as territorial sovereignty but as part of a broader Pan-African project, defined as the political, cultural, and

intellectual movement advocating unity among African peoples on the continent and in the diaspora (Nkrumah, 1963). This vision positioned Africa as an active node within global struggles against racism, imperialism, and economic domination.

3.1 Independence Movements and Global Black Solidarity

West African leaders emerged as central architects of post-independence transnationalism. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana articulated Pan-Africanism as both a continental and diasporic mission, arguing that Africa's freedom was incomplete without the liberation of all Black peoples globally (Nkrumah, 1963). Ghana's independence in 1957, preceding that of most African states, became a symbolic and material hub for global Black activism, hosting figures such as W. E. B. Du Bois, Maya Angelou, and Malcolm X (Adi, 2018). Similarly, leaders such as Léopold Sédar Senghor of Senegal advanced cultural Pan-Africanism through the philosophy of Négritude, which framed Black identity as a source of epistemic and aesthetic value rather than inferiority (Senghor, 1964). Empirical evidence underscores the scale of this transnational engagement, as Adi (2018) documents that by the mid-1960s, thousands of African-descended students, activists, and intellectuals had travelled to West Africa for conferences, education, and political collaboration. These exchanges were not merely symbolic; they shaped policy agendas, cultural production, and international advocacy. Moreover, African states maintained explicit links with civil rights movements in the United States and anti-colonial struggles in the Caribbean, reinforcing a shared political consciousness and challenging narratives that portray African independence as an inward-looking or purely national project (Von Eschen, 1997).

3.2 Intellectual and Cultural Circuits

Intellectual and cultural circuits can be understood as transnational networks through which ideas, artistic expressions, and scholarly knowledge circulate across borders, shaping collective identities and political imaginaries (Gilroy, 1993). During the 1960s–1970s, African writers, artists, and scholars played a pivotal role in constructing these circuits. Writers such as Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, and Ama Ata Aidoo engaged global audiences while remaining deeply embedded in African historical experiences (Achebe, 1975). At the same time, diaspora intellectuals such as C. L. R. James and Stuart Hall drew on African and Caribbean histories to critique imperialism and modernity (Hall, 1996). Institutional spaces further sustained these exchanges. Major cultural events such as the First World Festival of Negro Arts, held in Dakar in 1966, functioned as transnational platforms bringing together participants from Africa, the Americas, and Europe (Diouf, 2013). Journals and publishing houses, including *Présence Africaine*, facilitated sustained intellectual dialogue across linguistic and geographic boundaries. These spaces enabled Africa and its diaspora to co-produce knowledge, countering colonial representations that had long excluded African voices from global canons. The relevance of these circuits lies in their enduring influence, as contemporary African cultural industries particularly music, film, and literature continue to draw on the foundations laid during this period, evidencing continuity rather than rupture in Africa's global cultural presence (Mbembe, 2017).

3.3 Cold War Politics and African Agency

Africa's post-independence transnationalism unfolded within the constraints of Cold War geopolitics, yet African actors were not passive recipients of superpower influence (Westad, 2005). Non-alignment, defined as the refusal to formally align with either the United States or the Soviet Union, became a strategic framework through which African states sought to preserve autonomy while maximising diplomatic leverage (Prashad, 2007). West African countries actively participated in the Non-Aligned Movement, using it as a platform to articulate collective interests and resist neocolonial domination. Quantitative indicators illustrate Africa's growing diplomatic footprint during this era. By the early 1970s, African states constituted over 25% of United Nations membership, significantly shaping voting blocs on decolonisation and racial justice resolutions (Mazrui, 1975). African leaders strategically engaged both Western and Eastern blocs to secure development assistance, military support, and ideological recognition without relinquishing sovereignty. This strategic engagement complicates portrayals of Africa as merely a Cold War battleground. In comparative perspective, Africa's Cold War experience differed from that of Latin America and Southeast Asia, where ideological alignment often resulted in prolonged proxy conflicts (Westad, 2005). In West Africa, while coups and instability occurred, transnational solidarities and diplomatic activism persisted, reinforcing Africa's role as a normative rather than purely military actor in global politics. In sum, the post-independence decades of the 1960s–1970s constituted a decisive moment of African transnational awakening. Through political leadership, intellectual and cultural exchange, and strategic Cold War engagement, West Africa and its diaspora articulated a global vision that challenged historical amnesia and affirmed Africa's agency in shaping twentieth-century world history.

4. Disruptions, Silencing, and Fragmentation (1980s–1990s)

The 1980s–1990s marked a period of profound disruption in Africa's transnational trajectory, characterised by economic crisis, ideological realignment, and narrative silencing (Cooper, 2002). While the post-independence decades had fostered expansive Pan-African networks, the late twentieth century witnessed a fragmentation of these connections, driven largely by structural adjustment, shifting global media discourses, and changing patterns of diaspora engagement.

4.1 Structural Adjustment and Neoliberal Restructuring

Economists and political scientists define Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) as policy packages imposed primarily by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, emphasising fiscal austerity, privatisation, trade liberalisation, and reduced state spending as conditions for financial assistance (World Bank, 1981). Across West Africa, SAPs reshaped political economies and reconfigured state–society relations. Scholars argue that these reforms significantly weakened African intellectual and political networks by dismantling institutions that had previously supported Pan-African collaboration, such as public universities, cultural centres, and state-funded research bodies (Mkandawire, 2001). Statistical evidence illustrates the scale of this transformation. By the mid-1990s, over 30 Sub-Saharan African countries were undergoing structural adjustment, with public expenditure on education declining by up to 25% in some West African states (UNESCO, 1998). These cuts triggered academic brain drain, as

scholars and professionals migrated to Europe and North America in search of stable employment. While this migration sustained people-centred transnationalism, it simultaneously eroded locally anchored intellectual communities that had underpinned earlier Pan-African projects (Zezeza, 2009). Scholars further contend that neoliberal restructuring undermined state-supported Pan-Africanism, as governments prioritised economic survival over continental or diasporic solidarity (Bond, 2006). Regional initiatives lost funding and political momentum, contributing to a shift from collective ideological visions to technocratic governance. In contrast to earlier decades, Africa's transnational engagement became increasingly informal, individualised, and economically driven.

4.2 Media Narratives and the Construction of Crisis

Media scholars define Afro-pessimism as a dominant representational framework that depicts Africa as inherently crisis-prone, violent, and incapable of self-governance (Hawk, 1992). During the 1980s–1990s, Western media coverage increasingly framed Africa through famine, debt, war, and disease, marginalising stories of resilience, innovation, and transnational agency. Scholars argue that this narrative shift reinforced historical amnesia by severing contemporary African realities from the emancipatory histories of the independence era (Mbembe, 2001). Empirical analyses of media content demonstrate this imbalance. Hawk (1992) documents that over 70% of Africa-related news stories in major Western outlets during the late Cold War focused on conflict and humanitarian disaster. Such portrayals obscured Africa's continued diplomatic activism and cultural production, consolidating a crisis ontology that shaped policy and public perception alike. Development discourses further reinforced this framing by reducing African societies to aid recipients rather than global contributors (Escobar, 1995). Comparatively, scholars note that similar economic crises in Latin America during the same period did not produce equivalent levels of cultural erasure, underscoring the racialised dimensions of Afro-pessimism (Mudimbe, 1988). The cumulative effect was a depoliticisation of African transnationalism, rendering earlier solidarities invisible within global consciousness.

4.3 Diaspora Disconnection and Reconfiguration

Sociologists define diaspora disconnection as the weakening of formal and ideological ties between migrant communities and their homelands, often accompanied by the emergence of new forms of engagement shaped by host-society conditions (Vertovec, 2009). During the 1980s–1990s, African diasporas underwent significant reconfiguration. Political exile and economic migration increased, but collective Pan-African activism gave way to more fragmented identity politics centred on nationality, ethnicity, or race (Zezeza, 2009). Quantitative data reflect this shift. While African migration to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries increased steadily from approximately 2.7 million in 1980 to over 6 million by 2000 diaspora political engagement became less institutionally coordinated (OECD, 2001). Remittances, though growing, were largely private and familial rather than overtly political. Scholars argue that this transformation did not signify disengagement but rather adaptation to new global realities (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). The emergence of new identity politics, particularly among second-generation Africans and Afro-descendants, redefined diaspora engagement. Cultural movements in music, fashion, and literature sustained transnational

connections, albeit in less explicitly political forms (Gilroy, 1993). These developments complicate simplistic narratives of decline by revealing continuity beneath fragmentation. In synthesis, the 1980s–1990s represent a period of disruption rather than disappearance in Africa’s transnational history. Structural adjustment weakened institutional Pan-Africanism, media narratives entrenched Afro-pessimism, and diaspora engagement was reconfigured rather than extinguished. Understanding this era is crucial for challenging historical amnesia and contextualising the renewed transnational reawakening that would emerge in the twenty-first century.

5. Reawakening and Reconnection in the Global Era (2000s–2010s)

The 2000s–2010s is a period of transnational reawakening, marked by technological transformation, cultural resurgence, and renewed political–economic engagement between Africa and its diaspora (Zezeza, 2010). Unlike earlier eras shaped by state-led Pan-Africanism or neoliberal fragmentation, this phase has been driven largely by digital connectivity, cultural soft power, and hybrid forms of institutional and grassroots mobilisation. Together, these dynamics have contributed to the partial reversal of historical amnesia by restoring Africa’s visibility and agency within global narratives.

5.1 Digital Transnationalism

Digital transnationalism is the use of digital technologies to sustain cross-border social, political, and cultural connections that transcend physical migration and state boundaries (Vertovec, 2009). In the African context, the rapid expansion of internet access and social media platforms during the 2000s fundamentally altered the terrain of diaspora engagement. Data from the International Telecommunication Union indicate that internet penetration in Sub-Saharan Africa increased from less than 2% in 2000 to over 25% by 2019, enabling unprecedented levels of communication between Africa and its diaspora (ITU, 2020). Scholars argue that digital platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and blogs have functioned as spaces of memory reclamation, allowing African and diasporic actors to contest colonial archives and dominant media representations (Emejulu & Sobande, 2019). Digital archives, podcasts, and online journals have revived suppressed histories of Pan-Africanism, anti-colonial struggle, and Black internationalism, thereby challenging historical amnesia. Moreover, new forms of diasporic mobilisation emerged through hashtag activism, crowdfunding, and online advocacy, linking local struggles to global audiences. Movements such as #EndSARS and transnational Black Lives Matter solidarities exemplify how digital infrastructures have reactivated people-centred transnationalism beyond formal institutions (Mutsvairo et al., 2021).

5.2 Cultural Renaissance and Soft Power

Political theorists define soft power as the ability to shape preferences and influence global audiences through culture, values, and ideas rather than coercion or material force (Nye, 2004). During the 2000s–2010s, Africa experienced a cultural renaissance that significantly enhanced its global soft power. Scholars highlight the global diffusion of African music genres such as Afrobeats, which gained mainstream recognition in Europe and North America through artists

like Burna Boy and Wizkid (Shiple, 2013). By the late 2010s, Afrobeats streams numbered in the billions annually on global platforms, underscoring Africa's reintegration into global cultural markets (IFPI, 2019). Similarly, African cinema particularly Nigeria's Nollywood emerged as one of the world's largest film industries by volume, producing over 2,000 films annually and contributing an estimated US\$7 billion to Nigeria's economy (UNESCO, 2021). Scholars argue that Nollywood's transnational circulation among African and diaspora audiences has reshaped representations of African life, moving beyond crisis-driven narratives to everyday experiences, aspirations, and contradictions (Haynes, 2016). Fashion, literature, and visual arts further reinforced this cultural visibility, with African designers and writers gaining prominence in global markets and literary prizes. Comparatively, this cultural resurgence parallels earlier intellectual circuits of the 1960s but differs in scale and accessibility due to digital mediation. Culture thus became a primary vehicle through which Africa re-entered global imaginaries as a producer of meaning rather than a site of deficiency (Mbembe, 2017).

5.3 Political and Economic Re-engagement

Economists define diaspora remittances as financial transfers sent by migrants to their countries of origin, which function as both household support mechanisms and macroeconomic stabilisers (World Bank, 2020). During the 2000s–2010s, remittances to Sub-Saharan Africa increased dramatically, rising from approximately US\$8 billion in 2000 to over US\$54 billion by 2019 (World Bank, 2020). In countries such as Nigeria and Ghana, remittances exceeded foreign direct investment and official development assistance, underscoring the material significance of diaspora engagement. Beyond remittances, scholars note growing diaspora investment in technology hubs, real estate, and social enterprises, reflecting a shift from survival-oriented transfers to developmental and entrepreneurial engagement (Newland & Tanaka, 2010). Politically, African states and regional organisations renewed efforts to institutionalise diaspora relations. The African Union's designation of the diaspora as the "sixth region of Africa" symbolised a formal recognition of transnational African belonging (African Union, 2003). Initiatives such as ECOWAS free movement protocols and diaspora bonds further institutionalised these connections. In comparative terms, Africa's re-engagement contrasts with the relative marginalisation of diasporas in earlier neoliberal decades, indicating a partial revival of Pan-African ideals under new global conditions. While inequalities and exclusions persist, the 2000s–2010s demonstrate that Africa's transnational networks have adapted rather than disappeared. In synthesis, the global era witnessed a multifaceted reawakening of African transnationalism. Through digital connectivity, cultural soft power, and renewed political-economic engagement, Africa and its diaspora reasserted their interconnectedness and global relevance. This period marks a critical departure from Afro-pessimist narratives, offering a contemporary counterpoint to historical amnesia and reaffirming Africa's role as an active participant in shaping twenty-first-century global culture and politics.

6. Critical Synthesis: Shattering Historical Amnesia

Scholars conceptualise historical amnesia as the patterned erasure or marginalisation of particular pasts from dominant knowledge systems, often through selective narration, archival silences, and disciplinary boundaries (Trouillot, 1995). Synthesising the literature across the

post-independence era, neoliberal decades, and the contemporary global period reveals that Africa's transnational history is best understood not as a linear rise-and-fall narrative, but as a cyclical process shaped by resistance, erasure, and renewal (Mbembe, 2001). This critical synthesis integrates these temporal layers to demonstrate how African and diasporic actors have continually reasserted agency despite shifting global constraints.

6.1 Patterns and Continuities across Decades

Historians consistently identify resistance as a defining continuity in Africa's transnational engagements, beginning with Pan-African anti-colonial solidarities of the 1960s and extending into digital activism in the 2010s (Adi, 2018; Mutsvauro et al., 2021). While the forms of mobilisation have changed from state-led diplomacy to people-centred digital networks the underlying commitment to global Black solidarity has endured. Scholars further observe recurring processes of erasure, particularly during periods of economic crisis and geopolitical marginalisation, when Africa's global role is reframed through deficit-oriented lenses (Mudimbe, 1988). Yet these moments of silencing have repeatedly been followed by renewal, as evidenced by the resurgence of diasporic cultural production and political engagement in the twenty-first century (Zezeza, 2010). Comparative data reinforce this pattern. For instance, while official development assistance to Africa stagnated during the 1980s–1990s, diaspora remittances expanded significantly in the 2000s, reaching over US\$54 billion by 2019 and providing an alternative channel of transnational connection and influence (World Bank, 2020). Such evidence challenges narratives of discontinuity by demonstrating how African transnationalism adapts rather than disappears.

6.2 Tensions and Contradictions

Scholars emphasise that Africa's transnational reawakening is marked by persistent tensions and contradictions. One key tension lies between elite-driven and grassroots transnationalism. Elite-driven transnationalism, exemplified by Pan-African summits and state-led diaspora initiatives, often prioritises symbolic unity and diplomatic visibility (African Union, 2003). In contrast, grassroots transnationalism operates through informal networks of migrants, artists, activists, and digital communities, frequently addressing everyday economic and social challenges (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). While elite initiatives offer institutional legitimacy, scholars argue they risk reproducing exclusion by privileging educated or economically successful diasporas. Another central contradiction exists between symbolic unity and material inequality. Cultural renaissance and soft power have enhanced Africa's global visibility, yet material disparities within and between African and diasporic communities persist (Mbembe, 2017). For example, while African creative industries have generated billions in global revenue, wealth distribution remains highly uneven, and structural inequalities shaped by race, class, and migration status endure (UNESCO, 2021). These contradictions complicate celebratory narratives of reawakening and underscore the need for critical engagement rather than romanticisation.

6.3 Implications for Knowledge Production

Confronting historical amnesia necessitates the decolonisation of African and diaspora historiography, defined as the dismantling of Eurocentric epistemologies that position Africa as peripheral to global modernity (Quijano, 2000). This requires integrating African and diasporic histories into shared analytical frameworks rather than treating them as separate fields. The literature reviewed demonstrates that Africa has consistently shaped global political thought, culture, and resistance movements, even when such contributions were obscured or devalued (Gilroy, 1993). Rethinking Africa's place in global history therefore involves reframing Africa not as an object of global processes but as a co-producer of global modernity (Mbembe, 2001). This shift has implications beyond academia, influencing how policymakers, international institutions, and cultural industries engage with Africa and its diaspora. By synthesising evidence across decades, this review illustrates that Africa's transnational reawakening is neither episodic nor derivative, but a constitutive element of global historical change. In sum, shattering historical amnesia requires sustained attention to patterns of continuity, critical examination of internal tensions, and a reorientation of knowledge production. Such an approach not only restores Africa's transnational past but also redefines its present and future place in the world.

Implications and Future Directions

Reframing Africa's transnational reawakening carries significant implications for both African Studies and International Relations (IR), as it directly challenges epistemological and methodological assumptions that have historically marginalised African agency (Quijano, 2000; Mbembe, 2001). By foregrounding long-term transnational continuities, this review disrupts Eurocentric periodisation, which often treats African history as episodic, defined by colonialism, crisis, or external intervention rather than as an active contributor to global historical processes (Mudimbe, 1988). Reframing Africa through a transnational lens reveals that African political thought, cultural production, and diasporic mobilisation have consistently shaped global modernity, thereby necessitating revisions to mainstream IR theories that privilege material power and Western state trajectories (Acharya, 2014). This perspective further reframes Africa as an ideational and cultural power, defined as the capacity to influence global norms, identities, and imaginaries through ideas, values, and symbolic production rather than military or economic dominance (Nye, 2004). Evidence from the global diffusion of African music, film, and literature during the 2000s–2010s demonstrates that Africa exercises substantial soft power, even amid persistent structural economic inequalities (UNESCO, 2021). Recognising this ideational influence compels IR scholarship to integrate culture, memory, and diaspora networks into analyses of global power relations, moving beyond narrow state-centric models. The findings also carry important policy and practice implications. Policymakers increasingly acknowledge the strategic importance of diaspora engagement, defined as deliberate efforts by states and institutions to mobilise the skills, capital, and networks of citizens abroad (Newland & Tanaka, 2010). Empirical data show that diaspora remittances to Sub-Saharan Africa exceeded US\$54 billion by 2019, surpassing official development assistance in several West African countries (World Bank, 2020). These flows underscore the need for policies that move beyond remittance reliance toward structured diaspora investment, political inclusion, and knowledge exchange. Initiatives such as diaspora bonds, dual citizenship frameworks, and voting rights for overseas

citizens offer pathways for strengthening transnational governance. Cultural diplomacy and regional leadership further emerge as important tools for advancing Africa's global influence (Cooper, 2014). Cultural industries including music, film, fashion, and literature provide platforms through which African states and regional bodies can project narratives of creativity, resilience, and innovation. The African Union's recognition of the diaspora as the "sixth region of Africa" illustrates an institutional effort to translate symbolic Pan-Africanism into policy-relevant frameworks (African Union, 2003), although such initiatives must address internal inequalities to avoid reproducing elite-driven models of transnationalism. Looking forward, several future research directions emerge. Comparative regional studies examining transnational African experiences beyond West Africa, including East and Southern Africa, are needed to identify similarities and divergences in diaspora engagement and cultural production (Zezeza, 2010). Quantitative mapping of transnational networks, using social network analysis, migration data, and digital trace methods, offers opportunities to empirically capture the scale and structure of African global connections (Vertovec, 2009). In addition, gendered perspectives that foreground women's roles in sustaining transnational households, cultural economies, and political movements remain essential, given their continued underrepresentation in dominant historiographies (Mama, 1997). In sum, the implications of this review extend beyond historical reconstruction to contemporary theory, policy, and research practice. By reframing Africa as a transnational, ideational, and cultural power, this synthesis contributes to the decolonisation of knowledge production and opens new pathways for understanding Africa's enduring role in shaping global history and governance.

Conclusion

Africa's post-independence history cannot be adequately understood through isolated national narratives or crisis-centred frameworks alone (Cooper, 2002). This narrative review synthesises interdisciplinary scholarship to show that from the 1960s to the 2010s, West Africa and its diaspora were connected through enduring transnational political, intellectual, cultural, and economic networks. The analysis highlights how early Pan-African solidarities, subsequent neoliberal disruptions, and contemporary digital and cultural reawakening form a continuous, though uneven, historical arc rather than discrete or disconnected episodes. The evidence reviewed reaffirms Africa's transnational agency, defined as the capacity of African and diasporic actors to shape global ideas, identities, and material flows beyond territorial boundaries (Gilroy, 1993; Zezeza, 2010). Despite periods of silencing and marginalisation, this agency persisted through people-centred transnationalism, diaspora remittances, cultural production, and ideational influence. Statistical indicators such as the sustained growth of diaspora remittances and the global reach of African cultural industries underscore that Africa has remained an active participant in global systems, even when its contributions were rendered invisible by dominant narratives (World Bank, 2020; UNESCO, 2021). Finally, confronting historical amnesia emerges as a question of memory, identity, and global belonging. Reclaiming Africa's transnational past challenges Eurocentric knowledge hierarchies and repositions Africa as a co-producer of global modernity rather than its periphery (Mbembe, 2001). By integrating African and diaspora histories within a shared analytical framework, this study contributes to the decolonisation of knowledge production and offers a more inclusive understanding of Africa's place in the world, one grounded in connection, creativity, and continuity rather than absence or failure.

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Nigerian Pidgin English as a Lingua Franca in Popular Music

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Abstract

This article investigates the pivotal role of Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) as a lingua franca in shaping contemporary Nigerian popular music, with a primary focus on its musical implications within the globally influential Afrobeats genre. Emerging from colonial contact, NPE has become Nigeria's most accessible unifying language, profoundly influencing lyrical composition, rhythmic delivery, and audience engagement in a multilingual nation. Drawing on ethnomusicological and sociolinguistic analysis, the study traces NPE's integration from early highlife and Afrobeat to its dominance in modern Afrobeats and hip-hop. Through close examination of lyrics by leading artists such as Burna Boy, Wizkid, Davido, Rema, and Asake, it demonstrates how Pidgin's simplified syntax, expressive slang, and code-switching enhance melodic flow, vocal phrasing, and rhythmic vitality, contributing to the genre's infectious appeal and dance-oriented aesthetics. Findings highlight NPE's contribution to musical inclusivity, enabling artists to reach diverse domestic audiences while facilitating Afrobeats' international resonance evident in viral hooks and global collaborations. Despite linguistic stigma, Pidgin empowers creative authenticity and cultural hybridity in Nigerian music production. In conclusion, NPE stands as a transformative musical resource that drives innovation in Nigerian popular music, reinforcing Afrobeats' sonic identity and global dominance. Its strategic use underscores music's capacity to transcend linguistic barriers, fostering stylistic cohesion and expressive depth.

Keywords: Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE), Lingua franca, Afrobeats, Lyrics, Musical inclusivity.

Introduction

Language and music are intrinsically linked cultural phenomena, where linguistic elements such as rhythm, tone, and semantics influence musical composition, performance, and reception, while music, in turn, shapes language through expressive innovations and social functions. In multilingual societies like Nigeria, this relationship becomes particularly dynamic, where music serves as a site for linguistic hybridity, identity negotiation, and social commentary (Agawu, 2003). Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE), an English-based creole that blends colonial influences with indigenous African linguistic features, exemplifies this interplay, serving as a versatile

medium that bridges ethnic divides in popular music (Faraclas, 1996).

Nigerian Pidgin English, spoken by over 100 million Nigerians as a lingua franca, facilitates communication across the over 500 languages in the country, often incorporating code-switching and slang that enhance musical expressiveness (Jowitt, 2019). In Nigerian music, from Afrobeat pioneers like Fela Kuti who used Pidgin for social commentary on politics and everyday struggles to contemporary Afrobeats artists, language functions not just as lyrics but as a rhythmic and tonal tool that mirrors societal realities (Adedeji, 2015). This linguistic choice not only democratizes music for diverse audiences but also revitalizes NPE by embedding it in global cultural exports, illustrating music's power to sustain and evolve creole languages in postcolonial settings (Mann, 1996).

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design with elements of ethnomusicological and sociolinguistic analysis to explore the role of Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) as a lingua franca in selected popular music genres, primarily Afrobeats, hip-hop, and highlife. Data collection involved purposive sampling of representative songs spanning the 1950s to the 20th century, focusing on tracks where Pidgin features prominently. The corpus includes iconic works by Fela Kuti (e.g., "Zombie," "Sorrow Tears and Blood"), early hip-hop/Afrobeats pioneers (e.g., Ice Prince, Davido, M.I Abaga), and contemporary artists (e.g., Asake, Sound Sultan, Phyno). Song selection prioritized diversity in era, artist background, and Pidgin usage intensity, drawing from publicly available lyrics on platforms such as Genius, Musixmatch, and official artist releases.

Theoretical Framework:

This study adopts Creolization Theory propounded by Édouard Glissant as its primary theoretical lens to examine the role of Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) as a lingua franca in popular music genres such as Afrobeats, hip-hop, and highlife. Creolization theory posits that cultural forms emerging from intense contact situations often under colonial or postcolonial conditions generate new, hybrid entities that are neither mere reproductions of source cultures nor simple mixtures, but innovative systems with their own structural integrity and expressive potential (Glissant, 1997; Cohen & Toninato, 2010). In linguistic terms, creolization describes the process by which pidgin, a simplified contact language expands into a full-fledged creole with native speakers, enriched grammar, and expanded lexicon, reflecting the creative agency of its users (Holm, 2000). Applied to music, the theory illuminates how NPE functions not merely as a communicative tool but as a dynamic site of cultural fusion, where global influences intersect with local substrates to produce distinctive sonic and lyrical innovations (Bilby, 2010; Baron & Cara, 2011). In the context of Nigerian popular music, creolization explains the emergence of a "glocal" aesthetic: artists strategically deploy Pidgin to negotiate identity, resist linguistic hegemony, and foster inclusivity across ethnic boundaries, while simultaneously exporting hybrid forms that resonate globally (Shepherd & Devine, 2015).

Historical Development of Nigerian Pidgin English

Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) has evolved into a unifying force, spoken by virtually every Nigerian and even some non-Nigerians. Beyond its role as a lingua franca or home language, NPE thrives in diverse settings especially in households where parents hail from different ethnic groups or live in multi-ethnic communities (Balogun, 2013). NPE transcends socio-cultural boundaries: Students in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria default to it when vibing with peers from different backgrounds. Nigerians abroad often use it to communicate with fellow countrymen over other languages (Onyeche, 2004). Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) functions as

a profound emblem of national identity for Nigerians, both at home and in the diaspora, signifying their shared identity in everyday interactions. Even among highly educated individuals, conversations in Standard English can create a sense of formality or detachment; NPE effectively eliminates this barrier, promoting closeness and informality (Osa, 1986; Osoba, 2015). For contemporary Nigerians, Pidgin represents a medium of solidarity and equality.

Pinpointing the exact origins of NPE in Nigeria remains challenging due to the absence of historical records or archaeological evidence. Nonetheless, some form of pidgin has long existed in the region, driven by Nigeria's inherent multilingualism evidenced by ongoing use of pidginized Hausa among non-native speakers in markets near Lake Chad and pidginized Igbo in certain Niger Delta trading areas (Faraclas, 1996). The diverse ethnic groups comprising Nigeria lack a common indigenous language but require regular communication, particularly for commerce, without the burden of mastering one another's tongues (Thomason, 2008). Crucially, European colonizers, first the Portuguese and later the British showed little interest in learning local languages (Faraclas, 1996). Consequently, a simplified contact variety emerged, sufficient for basic transactions rather than full fluency (Thomason, 2001). The vocabulary of NPE draws extensively from English and various Nigerian languages (cf. Versteegh, 1984), while its grammar, morphology, and phonology blend English features with indigenous ones, resulting in a system generally less complex than the source languages, with reduced lexicon, morphology, syntactic and phonological variations (Rickford, 1978). Over time, NPE has evolved distinct structural characteristics and now stands as Nigeria's most prevalent language, surpassing the combined speakers of Standard English and individual indigenous languages (Osoba, 2015).

Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) is mainly spoken, not written. It emerged for practical communication, not requiring literacy (Holm, 2004; de Swaan, 2010, as cited in Enwata, 2015). Historically, it was neither formally taught in educational institutions nor employed in official contexts. This situation has evolved, however, with NPE now increasingly appearing in written forms, although a standardized orthography remains undeveloped (Enwata, 2015). The absence of an authoritative body to regulate its spelling contributes to this lack of uniformity, compounded by Nigeria's linguistic diversity. For instance, Yoruba-influenced speakers render "sorry" or "take care" as "*pele*," whereas Igbo-influenced users spell the equivalent as "*kpele*" (Enwata, 2015). Nevertheless, the language has gained considerable scholarly attention within Nigerian academic circles, where researchers examine its phonological, grammatical, and sociolinguistic dimensions to facilitate potential standardization (Enwata, 2015). Numerous studies have already examined the multifaceted applications and structural features of Nigerian Pidgin English, providing essential foundations for potential standardization in the future (as cited in Enwata, 2015). These investigations cover a wide range of dimensions, including its sociolinguistic functions among Nigerian diaspora communities in Sweden (Onyeche, 2004), syntactic properties (Aziza, 2015), incorporation of bilingual verbs (Mowarin, 2014), arguments for its legitimacy and defence as a valid language variety (Balogun, 2013), historical and descriptive accounts of its development (Faraclas, 1996), creative deployment in literary poetry (Zabus, 2006), employment in media advertisements and discourse patterns (Osoba 2015), as well as linguistic innovation in advertising contexts (Mensah & Ndimele, 2014), among several other contributions.

Popular Music in Nigeria

Popular music in Nigeria evolves through dynamic interactions with diverse indigenous traditional genres and Western-influenced art music, drawing richly from styles including

highlife, afrobeat, fuji, waka, and juju. These popular forms have become deeply embedded and widely embraced across all socioeconomic levels of Nigerian society. As scholars have observed, the success of popular music largely depends on the synergy between artists' creative vision and the broad appeal and acceptance it garners from audiences (Onyeji & Onyeji, 2025). Definitions of popular music vary across scholarly perspectives, yet they consistently emphasize its commercial orientation, broad accessibility, and widespread listener engagement. Shuker (2001) describes it as mass-produced music aimed at a large consumer base, covering diverse styles like rock, pop, dance, hip-hop, and R&B. Similarly, Connolly and Krueger (2005) characterize popular music as contemporary works by artists and composers that enjoy extensive popularity. Rojek (2011) frames the "popular" as widely favored cultural practices and products, positioning popular music as a broad category that represents "the people's music" in its entirety. Aligning with these interpretations, Adedeji (2017) argues that popular music prioritizes audience gratification, featuring strong crowd appeal and incorporating multiple stylistic elements.

Central to these conceptualizations is the idea that artists deliberately craft popular music to achieve mass sonic resonance and emotional connection with listeners. In the Nigerian context, as Onyeji (2025) observes, popular music develops through interactions with both traditional genres and art music forms, nourishing styles such as highlife, afrobeat, fuji, waka, and juju, which are deeply rooted and valued across various socioeconomic groups. Onyeji (2025) further notes that religious forces have profoundly shaped Nigerian popular music: Christianity played a key role in the emergence of idioms like juju, whereas Islamic traditions significantly influenced the development of fuji music, building on earlier observations by Adedeji (2017).

In addition to these primary religious influences, globalization driven by modern media, advanced technology, and cross-border cultural exchanges has emerged as a pivotal force in molding the evolution of popular music in Nigeria (Onyeji & Onyeji, 2025). The ongoing prominence and relevance of popular music persistently generate scholarly debates, diverse viewpoints, and sustained research attention. As a vibrant field drawing multifaceted critical analyses, Nigerian popular music encompasses unique forms, stylistic innovations, and their offshoots. Throughout the 20th century, the country saw the emergence of genres including disco, blues, highlife, reggae, Afrobeat, jazz, juju, and Congo. In the present era, the landscape has expanded further with styles like hip hop, which has garnered substantial enthusiasm among young audiences (Onyeji & Onyeji, 2025). This discussion centers on Nigerian Pidgin English as a lingua franca in selected popular music genres, particularly its pervasive and transformative role in contemporary Nigerian expressions such as Afrobeats, hip-hop, and related hybrid styles.

Pidgin in Nigerian Popular Music

Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) has played a pivotal role in the development of popular music genres, emerging as a tool for broad accessibility and cultural resonance in Nigeria's multilingual society. Its adoption began in mid-20th-century styles like highlife and jùjú, where artists incorporated Pidgin to bridge ethnic divides and appeal to urban audiences (Waterman, 1990; Olatunji, 2001).

In highlife, particularly the Igbo variant popularized in the 1950s–1970s, Pidgin featured prominently alongside indigenous languages, as seen in Prince Nico Mbarga's iconic 1976 hit "Sweet Mother" Africa's best-selling single at the time which used Pidgin to convey universal themes of maternal love, achieving pan-African reach (Emielu, 2011; African Music Library, n.d.). Similarly, artists like Victor Uwaifo and Osita Osadebe blended Pidgin with local dialects to enhance communal refrains and emotional delivery in guitar-band highlife. For instance,

Victor Uwaifo incorporated Pidgin in tracks such as "**Guitar Boy**" released in 1966, where lively storytelling in Pidgin amplified the song's energetic appeal and transcended linguistic barriers across West Africa (Waterman, 1990). Chief Osita Osadebe, a master of Igbo highlife, frequently mixed Pidgin with Igbo in songs like "**Aye Mama**", using phrases such as "wetin man go do for this world wey people no go talk" to reflect on life's inevitabilities and foster audience participation through relatable, everyday expressions.

The transition to Afrobeat in the 1970s marked a deliberate strategic use of Pidgin for political and pan-African messaging. Fela Kuti, the genre's pioneer, sang almost exclusively in Pidgin (combined with Yoruba) to ensure his critiques of corruption and colonialism reached a mass, non-elite audience across West Africa, rather than limiting to Yoruba speakers (Moore, 1982; Olaniyan, 2004). Fela Kuti's sharp critiques targeted issues central to the survival and dignity of ordinary Nigerians and the broader Black African experience. To effectively deliver these powerful messages in a nation as linguistically and culturally diverse as Nigeria, he needed a communicative tool that was accessible, engaging, and free from elitist barriers. Nigerian Pidgin English emerged as the ideal choice, widely comprehensible across social classes especially among the masses, the oppressed, and the marginalized, who formed the core of his intended audience (Waterman, 1998).

This approach democratized his music, using Pidgin's simplicity and relatability to amplify themes of resistance, African unity, and anti-imperialism. Below are four exemplary songs, with key lyric excerpts and analysis focusing on Pidgin's role in conveying political depth.

1. "**Zombie**" (1976): This track satirizes the Nigerian military as mindless "zombies" following orders blindly. Lyrics excerpt:

Zombie no go go, unless you tell am to go
Zombie no go stop, unless you tell am to stop
Zombie no go turn, unless you tell am to turn
Zombie no go think, unless you tell am to think.

The repetitive Pidgin structure ("tell am to") mimics military commands, emphasizing mechanical obedience and critiquing authoritarianism. Pidgin's colloquialism makes the anti-government message accessible, fostering pan-African solidarity against oppression, as the song's zombie metaphor resonated across West Africa, inciting public outrage and a government raid on Kuti's commune.

2. "**Sorrow Tears and Blood**" (1977): Inspired by a military raid on Kuti's home, this song condemns police and army brutality. Lyrics excerpt:

Everybody run run run
Everybody scatter scatter
Some people lost some bread
Someone nearly die
Someone just die
Police dey come, army dey come
Confusion everywhere.

Pidgin phrases like "run run run" and "scatter scatter" evoke chaotic urgency, while "them leave sorrow, tears and blood" (repeated as "them regular trademark") indicts state violence as routine. The use of Pidgin underscores everyday Nigerian experiences, promoting pan-African awareness of shared struggles against colonial legacies.

3. "**International Thief Thief (I.T.T.)**" (1979): Targeting multinational corporations like ITT

for exploiting Africa, this song exposes neocolonialism. Lyrics excerpt (from common sources, as Genius page was inaccessible):

International thief thief
Them go dey steal dey go
Them go dey rob dey go
Them no dey tire.

Pidgin terms like "dey steal dey go" and "dey rob dey go" rhythmically hammer home endless corporate greed, blending with Yoruba for cultural depth. The analysis reveals Pidgin's satirical edge, making critiques of economic imperialism relatable to non-elite Africans, urging pan-African unity against foreign exploitation and local complicity.

4. **"Teacher Don't Teach Me Nonsense" (1986):** This critiques colonial education and imposed democracy ("democracy"). Lyrics excerpt:

Teacher, teacher-o na the lecturer be your name
Teacher, teacher-o na the lecture be the same
Make-ee no teach-ee me again oh
As soon teaching finish yes, da thing-ee it gon die it dey-o.

Pidgin distortions like "democracy" (demonstration of craze) mock Western systems, while "Oyinbo teach-ee us" attacks European "teachers" for cultural imposition. The song's Pidgin-Yoruba mix analyzes how foreign influences perpetuate corruption, calling for African self-reliance and pan-African rejection of neocolonial "nonsense."

Fela's deliberate shift from Standard English and Yoruba to Pidgin reflected both artistic creativity and acute social awareness (Labinjoh, 1982). He recognized a pervasive postcolonial mindset among Africans, a tendency to uncritically privilege foreign cultural elements over indigenous ones, often at the expense of self-pride (Labinjoh, 1982). Through his music, Fela sought to challenge this "colonial mentality," awakening listeners to embrace their Black identity and rich heritage. Pidgin proved indispensable here, allowing him to simplify complex socio-political ideas without losing impact, making his commentary relatable to everyday people rather than just the educated elite. By employing Pidgin, Fela ensured his Afrobeat transcended ethnic and regional boundaries, appealing directly to the common person while extending its reach across West Africa, where similar pidgin varieties exist. This linguistic decision infused his work with vibrancy, authenticity, and performative energy, enhancing its entertainment appeal while serving deeper narrative purposes (Jesse, 2001, as cited in Ewata, 2015; Zabus, as cited in Ewata, 2015). Ultimately, in Fela's hands, Pidgin transformed Afrobeat into more than mere music, it became a storytelling medium that built mood, developed themes, and conveyed profound artistic and political truths (Oikelome, 2013).

By the 2000s–2010s, as Nigerian hip-hop and Afrobeats rose with influences from American rap and digital production, Pidgin became dominant for authenticity and national appeal. Artists prioritized it over standard English to connect with youth and urban listeners, facilitating the genres' explosion via platforms like MTV Base Africa (Adedeji, 2010; Shipley, 2013). This evolution underscores Pidgin's function in democratizing music, enabling cross-ethnic unity and global export while preserving local flavor. Below are three exemplary songs from this era, with key lyric excerpts and textual analysis highlighting Pidgin's role in enhancing relatability, cultural fusion, and social commentary.

1. **Ice Prince - "Oleku" (feat. Brymo, 2010):** This breakout hit celebrates confidence and success in a party vibe. Lyrics excerpt:

Oleku, tell me something wey I no fit do
So, love my haters
I'm getting my cake, I'm on the cake list
Beating my chest, I'm on the ape list.

Pidgin phrases like "wey I no fit do" (what I can't do) and "oleku" (a slang for being "hot" or exceptional) infuse the track with street-level authenticity, blending English metaphors (e.g., "getting my cake") for global appeal while using Pidgin's rhythmic repetition to foster communal chanting, appealing to urban youth across ethnic lines and boosting the song's viral spread in Nigeria and beyond.

2. **M.I Abaga - "Action Film" (feat. Brymo, 2010):** A boastful track portraying the artist as a cinematic hero. Lyrics excerpt:

I will like to take you for a ride,
I'll be your superman,
I'll take you to the sky
So fun won, *kpe ko wa tasi mi*,
Cause I be actor for this action film.

Pidgin elements like "I be actor" (I am an actor) and "*fun won, kpe ko wa tasi mi*" (tell them to come chase me, in Yoruba-Pidgin mix) create a playful, filmic narrative, drawing on Hollywood tropes while grounding them in Nigerian slang for authenticity. The analysis shows how Pidgin amplifies bravado and humor, fostering cross-ethnic unity by making the lyrics relatable to young listeners navigating global influences and local realities.

3. **Asake - "Amapiano" (feat. Olamide, 2023):** A vibrant homage to South African Amapiano fused with Afrobeats, boasting dominance and party energy. Lyrics excerpt:

Amapiano, eh, Diano, eh
It's a big vibe, but the girls dem know
Steadily, steadily, Heavily, we are getting lit
Dem no dey call me Mr. Money for no reason o.

Pidgin constructions like "girls dem know," "we are getting lit," and "dem no dey call me" (they don't call me) blend with slang for rhythmic drive and inclusivity. Textually, Pidgin enhances the song's celebratory flow, making boasts about success accessible and danceable, bridging Nigerian youth culture with global trends while reinforcing Asake's street-to-stardom narrative.

Linguistic Features of Pidgin in Song Lyrics

Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) exhibits distinctive linguistic features that make it particularly suited to song lyrics, enhancing rhythmic flow, expressiveness, and audience accessibility in popular music genres like Afrobeats and hip-hop (Akande, 2013; Mensah, 2011). These features rooted in its creole structure, substrate influences from West African languages, and simplification from English include phonological, grammatical, lexical, and pragmatic elements that align seamlessly with musical demands.

Phonologically, NPE favors syllable-timed rhythm over stress-timing, with reduced vowel contrasts and consonant cluster simplification (e.g., "fit" for "feet," "dey" for locative/existential "there is"), creating predictable patterns ideal for melodic repetition and rhyme (Faraclas, 1996; Deuber, 2005). This facilitates catchy hooks and chant-like choruses common in Afrobeats.

Grammatically, key traits include the invariant pre-verbal markers "dey" (progressive/habitual), "don" (completive), and "go" (future/irrealis), absence of inflectional morphology, and serial verb constructions (Mensah & Rowan, 2019). For example, "I dey go" (I am going) or "money

dey" (there is money) allow concise, rhythmic phrasing without tense complexity, enabling rapid delivery in fast-paced tracks (Akande & Salami, 2010).

Lexically, NPE innovates through borrowing, calquing, and slang creation (e.g., "sharperly" for quickly, "japa" for flee/emigrate), often blending with indigenous terms for cultural depth (Igboanusi, 2008). Reduplication for emphasis ("fine fine girl") adds rhythmic intensification, mirroring African oral traditions (Huber, 1999).

Pragmatically, Pidgin's indirectness, proverbs, and code-switching foster inclusivity and solidarity, allowing artists to convey nuanced social commentary while maintaining broad appeal (Akande, 2013).

These features collectively democratize lyrics, making them relatable across socioeconomic and ethnic lines while providing artists with flexible tools for sonic innovation and global resonance (Omoniyi, 2006).

Global Impact and Exportation of Pidgin through Afrobeats

The global rise of Afrobeats, a vibrant fusion of West African rhythms with contemporary pop, hip-hop, and dance elements, has significantly propelled Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) beyond Africa's borders, embedding it into international pop culture and everyday slang. Originating in Nigeria's urban scenes, Afrobeats have transformed from a regional sound into a transnational phenomenon since the 2010s, with artists exporting Pidgin's colloquial charm through catchy lyrics, viral tracks, and high-profile collaborations. This exportation mirrors how Jamaican Patois gained worldwide recognition via reggae and dancehall, as Pidgin-infused phrases from Afrobeats songs enter global vocabularies, influencing non-Nigerian audiences and diaspora communities (The BFA Agency, 2025).

Key Nigerian artists like Burna Boy, Wizkid, Davido, Rema, Asake, and Tems have been instrumental in this process, blending Pidgin with English and local dialects to create accessible, infectious anthems that resonate universally. For instance, Rema's "Calm Down" (2022, remixed with Selena Gomez) became one of the most streamed African songs globally, using Pidgin expressions to convey emotions in a relatable manner, contributing to its chart-topping success and Pidgin's infiltration into American pop (Besse, 2025). Similarly, Davido's collaborations, such as with Beyoncé on "The Lion King: The Gift" (2019), showcase Pidgin's rhythmic flow, helping to normalize its use in mainstream Western music and fashion contexts (Daily Trust, 2025).

Afrobeats' global impact extends to cultural spheres, including dance challenges, festivals, and media, where Pidgin slang like "japa" (to flee/emigrate) or "oleku" (exceptional) has permeated social media trends and non-African vernacular (Jembe, 2024; The Social Talks, n.d.). This linguistic exportation fosters a "Naija" identity worldwide, as seen in diaspora communities and international charts, where Pidgin's simplicity aids cross-cultural adoption (Rolling Stone, 2022). However, challenges like linguistic stigmatization persist, yet Afrobeats' dominance evident in Grammy wins and sold-out tours continues to elevate Pidgin as a symbol of African innovation in global pop (Berkeley B-Side, 2023; NaijaSpider Blog, 2025). Ultimately, through Afrobeats, Pidgin is not just exported but integrated into global narratives, enriching linguistic diversity and affirming Nigeria's cultural soft power.

Conclusion

Nigerian Pidgin English continues to occupy a unique and powerful position in the nation's popular music landscape, balancing enduring challenges with remarkable potential for growth. On one hand, it still carries the burden of stigma, often dismissed as informal or "broken"

English, which limits its acceptance in formal education and official domains. Yet, within music, Pidgin serves as an empowering force, giving voice to everyday experiences, street wisdom, and shared struggles in a way that feels immediate and authentic.

Looking to the future, the increasing documentation of its forms and uses opens pathways toward greater standardization, even if full uniformity remains elusive in Nigeria's richly diverse linguistic environment. Its growing presence in digital media, literature, and global platforms suggests a bright trajectory, where Pidgin could gain wider recognition without losing its organic, flexible character.

Above all, Pidgin's cultural significance lies in its quiet yet profound resilience. By bridging ethnic and social divides, it has helped forge a collective Nigerian identity while fueling the creative energy that drives Afrobeats and other popular genres to worldwide prominence. It transforms local stories into universal songs, preserves oral traditions in modern forms, and carries Nigeria's vibrant spirit across borders. In an era of rapid globalization, Pidgin stands as a testament to cultural adaptability and pride, ensuring that Nigerian popular music remains deeply rooted even as it conquers global stages. Its journey reflects not just linguistic evolution, but the enduring strength of a people expressing themselves on their own terms.

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The Church As A Catalyst For Sustainable Development: A Case Study Of Ecwa Kaduna South Dcc'S In Kaduna State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of the Church as a catalyst for sustainable development using ECWA Kaduna South DCC as a case study. The research is driven by the growing need for faith-based organizations to support government efforts in addressing socio-economic challenges in Nigerian communities. The main objective of the study is to examine how ECWA Kaduna South DCC's programmes contribute to education, economic empowerment, health, and social welfare in Kaduna State. The study adopts a qualitative research method that relies on data gathered from library books, internet sources, relevant journals, and documented church activities. The Social Capital Theory serves as the theoretical framework, emphasizing how networks, community trust, and collective action strengthen development outcomes. Findings reveal that ECWA Kaduna South DCC has initiated notable developmental activities such as scholarship schemes, vocational training, skill acquisition programs, and health outreach services, all of which positively influence community well-being. However, challenges including limited financial resources, insecurity, and weak institutional collaboration restrict the full execution of these programmes. The study concludes that the Church plays an essential role in advancing sustainable development, especially in areas where government interventions are insufficient. It recommends stronger church-government partnerships, improved donor engagement, enhanced monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and the expansion of current programmes to reach more vulnerable populations, thereby increasing the developmental impact of ECWA Kaduna South DCC in Kaduna State, Nigeria

Keywords: Church Development; Sustainable Development; ECWA Kaduna South; Social Capital Theory; Community Empowerment.

Introduction

The role of the Church in facilitating community transformation and sustainable development has attracted significant scholarly attention in recent decades. In many developing nations, especially across sub-Saharan Africa, faith-based organizations (FBOs) have become major contributors to social welfare, education, healthcare, and poverty alleviation (Afolabi, 2018). This expanding role is largely due to the Church's historical presence, moral authority, and close relationship with marginalized populations. As government institutions in Nigeria face challenges such as inadequate funding, insecurity, and weak policy implementation, the Church increasingly fills development gaps by initiating programmes that directly respond to community needs (Adedibu, 2020). Against this backdrop, the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) Kaduna South District Church Council (DCC) represents a significant example of a faith-based institution whose developmental interventions warrant academic investigation.

Sustainable development, as defined by the United Nations (2015), involves promoting social, economic, and environmental progress without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The Church, through its moral teachings and community outreach, provides a platform for addressing issues such as poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, and social inequality. Studies have shown that religious institutions often leverage social capital trust, networks, and shared values to mobilize resources and enhance community participation in development activities (Putnam, 2000). This makes the Church a unique and credible actor in advancing sustainable development at the grassroots level.

The developmental programmes of ECWA Kaduna South DCC, including vocational training, scholarship schemes, poverty alleviation initiatives, and health outreach services, illustrate the Church's commitment to improving community well-being. These initiatives are particularly essential in Kaduna State, where socio-economic disparities and recurring conflicts have hindered development progress (Ibrahim, 2021). Yet, despite the Church's contributions, existing literature suggests that faith-based organizations still face constraints such as inadequate funding, limited technical capacity, and weak collaboration with government agencies (Adewale & Odetola, 2019). This makes it important to evaluate both the strengths and the limitations of the Church's developmental role.

This study therefore examines ECWA Kaduna South DCC's developmental contributions within the framework of sustainable development. The introduction establishes the relevance of the topic, situates it within broader academic discourse, and underscores the need to explore how faith-based approaches can contribute to long-term community transformation in Kaduna State.

Conceptual Clarification

Conceptual clarification is essential in academic research to define key terms and provide a framework for understanding the study. In this research, the term Church is understood as a Christian faith community organized around shared beliefs, worship practices, and moral guidance, extending its influence beyond spiritual matters to social and developmental engagement (Afolabi, 2018). Specifically, this study focuses on the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) Kaduna South District Church Council (DCC), which coordinates congregational activities and implements programmes aimed at improving the welfare of its members and surrounding communities.

Sustainable development refers to growth and progress that meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs (United Nations, 2015). This concept integrates economic empowerment, social welfare, and environmental sustainability. Within the context of faith-based interventions, sustainable development emphasizes initiatives that produce long-term benefits, addressing issues such as poverty, unemployment, education deficits, and inadequate healthcare (Adedibu, 2020). Faith-based organizations are uniquely positioned to contribute to sustainable development due to their moral authority, social networks, and community trust (Putnam, 2000).

The phrase catalyst for development highlights the Church's role in initiating, promoting, and accelerating social transformation. Acting as a catalyst, the Church mobilizes resources, encourages community participation, and fosters collaborations with governmental and non-governmental actors to enhance development outcomes (Adewale & Odetola, 2019). In this context, ECWA Kaduna South DCC serves as a catalyst by implementing programmes that stimulate human capacity development, improve livelihoods, and enhance social cohesion.

Developmental programmes refer to structured initiatives designed to improve community welfare, such as vocational training, scholarship schemes, health outreach programmes, and poverty-alleviation efforts. These programmes aim to provide tangible benefits to the community while building local capacity for self-reliance (Ibrahim, 2021). Furthermore, the concept of faith-based organizations (FBOs) is crucial, as these institutions engage in development activities guided by moral and ethical principles, ensuring that social interventions align with community values and promote holistic human development (Afolabi, 2018).

By clarifying these concepts, this study establishes a clear framework for examining the role of ECWA Kaduna South DCC in fostering sustainable development and demonstrates the intersection of faith, social responsibility, and community transformation in Kaduna State.

A Theoretical Framework of Social Capital Theory Propounded by Bourdieu in 1986

Social Capital Theory provides a useful framework for understanding how the Church can act as a catalyst for sustainable development. Social capital refers to the networks, norms, and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation among individuals and groups to achieve common goals (Putnam, 2000). In the context of faith-based organizations, social capital enables churches to mobilize resources, foster collective action, and strengthen community participation in developmental programmes. The theory emphasizes that social relationships are not merely social constructs but also valuable assets that can be leveraged for social and economic progress (Bourdieu, 1986).

The Church, particularly ECWA Kaduna South DCC, exemplifies the application of social capital by creating strong networks among congregants, local leaders, and partner organizations. These networks promote trust, shared values, and mutual support, which are essential for the successful implementation of development initiatives such as vocational training, scholarship schemes, health outreach, and poverty alleviation (Coleman, 1988). By building social capital, the Church encourages active participation from community members, enhances collective responsibility, and ensures that developmental programmes are culturally acceptable and sustainable.

Social capital is generally categorized into three forms: bonding, bridging, and linking. Bonding social capital refers to close connections among members of the same group, such as church congregants, which fosters mutual support and cooperation. Bridging social capital refers to connections across different groups, facilitating access to broader resources, information, and

opportunities. Linking social capital involves relationships with institutions and authorities that have power or resources, enabling churches to influence policy or secure funding for developmental projects (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). ECWA Kaduna South DCC leverages all three forms by strengthening congregational unity, collaborating with other religious and community groups, and engaging with government and NGOs to enhance the effectiveness of its programs.

By applying Social Capital Theory, this study highlights how the Church's relational networks, trust-building mechanisms, and communal values serve as vital resources for promoting sustainable development. The theory demonstrates that beyond spiritual guidance, the Church's social influence and organizational capacity can significantly improve education, health, and economic welfare in communities, particularly in contexts where government support is limited.

Historical overview of ECWA Kaduna South DCC and its Developmental Mandate

The origins of ECWA trace to the missionary work of Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), which in 1893 sent three missionaries Walter Gowans, Thomas Kent, and Rowland Bingham to Nigeria with the aim of evangelizing the "Sudan" region of West Africa (ECWA Global, 2021). Their determination, despite severe health risks and the death of two of them within their first year, laid the foundation for what would eventually become ECWA (ECWA Global, 2021).

Over the following decades, SIM established a network of mission stations across what is now central and northern Nigeria, planting churches, founding Bible schools, and initiating early forms of social outreach (Corwin, 2018). By the mid-20th century, there was growing recognition among SIM leadership and Nigerian Christians that the local churches should become self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating rather than remain under foreign missionary control (ECWA Global, 2020).

This process of indigenization culminated in January 1954, during a conference held in Kagoro (present-day Kaduna State, Nigeria), where a constitution was adopted and the name Evangelical Church of West Africa was officially adopted (ECWA Global, n.d.; Christian Events Nigeria, 2024). A few months later from May 18-20, 1954 the first General Church Assembly (now General Church Council) convened at Egbe in present-day Kogi State, marking the formal institutional establishment of the indigenous church body (ECWA Global, n.d.; ECWA USA, n.d.).

With independence from SIM, ECWA assumed leadership over mission stations, Bible schools, academic institutions, and medical programs previously managed by SIM (ECWA Central Area, n.d.). Over the years ECWA expanded rapidly establishing theological seminaries, secondary and tertiary schools, health facilities, and other social ministries thus embedding a "wholistic mandate": combining evangelism with education, healthcare, and community development (ECWA Central Area, n.d.; Africa Prime News, 2022).

By the early 21st century, ECWA had grown to become one of Nigeria's largest Protestant denominations, with membership reportedly over ten million and operating through numerous District Church Councils (DCCs) across all states (Christian Events Nigeria, 2024; ECWA USA, n.d.). Among these is ECWA Kaduna South DCC. Historical data show that the first ECWA church in Kaduna was established around 1952 prior to the formal 1954 constitution and that over time more than 200 local churches have emerged under various district councils in the region (Radio Nigeria Kaduna, 2022).

This legacy means that for Kaduna South DCC, the church is not just a place of worship but an

institution with established organizational structure, doctrinal identity, and a commitment to social welfare education, health, empowerment, and community development. The early missionary impetus, subsequent indigenization, and expansive growth have positioned ECWA to pursue a developmental mandate alongside its spiritual mission.

Thus, understanding ECWA's historical evolution from foreign mission roots through indigenization and institutional formation, to expansive engagement in education, health, and social services is essential for comprehending why and how ECWA Kaduna South DCC carries a developmental mandate. This background situates the Church's dual vocation: spiritual leadership and community transformation through concrete social interventions.

Theological foundations for Sustainable Development in the ECWA Doctrine

Theologically grounding sustainable development within a Christian context involves understanding God's mandate for humanity to steward creation, care for the poor, uphold justice, and enact holistic mission. For ECWA which combines evangelical Protestant doctrine with social engagement in education, health, and community welfare these theological foundations provide both moral impetus and practical guidance for developmental programmes.

A central theological principle is stewardship. Christian stewardship presupposes that all created resources belong to God, and human beings are entrusted to manage them responsibly (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15). This entails caring for the environment, using material and human resources wisely, and ensuring the common good. The stewardship theology aligns with sustainable development goals where resource use, equity, and intergenerational responsibility are emphasized. In Nigeria (and broadly), faith-based organizations have been identified as advocates for ethical resource management promoting transparency, accountability, and social responsibility which supports community development and environmental care (Ives et al., 2022; Communities First, n.d.; Nanthambwe & Magezi, 2022).

Another foundational concept is social justice and preferential concern for the poor and marginalized. Christian doctrine consistently emphasizes compassion, mercy, and justice, especially toward the vulnerable. Scriptural mandates such as caring for orphans, widows, the sick, and the poor, as well as Jesus' teaching that whatever is done to "the least of these" is done unto Him (Matthew 25:35-40), constitute a divine call to uplift the needy. Under a theology of development, the church becomes a moral agent committed to addressing structural inequalities (Alawode, 2016; Sele & Wanjiku, 2024). In contexts where poverty and inequality persist such as many communities in Nigeria a theology that privileges the poor challenges churches to develop programmes targeting education, health, skill acquisition, and economic empowerment. This aligns with sustainable development's social dimension, ensuring inclusive progress rather than growth for only the privileged (Sele & Wanjiku, 2022; Nanthambwe & Magezi, 2024).

Closely related is communal solidarity and collective responsibility, rooted in Christian understanding of community (*koinonia*). Believers are called to mutual care, shared burdens, and collective flourishing rather than individualism. When churches organize such solidarity through social programmes, they foster social capital, build cohesion, and address community-level structural problems thereby contributing to sustainable development at grassroots level (Alawode, 2016; Ives et al., 2022).

Moreover, the concept of holistic mission or "integral mission" provides a theological basis for combining evangelism with social involvement. Integral mission rejects a dichotomy between

spiritual concern and social responsibility; it holds that the gospel's good news must affect the whole person and community body, mind, soul, and social circumstances. What is often framed as dualistic mission (evangelism only) is replaced with a mission that embraces justice, mercy, healing, and societal transformation. This theological stance allows churches like ECWA to engage in education, health services, poverty alleviation, and community development, seeing them as part of their core mandate rather than optional extras (Mission Theology Anglican, n.d.; Communities First, n.d.).

Finally, ethical governance and accountability grounded in faith provide a foundation for sustainable institutional practices. When faith-based organizations operate under stewardship theology, they tend to emphasize financial accountability, transparent use of resources, and integrity in social interventions. This theological grounding helps ensure that developmental programmes are managed ethically, resources are used equitably, and beneficiaries are served with dignity all critical for sustainable impact and trust (Nanthambwe & Magezi, 2022; Communities First, 2023).

Thus, for ECWA, sustainable development is not a secular add-on, but deeply rooted in biblical theology and Christian social ethics stewardship of creation, justice for the poor, communal solidarity, holistic mission, and ethical accountability. These theological foundations justify and guide the Church's developmental mandate, legitimizing education, healthcare, empowerment, and welfare initiatives as expressions of faithful obedience to God's will. As such, ECWA's social programmes reflect a theological vision that integrates spiritual and material well-being, promoting long-term, inclusive, and just community transformation (Alawode, 2016; Sele & Wanjiku, 2022; Ives et al., 2022; Nanthambwe & Magezi, 2024).

Assessment of ECWA Kaduna South DCC's Educational Programs and their Community Impact

Education is a critical avenue through which faith-based organizations contribute to sustainable development and social transformation. ECWA Kaduna South District Church Council (DCC) has historically prioritized educational initiatives as part of its broader developmental mandate. These programs encompass formal schooling, vocational training, scholarship schemes, and adult literacy programs aimed at equipping individuals with skills, knowledge, and ethical frameworks to thrive in both spiritual and secular contexts (Adedibu, 2020; ECWA Global, 2021).

The DCC's educational programs include primary and secondary schools, Bible colleges, and vocational training centers. By integrating moral and religious instruction with academic learning, ECWA seeks to produce well-rounded individuals capable of contributing positively to society. Research indicates that faith-based educational programs often promote higher retention and discipline among students due to the integration of spiritual values in learning environments (Afolabi, 2018). These programs have become pivotal in communities where government-provided educational infrastructure is limited, thereby bridging access gaps and promoting literacy and skills acquisition.

One of the significant impacts of ECWA Kaduna South DCC's educational programs is community empowerment. Graduates of ECWA-affiliated institutions have gone on to pursue higher education, vocational careers, and entrepreneurial ventures, thereby improving household income levels and reducing poverty within the community (Ibrahim, 2021). Vocational training, in particular, equips youths with practical skills in carpentry, tailoring, ICT, and agriculture,

enabling them to generate livelihoods and contribute to local economic development. Furthermore, scholarship programs have increased access for underprivileged students; fostering inclusivity and reducing educational inequalities (Adedibu, 2020).

ECWA's educational interventions also promote social cohesion and moral development. By embedding values of honesty, integrity, service, and community responsibility, these programs cultivate socially responsible citizens who actively participate in community development initiatives (Putnam, 2000). Additionally, the schools often serve as community hubs, hosting seminars, workshops, and awareness campaigns on health, environmental conservation, and civic engagement, further strengthening the link between education and sustainable community development (Afolabi, 2018).

Despite these successes, challenges remain, including inadequate funding, insufficient infrastructure, and occasional teacher shortages, which limit the scalability and reach of educational programs (Ibrahim, 2021). Addressing these challenges requires strategic partnerships with government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and international donors to enhance resource mobilization, infrastructure development, and program sustainability.

Health and Social Welfare Initiatives Implemented by the Church in Kaduna South

Faith-based organizations, including ECWA Kaduna South District Church Council (DCC), have historically played a critical role in promoting health and social welfare in Nigerian communities. Recognizing that holistic mission encompasses both spiritual guidance and material well-being, the Church has implemented programs targeting healthcare delivery, disease prevention, social support, and community empowerment (Adeniran, 2019; ECWA Global, n.d.). These initiatives aim not only to alleviate immediate needs but also to promote sustainable social development within Kaduna South communities.

ECWA Kaduna South DCC's health initiatives are multifaceted. The Church operates clinics and dispensaries that provide primary healthcare services, maternal and child care, vaccination programs, and basic laboratory services. These facilities are especially important in rural and peri-urban areas where government-provided healthcare is limited or inaccessible (Ibrahim & Musa, 2020). In addition to physical health services, the Church organizes health outreach programs, including medical missions and health education campaigns. These campaigns raise awareness about hygiene, nutrition, family planning, malaria prevention, and disease control, thereby promoting preventive healthcare practices among community members (Owolabi et al., 2021).

Social welfare initiatives complement the Church's health programs. ECWA Kaduna South DCC provides support for vulnerable populations, including widows, orphans, persons with disabilities, and the economically disadvantaged. Through food distribution programs, microcredit schemes, and vocational training, the Church seeks to alleviate poverty and enhance self-reliance among marginalized groups (Adedibu, 2020). These programs strengthen social safety nets within the community and foster resilience, particularly in areas affected by conflict or economic instability. An additional area of impact is mental health and psychosocial support. The Church conducts counseling services, support groups, and spiritual guidance sessions aimed at addressing emotional and psychological needs. These services are vital for mitigating stress, depression, and trauma among individuals affected by poverty, displacement, or social disruption (Adeniran, 2019). By integrating mental health awareness with spiritual care, ECWA demonstrates a holistic

approach to well-being that aligns with broader development goals.

The impact of these health and social welfare initiatives extends beyond immediate beneficiaries. Communities experience improved health outcomes, enhanced productivity, and greater social cohesion as individuals and families are better equipped to participate in economic, educational, and civic activities (Ibrahim & Musa, 2020). Moreover, the Church's programs foster a sense of solidarity and communal responsibility, which strengthens social capital and encourages collective action toward development goals (Putnam, 2000).

Despite these achievements, challenges persist, including limited funding, inadequate infrastructure, and a shortage of trained healthcare personnel. Addressing these constraints requires strategic collaboration with government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and international partners to expand service delivery, improve capacity, and ensure sustainability.

The Church's Role in Economic Empowerment and Poverty Reduction within the Community

Faith-based organizations have increasingly assumed active roles in promoting economic empowerment and reducing poverty, particularly in communities where state support is limited or inconsistent. The Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) Kaduna South District Church Council (DCC) exemplifies how religious institutions combine spiritual guidance with socioeconomic interventions to foster holistic community development. Through microfinance initiatives, vocational training, entrepreneurship programs, and community-based cooperatives, the Church contributes significantly to poverty alleviation and economic upliftment (Afolabi, 2018; Adedibu, 2020).

A key strategy employed by ECWA Kaduna South DCC is vocational and skills development. The Church organizes training in carpentry, tailoring, ICT, agriculture, and other trades, equipping both youth and adult members with practical skills that enhance employability and income generation. Studies indicate that faith-based vocational programs not only provide immediate employment opportunities but also instill values of discipline, responsibility, and ethical business practice, which improve long-term economic sustainability (Ibrahim, 2021). In Kaduna South, graduates of these programs have established small businesses and cooperatives that contribute to local economic activity, reduce unemployment, and strengthen household financial security.

Microfinance and cooperative schemes represent another vital aspect of the Church's economic empowerment strategy. ECWA facilitates small loans, savings schemes, and cooperative societies among members to enable access to capital for business start-ups, agricultural production, and other income-generating ventures. These programs empower community members, particularly women and marginalized groups, to achieve financial independence and mitigate vulnerability to poverty (Okoye & Musa, 2019). By promoting responsible borrowing, saving, and reinvestment practices, the Church ensures that participants develop sustainable financial habits that extend beyond short-term assistance.

Additionally, the Church supports entrepreneurial mentorship and business development programs. Mentorship initiatives provide guidance on business planning, market access, and ethical management, ensuring that small businesses remain viable and profitable. This approach aligns with the broader theological perspective of stewardship, where individuals are entrusted to manage resources responsibly for communal benefit (Nanthambwe & Magezi, 2022).

The economic interventions of ECWA Kaduna South DCC also have significant social and

community-wide impacts. Poverty reduction reduces dependence on external aid, fosters social cohesion, and enables families to invest in education, healthcare, and other welfare activities. These initiatives enhance the overall resilience of communities, particularly in regions affected by economic hardship, insecurity, or environmental challenges (Afolabi, 2018).

Thus, despite the successes, challenges remain, including limited financial resources, insufficient monitoring and evaluation of programs, and occasional lack of market access for participants' products. Addressing these challenges requires partnerships with government agencies, NGOs, and private sector actors to improve funding, capacity building, and program sustainability (Okoye & Musa, 2019).

Thus, ECWA Kaduna South DCC plays a pivotal role in economic empowerment and poverty reduction within its community. Through vocational training, microfinance, cooperative schemes, and entrepreneurship mentorship, the Church equips individuals with skills and resources that improve livelihoods and promote sustainable development. By integrating economic initiatives with spiritual and moral formation, ECWA demonstrates a holistic approach to community transformation, addressing both material and social dimensions of poverty.

ECWA Kaduna South DCC and Youth Development: Skills Training, Mentorship, and Empowerment Opportunities

Youth development is a critical component of community advancement, particularly in regions where young people face unemployment, limited educational opportunities, and social vulnerability. The Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) Kaduna South District Church Council (DCC) has recognized the strategic importance of investing in youth as a means of fostering sustainable development and social transformation. Through skills training, mentorship programs, and empowerment initiatives, ECWA Kaduna South DCC equips young people with the tools necessary to become productive, responsible, and socially engaged citizens (Afolabi, 2018; Adedibu, 2020).

A primary avenue for youth engagement is skills training programs. The Church organizes vocational workshops in areas such as information and communication technology (ICT), agriculture, tailoring, carpentry, and entrepreneurship. These programs aim to address unemployment by equipping youth with practical competencies that are directly applicable to the labor market. Research demonstrates that faith-based vocational programs significantly enhance employability and income-generating capacity among participants (Ibrahim, 2021). In Kaduna South, numerous youths who have undergone ECWA training programs have launched small-scale businesses, contributed to household income, and participated actively in local economic activities.

In addition to technical skills, ECWA Kaduna South DCC emphasizes mentorship and moral guidance. The Church provides mentorship programs where experienced leaders and professionals guide youth in personal development, career planning, ethical decision-making and spiritual growth. Mentorship strengthens youths' social networks, promotes self-confidence, and encourages goal-oriented behavior (Nanthambwe & Magezi, 2022). Through these programs, participants receive individualized support and counseling that help navigate challenges such as peer pressure, unemployment, and moral dilemmas, thereby fostering resilience and personal responsibility.

Empowerment initiatives constitute another key dimension of youth development in ECWA Kaduna South. These include scholarship schemes, leadership training, microcredit programs,

and youth-focused community projects. Scholarships increase access to formal education for talented but underprivileged youth, thereby reducing educational inequalities. Leadership training cultivates skills in governance, teamwork, and community service, preparing young people for active participation in church and civic life (Okoye & Musa, 2019). Microcredit programs further empower youth to start small businesses, gain financial independence, and contribute to local economic development.

The cumulative impact of these programs extends beyond individual beneficiaries. By enhancing youth employability, fostering ethical leadership, and encouraging civic participation, ECWA Kaduna South DCC contributes to community stability, social cohesion, and long-term development (Putnam, 2000). Youth empowerment also reduces vulnerability to social vices, such as crime, drug abuse, and radicalization, by providing meaningful opportunities for engagement and self-realization.

Challenges Facing the Church in Implementing Sustainable Development Programs in Kaduna State

Faith-based organizations, including the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) Kaduna South District Church Council (DCC), play significant roles in promoting sustainable development in Nigeria. Through educational programs, health initiatives, economic empowerment, and youth development, the Church seeks to contribute to holistic community transformation. However, the implementation of these programs in Kaduna State faces a range of challenges that limit effectiveness, scalability, and sustainability. Understanding these constraints is essential for improving program outcomes and achieving meaningful community development. A major challenge is financial constraints. Most sustainable development programs require substantial funding for infrastructure, personnel, training, and program materials. Many church-based programs depend on donations, tithes, and voluntary contributions, which are often insufficient or inconsistent (Adedibu, 2020). The lack of adequate funding limits the scale of interventions, reduces outreach capacity, and sometimes forces the Church to prioritize certain programs over others, leaving critical areas underserved.

Human resource limitations also pose significant challenges. Implementing educational, health, and vocational programs requires trained personnel, including teachers, healthcare workers, counselors, and administrators. In Kaduna State, there is often a shortage of qualified professionals willing to work in faith-based or rural settings due to lower remuneration, poor facilities, and insecurity (Ibrahim, 2021). Consequently, program quality may suffer, and the Church faces difficulties in sustaining impactful interventions.

Security and socio-political instability are additional obstacles. Kaduna State has experienced communal tensions, insurgency, and criminal activities that disrupt program activities, limit community participation, and pose risks to staff and beneficiaries (Owolabi et al., 2021). In areas affected by conflict, implementing development programs becomes particularly challenging, as safety concerns and population displacement undermine continuity and effectiveness.

Cultural and societal barriers can also limit program implementation. Traditional norms, religious differences, and community resistance may hinder adoption of certain programs, particularly in areas such as women's empowerment, vocational training for youth, or health education initiatives like family planning (Afolabi, 2018). Overcoming these barriers requires sensitive community engagement, dialogue, and adaptation of programs to local contexts.

Infrastructure deficits further constrain program effectiveness. Poor road networks, limited

electricity, and inadequate water supply affect the delivery of educational and healthcare services, impede access to training centers, and reduce program reach (Okoye & Musa, 2019). Similarly, limited technological resources hinder information dissemination, record-keeping, and program monitoring and evaluation.

Furthermore, limited partnerships and collaborations reduce program sustainability and innovation. While some churches partner with government agencies and NGOs, many operate in isolation, missing opportunities for resource sharing, technical support, and capacity building (Nanthambwe & Magezi, 2022). Such isolation limits the impact and scalability of sustainable development programs.

Meanwhile, ECWA Kaduna South DCC has made commendable contributions to sustainable development; it faces multiple challenges, including financial constraints, human resource limitations, insecurity, cultural barriers, infrastructure deficits, and limited partnerships. Addressing these challenges requires strategic planning, resource mobilization, stakeholder collaboration, and capacity building to strengthen program implementation and ensure sustainable community development in Kaduna State.

Strategies for Enhancing the Church's Contribution to Sustainable Community Development

Faith-based organizations, including the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) Kaduna South District Church Council (DCC), have the potential to significantly influence sustainable community development through education, health, economic empowerment, and youth-focused programs. However, to maximize impact, strategic interventions are necessary to address existing challenges and enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of developmental initiatives.

A fundamental strategy is strengthening partnerships and collaborations. Churches can collaborate with government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international development agencies, and private sector actors to mobilize resources, share technical expertise, and expand program reach (Nanthambwe & Magezi, 2022). Partnerships provide access to funding, capacity-building opportunities, and innovative approaches to program design and delivery. By integrating efforts with other stakeholders, the Church can avoid duplication, ensure accountability, and achieve scalable impact.

Capacity building and professional development is another critical strategy. The effectiveness of educational, health, and vocational programs depends largely on the competence of personnel involved. Regular training, workshops, and certification programs for teachers, healthcare workers, counselors, and program managers enhance service quality, improve program outcomes, and instill professionalism (Ibrahim, 2021). Capacity building also empowers church leaders to implement evidence-based programs, monitor progress, and adapt interventions to community needs.

Diversification and sustainable funding strategies are essential for long-term program continuity. Reliance on donations, tithes, or voluntary contributions often limits program scope and stability. Churches can adopt income-generating projects, such as agricultural ventures, microfinance schemes, and community-based enterprises, to generate funds for development programs (Okoye & Musa, 2019). Additionally, applying for grants from government and international donors can provide structured financial support for larger-scale initiatives.

Community engagement and participatory approaches strengthen the relevance and acceptance of church-led programs. Involving community members in needs assessment, program design,

and decision-making ensures that interventions align with local priorities and cultural contexts (Afolabi, 2018). Participatory approaches also enhance ownership, increase sustainability, and promote social cohesion as community members actively contribute to development initiatives. Integration of technology and innovation can enhance program efficiency and reach. For instance, digital tools can be used for educational content delivery, monitoring and evaluation, health awareness campaigns, and management of microcredit programs. Technology also enables wider communication and data collection, which supports evidence-based decision-making and resource allocation (Owolabi et al., 2021).

Thus, focus on sustainability and holistic development ensures that programs address both immediate and long-term community needs. Combining spiritual guidance with social, economic, and health interventions fosters comprehensive development. Holistic approaches, guided by stewardship and social justice principles, ensure that programs not only alleviate poverty and improve livelihoods but also promote ethical behavior, social cohesion, and environmental stewardship (Adedibu, 2020).

Furthermore, enhancing the Church's contribution to sustainable community development requires deliberate strategies, including partnerships, capacity building, diversified funding, participatory approaches, technology integration, and holistic program design. By adopting these strategies, ECWA Kaduna South DCC can improve the effectiveness, reach, and sustainability of its initiatives, ultimately fostering long-term social, economic, and spiritual transformation within Kaduna South communities.

Conclusion

ECWA Kaduna South District Church Council (DCC) has demonstrated a significant commitment to sustainable community development through its multifaceted programs in education, health, economic empowerment, youth development, and social welfare. These initiatives have not only improved access to essential services but have also enhanced the social, economic, and moral capacities of community members. By integrating spiritual guidance with practical interventions, the Church addresses both immediate needs and long-term developmental goals, fostering holistic transformation. However, challenges such as financial constraints, limited human resources, infrastructure deficits, security concerns, and cultural barriers continue to limit the full potential of these programs. Despite these obstacles, the Church's strategic engagement with the community underscores the crucial role faith-based organizations play in promoting sustainable development in Kaduna South and similar contexts.

Recommendations

- i. ECWA Kaduna South DCC should engage more actively with government agencies, NGOs, international development organizations, and private sector actors to mobilize resources, share expertise, and expand the reach of its programs.
- ii. The Church should diversify funding sources through income-generating projects, grant applications, and community-based fundraising initiatives to ensure the sustainability of its development programs.
- iii. There should be a regular training and professional development for staff, volunteers, and program coordinators to improve the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of educational, health, and empowerment initiatives.
- iv. Actively involving community members in program planning, decision-making, and

implementation will ensure interventions are culturally relevant, widely accepted, and sustainable.

- v. Integrating digital tools for program delivery, monitoring, and evaluation can improve efficiency, data management, and communication with beneficiaries, enhancing overall program impact.
- vi. The Church should continue to design programs that address both immediate social and economic needs while promoting moral, ethical, and environmental stewardship to ensure sustainable community transformation.

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Effect of Context Cues Strategy on Students' Literal Comprehension Among Secondary School Students In Kontagora Metropolis, Niger State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of context cues strategy on literal comprehension among Senior Secondary School Two (SS2) students in Kontagora Metropolis, Niger State, Nigeria. Employing a quasi-experimental pre-test, post-test control group design, 160 students from two public schools were purposively sampled (80 males in the experimental group receiving explicit context cues instruction and 80 females in the control group exposed to conventional methods) over six weeks. Data were collected using a validated 20-item Reading Comprehension Achievement Test (RDRCAT) and analyzed via descriptive statistics and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) at a 0.05 significance level. Results revealed a statistically significant improvement in literal comprehension for the experimental group (mean gain = 1.73, $F(1,157) = 101.05$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .392$), indicating a large effect size and superior performance over the control group (mean gain = 0.44). Grounded in Rumelhart's (1977) Interactive Reading Model, the findings underscore the strategy's efficacy in enhancing explicit text extraction through semantic, syntactic, graphophonic, and pragmatic cues. Recommendations include integrating context cues into the national English curriculum and mandating teacher training to address foundational literacy deficits in under-resourced northern Nigerian contexts.

Keywords: *Context cues strategy; literal comprehension; quasi-experimental design; reading intervention; secondary education; Nigerian ESL; instructional efficacy*

Introduction

Context cues strategy is a reading approach that teaches learners to use surrounding words, sentence structure, and overall text meaning to infer the meaning of unfamiliar words and ideas while reading. The study was prompted by the persistent poor reading comprehension performance of secondary school students, especially their difficulty in understanding

vocabulary, making inferences, and critically interpreting texts due to overreliance on rote learning and ineffective traditional teaching methods.

Reading comprehension is a foundational skill in secondary education, enabling students to extract and construct meaning from texts across disciplines such as literature, science, and social studies. Literal comprehension, as the entry-level domain of this process, involves identifying and recalling explicitly stated information, facts, and details directly from the text (Snow, 2002; Sohn, 2023). In Nigerian secondary schools, particularly in northern regions like Kontagora Metropolis, Niger State, students often exhibit deficiencies in literal comprehension due to instructional practices that prioritize rote memorization over strategic engagement with textual cues (Agbo, Kadiri & Ekwueme, 2023; Hussain, 2024). This limits their ability to grasp surface-level meanings, hindering progression to higher-order skills like inference and evaluation.

The context cues strategy emerges as a promising intervention, training students to use semantic (e.g., synonyms, definitions), syntactic (e.g., sentence structure), graphophonic (e.g., word patterns), and pragmatic (e.g., real-world knowledge) cues embedded in texts to decode explicit content (Le Van Tuyen & Huyen, 2019; Che Ani et al., 2023). By fostering active interaction with surrounding textual elements, this approach enhances literal understanding without external aids like dictionaries, promoting autonomy and fluency (National Reading Panel, 2000). Despite global evidence of its efficacy (e.g., Mutmainnah et al., 2021; İlter, 2022), localized studies in Nigeria, especially in under-resourced northern contexts, remain scarce, creating a gap in adapting this strategy to address literal comprehension challenges amid cultural-linguistic diversity and resource constraints.

This study investigates the effect of context cues strategy on literal comprehension among SS2 students in Kontagora Metropolis, employing a quasi-experimental design to compare intervention and control groups. Grounded in Rumelhart's (1977) Interactive Reading Model which integrates bottom-up decoding with top-down processing and Wertheimer's (1923) Gestalt Psychology Theory emphasizing holistic text perception the research aligns with Nigeria's English curriculum goals for foundational literacy (NERDC, 2013). Findings from this focused inquiry contribute to evidence-based pedagogy, potentially informing teacher training and policy for equitable literacy gains in similar settings.

Statement of the Problem

Literal comprehension deficiencies among Nigerian secondary school students represent a persistent barrier to academic success, as evidenced by low performance in national assessments like WAEC and NECO, where over 60% of candidates struggle with extracting explicit textual information (Hussain, 2024; WAEC, 2024). In Kontagora Metropolis, these issues are exacerbated by multilingual environments, where English as a second language amplifies decoding challenges, and by traditional teaching methods that emphasize mechanical word-for-word translation and drill-based recall without leveraging contextual supports (Obiegbu, 2018; Agbo, Kadiri & Ekwueme, 2023). Students often fail to recognize key facts, sequence events, or identify main ideas, resulting in superficial engagement and fragmented understanding of texts.

A core problem is the overreliance on isolated vocabulary drills, which neglects how explicit meanings are reinforced by surrounding cues, leading to inconsistent literal recall (Leonard, 2023). For instance, learners misinterpret direct statements due to unfamiliar syntactic structures or semantic gaps, compounded by limited exposure to diverse texts in resource-poor schools (Olanrewaju, 2024). Teacher inadequacies further aggravate this: many educators lack training in cue-based strategies, resorting to passive question-answer formats that yield minimal gains in

literal skills (Musa, 2020). Gender dynamics may also play a role, with anecdotal evidence suggesting varied engagement levels, yet unexamined in northern contexts (Nnaji, 2021). Globally validated context cues strategies show promise for literal comprehension (Mutmainnah et al., 2021), but empirical voids persist in Nigeria particularly northern semi-urban areas like Kontagora where no rigorous quasi-experimental studies have isolated their impact on explicit text extraction. This gap undermines curriculum implementation and perpetuates literacy inequities. The present study addresses this by examining how context cues instruction enhances literal comprehension, providing localized evidence to bridge instructional-practice divides and elevate foundational reading outcomes.

Research Objectives

The specific objective guiding this inquiry is:

- i. To examine the effect of context cues strategy on students' literal comprehension among secondary school students in Kontagora Metropolis, Niger State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Conceptual Review

i. Literal Comprehension

Literal comprehension forms the bedrock of reading comprehension, defined as the ability to identify, recall, and reproduce explicitly stated information from texts, including facts, details, sequence of events, and main ideas (Snow, 2002; Sohn, 2023). Unlike inferential or critical levels, it relies on surface-level processing without requiring interpretation of implied meanings, making it accessible yet essential for building higher-order skills (Perfetti & Stafura, 2014). Within Rumelhart's (1977) Interactive Reading Model, literal comprehension emerges from bottom-up decoding of textual elements (e.g., words, sentences) integrated with top-down cues, where context facilitates accurate extraction of explicit content. Complementing this, Wertheimer's (1923) Gestalt Theory views literal understanding as perceiving texts holistically, with cues organizing disparate details into coherent wholes.

Context cues strategy operationalizes these processes by explicitly teaching students to harness semantic (e.g., appositives defining terms), syntactic (e.g., grammatical roles clarifying facts), graphophonic (e.g., root words signaling explicit descriptors), and pragmatic (e.g., situational knowledge anchoring details) elements (Che Ani et al., 2023). This approach shifts passive reading to active cue-detection, enhancing literal recall by 20-40% in ESL contexts (National Reading Panel, 2000). In Nigerian secondary schools, where literal deficits stem from decontextualized instruction, integrating cues aligns with curriculum mandates for factual mastery, fostering fluency and reducing cognitive overload (Oyetunde, 2002; Grabe & Stoller, 2011). Thus, conceptualizing literal comprehension through cue-mediated interaction underscores its teachability, positioning context cues as a targeted scaffold for foundational literacy in diverse, under-resourced settings.

Empirical Review

The empirical literature on context cues strategy and literal comprehension reveals promising yet fragmented evidence, particularly in ESL contexts. Below are five critical reviews of key studies, highlighting methodologies, findings, strengths, limitations, and gaps relevant to Nigerian secondary education.

Mutmainnah, S., Asriati, A., & Ardiana, R. (2021). The impact of context cue instruction on reading comprehension among middle school students in Indonesia. This quasi-experimental

study (n=60, pre/post-test design) exposed an experimental group to 8 weeks of semantic/syntactic cue training on narrative texts, yielding a 35% gain in literal scores (from 65% to 88%) versus 12% in controls. Strengths include curriculum-aligned materials and ANCOVA for equivalence. However, the focus on urban middle-schoolers limits generalizability to semi-urban Nigerian contexts, and short duration overlooked retention. No gender analysis or adaptation for multilingual learners, ignoring northern Nigeria's Hausa-English dynamics in this study (Ilahi & Hidayat, 2023).

İlter, İ. (2022). The effects of context clue strategy instruction on reading comprehension of EFL learners in Turkey. In a randomized trial (n=80, 10-week intervention), explicit graphophonic/pragmatic cues improved literal comprehension by 28% ($\eta^2=.32$), with think-aloud protocols enhancing fact recall. Robust fidelity checks and effect-size reporting strengthen validity. Limitations: University-level participants skew toward advanced ESL, underrepresenting secondary novices; no control for socioeconomic factors. This lacks integration with national exams like WAEC, failing to address how cues mitigate literal deficits in high-stakes Nigerian assessments (Akubo et al., 2024).

Le Van Tuyen & Huyen (2019). The effect of context clue strategies on vocabulary and reading comprehension among Vietnamese university students. This pre/post quasi-experiment (n=50) integrated cues over 6 weeks, boosting literal scores by 22% via semantic embedding, outperforming conventional drills ($p<.01$). Mixed-methods (interviews) added depth. Critiques: Small sample and self-selected texts reduced ecological validity; urban bias ignores rural Nigerian parallels. The study overemphasizes vocabulary spillover without isolating literal effects, neglecting standalone cue training for explicit recall in under-resourced secondary settings (Emadesti, 2021).

Indriana, D., Aminah, S., & Dewi, L. (2021). The effect of context cue strategy instruction on eighth-grade students' reading comprehension at SMPN 20 Sigi, Indonesia. Employing intact classes (n=70, 7-week treatment), syntactic/pragmatic cues raised literal performance by 31% ($F=45.2$, $p<.001$), with reduced variability (SD drop from 1.2 to 0.8). Ethical intact-group use mirrors Nigerian feasibility. Weaknesses: No long-term follow-up; descriptive texts biased toward non-expository WAEC formats. This study ignores gender moderation, despite evidence of male literal lags in Nigeria, and omits teacher training variables crucial for scalable adoption (Nnaji, 2021).

Safika, R., & Fauzana, S. (2023). The effect of explicit context cue instruction on the reading comprehension abilities of tenth-grade students in Indonesia. A counterbalanced design (n=90, 9 weeks) using multimodal cues yielded 29% literal gains ($\eta^2=.41$), emphasizing pragmatic real-world links. Multimodal innovation suits digital Nigerian trends. Limitations: High attrition (15%) and self-report fidelity undermine reliability; secondary urban focus excludes northern semi-urban equity issues. The study fails to compare cue types' differential literal impacts, overlooking which (e.g., semantic vs. graphophonic) best suits Nigeria's phonological challenges in explicit fact extraction (Che Ani et al., 2023).

These studies affirm context cues' efficacy for literal comprehension (average gain ~27%), yet gaps persist: limited Nigerian localization, gender blindness, short-term focus, and insufficient isolation of literal domains from broader comprehension. This study addresses these by targeting Kontagora's SS2 students, incorporating gender analysis, and using WAEC-aligned tests for sustained, context-specific insights.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts [The Interactive Reading Model \(1977\)](#)

The Interactive Reading Model

The interactive reading model was proposed by David E. Rumelhart in 1977 as a synthesis of both the bottom-up and top-down approaches to reading. While earlier models treated reading as either a purely linear decoding process (bottom-up) or a meaning-making activity relying solely on prior knowledge and prediction (top-down), Rumelhart argued that effective reading involves a simultaneous, interactive process of decoding and understanding. His model emphasizes that readers do not process text in isolation; rather, they draw on a combination of textual information (letters, sounds, words) and their own cognitive frameworks (schemas, expectations) to construct meaning as they read (Rumelhart, 1977). This dual engagement reflects the complex nature of real-world reading, where decoding and interpretation often occur in tandem. The rationale behind the interactive model is rooted in the understanding that neither decoding nor comprehension alone can account for successful reading. Rumelhart (1977) emphasized that reading must be viewed as an active process in which lower-level perceptual processes (such as identifying letters and words) are influenced by higher-level cognitive processes (such as predicting content or inferring meaning). This dynamic interaction allows readers to adjust their interpretation of text based on new information or unexpected word usage. In essence, Rumelhart's theory presents reading as a problem-solving activity where meaning emerges from the interaction between the reader and the text. This interaction not only makes reading more effective but also accommodates readers of varying skill levels, backgrounds, and purposes. According to Rasinski, “reading proficiency flourishes when instruction targets both decoding and comprehension through interactive practices” (Rasinski, 2020). This theory provides a strong justification for the current study on the effect of context cues teaching on reading comprehension.

The interactive reading model is particularly relevant to this study because it provides a robust theoretical framework for understanding how context cues support comprehension. It validates the study’s hypothesis that teaching students to identify and interpret contextual signals can lead to deeper understanding of texts. Since the model encourages simultaneous attention to linguistic structure and semantic interpretation, it supports the instructional design used in the study and explains the mechanisms through which reading comprehension improves. The alignment between the theory and the intervention reinforces the validity of the study’s approach and highlights its potential contribution to both theory and practice in literacy education.

Methodology

This study employs a quasi-experimental research design of the pre-test, post-test control group type, selected for its suitability in investigating causal relationships in authentic educational settings where randomization is impractical, as supported by Creswell and Creswell (2018); two intact SS2 classes from public secondary schools in Kontagora Metropolis, Niger State one experimental group exposed to explicit context cue strategies in reading lessons and one control group receiving conventional methods were purposively chosen, with both undergoing pre- and post-tests to assess intervention effects on reading comprehension. The population comprises 2,005 SS2 students across 11 public senior secondary schools, while the sample consists of 160 students (80 males from Government Day Secondary School assigned to the experimental group

and 80 females from Government Girls Day Secondary School to the control group), selected via purposive and stratified sampling to ensure gender representation and intact class integrity for quasi-experimental feasibility, enabling valid gender-based comparisons without mixed-class dynamics. Data collection utilized a researcher-designed Reading Comprehension Achievement Test (RDRCAT), a 20-item multiple-choice instrument divided into four sections (literal, inferential, critical comprehension, and vocabulary via context cues), administered in pre-test, six-week intervention, and post-test phases under standardized conditions by three trained research assistants (over six hours of training emphasizing ethical neutrality and procedural consistency); scoring awarded 1 mark per correct item for a total of 20, with anonymous coding and inter-rater checks for reliability, while validity was established through expert review from English Language Education and measurement specialists, and reliability confirmed via Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 (KR-20) for internal consistency (targeting 0.5–0.99) and test-retest correlation over two weeks. Quantitative analysis involved descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, percentages) to profile performance across domains and inferential Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) at a 0.05 significance level using SPSS version 25 to control for pre-test differences and isolate the intervention's impact, as recommended by Nworgu (2015). These methods quasi-experimental design, tailored RDRCAT, primary data sourcing, and ANCOVA were justified for their alignment with study objectives, enhancement of internal validity in natural school contexts, precise measurement of comprehension gains, and robust control of covariates, thereby providing credible evidence on context cue strategies' effectiveness over conventional instruction, per curricular and ethical standards.

Data Analysis

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data under the following sub-headings: **Demographic Characteristics of Respondents, Descriptive Analysis of Pre-test and Post-test Scores, Inferential Analysis of Hypotheses using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA), and Summary of findings.**

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Before presenting the main findings, it is important to describe the demographic characteristics of the participants who took part in this study. The total sample consisted of 160 Senior Secondary School Two (SS2) students drawn from two public secondary schools in Kontagora Metropolis, Niger State, Nigeria. The sample was equally divided between the experimental group (n=80) and the control group (n=80). In terms of gender distribution, 80 students (50%) were male, drawn from Government Day Secondary School, while 80 students (50%) were female, drawn from Government Girls Day Secondary School. This gender-balanced sampling approach ensured that the study could adequately examine potential gender differences in reading comprehension outcomes following context cues instruction.

Distribution of Respondents by Group and Gender

Category	Experimental Group	Control Group	Total	Percentage
Male	40	40	80	50.0%
Female	40	40	80	50.0%
Total	80	80	160	100%

As shown in Table above, the distribution of participants was balanced across both experimental

and control groups, as well as across gender categories. This balanced design enhanced the internal validity of the study and facilitated meaningful comparisons across groups.

Research Question

To what extent does context cues strategy influence students' performance in literal comprehension among secondary school students in Kontagora metropolis, Niger State, Nigeria? To answer this research question, the mean scores and standard deviations of students' performance in literal comprehension were computed for both the experimental and control groups at pre-test and post-test stages.

Mean and Standard Deviation of Students' Performance in Literal Comprehension

Group	Pre-test Mean	Pre-test SD	Post-test Mean	Post-test SD	Mean Gain
Experimental (n=80)	2.45	1.12	4.18	0.76	1.73
Control (n=80)	2.38	1.18	2.82	1.05	0.44

Table reveals that at the pre-test stage, the experimental group had a mean score of 2.45 (SD=1.12) while the control group had a mean score of 2.38 (SD=1.18), indicating that both groups were relatively equivalent in their literal comprehension abilities before the intervention. However, at the post-test stage, the experimental group achieved a mean score of 4.18 (SD=0.76), representing a mean gain of 1.73 points, while the control group obtained a mean score of 2.82 (SD=1.05), with a mean gain of only 0.44 points. This substantial difference in mean gains suggests that the context cues strategy had a positive effect on students' literal comprehension performance. The higher post-test mean score and lower standard deviation in the experimental group further indicate that the intervention not only improved performance but also reduced variability among students, suggesting more consistent learning outcomes.

There is no significant effect of the context cues strategy on students' performance in literal comprehension among secondary school students in Kontagora metropolis, Niger State, Nigeria.

To test this hypothesis, Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted with post-test literal comprehension scores as the dependent variable, group (experimental vs. control) as the independent variable, and pre-test scores as the covariate.

ANCOVA Results for Effect of Context Cues Strategy on Literal Comprehension

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Pre-test (Covariate)	28.45	1	28.45	32.18	.000	.170
Group	89.32	1	89.32	101.05	.000	.392
Error	138.75	157	0.88			
Total	3846.00	160				

This shows that after controlling for pre-test scores, there was a statistically significant effect of the context cues strategy on students' literal comprehension performance, $F(1,157) = 101.05$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .392$. The partial eta squared value of .392 indicates a large effect size, suggesting that approximately 39.2% of the variance in post-test literal comprehension scores

can be attributed to the instructional method. Since the p-value (.000) is less than the alpha level of .05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This finding confirms that context cues instruction significantly enhanced students' ability to identify and recall explicitly stated information from texts compared to conventional teaching methods.

Discussions

The findings of this study are discussed in relation to the research questions, hypotheses, and existing literature on context cues strategy and reading comprehension instruction.

The first research question examined the extent to which context cues strategy influences students' performance in literal comprehension. The findings revealed that the experimental group achieved a mean gain of 1.73 points (from 2.45 to 4.18), while the control group recorded only 0.44 points (from 2.38 to 2.82). The ANCOVA results confirmed a statistically significant effect ($F=101.05$, $p<.001$, $\eta^2=.392$), with approximately 39.2% of the variance in post-test literal comprehension scores attributable to the instructional method.

This substantial improvement demonstrates that explicit instruction in context cues significantly enhanced students' ability to identify and recall directly stated information from texts. The finding aligns with previous research by Mutmainnah, Asriati, and Ardiana (2021), who reported that students exposed to context cue instruction showed marked improvements in recognizing key points and factual content in both narrative and descriptive texts. Similarly, Ilahi and Hidayat (2023) supports that context cue strategies helped students move beyond word-for-word reading towards more meaning-focused approaches, thereby enhancing their literal comprehension abilities.

The theoretical foundation for this finding rests on Rumelhart's (1977) Interactive Reading Model, which posits that effective reading involves simultaneous processing of textual information and cognitive interpretation. When students were taught to use semantic, syntactic, graphophonic, and pragmatic cues, they developed a more systematic approach to extracting explicit information from texts. Rather than relying on rote memorization or surface-level decoding, students learned to use surrounding textual information to confirm their understanding of directly stated facts and details.

The large effect size ($\eta^2=.392$) suggests that context cues instruction represents a powerful intervention for improving literal comprehension in Nigerian secondary schools. This is particularly significant given that many students in the region struggle with basic comprehension skills due to limited exposure to strategic reading instruction. The reduced standard deviation in the experimental group's post-test scores ($SD=0.76$ compared to pre-test $SD=1.12$) further indicates that the intervention not only improved average performance but also reduced variability, suggesting more consistent learning outcomes across students of varying abilities.

Conclusions

This study provides compelling evidence that context cues strategy significantly enhances literal comprehension among SS2 students in Kontagora Metropolis, addressing a critical gap in foundational reading skills within northern Nigeria's resource-constrained educational landscape. The quasi-experimental findings demonstrate that explicit instruction in semantic, syntactic, graphophonic, and pragmatic cues yields substantial gains ($\eta^2 = .392$), enabling students to more effectively identify, recall, and reproduce explicitly stated textual information skills essential for academic progression and national assessments like WAEC and NECO. By rejecting the null

hypothesis ($p < .001$), the research confirms the intervention's superiority over conventional rote-based methods, which produced only marginal improvements, highlighting the limitations of decontextualized teaching in multilingual ESL environments.

Theoretically, these results validate Rumelhart's (1977) Interactive Reading Model, illustrating how simultaneous bottom-up decoding and top-down cue integration fosters active, holistic text processing, as complemented by Wertheimer's (1923) Gestalt principles of perceptual organization. Empirically, the outcomes align with international studies (e.g., Mutmainnah et al., 2021; İlter, 2022) while extending localized insights to semi-urban Nigerian settings, where cultural-linguistic barriers and teacher training deficits exacerbate literal deficits. The balanced gender sampling and reduced post-test variability in the experimental group further suggest equitable, consistent benefits across diverse learners, mitigating potential engagement disparities. In broader terms, this inquiry contributes to evidence-based literacy pedagogy by positioning context cues as a low-cost, scalable scaffold for foundational comprehension, potentially bridging the 60% failure rate in explicit text extraction observed in regional assessments (WAEC, 2024). By promoting autonomous reading without reliance on external aids, the strategy not only elevates surface-level understanding but also lays the groundwork for inferential and critical skills, aligning with Nigeria's NERDC (2013) curriculum goals. Ultimately, these conclusions affirm the transformative potential of strategic interventions in combating persistent literacy inequities, offering a pathway to improved academic outcomes and lifelong learning in under-resourced secondary schools.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed for stakeholders in Nigerian education: Reduced Recommendations

1. NERDC should integrate context cues instruction (semantic, syntactic, graphophonic, pragmatic) into the senior secondary English curriculum, with SS1-SS3 lesson plans, sample texts, and literal comprehension assessments for systematic implementation.
2. Ministries and training institutions should require in-service workshops and pre-service modules on context cues (e.g., think-alouds, guided practice), with certification incentives prioritizing northern regions like Niger State.
3. WAEC/NECO should update comprehension exams with cue-based literal recall items and guidelines; policymakers should fund low-cost interventions, including gender-equitable monitoring and Hausa-English bilingual supports in under-resourced schools.
4. Administrators in Kontagora and similar areas should schedule weekly context cues lessons, form peer observation communities, and provide diverse library texts to promote independent practice.

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A Comparative Analysis of YorùBá Robotic Innovation As Artificial Intelligence, AI-Like

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Abstract

This study undertakes a comparative analysis of Yoruba robotic innovation as AI-like systems and contemporary robotic artificial intelligence, arguing that the history of intelligent machines has been narrowly framed within Western epistemologies while marginalising indigenous technocultural traditions such as those of the Yorùbá. It foregrounds mythological and ritual constructs like Ọsanyìn and Ère Ìbejì as culturally embedded “automata” that encode principles of automation, algorithmic reasoning, and adaptive response, thereby functioning as proto-robotic, AI-like entities within Yoruba knowledge systems. Methodologically, the study combines primary and secondary data: in-depth interviews with purposively selected Ifá and Ọsanyìn priests explore the ontological and operational characteristics of these figures, while textual analysis of relevant books, academic articles, and curated digital materials deepens the examination of Yorùbá mythology in relation to modern AI discourse. Transcribed data are interpreted through the lens of transculturalism, drawing on Ortiz (1947) and Welsch (1999), to illuminate how Yoruba robotic imaginaries and contemporary AI co-constitute a fluid field of intercultural exchange rather than discrete, “pure” traditions. The analysis demonstrates that Yoruba robotic innovation, understood as the design and ritual programming of AI-like agents, offers conceptual resources for rethinking embodiment, agency, and ethics in modern robotic AI, particularly in the areas of human–machine interaction, creativity, and problem-solving. The study ultimately argues that recognising Yoruba mythological and ritual automata as foundational to AI-like thinking expands global AI historiography and underscores the value of indigenous knowledge systems for more culturally inclusive and socially responsive AI development.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Yorùbá Robotic Innovation, Ọsanyìn, Ère Ìbejì, Cultural Heritage, Intelligent Systems, Automata, Transculturalism.

Introduction

While the rapid, Western-led transformation driven by artificial intelligence defines the contemporary technological paradigm, this narrative obscures a deeper, more diverse history of humanity's quest to create autonomous intelligence. The dominant discourse, focused on algorithmic advancement and machine learning, often overlooks profound indigenous

epistemologies that have long conceptualized artificial agency. This study challenges the narrow lineage by examining the rich robotic innovations within Yorùbá culture, such as the automatons attributed to the artisan Sígídí, the mythological entity Ósanyìn, and the conceptual framework of Ère Ìbèjì. These manifestations represent a sophisticated, pre-digital system where agency derives from metaphysical forces, such as àṣẹ (life-force), and the mastery of Ògún, the deity associated with technology.

Despite AI's penetration into every sector, raising valid concerns about ethics, employment, and creativity, the philosophical debate remains culturally myopic. The persistent exclusion of non-Western frameworks, like the Yorùbá, constitutes a critical academic gap, relegating such innovations to myth rather than engaging them as serious philosophical prototypes for intelligence and autonomy. This research addresses this gap through a comparative analysis, positing Yorùbá robotic innovation as a coherent, AI-like conceptual system. By employing a mixed-methods approach, including in-depth interviews with Ifá priests, Ósanyìn priests, and cultural custodians, alongside participant observation and analysis of textual sources, this investigation moves beyond folklore to conduct a rigorous conceptual excavation.

Ultimately, this work contributes to knowledge by decolonizing the history of innovation, offering the Yorùbá metaphysical framework as a vital lens for enriching global AI ethics and building an interdisciplinary bridge between indigenous knowledge systems and computational philosophy. It argues that integrating such parallel intellectual traditions is essential for fostering a truly inclusive and philosophically robust understanding of artificial life in an age of technological transformation.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in the transculturalism approach, elaborated through Fernando Ortiz's notion of transculturation and later refined by Wolfgang Welsch and Homi Bhabha. Transculturalism emphasizes cultural diffusion, transformation, and hybridity, foregrounding the dynamic interactions that occur when cultures meet, overlap, and mutually reshape one another. In the context of Yorùbá robotic innovation and modern artificial intelligence (AI), this perspective enables a nuanced reading of how indigenous ritual-technological forms and Western computational systems co-produce new configurations of "intelligent" agency and knowledge.

Fernando Ortiz, a Cuban sociologist, first coined "transculturation" to describe the complex, multi-directional processes of cultural change in colonial and postcolonial Cuba (Ortiz, 1947). He argues that existing terms such as "acculturation" and "deculturation" were inadequate because they implied one-way absorption or loss; instead, "transculturation" and its counterpart "neoculturation" capture the reciprocal, transformative, and creative character of cultural interaction. Xiaoying Yang and Duo (2022) highlight how Ortiz's framework recognizes bi-directional flows of influence in which elements from distinct traditions intertwine, adapt, and generate novel cultural forms.

Building on such insights, Welsch (1999) advances "transculturality" to describe contemporary cultures as interwoven, overlapping networks rather than self-contained, homogeneous units. For Welsch, migration, media, and globalization dissolve rigid cultural borders and produce hybrid formations as the norm rather than the exception. Bhabha (1994), in turn, theorizes hybridity and the "third space of enunciation" as the site where cultural negotiation and translation occur, unsettling binary oppositions (such as coloniser/colonised or tradition/modernity) and allowing new subjectivities and discourses to emerge.

Ortiz's concept of transculturation rests on several core tenets: cultural interaction is

reciprocal rather than unilateral; cultural contact produces loss, acquisition, and creation simultaneously; and new cultural forms (neocultures) emerge from this ongoing process (Ortiz, 1947; Yang & Duo, 2022). His deliberate rejection of “acculturation” reflects a commitment to cultural equality, resisting hierarchical models that place one culture above another. Umera-Okeke (2016) extends this orientation by describing transculturalism as fostering intercultural understanding, linguistic adaptability, and peaceful coexistence, and by characterising transcultural subjects as individuals with fluid identities who “think outside the box” of their motherland while retaining rootedness in their own traditions.

This emphasis on reciprocity and equality is a major strength of transculturalism for the present study. It foregrounds the agency and resilience of marginalised cultures, challenging Eurocentric narratives that portray non-Western societies as passive recipients of technology. Hermann (2007) underscores this strength by showing how Ortiz’s concept illuminates transcultural exchange under conditions of power asymmetry, highlighting that even in unequal contexts, subordinated groups actively transform and reconfigure imposed cultural forms. In this sense, transculturation helps to recover indigenous contributions such as Yorùbá ritual automata within global histories of technology and AI.

However, the framework also has limitations. First, by stressing reciprocity and mutual transformation, some applications of transculturalism risk under-playing the depth of structural inequalities and technological dependencies that shape exchanges between African societies and Western AI industries. Second, Welsch’s more global, network-based account can drift into abstraction, potentially diluting the specificity of particular traditions such as Yorùbá cosmology and ritual practice if not carefully grounded. Bhabha’s third-space theory, while powerful for analysing hybridity and ambivalence, can be conceptually dense and less immediately operational for empirical work unless translated into concrete analytical categories.

For a study titled “A Comparative Analysis of Yorùbá Robotic Innovation as Artificial Intelligence, AI-Like,” transculturalism offers a robust interpretive lens in four key ways:

- **Origin and reciprocity:** Ortiz’s transculturation allows the study to conceptualise the contact between Yorùbá ritual technologies (for example, Ọsanyìn and Ère Ìbejì as programmed, task-oriented entities) and Western robotic AI not as a one-way borrowing but as a site of reciprocal influence and creative rearticulation (Ortiz, 1947; Yang & Duo, 2022). This supports the argument that Yorùbá robotic innovation contributes conceptually to global AI imaginaries, rather than merely absorbing imported technologies.
- **Tenets and hybridity:** Welsch’s vision of transculturality legitimises reading contemporary AI systems designed or used in Yorùbá contexts as inherently hybrid artefacts, shaped simultaneously by local cosmologies, ritual logics, and global engineering discourses (Welsch, 1999). This allows the comparison to treat Yorùbá “automata” and silicon-based robots as participating in a single, though internally differentiated, field of intelligent systems.
- **Third space and negotiation:** Bhabha’s “third space” helps frame the intersection of Yorùbá robotic innovation and modern AI as a zone of negotiation where meanings of autonomy, agency, and intelligence are contested and re-defined (Bhabha, 1994). Interviews with Ifá and Ọsanyìn priests, custodians, and practitioners can thus be analysed as articulations from this third space, where indigenous epistemologies encounter and re-script contemporary AI narratives.

- Strengths and ethical re-orientation: Drawing on Hermann (2007), transculturalism and Umera-Okeke (2016) equips the study to highlight how Yorùbá knowledge systems can inform more inclusive and ethically attuned AI—reimagining “programming” as relational, spiritually accountable practice rather than purely computational. At the same time, recognising the framework’s weaknesses encourages the researcher to remain attentive to enduring power imbalances in funding, infrastructure, and discourse that may limit the practical impact of such indigenous contributions.

In sum, by combining works of Ortiz (1947) on transculturation, Welsch (1999) on transculturality, and Bhabha (1994) on third-space hybridity, the theoretical framework enables a comparative reading in which Yorùbá robotic innovation is not an anecdotal parallel but a constitutive dimension of what counts as “artificial intelligence, AI-like.”

Review of Relevant Literature

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its development

The concept of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been defined as "the science and engineering of making intelligent machines" (McCarthy, 2007). This definition, coined by John McCarthy, a pioneer in the field, emphasizes the computational aspect of intelligence as the ability to achieve goals in the world. McCarthy's work laid the foundation for AI research, which has evolved significantly (Russell & Norvig, 2010). **AI encompasses various disciplines, including computer science, engineering, mathematics, and cognitive psychology, to create machines that can simulate human intelligence** (Kurzweil, 2005). According to Kurzweil (2005), AI systems can be categorized into two main types: narrow or weak AI, designed to perform specific tasks, and general or strong AI, capable of performing any intellectual task that humans can. AI research focuses primarily on narrow AI, with applications in machine learning, natural language processing, and robotics (LeCun et al., 2015). Researchers continue to explore new approaches to achieve general AI, which would enable machines to learn, reason, and adapt like humans (Lake et al., 2017).



Fig.1. Image of Modern Robotic AI

Source: google.com (29/09/2024)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has evolved significantly since its inception in the 1950s. Today, AI encompasses the science and engineering of computer systems capable of performing complex tasks, such as visual perception, speech recognition, language translations, and decision-making (Russell & Norvig, 2010). The field has experienced steady growth, albeit

slower than predicted by early pioneers. A pivotal milestone in AI's advancement was the introduction of machine learning, particularly deep learning, enabled by increased computational power and data availability (LeCun et al., 2015). This breakthrough has propelled AI's real-world impact, especially in the present moment. Machine learning algorithms now underpin various applications, including search engines, news feeds, chatbots, music composition, medical diagnoses, and engineering designs. The capabilities of AI systems have expanded dramatically, as evidenced by the contrast between early AI programs like Eliza and modern Large Language Models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT-4 (Brown et al., 2020). LLMs demonstrate remarkable language understanding and generation capabilities, underscoring AI's rapid progress.

The importance of technology for the future is enormous and gradually artificial intelligence has been employed virtually in every sphere of life. These advancements have far-reaching implications, influencing life-altering decisions in areas like employment, finance, and criminal justice. According to the World Economic Forum (2023), artificial intelligence already plays a crucial role in the decision-making processes of many companies. It is increasingly used to inform policy and public sector decisions around the world. Supervised learning, for example, is already used by some governments to detect potential criminals and terrorists. In the same vein, Michael and James (2021), opine that Artificial Intelligence (AI) revolutionizes decision-making by transforming data into actionable intelligence, augmenting or replacing expertise, and scaling predictions at minimal cost. AI-powered technologies have vast impacts, including:

- Inclusive governance through automated translation
- Efficient justice through optical character recognition and natural language processing
- Improved livestock health through sensor technology and AI analysis
- Accessible healthcare through AI-powered diagnosis
- Environmental sustainability through energy-efficient building design and deforestation monitoring
- Personalized education supporting children with disabilities
- Optimized agriculture ensuring stable incomes and responsible environmental use

However, experts emphasize responsible AI development to ensure equity, minimize disparities and biases, and establish ethical guardrails and regulatory frameworks to guide AI's continued growth and decision-making influence. For instance, the UN Secretary-General warns of AI's potential harms, including "misinformation and disinformation; the entrenching of bias and discrimination; surveillance and invasion of privacy; fraud, and other violations of human rights" (UN News, 2019). He emphasizes, "Without entering into a host of doomsday scenarios, the malicious use of AI could undermine trust in institutions, weaken social cohesion, and threaten democracy itself" (UN News, 2019).

2.2. Yorùbá Mythology and Culture

The word "mythology" originates from the Greek term "mythologia", which is derived from two Greek words "mythos" meaning "story, legend, or tale," and "logos", meaning "discourse" or "study." In essence, mythology refers to the study of myths, or stories that explain natural phenomena, the origins of the world, and the lives and actions of gods, heroes, and other supernatural beings (Ali 2012). Sikiru (2017) opines that Mythology can be best understood by combining both the functionalist's view and the historicist view of myth. Ògúnyemí (2007) myths are widely recognized as stories possessing distinct qualities, conveying meaning beyond mere statements.

Ọ́ sá kẹ́kẹ́ gbẹ̀jẹ́	the one who stylishly receives and fulfills,
Ọ́ gbòpá ọ̀wọ́ olókùnrùn sọ̀nù	the one who takes away the walking stick from the sick, a sick person
Alúwẹ́é lágbo	the one who swims in the pool of herbs,
Ọ́ já sí kòtò doògùn ijà móyà	the fearless warrior, ready for battle

In Yorùbá mythology, Ọ̀sanyìn has a complex relationship with Ọ̀rúnmilà, the god of wisdom and divination. Although Babalawos (Ifá priests) know Ọ̀sanyìn, possessing him is spiritually unwise, as it may incur Orunmila's wrath and hinder success. His expertise in Ifá divination, learned from the esteemed Ọ̀rúnmilà, enabled him to integrate spiritual insights into his medicinal practices. Ọ̀sanyìn also shared his knowledge with Ọ̀rúnmilà, teaching him the art of root and leaf medicine. This assertion is supported by scholarly research, including studies by Usman and Emmanuel (2019) and Raji (2023), which highlight Ọ̀sanyìn's multifaceted qualities as a deity of wisdom, healing, and spiritual guidance.

The etymology of Ọ̀sanyìn reveals him as Orunmila's servant, sent to clear his farm. However, Ọ̀sanyìn refused, recognizing the medicinal value of every leaf. This narrative is supported by the Ifá corpus *Ọ̀sẹ̀dii* (Ọ̀sé+Ọ̀dí) below. One of our informants Babaláwo Awótúndé Awówùmí Anífálájé from iwó town in Osun state says:

Ifá ní gbinrin bí ìtì	Ifá says, heavy and solid like a massive log,
Ìtì náà gbinrin	A log, heavy and solid
A díá fún Ọ̀rúnmilà	make Ifá divination for Ọ̀rúnmilà
Ifá yòò ra Ọ̀sanyìn lẹ̀rú	Ifá would purchase Ọ̀sanyìn as slave
.....
Ọ̀sanyìn ní ewé kín ni kí Ọ̀un ó ro?	Osanyin said Which of the leaves should I clear?
Gbinrin bí ìtì	Heavy and solid like a massive log,
Ìtì náà gbinrin	A log, heavy and solid
Ewé ajé ni kí Ọ̀un ó r oni?	Is it ajé leaf he should clear?
Gbinrin bí ìtì	Gbinrin bí ìtì
Ìtì náà gbinrin	A log, heavy and solid
Ewé èkùyá ni ki Ọ̀un ó ro ni?	Is it èkùyá leaf should he clear?
Gbinrin bí ìtì	Heavy and solid like a massive log,
Ìtì náà gbinrin	A log, heavy and solid
Ewé Alúpàídà ni ki Ọ̀un ó ro ni?	Is it àlúpàídà leaf he should clear?
Gbinrin bí ìtì	Heavy and solid like a massive log,
Ìtì náà gbinrin	A log, heavy and solid
Ewé tẹ̀tẹ̀ ni ki Ọ̀un ó ro ni?	Is it tete leaf should he clear?
Gbinrin bí ìtì	Heavy and solid like a massive log,
Ìtì náà gbinrin	A log, heavy and solid
Ewé Ọ̀dúndún ni ki Ọ̀un ó ro ni?	It it ọ̀dúndún leaf should he clear?
Gbinrin bí ìtì	Heavy and solid like a massive log,
Ìtì náà gbinrin	A log, heavy and solid

The excerpt highlights Ọ̀sanyìn's questioning of which leaves to clear, demonstrating his expertise in herbal medicine "Ọ̀sanyìn ní ewé kín ni kí Ọ̀un ó ro?" (Which leaves should I clear?).

However, Ọsanyìn's transformation from a Yoruba deity of wisdom to a symbol of robotic innovation stems from his mythological confrontation with Ọrúnmilà, the patron deity of Ifá divination. This ancient rivalry sparked Ọsanyìn's infusion with technological capabilities. The mythological account highlights the intersection of traditional Yoruba knowledge and modern technological advancements. Ultimately, Ọsanyìn's evolution showcases Yoruba culture's innovative problem-solving and adaptability, blending spirituality and technology.

According to Chief Priest Awólówò Agbójúléfá Awógbilé the Àràbà of Ìka land in Èjìgbò Local Government of Ọsun state, the power struggle emerged between Èbò, Ọrúnmilà's son, and Ọ̀ògùn, Ọsanyìn's son, as they contested their fathers' supremacy. To resolve this dispute, the two sons underwent a seven-day endurance test without food or water. On the first day, Ọrúnmilà consulted his oracle and was instructed to offer ritual sacrifices (ètùtù) to Èṣù Ọ̀dàrà, the deity of Àṣẹ. Meanwhile, Ọ̀ògùn, driven by hunger, discovered Èbò eating the sacrificed food and joined him. Upon inspection on the ultimatum day of their test, the people found Èbò alive, but Ọ̀ògùn's response was suppressed by Èbò, leading to the Yoruba proverb: "Èbò ni kí jé kí Ọ̀ògùn ó jé" (Sacrifice makes charm work ineffective).

This outcome solidified Ọrúnmilà's superiority over Ọsanyìn, sowing the seeds of their rift. This coupled with the fact that Ọrúnmilà proclaimed himself "Ọ̀ótó inú jà ju ọ̀ògùn lọ" (Plain heart is mightier than charm), which infuriated Ọsanyìn. Seeking revenge, Ọsanyìn devised a trap for Ọrúnmilà. Ọsanyìn planted harmful charms at Ọrúnmilà's doorstep, backyard, and divination tools. However, Ọrúnmilà received a premonitory dream warning him to remain indoors and avoid consulting his divinity. Heeding the warning, Ọrúnmilà stayed indoors. Ọsanyìn, assuming Ọrúnmilà had fallen victim to his charms, entered Ọrúnmilà's house to confirm his demise. Instead, he discovered that Ọrúnmilà had outsmarted him. The charms backfired, causing Ọsanyìn to become blind and his body to shrink drastically, rendering him unrecognizable. Ọrúnmilà subsequently relegated Ọsanyìn to the edge of his house, covering him with a red cloth and tasking him to watch over the residence in his absence. This marked the beginning of Ọsanyìn's transformation into a guardian figure. The myth concludes with the phrase:

"Ọ̀ótó inú jà ju ọ̀ògùn lọ

A díá fún Ọrúnmilà

Ifá yòò máa jé orúkọ tí yòò máa bí Ọsanyìn nínú"

the plain heart is mightier than charm

make Ifá divination for Ọrúnmilà

Ifá will bear accolade that will arise the anger of Ọsanyìn

Another mythological perspective of how Ọsanyìn's transformation into a robotic innovation stems from a unique ritual practised by his worshipers. When one of the twins dies, devotees invoke Ọsanyìn's spirit into the deceased twin's body. The corpse is then prepared with charms and intricately carved wooden statues, and placed inside a hollow irókò tree for six months. After this period, the worshiper returns to the tree and activates the wooden structure, symbolically reviving Ọsanyìn's spirit. This ancient ritual essentially "reboots" the deceased twin, infusing it with Ọsanyìn's essence and technological capabilities, effectively creating a primitive robotic entity (Babaláwo Ifásayò of Ogbè-iyónú temple ọ̀nà àbáyọ in Ondo town). This mythological account highlights the intersection of traditional Yorùbá spirituality and innovative technological concepts, illustrating the roots of Ọsanyìn's association with robotic innovation.



Fig.2

Òsanyìn Image

Source: google.com (29/09/2024)

However, Ère Ìbejì is revered robotic innovations, akin to Òsanyìn, embodying ancient wisdom and technological prowess. These traditional artifacts, infused with spiritual essence, function remarkably like modern robotic AI systems. Ère Ìbejì, comprising twin wooden carvings representing male and female forms, showcases Yorùbá ingenuity in artificial intelligence. Once the spirit is cast into these carvings, they can perform various robotic functions, mirroring modern AI capabilities. Our informant, Ifá priest, Chief Awólówò Agbójúléfá Awógbilé, the Àràbà Awo of Ìka land in Èjìgbò Local Government Òsun state, Nigeria, states that. some herbalists exploited Ere Ibeji's mystical properties to craft charms for cocaine smugglers. This illicit practice involved invoking the spirits within twin Ère Ìbejì statues, with one accompanying the smuggler abroad and the other remaining in Nigeria, tied to the cocaine. Through spiritual connection, the Ère Ìbejì in Nigeria would miraculously transport the cocaine to reunite with its twin abroad, enabling the smuggler to evade detection by immigration, NDLEA, and customs officials at the airport. This clandestine tactic relied on the ancient belief in Ere Ibeji's transcendent abilities, highlighting the complex interplay between traditional spirituality and modern criminal enterprise.



Fig.3

Effigy of Ìbejì

Source: google.com (29/09/2024)

4.0. The Intersection of Yorùbá Robotic Innovation and Modern AI

The fusion of Yorùbá robotic innovation and modern AI transforms technological development, blending rich cultural heritage with cutting-edge advancements. This intersection enables culturally sensitive AI design, Afrocentric AI systems, and the incorporation of Indigenous Yorùbá knowledge -human-centered design, algorithmic Ifá-inspired decision-making, Òrìsà-inspired AI, Yorùbá language processing, and cultural heritage preservation through AI-driven conservation. These innovations embody the principles of acculturation and transculturalism, harmoniously integrating traditional Yorùbá values with modern technological advancements, while countering Anglocentric dominance.

4.1. Òsanyìn: Automation and Machine Learning

Òsanyìn, a potent and revered Yorùbá deity, proffers efficacious solutions to complex problems, traversing realms with fluid spirituality. Analogous to AI, Òsanyìn is often dispatched on errands, carrying out tasks with autonomy and precision. When invoked, Òsanyìn's presence is palpable, yet elusive; if absent, no amount of summons can compel his response. Upon his return, an unexplainable breeze often signals his presence, leaving an indelible mark. Babalawo Ifámákindé Oláwúwu further explains that Òsanyìn possesses omniscient wisdom, anticipating and resolving human problems before they are articulated. When seekers approach Òsanyìn's worship site, they experience an astonishing display of psychic awareness, Òsanyìn recites the client's biography, diagnoses their concerns, and offers tailored remedies. Therefore, Òsanyìn can be connected to automation and machine learning in the following ways:

- i. Òsanyìn embodies the spirit of automation, where cutting-edge technology and innovation converge. Remarkably, Osanyin anticipates clients' intentions, intuitively preparing bespoke natural remedies with uncanny precision, mirroring the seamless efficiency of modern robotic AI. Just as automation enables robots and machines to execute tasks without human intervention, Osanyin's extraordinary abilities facilitate swift, personalized solutions, harmoniously blending ancient wisdom with contemporary technological ideals.
- ii. Òsanyìn's extraordinary abilities resonate with machine learning principles, where

- algorithms empower robots to learn from experience and adapt to novel situations. As a revered expert in natural medicine, Ọsanyìn shares his vast knowledge with herbalists, imparting ancient wisdom on potent charms and remedies. When faced with seemingly incurable disease outbreaks, Ọsanyìn guides his custodian, an esteemed herbalist, in crafting effective natural solutions. With precise instructions, he prescribes the necessary ingredients, preparation methods, and administration techniques, ensuring efficacious treatments that alleviate suffering and promote well-being.
- iii. Ọsanyìn's extraordinary ability to decipher omens and signs offers a profound analogy with data analysis and pattern recognition in machine learning. By interpreting subtle patterns in nature, human behavior, and cosmic alignments, Ọsanyìn demonstrates an uncanny capacity for predictive insight, mirroring machine learning algorithms that uncover hidden relationships within complex datasets. Osanyin's intuitive analysis of seemingly disparate elements yields actionable wisdom, much like data analytics informs evidence-based decision-making. Moreover, Osanyin's anticipatory guidance – preparing solutions before clients articulate their concerns – echoes the predictive capabilities of advanced data models, underscoring the symbiotic relationship between ancient Yorubá wisdom and cutting-edge data science.

4.2. Ère Ìbejì: Human-machine Interaction and Creativity

The revered Yorubá deity, Ère Ìbejì, embodying the essence of twins and creativity, reveals intriguing parallels with human-machine interaction and innovative design. Specifically, Ère Ìbejì's association with duality, harmony, and inventive expression resonates with the synergy between humans and machines, illuminating potential connections in the following areas:

- i. Ère Ìbejì's profound connection to twins illuminates the transformative power of duality and collaboration in human-machine interaction. Just as twins embody unity in diversity, the effigy of Ìbejì inspires harmonious synergy between humans and machines, fostering reciprocal enhancement and mutual learning. This sacred Yorubá deity's essence encourages designers to craft intuitive interfaces, adaptive systems, and collaborative AI tools that leverage human creativity and machine precision. By embracing the effigy of Ìbejì's principles, innovators can create hybrid intelligence that amplifies human potential, ensures inclusive decision-making, and cultivates empathetic problem-solving, ultimately reflecting the balanced interplay and cooperative spirit embodied by the sacred twins. Creativity and Innovation: Ère Ìbejì's role as a patron of creativity can be connected to the development of innovative human-machine interfaces that foster artistic expression and imagination.
- ii. The twin essence of Ère Ìbejì elegantly encapsulates the dynamic of mirroring and reflection in human-machine interaction, where machines intuitively reflect and adapt to human behavior, and humans, in turn, respond and refine their interactions. This symbiotic dance echoes the sacred twins' harmonious interplay, illustrating the potential for reciprocal learning and mutual growth. Ère Ìbejì's mirroring principle inspires AI-driven interfaces that echo human emotions, gestures, and intentions, fostering empathetic engagement and personalized experiences. Conversely, human reflection on machine feedback enables iterative improvement, crystallizing the Ère

- Ibeji-inspired paradigm: adaptive machines, reflective humans, and the emergent wisdom born from their synergistic exchange.
- iii. Ère Ìbeji's mystical realm of imagination and fantasy inspires the creation of immersive human-machine interfaces that unlock creative expression, storytelling, and innovation. By tapping into the sacred twins' boundless imagination, designers can craft intuitive platforms that merge art, technology, and human experience. Ère Ibeji's fantastical essence fuels virtual and augmented reality environments, where humans and machines co-create vivid narratives, interactive mythologies, and immersive simulations. This deity's imaginative spark ignites generative AI tools that empower artists, writers, and musicians to push boundaries and redefine creative frontiers. Through Ère Ibeji's guidance, human-machine collaboration becomes a dynamic, dreamlike dance, where fantasy and reality converge to give birth to novel forms of artistic expression, therapeutic outlets, and visionary technologies.

5.0. Conclusion

This research explores the intersection of Yorùbá robotic innovation and modern AI, revealing the vast potential for cross-cultural exchange and innovation. Integrating Yorùbá principles enhances AI's adaptability, inclusivity, and social responsibility, broadening goals to prioritize community harmony and mitigating cultural biases. Our findings suggest African knowledge systems can revolutionize AI development, creating contextually aware, socially beneficial, and culturally responsive systems. Contributing to Afrocentric AI, this research highlights the importance of centering African perspectives in AI development. As AI shapes our world, prioritizing diversity, inclusivity, and social responsibility is crucial. Future research should continue exploring African knowledge-AI intersections, fostering a diverse technological landscape benefiting humanity.

This study explores Yorùbá robotic innovation's cultural perspective on AI development, emphasizing community, social harmony, and adaptability. Yorùbá principles like "Ogbon" and "Àṣẹ" align with modern AI goals, facilitating cross-cultural exchange. Contextualized AI design and integrating Indigenous knowledge systems like Yorùbá Ifá enhance problem-solving capabilities. Social responsibility is paramount, prioritizing community and harmony. Incorporating Yorùbá robotic innovation mitigates cultural biases, enriching AI development with diverse perspectives. This study highlights the importance of inclusive AI development, prioritizing diverse cultural perspectives and contextual understanding. Integrating indigenous knowledge systems enhances AI capabilities, fostering a more equitable technological landscape. By integrating African perspectives, this study enriches the field of AI development, promoting social responsibility and inclusivity.

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Hymnody In The Celestial Church Of Christ: Theological And Musical Perspectives

By

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Abstract

Hymnody refers to the body and practice of hymns within a religious tradition, including their theological content, poetic expression, musical structure, and role in worship. Through hymns, religious beliefs are communicated, remembered, and embodied in congregational singing. In African Indigenous Churches, hymnody occupies a central place in worship and plays a significant role in shaping religious consciousness and communal identity, yet it remains insufficiently examined within multidisciplinary African Studies. This article explores the theological meanings and musical features of selected hymns of the Celestial Church of Christ, an African initiated Christian movement deeply embedded in Yoruba cultural traditions. The study adopts a qualitative approach, drawing on ethnographic observation, semi structured interviews with church leaders and choristers, and close textual and musical analysis of seven hymns commonly performed during Sunday worship services. The findings indicate that hymns in the Celestial Church of Christ extend beyond their liturgical function as songs of praise. They serve as important vehicles for theological teaching, spiritual formation, and the reinforcement of collective identity. The hymn texts engage key Christian themes such as repentance, thanksgiving, divine provision, joy in Christ, and hope in the life to come. Musically, the hymns display characteristics associated with Yoruba musical aesthetics, including rhythmic vitality, melodic simplicity, repetition, and participatory performance practices. The use of indigenous language, familiar imagery, and traditional percussion situates worship within a recognizable cultural sound world, allowing congregants to experience Christian faith through local expressive forms while affirming identity, belonging, and theological meaning within African Christianity contexts today.

Keywords: Celestial Church of Christ; African Indigenous Churches; hymnody; Yoruba musical culture; liturgical inculturation

Introduction

The Celestial Church of Christ (CCC) is an African-initiated Christian denomination founded by Reverend Samuel Bilehou Joseph Oshoffa on September 29, 1947 in Porto Novo (now Benin). It quickly spread to Nigeria and beyond, establishing parishes and dioceses with large Yoruba congregations. (Faseun,2015; Lasisi, 2025). The CCC is noted for its unique worship style that blends Yoruba and Egun cultural elements (language, music, and ritual) with Christian liturgy. This cultural synthesis is evident in the church's rich hymnody – songs of praise that are sung in Yoruba (and sometimes English) during services. Hymns in the CCC serve not only as expressions of praise and faith, but also as vehicles for teaching theology and reinforcing communal identity. Despite their significance in worship, CCC hymns have received little scholarly attention.

This study fills that gap by analyzing seven hymns commonly used in Sunday services, focusing on both their theological messages and musical characteristics. Through ethnographic interviews with church members (an elder, choir master, and choristers) and participant observation, the analysis explores how these hymns convey Christian doctrine and Yoruba cultural identity simultaneously. The research addresses questions such as: What roles do hymns play in CCC worship? What theological themes do they express? How do their melodies and rhythms reflect Yoruba musical heritage? The findings illuminate how hymnody contributes to spiritual formation, cultural expression, and communal identity within the CCC. In particular, this study highlights the inculturation of liturgy – the way in which indigenous African culture and Christian faith meet and shape one another. By integrating local rhythms, languages, and symbols, CCC hymns embody a distinctly African Christian identity, enriching both worship and social cohesion.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in theories of inculturation and identity formation in African Christianity (Bediako, 1995; Magesa, 2004; Oduyoye, 1986). Inculturation refers to the dynamic interaction between the Christian gospel and local cultures, such that neither supersedes the other but both inform worship and belief (Magesa, 2004). In the context of African-initiated churches like the CCC, inculturation theories emphasize giving “the Christian faith a local shape” by integrating African musical, linguistic, and ritual elements into liturgy (Bediako, 1999; Magesa, 2004). Worship practices and music are key markers of denominational identity: religious communities are often “identified by their worship practices,” and thus liturgy significantly contributes to the identity of the church and its members (Bediako, 1995; Oduyoye, 1986). In other words, choosing to sing in Yoruba, to use traditional rhythms, or to incorporate indigenous imagery in hymn texts helps congregants experience Christianity as authentically African, fostering a cohesive communal identity (Bediako, 1995; Magesa, 2004).

Music and singing occupy a central place in religious experience and spiritual formation. Scholars note that, across cultures, singing is closely linked to ritual, confession, and the construction of meaning in spiritual life. In African worship in particular, music extends beyond aesthetic enjoyment to become a deeply participatory practice. As Magesa (2004) observes, “traditionally, when Africans worship, they sing and dance together,” engaging both emotionally and spiritually with the service. Lebaka (2015) observes that African Pentecostal and Independent church services frequently include drums, clapping, and movement, because Africans “do not always feel comfortable in a controlled...church environment where emotions are not expressed freely”. This embodied participation reinforces a sense of communal

belonging and spiritual vitality. Therefore, CCC hymnody can be understood through a lens that sees singing as ritual and as an embodied prayer, shaping faith and forging community bonds. This theoretical framework combines inculturation theory and music worship theory. It suggests that CCC hymns are not just songs but inculturated liturgical texts: they merge Christian theology with Yoruba cultural expression, thereby shaping an African Christian identity. Examining the hymns' theology and music in tandem reveals how faith and culture are co-constructed in the CCC's spirituality.

Literature Review

The Celestial Church of Christ (CCC) is widely recognized as one of the most prominent African Indigenous Churches, founded by Reverend Samuel Bilehou Joseph Oshoffa in 1947. Its worship practices, particularly music, are a distinctive blend of Christian theology and Yoruba cultural expression. Previous studies highlight the church's emphasis on divinely inspired hymns, many of which were reportedly revealed to Oshoffa or his early followers. These hymns, performed in Yoruba and occasionally English, serve not only as vehicles of praise but also as instruments for theological instruction and communal cohesion (Faseun, 2015; Ayokunmi, 2015; Agba, 2025). Scholars note that CCC hymnody embodies a form of liturgical inculturation, integrating indigenous rhythms, instruments, and performance conventions into Christian worship (Omojola, 2012; Lebaka, 2015).

Research into African Independent Churches more broadly indicates that hymnody often adapts Western musical forms to local contexts while retaining culturally resonant elements. For instance, Yoruba AICs frequently employ polyrhythmic percussion, call-and-response patterns, and melodic structures drawn from traditional song, creating a worship experience that is participatory and communal (Adetiran, 1987; Adegbite, 1988; Adogame, 2000). CCC music exemplifies this synthesis: *sekere*, *agogo*, and organ accompaniments coexist with stepwise melodic lines, strophic forms, and repetition, aligning theological messages with familiar African musical sensibilities.

Studies on the role of music in African Christianity suggest that hymnody functions as both spiritual formation and identity affirmation. Singing in Yoruba, with culturally meaningful metaphors and instruments, reinforces congregants' sense of belonging while simultaneously transmitting core Christian doctrines such as repentance, thanksgiving, and eschatological hope (Lebaka, 2015; Ayokunmi & Ologundudu, 2020; Kama & Klaasen, 2023). Faseun and Bello (1970) further note the social dimension of CCC music, emphasizing how choirs and congregation members negotiate authority and participation, with women often assuming key musical leadership roles in the church.

Overall, the literature discusses the dual nature of CCC hymnody: it is at once theological and cultural. Hymns educate, edify, and cultivate devotion, while their musical characteristics affirm Yoruba heritage and communal identity. Despite the centrality of music to CCC worship, scholarly attention remains limited, particularly in systematic analyses of hymn structure, performance practice, and the integration of indigenous musical idioms. This gap justifies the present study, which examines selected hymns to illuminate how music in the CCC mediates faith, culture, and community.

Methodology

This research employed an ethnographic design combining participant observation and open-ended interviews. The primary site was an Ibadan parish of the CCC. The researcher attended Sunday services to observe the singing of hymns in context and take field notes on their use. In-

depth interviews were conducted with key informants: one long-serving church elder (formerly a chorister), the choir master, and two veteran choristers. These informants were selected purposively for their knowledge of CCC liturgy and music. During interviews, respondents answered questions about the meaning of hymn texts, the reasons for using certain songs, and the musical features they observed. All interviews were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed.

Data analysis was qualitative and thematic. The researcher examined each selected hymn by transcribing its Yoruba lyrics (with translations) and noting musical features. Themes (e.g., repentance, thanksgiving, divine attributes) were identified from the texts, guided by biblical references mentioned by respondents. Musical analysis included identifying meter, melodic contour, harmonic accompaniment, and instrumental textures. Themes and musical characteristics emerging from observation and interviews were compared against liturgical context. The research specifically focused on seven hymns – the first seven hymns sung during a typical CCC Sunday service – analyzing them in the order of the service. These hymns were chosen because each is associated with a particular liturgical segment (e.g. post-psalm hymns, after scripture readings, etc.) and exemplify different thematic categories in the CCC hymnbook. Throughout, emphasis was placed on preserving the hymns’ theological and musical integrity as articulated by congregants.

Findings and Discussion

Hymn Order and Liturgical Function: Observations confirmed that CCC hymns are strategically placed within the service to reinforce liturgical themes. The service begins with Psalm 51 (Psalm of repentance) followed by the first hymn, which underscores forgiveness, sin, and devotion. The second hymn follows Psalm 118 and emphasizes thanksgiving and God’s provision. After Psalm 72, a third hymn is sung to invite God’s guidance and justice. A fourth hymn after silent prayer reflects the congregation’s intercessions. The fifth and sixth hymns, following the readings, provide musical reflection on the scripture passages. Finally, after the offering and thanksgiving prayers, the seventh hymn is sung, conveying divine blessing, protection, and provision as the service concludes. This ordered sequence ensures that each hymn thematically aligns with prayers and scripture recitations, guiding worshippers through a spiritual journey of repentance, praise, petition, and commitment.

Theological Themes of Selected Hymns: Across the seven hymns, several recurrent theological motifs emerged. These include divine grace and salvation, provision and blessings, repentance and forgiveness, joy in Christ, and heavenly expectation. For example:

Hymn 12 (Category: Forgiveness/Repentance) begins “*Baba wa, ko wa gba wa la*” (“Our Father, come and save us”), a plea for deliverance from sin. This sets a humble, contrite tone at the service start.

Hymn 376 (Thanksgiving), “*Jesu Olubaso Okan mi*” (“Jesus, Redeemer of my soul”), thanks God for friendship and comfort. Its chorus invokes Jehovah-Nissi (“The Lord my Banner”), celebrating God’s protection through life’s storms.

Hymn 239 (Holy Spirit’s outpouring) uses the metaphor of rain: “*Ojo emi mimo yio ro*” (“Rain of Holy Spirit shall fall”). Each verse petitions for spiritual rain of Spirit, mercy, and blessings. The text draws on biblical promises (Acts 2:17; Joel 2:28-29) to promise transformation through the Spirit.

Hymn 305 (Joy and Protection) urges dancers to shout with joy, affirming that “whoever belongs to God, no evil can confront him.” It expresses trust that believers are under divine protection

and belong to a joyful community.

Hymn 289 (Joy of Christ) simply repeats “Let the world be full of the joy of our Lord Jesus Christ” in many forms, reinforcing a universal theme of rejoicing in Christ (citing Psalms and Paul’s exhortations).

Hymn 620 (Heavenly Preparation) calls believers to “girdle up your loins” and prepare to join the angels and dwell in God’s joy. It reflects eschatological readiness (cf. Luke 12:35) and the CCC’s emphasis on the heavenly destiny of the faithful.

Hymn 426 (Divine Provision/Blessing) richly invokes titles of God (El-Beracad “God of Blessing”, Jehovah Elyon “Lord Most High”, El-Morijah “Provider”). Its lyrics connect to biblical promises of provision (Gen. 22:14) and emphasize trusting God for needs. The final chorus calls angels to join in song, highlighting the transcendent joy of worship.

In all cases, the hymns’ texts are saturated with biblical imagery and Yoruba cultural resonance. For instance, rain is used as an African metaphor for spiritual blessing, and communal pronouns like “our Lord” and “our God” stress shared identity. Theologies of repentance, gratitude, divine friendship, provision, eschatology, and celestial communion are woven into the worship flow. These align with CCC doctrines emphasizing Holy Spirit renewal, miracle-working, and anticipation of God’s kingdom on earth and heaven.

Musical Characteristics: All seven hymns exhibit features of Yoruba musical heritage, blended with hymnody structures. The first hymn and several others use 6/8 or 3/4 meter, creating a lilting, dance-like feel typical of Yoruba rhythms. For example, Hymn 12 (opening hymn) is in 6/8 time with an anacrusis (pickup) on the third quaver beat. The melodies tend to move stepwise (conjunct motion) with repeated phrases, spanning about an octave or less – a characteristic reminiscent of traditional Yoruba song patterns. Many hymns follow a strophic or verse-chorus form (verses with a repeated chorus). Instrumentation consistently includes *sekere* (shakers) and *agogo* (bells), which provide the core polyrhythmic groove. Keyboard/organ accompaniment often adds harmonic support, but the percussive texture and syncopation give the hymns an unmistakable African sound.

Several hymns reflect the influence of Yoruba highlife (a West African popular style). Hymns 305, 289, and 620 are in 4/4 time with a steady pulse and employ highlife-style rhythmic patterns on *sekere/agogo*. For instance, Hymn 305’s melody and rhythm evoke highlife: it starts with an upbeat (anacrusis) and repeats a catchy melodic motif thrice (strophic repetition). The singers often repeat certain lines (refrains) and even sing stanzas multiple times during performance, a practice that intensifies the celebratory feel. Hymn 620, in 4/4, likewise uses the standard Yoruba highlife groove on *sekere/agogo*, underscoring its joyful message of preparation and provision.

In contrast, Hymn 426 is set in slow 3/4 time and is used as a closing hymn. Its tempo and steady triple meter create a solemn, prayerful atmosphere fitting themes of blessing and protection. Notably, Hymn 426’s melody is highly variable in practice – different parishes sing slightly different tunes – highlighting a living oral tradition without a single fixed notation. The hymns’ musical findings show a fusion of African and Western elements. The formal structures (verse-chorus, strophic form) and diatonic (major-scale) melodies reflect Christian hymn traditions, while the rhythms, instruments, and anacrusis reflect Yoruba performance practice. This synthesis allows congregants to experience Christian worship through the lens of their cultural heritage.

The findings illustrate the inculturation of worship in the Celestial Church of Christ: hymns serve as a meeting point of Christianity and Yoruba culture, reinforcing both faith and ethnic identity.

The seamless blend of elements supports theoretical expectations that indigenous churches fashion a contextual identity through worship (Kama & Klaasen, 2023). For instance, Hymn 12's 6/8 dance rhythm and use of Yoruba percussion make it feel like an African praise song even as its lyrics plead for Christian forgiveness. This mirrors Lebaka's observation that African worshippers "participate emotionally and physically" through music and dance. Singing in Yoruba with familiar beat patterns makes the hymn immediately resonant to congregants, strengthening communal bonds. At the same time, the text's theological content (sin, salvation) situates the practice firmly in Christian discourse. Such dual encoding (cultural form with Christian meaning) exemplifies how hymnody in the CCC shapes believers' identity as both Yoruba and Christian.

Hymnody as Theological Formation: Hymns in the CCC function didactically, teaching doctrine through song. The order of hymns matches the liturgy so that key doctrines are revisited throughout the service. The opening hymn on repentance immediately confronts worshippers with the need for forgiveness. Later hymns on thanksgiving and blessings reinforce gratitude and trust in divine provision. Hymn 620's exhortation to prepare for eternity reflects the church's eschatology of white garments and angelic communion. Through repeated singing of these hymns, congregants internalize core beliefs: that God's grace is like life-giving rain (Hymn 239), that belonging to God shields one from evil (Hymn 305), and that God is rich in blessing (Hymn 426). In this sense, hymn singing becomes spiritual formation, reinforcing holiness, gratitude, and hope in a culturally meaningful way. (Oluwadamilare & Ayokunmi, 2024)

Hymnody and Cultural Expression: The research underscores the role of hymns as carriers of Yoruba heritage. Using Yoruba language and idioms in sacred music affirms cultural pride. For example, the metaphor of rain in Hymn 239 ("*Ojo emi mimo yio ro*" – "Rain of Holy Spirit shall fall") draws on the African view of rain as a blessing and life source. Likewise, incorporating calls to angels (Hymn 620 and 426) resonates with Yoruba spirituality's emphasis on ancestors and celestial beings, reinterpreted in Christian terms. The instruments (*sekere, agogo*) and polyrhythms evoke traditional ceremonies. These elements situate CCC worship within Yoruba cosmology even as the texts remain biblical. As Adetiran noted, the prevalence of highlife and Yoruba elements creates "the foundation on which the musical system of the Celestial Church of Christ is built". Thus, singing these hymns is simultaneously an act of cultural affirmation and worship. (Oluwadamilare, Ayokunmi & Adeniyi, 2024, Dada, 2025)

Communal Identity and Participation: Hymnody fosters communal belonging in tangible ways. Singing together – often in antiphonal response – unites members in a collective act. The lyrics frequently use inclusive pronouns ("our Lord," "our God"), reinforcing a shared spiritual family. Musically, the repetitive and participatory structures (choruses, call-and-response) invite all present to join, minimizing the distance between choir and congregation. This aligns with Lebaka's point that active music-making (clapping, dancing) draws people into worship and prevents passive detachment. The catechetical content of hymns (teaching theology) is also communal: by learning and memorizing these songs, the entire congregation gains theological knowledge. In short, CCC hymnody is a social glue – it expresses communal identity (as members of *Ijo Mimo* – "Holy Church") and sustains solidarity through shared musical and spiritual experience.

Conclusion

This study of seven Celestial Church of Christ hymns has revealed the rich interplay of theology and Yoruba culture in African liturgy. Each hymn analyzed is theologically rich – addressing repentance, thanksgiving, joy, divine protection, or heavenly hope – and musically distinct,

employing indigenous rhythms, language, and instruments. Together, the hymns map a worship experience that educates the congregation on doctrine while celebrating Yoruba heritage. By seamlessly blending African traditional musical idioms with biblical themes, CCC hymnody supports spiritual formation (through singing of scripture-infused texts) and fosters communal identity (through shared language and melody).

These findings reinforce the idea that music is foundational in African Christian worship. Hymnody in the CCC is not a mere vestige of Western mission; it has been reinvented as a platform for African expression. The hymns studied herein exemplify how religious communities negotiate faith and culture: they adopt Christian content but shape it in the mold of local song. As such, these hymns underscore that liturgical inculturation can enrich both church and culture – preserving ancestral artistry within Christian devotion. This research contributes to African religious studies by documenting how a prominent Yoruba African-initiated church uses music to articulate and transmit an indigenous Christian identity.

Recommendations

The study highlights the importance of preserving and documenting the hymnody of the Celestial Church of Christ. Many hymns exist primarily in oral form, resulting in variations across parishes and the potential loss of musical and textual integrity over time. It is therefore recommended that church leadership, in collaboration with scholars and musicologists, systematically record and notate these hymns. Doing so would ensure that future generations of choristers and congregants have access to accurate representations of these culturally and theologically significant songs.

In addition, musical training for church musicians and choristers should be strengthened. Workshops and training programs focusing on Yoruba musical techniques, harmony, vocal performance, and the liturgical context of hymns would enhance both the technical quality of performances and the spiritual impact of worship. Such programs would reinforce the dual purpose of hymnody: as a vehicle for theological instruction and as an expression of indigenous musical heritage. The study also encourages comparative research into hymn traditions across African Indigenous Churches. Examining how different churches develop and adapt hymnody can illuminate broader patterns of cultural negotiation, liturgical innovation, and theological transmission. This would provide valuable insights into the evolution of African Christian music and the ways communities sustain identity and belonging through song.

Lastly, religious educators and liturgists should integrate hymns more explicitly into congregational teaching. Explaining the theological content, musical features, and cultural symbolism of hymns can deepen congregants' understanding and appreciation of worship. By engaging actively with both text and music, worshippers can experience a richer, more participatory spiritual life while connecting more meaningfully to their cultural and religious heritage.

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Appendix

CCC HYMN 289

$\text{♩} = 75$

A ye e kun fa yo a ye e kun fa yo a yo ti je su
A ye e te ri ba a ye e te ri ba a de ti je su
e te ra me sin yi e te ra me sin yi e sin yi ni yo

7

kris ti ni a ye e kun fa yo a yo a a yo a yo ti Je su
kris ti ni ke le ri a de na a de a a de a de to ga ogo
gba wa la e te ra me sin yi e sin e e sin e sin ti aye ye

13

ni a yo a a yo a a yo ti je su ni A min
ni a de a a de a a de to ga ogo ni
yi e sin e e sin esin ta ye yo gba wa la.

CCC HYMN 620

$\text{♩} = 80$

En yin o mo jo mi mo e da mu re yi gi ri ka si le ba won ange li ka le
Ni to ri Je su bo wa la ti se da jo a ye yio si ka won a yan fe lo so
Je su si npa da bo wa ge ge bi o le lo run en yin a yan fe lu wa e je

5
lu ya lo jo na ka si le bo si nu a yo o lu wa du mu so fun ba ba a wa
do ba ba lo ke a o si ba won angel li ka le lu ya chr.....
ka mu ra si le la ti le ba won angel li fo lo so run chr.....

10
ma ri di jin le ka bi ye si je ho vah mi mo jo wo ma se le mi lo do re ni pa

14
o re o fe re ki le de be. A_____ min._____

CCC HYMN 305

$\text{♩} = 80$

O mo jo ce le stial mi mo la to run mi mo wa ni a n

6
ho fa yo a n bu sa yo a n ke ha lle lu yah e ni to lo run se ti

11
re ta lo le ko ju ja si A_____ min._____

CCC HYMN 12

♩ = 75



Ba ba wa ko wa gba wa la wa e le se ke pe yo o - ba ba re re -

8



-da kun wa o - ka wa o ni gba gbo ka jo wo ka yi wa pa da - lai ye -

15



- Je su wa ko wa gba wa la wa e le se ke pe yo o - ba ba re re -

22



-da kun wa o - ka wa o ni gba gbo ka jo wo ka yi wa pa da - la ye.