

NAMING CEREMONY: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE IGBO AND YORUBA CULTURE IN NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

Culture is simply everything that embraces our mode of live. An accumulated culture is an invented culture added to the already present one. It denotes a process of cultural growth whereby new cultural elements or traits are added by invention, discovery or borrowing to those already in existence with a resultant increases in the number of cultural traits. The purpose of this essay is to carry out a survey on the effect of culture on naming ceremonies in Igbo and Yoruba societies in Nigeria. In any social system, sociologists and anthropologists will admit the necessity of studying existing cultures in the society. This study is guided by the theory of ethnology. The major concern of the theory is the study of a race or group of people. An in-depth interview was used to obtain information from respondents. The study was carried out amongst the residents who are Igbos and Yorubas residing in the Abadina area of the University of Ibadan. The total number of respondents that was selected to be a representative sample, comprising of the Igbo and Yoruba families in the area were 14. The study brings out clearly the importance which Igbo and Yoruba families attach to names.

KEYWORDS: Culture, Ethnology, Anthropologist, Sociologist, cultural-trait and Social Organization

INTRODUCTION

Culture is the core of this study between Yoruba and Igbo societies. What then is meant by culture? Culture is people ways of life. Before a set of people can be grouped under one culture, they must share the same language, attitudes and have identical world views (Idowu, 2008).

Most commonly, cultural grouping is defined as people sharing a common code, heritage, history and social organization pattern. (Oтите, and Ogionwo, 1978).

Cultural reality is expressed in a people's institutions, proverbs, ceremonies, religion and polity, and can be identified as separate from the culture of another people. (Smith, 1996). People of the same cultural background tend to share the same social habits. (Bacon, 1998) believe that culture is broad enough to express all forms of spiritual life in man, whether intellectual, religion, ethnical etc. Anthropologists and sociologists in their studies have noticed that culture could be inherited and accumulated. Most of our cultural ideas are inherited. We practice an inherited culture when our social habits still reflect what our forefather practiced in their days. An accumulated culture on the other hand, is an invented culture added to the already present one. It denotes a process of cultural growth whereby new cultural elements or traits are added by invention, discovery or borrowing to those already in existence with a resultant increase in the number of cultural traits. Looking carefully at this definition of cultural accumulation, one can say that although culture differs from one community to the other, traits of similarities cannot be unexpected. Anthropologists have seen culture as a progressive process, which is possible through accumulation of culture (Ezeanya, 1998).

The concept of culture is used in various ways with different meanings. These usages are either colloquial or scientific. In colloquial terms, culture or cultured is used to state that someone has or does not have good manner or behaviour. For instance, when quarrelling, Mr. A may tell Mr. B that the latter is not cultured or has no culture. That is, Mr. A means to say that Mr. B is unrefined.

This usage may carry some scientific meaning behind it if Mr. A and B come from the same cultural system, that is, anyone misbehaving as objectively determined, has not acquired the behaviour expected of him as a member of a particular society.

In scientific usage, culture is often defined in blanket terms as the total way of life of a people. Specifically, culture is defined as the complex whole of man's acquisitions of knowledge, morals, belief, art, custom, technology, etc which are shared and transmitted from generation to generation. Many anthropologists and sociologists accept this definition of culture, which, was given by Taylor (1981, Fadipe, 1990) in his primitive culture. The definition stresses that culture is not a personal item; culture is used with reference to a society or a group of societies. Culture does not die with the death of an individual or a group of individuals. The culture of a people may vanish only when such people vanish under such mishaps as earthquakes.

Our definition of culture indicates that it has both material and non-material aspects, and is acquired by every member of a society. Material culture relates to overt or explicit aspect of culture, and means the products of industry, technology, art, etc that is, every visible or concrete acquisition of man in society: artifacts such as bridges, pots, cutlasses, hoes, houses, cooking utensil, handicrafts, etc. These are directly observable as the cultural products of any society. The material aspects of culture thus consist of the objects, which people have learned to make and use to satisfy their needs in society.

The non-material aspects of culture consist of the knowledge, philosophy, morals, motivation, language, attitudes and values etc. shared and transmitted in a society. These are sometimes referred to as the covert or implicit aspects of culture and are acquired by members of a society. They are not visible or tangible but they are manifested through the psychological states and behaviour of a people (Johnson, 2004).

Both of these aspects of culture, material and non-material go together as the culture of a people. They are fundamental in the analysis of the cultural pattern, that is, the general mode of conduct, the systematic and integrated content of behaviour, which is characteristic of a society (Oduyoye, 1997). Because of this, it is possible to predict or anticipate the behaviour of members of a society. They are not visible or tangible but they are manifested through the psychological states and behaviour of a people. It follows therefore that in sociological studies we do not consider any society or individual as "uncultured". Every person who is a member of a society or every society in the world has a culture (Fadipe, 1990).

Culture Differences

Culture differences are the differences between the social habits of people who belong to different linguistic groups. "Communication technique that makes a person successful in New York could kill him in New Delhi" so, also a naming ceremony activities which is acceptable to the Yorubas, might not be acceptable to the Igbos; when we do not share the same culture, we tend to give different interpretations to events; this depends a lot on our cultural background which includes unconscious accumulation of the ideas and behaviour of one's culture. Recognizing cultural or ethnic dissimilarities is like recognizing individual differences. (Smith, 1996), explains cultural differences with the attitude of the white and black people as to time. He illustrate with a colleague of his at a university who threw a big dance party for 20 couples made up of blacks and whites. The party was scheduled for 9.00pm, by 9.30pm most of the white people had arrived but only one black couple had appeared. All the blacks people did not see anything wrong in coming late. They were simply operating on 'African people's time'. This illustration may not necessarily be the case, when view from the culture of a black culture toward time. (White, 1998), (Sitaram, 1997) and (Smith, 1996).

The concept of family is another thing that portrays cultural differences between the blacks and whites. When a white man refers to his family, he means just himself, his wife and children, while, to an African, with his extended concept of family, his family means the husband, wife, children, grandchildren, cousin and in fact all his relations. (Ogbalu, 1997) confirms this statement when he says the Igbos believe that they owe a great deal of responsibility to all whom they are related, that is, their family. Language is another element that can reflect cultural differences. The cultural differences between two people of Yoruba and Igbo cultural background respectively, will make it difficult for them to understand each other language.

Custom manifest itself in Igbo and Yoruba naming ceremonies. Names in these two linguistic communities; have high culture content. A name could reflect gratitude, loyalty or belief in the people's object of worship, for example "Ogunseun" is a name that shows gratitude to "Ogun" (Yoruba's god of iron), meaning "thanks be to Ogun". An Igbo family can also, name their child "Chika" which means, "God is the greatest".

Naming Ceremony

According to Ubahakwe (2007), Nigerian indigenous names, like most other African names, have high culture content. By this is meant that personal names are not simply labels used for mere identification purposes, as baggage tags are. On the contrary, an indigenous African name on the whole personifies the individual, tells some story about the parents and or the family of the bearer, and in a more general sense, points to the values of the society into which the individual is born. Yoruba people are bounded together like the Igbo people by culture; they are made up of several clans which are bound together by language, traditions, beliefs and practices. Naming Ceremony is a widely observed culture in Yoruba land. The arrival of a newborn baby is a thing of joy. People in this linguistic group live in compounds; the family blessed with a new child expects congratulatory visits from neighbours and relations. When this obligation is not discharged ill feelings result. They sincerely observed significant events from conceptions to the births of a child. These observations serve as the basis for choosing names for children.

Customs demands that the women who have just gotten a child should be exempted from many things such as paying visits, going to the streams, cooking etc. In some compound custom permits the woman to go out of the house if she so desires after the naming ceremony- in some compounds in Erumu village, in Oyo Yoruba Society, is the 8th day, while in some other places like Lalugbon village, in the same Oyo Society, she can only do so after the 40th day when she must have been healthy enough. In Erumu community, male children are given names on the 9th day, female on the 7th day and twin children on the 8th day. There are these variations in dates because it's believed that a male child has 9 rib bones and a female 7.

Indigenous Yoruba children usually have two types of names- one he receive as a result of the observation of events before and immediately after birth and the other is the one referred to as "Oriki". This is the name given to a child to describe the future portents of the child's life or as a recital of the accomplishments of a clan. It is invoked when praising a child for bringing pride to the parents, clan or when attempting to evoke virtuous character traits of bravery, fortitude, perseverance believed to be innate in a person due to his pedigree. The name of the child is not supposed to be known by anybody until the day of the person who has the right of choosing names for the child, but if the child's grandfather is still alive, he chooses the name. Naming ceremony is referred to in Yoruba language as "Isomoloruko" meaning giving a name to a child. Others call it "Ikomojade" bringing out of the child. With children who are believed to have brought their names from heaven- these are children born in some unusual manner and in difficult circumstances, which make it necessary to prescribe special taboos for the care of the baby. This child can be named as soon as the baby is born by anybody that can discern children born in such unusual circumstances. For example, a child born with his legs coming out before his head will immediately be known and called "Ige".

Naming ceremony is one of the most important customs observed in Igbo land. "Igu aha" is the Igbo meaning for naming ceremony. A woman stays in confinement for 7 market weeks after delivering a child. She and her child are not permitted by custom to come out of the house until the day of the "Igu aha". She stays all day beside the fire place (in her bedroom) to keep herself warm and to prevent any form of sickness after birth. She does not associate with anybody; she neither cooks nor serves food to her husband because she is believed to be unclean. Instead, her mother or sisters come around to help with the housework. She is brought special foods such as "Ariraa", and "Awai", these she takes every day until the 28th day, the 28 days of confinement is called "Omuguwo" in Igbo language.

The children are not given names until the 28th day, there are of course variations in this date. For example, in N'turu in Okigwe in Imo State, the naming ceremony comes up on the 8th day. Preparations are made towards the "Igu aha" before the actual day, by all Elders in the family. On the day of the 'Igu aha' the mother and child are dressed ready for the ceremony. The Igbo people just like the Yorubas observed significant circumstance surrounding the birth of a child before a name is chosen for him/her. People of Udi and Akwa division in Anambra State believe in reincarnation (Ubesie, 1998). When a child is born they normally consult an oracle to know which

of their dead grandparents returned back as the new born child. It's the name of this grandparent that will be given to the child. Other sources of Igbo names are of event like, giving praise to God, market days and nature- this is when a child is given a name relating to springs or rivers. This is common among the Igbo because they believe springs are the source of life.

Interpersonal communication exists in the culture of naming ceremony, since it involves interaction between people. A woman who has just given birth to a child realizes that she immediately starts sharing meaning with her baby. For example, the cry of the baby will communicate to her that the child is uncomfortable and needs her attention. (Ojike, 2005), says that in Igbo land women who are well wishers and relations of the family blessed with a new child communicate the good news of the arrival of a new child to others by rubbing can wood on their bodies, and when anybody come in contact with them, such a person will know that a child has just been newly born. He/she can then ask who and where the child is born so that he/she can go and pay a congratulatory visit.

Materials used for Naming Ceremony

Among the Igbo people, the naming ceremony day, is a day in which all the relations and friends that are present at the ceremony feast together (Ilogu, 2002). One of the most important things at the ceremony is palm wine. The father of the child must make sure there are enough kegs of palm wine for his guests. The significance of palm wine is that, it is used to appease and invite the ancestors into their midst. Kola nut is also used for prayer; it is then broken in pieces so that all that are present will eat from it. Women from the family where the ceremony is being performed cook different types of food from which the family shrine is first fed and then the guests. If the family is one that pays prominence to God, they take part of the food to the pastor's house or the priest.

As in the Igbo culture, among the Yoruba people, the naming of a child always attracts ceremonies. The ways these ceremonies are performed differ from one compound to the other. The naming ceremony is generally referred to as "*Ikomojade*" as earlier mentioned. It is the day in which the child is for the first time, brought out of the room. Hence, the term applies to the event that is, bringing out of the child. Materials used for naming ceremony among the Yoruba people differ from one family to the other. However, there are some common items according to Daramola and Jeje, (1995); these are bitter kola, salt, honey, cold water and hot drink. Adeoye (1992) added fish and "*Ataare*" (Alligator pepper).

Each of these materials has its own significance in the ceremony and in the life of the child to be named. The head of the family in performing the rites involved in the ceremony takes bitter kola and says to the child;(mentioning the name he has been given) as this bitter kola is strong, so must you be strong in life.

He again takes salt, puts it in the child's mouth and says: this salt, as this salt is sweet, so must your life be sweet, and because life is as sweet as salt, you should stay and eat the salt with us. Honey and salt signify almost the same thing. Water indicates that the child's life shall be as cool as water. With the hot drink in hand, he says; gin does not fade, may you stay long with us and not fade away.

The fish signifies food that the parents of the child eat and that important people eat meat or fish, the child should therefore grow up to be an important person who will eat meat or fish. One of the seeds of "*Ataare*" (Alligator pepper) is removed and put on the child's lips; it signifies that the child should grow up and multiply just like *Ataare* (Alligator pepper) has many seeds.

Theoretical Framework

In this study the theory of ethnography was taken in consideration- the science of ethnography is the scientific study of a race or group of people. People without culture are dead. Culture is the totality of the people's ways of life, beliefs and values. It is a regular and routine demonstration of the human power, body and spirit; personal and group relationship and community responsibilities. It encompasses the arts, music, and folklore intellectual development, social institutions, for which the community or society is identified. Culture is not static. It evolves with the development and advancement of the environment in which the society strives. For instance, with the advent of religion, the belief of culture of the people is bound to change in response to the new belief system.

The cultural values of the people nurtured along the pagan religious belief, could also be woven around the new found religion and made to develop along with it. In doing so, the culture of the people under goes some changes, which would also make it grow.

In the era of technological advancement, the culture and traditions of the people are bound to respond to the changes brought about by these developments. In applying ethnography, it can be argued that in any social system, Sociologists and anthropologists will admit the necessity of studying existing cultures in the society (Bacon, 1998). And since naming ceremony is an aspect of Igbo and Yoruba cultures the theory of ethnography is of utmost importance in analyzing traditional activities involved in the naming ceremonies and the culture content of Igbo and Yoruba names.

Objectives of Study

The primary question addressed by this study is: Is there any effect of culture on the naming ceremonies of both the Igbo and Yoruba people in Nigeria?

In order to answer this research question, the specific objectives of the study are to explore the cultural areas in the naming ceremonies of both the Igbo and Yoruba people; to examine the culture content of Igbo and Yoruba names. In addition, the study examines clearly the importance which Igbo and Yoruba families attached to names.

METHODOLOGY

The study involved data collection in two stages. The first was the review of secondary sources for background information on naming ceremonies in both the Igbo and Yoruba people in Nigeria. In the second stage, primary data were collected using the in-depth interview.

The study was carried out in the Abadina residential area of the University of Ibadan in 2009. The choice of this area was influenced by the fact that households in this area are mixture of both the Igbo and Yoruba speaking people. The total number of respondents that was selected for this study was 14. The qualitative data obtained from the in-depth interview were content-analyzed along the main themes of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

A total of fourteen respondents were interviewed amongst residents who are Igbos and Yorubas residing in the Abadina area of the University of Ibadan. This consists of 6(42.9%) Male and 8(57.1%) Female. The difference in the Female-Male representation is a reflection of the fact that more women are interested in social/cultural beliefs. Thus, women participation in cultural activities remains quite high.

The age distribution of respondents shows that 6(42.9%) gave no response as regard their age. 1(7.1%) of the respondents fall within 19-24years, while, 3(21.4%) of the respondents reported their ages to fall between 25-30 years. And 4(28.6%) respondents reported their ages between 31 and above. From this distribution, it appears that more of the respondents are not interested in disclosing their age and most of the people within this vicinity who are married with child/children are above thirty years of age.

Respondents' educational statuses show that 9(64.3%) of the total population holds one form of tertiary school/academic qualification certificates, OND, HND, and BSc. However, in-depth investigation revealed that majority of the respondent who reported to have tertiary-school qualifications had studied courses in Universities with certificate or diploma statuses. About 5(35.7%) of the entire population completed Secondary school.

1(7.1%) of the population was single, while, 7(50%) were said to be married. 6(42.9%) were said to have been divorce or separated due to death of their spouse.

Analysis of respondents' religious orientations shows that Christians constitute the single largest group of respondents. This accounted for 8(57.1%) of the number of respondents in the study. Muslim makes up 6(42.0%). This shows that within the vicinity under study, the majority of respondents are Christians compare to other religions.

The study shows that 7(50%) of the respondents are from Igbo ethnic group, while, 7(50%) were also from the Yoruba ethnic group. This shows that there were equal opportunities given to both target population.

In the occupation distribution 3(21.4%) of the respondents did not disclosed their occupation, while, 10(71.4%) of the respondents were civil servants, the reason is not farfetched, since the study is carried out with in a government institution. 1(7.2%) of the respondents were clergy. This shows that target population which the study was proposed for fall within this bracket.

Meaning, Time and Date Attached To Names

In both the Yoruba and Igbo societies, meaning are attached to names given to a child. In the family of the first respondent, all the children except the last one have "Ade" as the prefix to their names. This means that the parents of the child have the royal blood in them, because in Yoruba land it is the children born into the families and into the extended families of chiefs that have "Ade" (meaning crown) as prefix to their names.

The basis for choosing names for children in this family is not only based on events that happened within the nuclear family, but on what also happened among the extended family. According to the first respondent, the circumstances that determine the choice of names for "Olawale" and "Adegoke" were based on what happened to their father's brother and their paternal grandmother, respectively. This goes to support the position of Fadipe, (1990) which state that the Yoruba believes that a child born into a family is not only for the husband and wife, who had the children, but for all other members of the extended family.

The significance of the names given to "Olawale" (meaning wealth comes to the house) and "Adeitan" (meaning crown doesn't end) according to the first respondent is the direct names of the great grandfather and the child's grandfather shows the family's belief in reincarnation. In both cases, the two children are seen as the personality of their deceased relations incarnate. The name of the only girl among the children, signifies that before her birth, there was no female child, so, when the girl was born, the parents were satisfied that their "crown is now complete". The names of all the children in this family show a clear pattern of the family's fortunes, belief in reincarnation and the circumstances at which the children are born.

In the case of the second respondent, all his children except "Oladele" (meaning wealth has gotten home) have "Olu" either, as the prefix or suffix to their names. "Olu" is the short form of the Yoruba word for God, which is "Olorun". With the occurrence of "Olu" in virtually all the names, the special prominence given to religion in choosing names for the children is noticed. These names are either acknowledging the power of God, or showing his mercies and giving him thanks. From this names, a common fact can be made about the belief of the family, and also, on their relationship with the society to which they belong. "Olusegun" and "Ebunoluwa" are names which show the type of hostility suffered by the family (the parents of the children). "Olumuyiwa" which means "God Himself brought this" was born after "Olusegun". At the time this child was born, the family had gotten over the hostility of the past, so, they now say the child is brought to them by God. The names given to all the children are true reflections of the life experience and the belief of the parents, while it has less to do with the children themselves.

The third and fourth respondents who happen to come from Afikpo, and Ife respectively, claimed that the right to choose names for their children is basically that of the eldest man in the family. It is noticed that where the eldest man is not available, (as in the case of respondent number two) the father of the child gives the names.

According to the fifth, sixth and seventh respondents, which were from Ekiti, Ondo and Umuahia respectively, "the mothers of the children do not choose names for their children". It then means that the choice of names for children is the responsibility of a man.

The family of the fifth respondent, who was a Yoruba mother from Ekiti, gives names to her children on the eighth day, while the family of the sixth respondent, a Yoruba father from Ondo gives names to male children on the seventh day.

According to respondent seven and eight, who were Igbo father and mother, their reasons for giving names on the third month for both male and female is because tradition and culture permit them.

For respondent nine, who is from Igbo extraction, claim that one month is the ideal date to name a child to recover properly to face the ceremonial problems.

Also, respondent ten, also an Igbo father from Umuahia was of the opinion that three month is the ideal date to name a child; reason is to allow the child to be strong. One can rightly depict that the differences in the time interval tend to occur in both culture. It was also discovered that the reason for the differences could be attributed to the cultural differences attached to the date and time for the naming a new born child. In the Igbo culture the people attached importance to market days in carrying out naming ceremony.

Materials and Processes in Naming a New Born Child

Some difference are reflected in the process of naming children and in the materials used by the families of the first and second respondents even though they are of the same Yoruba cultural background. Respondent number two makes provision for religion in the materials used for the ceremony. According to him, who is a traditional Ogun worshipper says that "Ogun" the family's object of worship is represented by any form of iron material, to show the presence of that god in their midst. This is a display of his religious affiliation, not in any way provided for by the first respondent.

The significance of the materials used for the naming ceremony according to the first, sixth and thirteen respondents, who were Yorubas, is based on the belief of the Yorubas about life. The materials are either signifying that the child should live a happy life, or that he should have many offspring. The responses of these three respondents show that the custom involved in giving names to children have slight difference even among people of the same cultural background. This confirms that among the Yoruba people, there are variations in the practice of naming ceremonies from one family to another (Ogunbowale, 1990). The basis of these variations could be due to the different processes at which each of the people got in contact with external culture and education, however, there are standard and practice common to the entire group.

Respondents, three and four were both of Igbo cultural background; the names of the children of the third respondent are reflections of what the family is deeply concerned with. This according to him shows the words of the names of the children, except the last one, refer to "Chukwu" (the great God) or "Chi", the personal deity (another name for God). This could mean the extent to which this family practices religion.

It is noticed that these names are either recognizing the power of God, or praising and thanking him for his deeds. According to him, the name "Okundiri" of the last child, however, tells something about the social relationship between the family and the people in their community. The meaning according to him of this name shows a tensed atmosphere that even the birth of the child has not relieved.

In the case of the fourth respondent, only two of the four names that he gave have something to do with the religious belief of the family. "Mmadukaego" is a name that reflects the Igbo and especially the family's concept of life, the fear of death and the importance of having relationship over being rich, could have influenced the choice of this name which says "man is greater than money". The female child was named "Nwayioma", meaning "a good woman". This is a name that says what the child is to the parents. There is a connection between these types of names with a marked ceremony, which is supposed to be a common practice all over Igbo land. Among the Igbo families interviewed only one did not perform the naming ceremony, while some just give names to their children without marking it with any ceremony because they have not got the money. The reason gives by the fourth respondent is based on urban area influence. Probably, if he was to be in the village, this complaint would not have come up; because neighbours and relations may have to provide virtually all the materials he would need for the ceremony, due to the extended family system practice in the village. But because people in city are mostly not concerned with this type of communal help pattern, it may be difficult for him to come by such help.

The third respondent on her own says that the naming ceremony is performed any time when there is money. This contrasts with what respondents' one and two have said about the dates the naming ceremony is performed. The choice of gin over palm wine or any other traditional gin (Ogogoro) must again be the effect of values and cultural differences of the family of the third respondent.

According to respondent four on the process of naming ceremony: On the morning of the naming ceremony, the paternal grandmother of the child takes him or her out of the room into the midst of people who are cited for the naming ceremony, the name to be given to the child is already written on a sheet of paper in a dish that is placed on the table, where the other materials for the ceremony are. The 'Elder', who is leading the ceremony, takes the child, as he says the name he has been given. He simultaneously touches the lips of the child with each of the materials provided as he prays for the child.

According to the fifth respondent: the Elder sit in the middle of the people who have come for the ceremony. The elderly man presiding over the ceremony uses chalk to draw a circle on the floor and he introduces the child into the world by putting the child's legs inside the circle that has been drawn. He then tells the people the name that has been chosen for the child and prays for the child with each of the materials provided.

According to the sixth respondent: On the morning of the naming ceremony, 'my child and I wear new things'. The elder who is naming the child prays for him/her with the hot drinks and kola nuts.

He then pours a bit of the drink on the ground before he gives to everybody present to drink. After praying with the kola nuts, he breaks it into pieces and all the people present eat from it.

There was no response from respondent seven on the process of naming his children.

Respondent eight: The mother of the child is asked to sit on a mat and a bowl is placed on the mat, the mother carrying the child opens up the mouth of the child and the soup prepared is dropped into the child's mouth, this signified that the child is introduced into eating of pepper and salt.

The ninth respondent simply gave the reason for the process in naming a child as Yoruba tradition.

According to respondent ten: The head of the family submits selected name(s) to the elders in the hamlet who are present at the ceremony.

For respondent 11: people are invited, that is, family members and close friends, even in-laws. Roasted yam will be prepared and red oil with which to eat it with. The hot drink will be ready too. The mother of the child will be instructed to present the child for naming, once that is done, the eldest man in the family will pronounce the name; and entertainment will follow immediately, then the closing prayer.

There was no response from respondent 12.

The process for respondent 13 is simply praying with the materials by the eldest man for long life for the child.

According to respondent 14: the parents send a town crier or any member of the family to inform the elders about the preparation or intention to name their child. You then cook for the visitors, the people contribute money for the child as well as pray, and the parents are allowed to open an account with the money so contributed for the new born baby.

The other respondents had similar responses from the above, in which they attribute the process of naming a child to traditional belief of the people.

CONCLUSION

The discussion brings out clearly the importance, which Igbo and Yoruba families attached to names. It means much more to them than just labels for differentiating one individual from the other. Each name tells a story about the individual, his family, and the society into which he belongs. The significance attached to names is also reflected in the ceremony that is used to mark the giving of names to children.

The Yoruba and Igbo people believed that the prayers offered for the child on his naming ceremony play an important role in the life of the child thus named. This is why the Yorubas need so many materials to signify all that the child will meet in life.

The belief and in the materials prepared for his naming- ceremony, for example, it is a wish (of the Yoruba people) that someone should live a long life. This is signified in the ceremony with the offering of prayers over each of the materials used. During the prayers, special requests are made for a life worth living and an enjoyable one for the child. The Yorubas also believed in having many children, and right from the day of the naming ceremony, they show concern for the child being able to have many offspring of his or her own later in life.

This prayer for many children is signified with alligator pepper (Ataare). We also get to know about the beliefs of the Igbos and Yorubas in reincarnation through the names given to children. Reincarnation in a child is taken as a blessing especially if the deceased Elder was an important person in the family. However, in Igbo society the name given to a child on his naming ceremony are believed to be able to have influence in his future. Ubahakwe (2007) took a leaf out of Wieschoff's article to explain this belief among the Igbo. "An ominous name is likely to spell hardship and ultimate doom for the bearer. When such names are given to children, in future people will be quick in relating the misfortunes of such children to their names". A child named "Ngozi" (meaning Blessing) or "Obiageli" (meaning one who comes to eat) is said to be most likely to have a bright future and less of misfortunes.

The work then concludes that Igbo and Yoruba names and the naming ceremony involves are embodiments of culture, which give insight into the beliefs, customs, values and attitude of the people studied. From the result of the research carried out, among some respondents who reside in Abadina junior staff quarters, University of Ibadan. This is an academic environment where the strict practice of custom and culture may not be strictly observed by the inhabitants. The life in the city must also have influenced the way some of the respondents have deviated from the cultural practice of the naming ceremony.

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Received for Publication: 09/06/2010

Accepted for Publication: 21/07/2010