



THE NASARA JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES

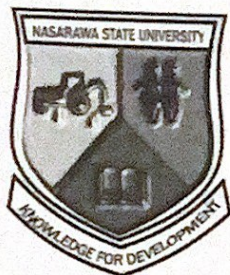
Volume 9, No. 1 and 2, March, 2020

ISSN: 1118-6887



A JOURNAL PUBLICATION OF THE
FACULTY OF ARTS
NASARAWA STATE UNIVERSITY, KEFFI - NIGERIA

VOL.9 NO. 1 and 2, March 2020



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Published by:
Faculty of Arts Nasarawa State University,
Keffi - Nigeria.

Printed by:
Eiwa Press Limited
08035536267
eiwapress@yahoo.com

ISSN: 1118-6887

NASARA JOURNAL is multi-disciplinary and is published by the Faculty of Arts, Nasarawa State University, Keffi -Nigeria.

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Changing Values and Identity Crisis: Implications for the Development of Yoruba Indigenous Names

By

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Abstract

The Yoruba are culturally minded people; hence, the act of naming a child is an inherited and indispensable culture in Yorubaland as children are the soul of Yoruba culture. This study examines the trends/changes in the value system (incidentally more in the negative direction than positive) with special focus to personal names in the 21st century Yoruba society. The researcher is thus interested in finding out the typology of Yoruba Personal names, the premium placed, new dimensions introduced into the Yoruba naming systems and danger signals. In carrying out this study, the researcher complemented primary and secondary sources with the social media, inscriptions on souvenirs and lists of registered students in selected schools. The researcher's findings reveal that the worrisome state of affairs leading to identity crisis has a lot of historical, cultural and educational implications on the Yoruba nation and African society at large. Many of these modifications have no restriction to language, religion and gender. The study concludes that while every culture borrows, modifies and integrates in a dynamic world; it is pertinent for the Yoruba to avoid hook, line and sinker embrace of alien values or else face historical erosion, loss of identity and cultural bastardization. Therefore, while cultural globalisation is inevitable, some interactions need to be resisted abinitio and where entrenched, reversed.

Keywords: Changing Values, Identity Crisis, The Yoruba, Indigenous, Personal Names.

Introduction

Until recently, the mark of a highly cultured and educated man described by Ayandele (1974:28) as "deluded hybrid" was the extent to which he approximated or limited or mimicked the Whiteman. If, in addition, such a man has actually travelled to and lived in the Whiteman's country, he was permanently labeled 'cultured' and 'educated'. With all respect to some, coming home from abroad with a white wife was part of that attitudinal syndrome. All these cannot and should not form the bases or ideals to which Africans should aspire in a bid to catch up with the Western world. In other words, while admitting that Western education had increased the GNP and consumption pattern, it had also dealt a mortal blow on an average Africa's traditional family and society in terms of child rearing practices, ethnic identity, dressing, mode of relaxation, music and poetry, vocation and value system.

Understanding the exact geographical location of the Yoruba people is fluid. The Yoruba people are an ethnic group of South-western and North-central Nigeria, as well as Southern and Central Benin. They are group of people found in the South-western part of Nigeria and one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria (Ladipo, 1982:1). Though the majority of the Yoruba population now live in the South-western Nigeria, the geographical spread is not absolute. There

are many Yoruba people whose villages and towns overlap into the territories bounding these geographical areas. It is therefore instructive to concede the point that the geographical locations of the Yoruba people as depicted in modern maps, both colonial and post-colonial, do not incorporate other Yoruba people in other places in West Africa and the Diaspora; but rather, takes into consideration the areas where the Yoruba people are the majority (Falola & Childs, 2005:12). They represent the highest level of cultural achievements in sub-Sahara Africa not only in arts and religion but also in culture (William, 1969:1). Their desirable values which reflect both the individual and society's moral, ethical and behavioral standards include godliness, morality, hard work, scholarship, respect for elders/constituted authority, civic responsibility, cultural awareness, and many others. The expected end-product of education is a refined, cultured, sensitive, caring, truthful and reliable man. An educational system is a failure if a substantial proportion of its products behave in contradiction to the listed cherished values.

Glaringly, the Yoruba ethnic group has never had a doubt about the usefulness of their historical traditions and the necessity for individual to know something about the customs and origins of their community. Admittedly, "the past cannot be completely recovered, but the present is also not completely enacted and fully open to our view" (Alagoa, 1979:7). Considering an in-depth study of how each of these values change and how each change positively or negatively influences the attitudes of most Nigerian educated youths, growing adults as well as the resultant implications for parents and institutions would be too elastic in scope. Osaji (1987:13) identifies that "apart from language, the most distinguishing characteristic of autochthons, peoples and nations throughout the world is the system of authentic identification in the choice of personal names." While places names seem to have been spared, the patterns of personal names have been greatly battered. Therefore, the emphasis of this study is limited to the loss of identity or collapsed African personality via personal names among the Yoruba ethnic group. Gone were the days where from the names of citizens from some geographical entities, one could say with some certainty that such individuals bearing that names are Chinese, Japanese, French, Germans, Italians, English, Russians, Nigerians (Ibo, Yoruba, Efik, Edo, etc).

Values in Yoruba Normative System

Philosophers say that the beginning of an argument begins with the clarification of terms and concepts. Norms are rules and expectations that specify the dos and don'ts in various social institutions, values are abstract conceptions of what is important and worthwhile. The United Nations agency, UNESCO (2013) defines culture as the "set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value system, traditions and beliefs." Generally speaking, African culture has a lot to offer and look up to in the global best practices. Ayisi (1979: xi) helps to define culture and divides human race into three categories: the founders, maintainers and destroyers of culture. Olaniyan (1982:12) discusses the inseparability of Africans from their history and culture as their cultural elements are manifested in their literatures, religions, social, economic and political institutions, music, dance, arts, drama and their languages, all profoundly influenced by their environments. They and other contributors have helped to identify and discuss some African institutions, cultural norms and values, which served as background to this work. The Yoruba ethnic group has a lot of values which are generally recognized by the citizenry and no doubt, contribute significantly to the sets of norms and ethos characterised by the behavioral patterns of such people. Thus, the term, *value system* is "a coherent set of values adopted and/or evolved by a person, organization, or society as a standard to guide its behavior in preferences in all situations." (<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/value-system.html>;) One conclusion that can be drawn from previous studies on Yoruba normative system is that proverbs, philosophical sayings,

moral values, family ethics, manners and customs are cherished cultural cum religious heritage in Yoruba culture(cf. Johnson (1921: 98-140, Oladele (1976: 32). To Mehrotra (1980:205-210), the socio-cultural norms are never static. Few values relating to the arrival of a child, its birth and reputation need a cursory attention.

Foremost, God instituted marriage primarily for companionship, to avert sexual immorality and procreations as evidences abound that infertility or celibacy have never been celebrated in Yoruba land and Africa at large. The popular prayer, *eyiniyawokonimọṣeni* (may the bride not experience delay) attests to the fact that:

The traditional Yoruba couples do not believe in the philosophy of 'sterility' or 'barrenness' but their philosophy... is that a life without being blessed with children from the deity is a wasted existence. ... They would not have honourable burial... as children are the projection and extensions of their parents (Adekunle, 1997:1).

Therefore, the arrival of a baby in the family till today is greeted with overwhelming joy by the parents and the whole community. Bearing of children has blessing in marriage and it is regarded as one of the greatest blessings in life as it ensures the continuity of a family/community. This is evident in names such as found on Table 1:

S/No	Name	Meaning	S/No	Name	Meaning
1	<i>Qmọlere</i>	Children are one's reward	4.	<i>Qmọntiyi</i>	Children are ones prestige
2	<i>Qmọlaso</i>	Children are one's garments	5.	<i>Qmọlade</i>	Children are crowns
3	<i>Qmọlọṣo</i>	Children are treasures	6.	<i>Ebunlọmọ</i>	Children are gifts

Other corroborating expressions include: "*okuṣọlọmọkii sun lọrun*" (he who dies and leaves offsprings still lives); *okuolowoṣodunmẹta*, *okuotosiosumefa*, *okuṣọlọmọṣasensetanni* (the burial and remembrance of a rich man lasts three years, of a pauper six months, but unending for a deceased that leaves offsprings); *Olọrunkonijẹkakuakurun*(may God forbid dying without issue); etc. Nangoli (2002:85) generally attests to the premium put on fertility thus:

Children are a big exultation in African society...All doubts about a marriage soon disappears with the arrival of a child. To the Africans, the marriage is then properly consummated. The relationship between the clans of both the husband and wife is cemented forever, the moment the child is born.

Another notable value is the preference for male gender. While all parents till date aspire for both male and female children, giving birth to only female children or sex discrimination has in the real sense led desperate men to unwarranted hatred, provocations, polygamy, divorce, 'excess' birth and extra-marital affairs. Their joy and breakthrough thus reflect in the well selected names given(i.e. *Qkanlawon*, *Olumide*, *Oluṣọmọ*); the elaborateness of naming ceremonies or simply in the questions or reactions put up after the congratulations on the safe delivery (i.e. *akoabi abo?* meaning male or female? Or *kilo bi?* Meaning what sex did she deliver?). Aboyeji (2005:106-107) captures thus:

Feasting and dancing was associated with the birth of a child. Aside the great praises and appreciation to God through their deities, more applause and credence was given to the father when the baby was a male child because only male children would grow up to keep the clan's name and join the ranks of other men of the clan to preserve traditions. Giving birth to female children was considered next to bareness and the blame usually shifted on the woman.

As consolation and gratitude to such displayed ingratitude, such parent and/or people around him promptly conclude, "*qmolomọṣẹ*" (a child is a child). In fact, it is important to get

married; more importantly to get married and have children, and most especially male children as having only female children is traditionally considered next to infertility. The idea of remaining single is usually associated with congenital abnormality or poverty and being barren considered being the most unfortunate mishap (Olainipekun, oral interview: 12/04/19).

Again, in spite of the common Yoruba saying, "*aikaomo fun olomo*" (don't count the number of children in the presence of their parents); the value placed on numerous children in the past due to both the cultural and economic factors is noteworthy. Virtually then, every family was self-sufficient and fairly comfortable as the three essentials of living: food, shelter and clothing were not hard to procure. Affluence at that time was determined by the size of one's material possessions. This cultural-cum economic factor consequently encouraged polygamy as well as taking honorary chieftaincy titles. A striking departure from their value system is the reduction in the number of children owing to the position of Christianity on polygamy as well as economic dictate (Ogundele, oral interview: 15/04/19).

Moreover, neither did Islam and Christianity dispute nor underestimate the premium placed on the importance and maintenance of good names and integrity over riches and materialism (*Qur'an* 2:188, 275, 26:88-89, 9:34; Proverbs 22:1 in the *Holy Bible*). Hence, the traditional saying, *orukoṣeniijanuṣeni* (one's name is one's integrity regulator) was to emphasize moral uprightness (*omoluabi*). In the traditional Yoruba society therefore, a good name was preferred to material riches. No matter the degree of material affluence of the family, it was customarily taught in tales and poetry that children should not build their future on material wealth of their parents. These names were tradition-based drawn from the home context "*ilèlákòwòkátòsòmól'órúko*" (the state or situation of the house must first be considered before a child is christened) and a person's name directs his actions and behavior (*orukoṣomniir'omo*). (Akinaso, 1980:283) rightly submits that:

Any personal name which invokes unpleasant or negatively valued connotations is obligatorily avoided because the Yoruba believe (i) that a child's name plays some part in its development and future career and consequently (ii) that a child may react to a name having negative social implications.

It should be noted that expectant parents from both clans (before the modernity of scanning) prepared numerous unisex names ahead of the delivery and no matter the nature or circumstance of birth, collated names were customarily put under lock and key until the naming ceremony day- "*oruko ta obasomoni, inuṣeniigbe*". Ilesanmi (1982:113) thus described naming ceremony (a socio-religious and cultural activity) as the means of legitimizing a child; a ceremony of initiation of a newly born child to a cultural family.

On the whole, it can be summarized and re-emphasized that the continued growth of culture depends on the continued production of children who can be incorporated into the oral cultural system to carry on the tradition.

Functions of Personal Names

Generally, personal names are not accidental in Africa as names become automatically associated with peoples, their character and characteristics. (Ilesanmi, 1982:12) succinctly puts:

Names do not only identify, they historicize, socialize, psychologize and spiritualize. Yoruba traditional believers hold that the knowledge of the secret names of certain creatures gives to the knowers of the names certain power or control over the creatures that bear the names.

Personal names are means of individual identification and differentiation. This is the most common reason for giving names as a popular Yoruba adage says, "*tori tiomo o badaran, lose un nioruko*" (it is for easy and unmistakable identification either for reward or punishment that individual names are given). The root of every individual can be vertically traced as the common

saying, "atillelaatikoesoro'de" (charity begins at home) implies that the home is the starting point for the inculcation of moral or ethical values into a child. The authenticity conferred on an individual by the use of indigenous personal names is no doubt the product of his culture which is an inescapable stamp on the personality of each one. In Yoruba land, like in most societies in Africa, clan or family names abound as they recognize both the nuclear and extended family systems. The chief was himself the incarnation of this eponymous hero and founder of the society or faith. Hence, apart from using names as a means of personal identification, names can also be used to recognize the community in which a person is from.

Scholars like (Johnson, 1921:79-89), (Osaji, 1987:12-19), (Akintoye, 2015:252-255) among others who had worked on Yoruba (indigenous) names claim that circumstances surrounding the child's birth, belief of the society, parents' occupation or societal status and events during the pregnancy and shortly after, are factors that influence choice of names. (Akinaso, 1980:277) citing (Geertz, 1973) identifies two extremes and linguistic complexities where names are loaded with meanings following references to conceptual or social reality on the one hand; and do not carry any reasonable meaning other than arbitrary (nonsense syllables) having no concrete characteristics of the individuals to whom they are applied.

In the historical sense, names are semantically loaded with some stories to tell and also have some shared assumptions and expectations of members of the community to reveal. The traditional Yoruba give names in accordance with the events or circumstances that happened either before or at the period of birth of a child-i.e. war, drought, death of a hero, coronation, plague, victory, etc. These names given to correlate such events (i.e. *Mosebòlatan*, *Fijabi*, *Kurunmi*, *Omoteji*, *Otedola*, *Ikuyelori*, *Omòdunbi*, *Ibidapo*, *Adedapo*) served as constant reminder to the people and of course a means of recording that particular history.

In the social sense, Table II shows that the social statuses of the parents are taken into cognizance; names alongside their parents' professions, titles, political status, wealth and so on.

S/No	Name	Meaning	S/No	Name	Meaning
1.	<i>Abiqla</i>	One born into honour	6	<i>Qlawarewaju</i>	Honour is progressing
2.	<i>Ayopla</i>	Joy of honour	7.	<i>Olusqla</i>	God wroughts elevation
3.	<i>Fafowora</i>	Ifa bought with money	8.	<i>Owolabi</i>	It is money we give birth to
4.	<i>Korode</i>	Gather good things in	9.	<i>Owoseni</i>	Money is possible to own
5.	<i>Okeowo</i>	Bag of money	10	<i>Wuraqla</i>	Gold of honour

In the psychological sense, names have psychological effects on either the family at large or the bearer of the name. Such names reflect the character(s) admired by the parents or family. Names normally spur people to action, so they name their children with the expectation that the bearers would conduct their lives in conformity with the import of the names. It was believed that constant calling or repetition of such names would make the bearers behave in manners reflective of the aspirations of the names. This conforms to the popular Yoruba saying "isuatenumoran, *kijona* (constant reminder). For instance, a child named *Ajanaku* (elephant) would be expected to behave mightily; *Ekun* (tiger), with the tendency of being always bossy; *Okin* (egret), would like to act wisely or gracefully. In another way, some names do not only reflect significant trees, birds and animals as praises; some of them, are equally based on existing proverbs or wise sayings i.e. *tiomo obajosokoto*, *a jokijipa*, *omopajanakukano jeyaarara*, *omotierinba bi erinnijq* (a child of the

mighty is expected to be a replica of his father); *ajanakukojamorinkanfiri*, *taabarierinkasopearierin* (the passing of the elephant is conspicuously undeniable); *Erin loniigbo*, *efon lolodan* (an elephant owns the forest and buffalo the jungle); *itakun to nikierin ma g'okeodo*, *tount'erinni o lo* (any root that stands on the way of the elephant to the bank of the river is forcefully pulled along by it); *Okinnibaba eiyi* (peacock is chief of all birds); etc.

In the spiritual sense, names are given in accordance to the spiritual significance of their religion during the birth of the child. In other words, the participation of the gods in giving such child is thus considered as prefixes by their adherents (i.e. Ogunbiyi, Osuntokun, Omisina, Omidire, Esubiyi, Fajuiyi, Awolowo and so on).

Consequent on the identified reasons or functions of names, it suffices to generally admit that personal names reflect African or ethnic group's world view, religion and language as they are rooted in the culture of the ethnic groups to which they belong. Ordinarily, where and when names are in their primordial forms, they are inseparably associated with ethnicity, or linguistic groups. This is attested to by (Osaji, 1989:14) that:

Personal names therefore are not accidental in Africa. They are rooted in the culture of the ethnic groups to which they belong. That is why they have defined geographical locations or anthropological and sociological spread. They automatically carry with them symbols and clichés, respect and prejudice, characteristics and personalities associated with their cultural background. They are of more eloquent index of identification than any other forms of cultural manifestations.

Though the multi-ethnic nature of Nigeria may put many at a loss; examples abound in different ethnic groups and religions across the globe where names become automatically associated with the mentioned. In recent past, a 'typical' Nigerian, conversant with its citizenry could out-rightly tell the nativity of a person correctly i.e. Ogundele (Yoruba), Emeka (Igbo), Rimi (Hausa/Fulani), Osagie (Bini/Edo), Abayon (Cross River State), Afizere (Plateau State), etc.

Basis and Patterns of Yoruba Personal Names

Traditionally, (Nangoli, 2001:89) verifies that:

When it comes to naming a child, great care is taken to ensure that the child is given the right name according to custom. A name that must reflect what the experts decide is the true character of the infant. These experts spend days with the child studying its characteristics to determine who of the hundreds of departed relatives the child resembles most physically. They determine whether the child will be quiet, outspoken, gregarious, moody, caring, daring, cowardly, adventurous, a leader, you name it! On the basis of the conclusions, appropriate names are chosen for the child. The men then take over at this stage.

The types of Yoruba names can be identified within the framework of combination of functions they are meant to perform, circumstances of birth, vocation, gender and other factors. The trends from regular to irregular names, consequently leading to identity crises cannot be better understood without identifying the various patterns or models of Yoruba personal names earlier identified by (Johnson, 1921), (Faleti, 1999), (Osaji, 1989), (Ikotun, 2013), (Akintoye, 2015) and others who frown at the unpatriotic preference for foreign names. These include:

i. The *Amutorunwa* (Circumstantial names): (lit. name brought from heaven) or names reflecting special circumstances of birth ("born with a name") such as found in Table III:

S/No	Name	Meaning
1.	<i>Ajayi</i>	Name given to a child born with faced onwards
2.	<i>Abidemi</i>	Name given to a child born before the arrival of the father on voyage

3.	<i>Alaba</i>	The child born after Idowu if a female; <i>Idogbe</i> , if a male
4.	<i>Dada</i>	Name given to a curly-headed child styled
5.	<i>Idowu</i>	The child born after the twins; <i>ÈtaOko</i> , name given to the third of triplets
6.	<i>Ige: Okẹ</i>	Child born with breech/footling presentation; born with membranes wrapped
7.	<i>Taiye</i>	<i>Taiye</i> –the first born of a twin; <i>Kẹhinde</i> , the second of the twin that lags behind

ii. The *Abiso* (Christening name): Of a truth, “all children need not be born with a name but all must be named” (Johnson, 1921:81). These names are determined by the happenings or situations (moods) surrounding either the child itself or the family such as found on Table IV:

S/No	Name	Meaning	Remark/Mood
1.	<i>Aborisade</i>	One who has come with the Orisa(s)	Deity worship/joy
2.	<i>Ayodele</i>	Joy enters the house	Situation of joy
3.	<i>Kurunmi</i>	Death has impoverished me	Sorrowful loss of wealth/life
4.	<i>Odunayo</i>	Festival of happiness	Festivity/joy
5.	<i>Ogundalenu</i>	Our home has been wrecked by war	Sorrowful war ruins/regret
6.	<i>Olu/Obasanjo</i>	Lord compensates	Reward/appreciation
7.	<i>Oluwadamilare</i>	God has vindicated me	Relief and proven justice

iii. Names given to the *Abiku* (*Ogbanjein* Igbo), the children in a series who die at the set time and are perceived to have been born again or have staged a comeback i.e. *Malomo* (do not go again), *Ikudayisi* (death has spared this), *Kosokọ* (there is no hoe to dig a grave with), *Durosaiye* (wait and enjoy the world), etc. However, the long held belief in *Abiku*, responsible for the frequent infant death is nothing other than sickle cell anemia or factors other than mystical (Aboyeji, 2015:272). The *aseyinwaye* (names that show the people's supposed belief in reincarnation and gender include: *Babatunde/Babajide* (the father reincarnated), *Iyabo/Yetunde* (the mother reincarnated), *Odejide* (the hunter reincarnated), etc.

iv. Names reflecting family professions or the deity devotedly worshipped in the family i.e. *Odewale* (hunter comes to the house), *Ifabunmi* (Ifa has given me this), *Ayandiji/Alayande* for the drummers, (*Awolowo/Awotoye*) for the diviners. Also are *OrukoOye* (Responsibility titles used as antonomasia) such as *Kabiyesi* (His Royal Highness), *Iyalaja/Babalaje* (someone who is the mother/father of the markets or in charge of business transactions), *AreOnaKakanfo* (someone who heads all the country's army and secret cults); *Balogun* (a generalissimo), etc. Modern equivalence include: the Chief Imam, the Lord Bishop, *Baba Ijo* (father of the church), (elder/deacon), His Excellency, the Honourable Commissioner, Mr Vice Chancellor, etc.

v. The *Oriki* (Cognomen/Pet Names) and *Oriṣe* (Totem). In traditional Yoruba society, every family, chieftaincy institution and community, had its peculiar praise chants. This is usually reflective of the historical background and nature of the people or communities. Till today, the *oriki* tells where a person originates from and when rhythmically chanted on the recipient, it evokes emotions of greatness, importance, achievements and ecstasies. Examples include: *Akanbi/Akande* (one who comes after a single touch), *Alabi/Alade* (a male that comes after several female births), *Abike* (born to cherish), etc. Furthermore, distinguished totems identified

and used for family or community (*orile*) among the Yoruba include: Erin (the elephant) for the original line of the kings; Ògún (the god of war), for the original line of the Basoruns; Òpó (a post), totem of a noble Oyo family; the Òkin (the love bird), totem of the Òlòfà and Oloro; Òjò (rain), totem for the Ologbin; Agan, totem for the Elese; Iji, totem for the Ologbin; etc (Johnson, 1921:86). Notably, the *orile* is never used by itself but alongside the name and attributive i.e. OyeniyiArindeÒkin, Morenike Asabi Agan, FabunmiAlabiOgo, LayinkaAkankeOgun, etc.

Foreign Influence on Indigenous Yoruba Names

To Mehrotra (1980:205), "the socio-cultural norms are never static. They keep on changing and these changes reflect in the naming patterns." Two things stand clear, survival of indigenous naming pattern; modifications and of course, cultural shift from the use of tradition-based names as personal names to the use of Islamic names, Christian names, European names, nicknames, customized names and others. The loss of either the first name or surname or both, is by implication a loss of individual and ethnic identity. The modification and adoption of new pattern of names could be obviously traced to both historical and religious factors. Historical factor in the sense that there were people who had early contacts with the Europeans stationed along the coast, especially during the slave trade. The first sets of names were therefore taken from the names of white slave dealers in admiration of the Whiteman and his way of life.

Furthermore, Islam and its Arabic culture via the trans-Saharan trade in the 11th century had a pervading and indelible influence on Yoruba names and culture. The Islamic culture appears more assimilated in Africa than the European culture-owing to its function as a socio-political-religious movement. Consequently, today, there are instances where complete Arabic names in many Islamised states in Yoruba land have replaced both the indigenous first names and surnames. Such Muslim names among others are Suleiman Ibrahim, Musa Abdulrasaq, Murtala Mohammed, Ahmed Usman, AbdullahiAminat, AbdulquadriAbdulqudus, IslamiatAbdulkareem, Muslimat, AbdulwahabMonsura. In mixed-religious states such as applicable in this study are the combination of both Arabic and indigenous Yoruba names i.e. MoshoodAbiola, MukailaOjo, AbdulkareemEniola, AbdulmutolibOpeyemi, AdeoyeSaheed, and so on.

The later introduction of Christianity and its civilization further created more identity crisis in Yoruba names. While the early missionaries in some cases condemned and abolished native names in totality (described as 'heathenish'), some allowed the adoption of English or baptismal names in conjunction with the indigenous. Hence, the Western civilization which is an amalgam of three powerful cultures-the Greek philosophy, the Roman law and the Jewish religion and Christianity resulted in the modification or obliteration of the traditional pattern of Yoruba personal names. Dropping or modifying an indigenous name in favour of a new one could be as a result of factors such as change of religion, spiritual conviction that such names are lowly, nonsensical, humiliating, counter-productive, uncivilized, etc. These names today fall between the regular pattern; irregular pattern (though not without their useful meanings) and those of arbitrarily nonsense syllables or *words*, neither making any reference to conceptual or social reality nor express any concrete characteristic of the recipients. Consequent upon these backgrounds emerged the following:

i. **Modification of names** in favour of the new faith owing to biblical references i.e. Abram (exalted father) whose name was changed by God Himself to Abraham (father of many nations-Genesis 17:5); Sarai (princess) to Sarah (mother of the promise-Genesis 17:15); Jacob (he grasps the heel) to Israel (he struggles with God-Genesis 32:26-29); Simeon to Peter (the Rock-Matthew 10:2, Acts 15:14); Saul to Paul (Acts 13:9); etc. Many converts had also criticized and modified many totem names to reflect alignment with the alien religions such as Orisabunmi to Oluwabunmi, Sangoyomi to Oluwayomi, Famuyide to Olumuyiwa and so on. In cases of inter-

vii. Anglicization and Customization of names: Aside the conscious or sub-conscious pick up of nicknames as stage names or political identity as a.k.a. (i.e Liamzey, Ladycima, Topsido, Tiwaslim, Davinchi); more worrisome today is the thinking language of most youths and growing adults, leading to mushroom Anglicization of both Yoruba and Arabic names. Komolafe (2014:47) attests thus:

Name "customizing" is a phenomenon that has recently developed among the Nigerian youth, most especially those in the tertiary institutions and the entertainment industry. The phenomenon involves coining a personalized variant of one name (personal or both). In most cases the customized names are pronounced with English accent. The names customized have no restriction to language, religion and sex.

Examples of such customized names found on Facebook time-line, clothing articles, souvenirs include: HorphehyehmyHaryorkah (OpeyemiAyoka), HarriyherHoluwahfunmmy (AriyoOluwafunmi); OluwhadahmeanlawlarRizqoht (AdeyemiAyobami), HardeydayorhHorlaydayorh (AdeyemiAyobami), HadeyemeeHaryorbarmee (AdeyemiAyobami), Horshagbehmi (Osagbemi), HarbaryomingHaedeyeming (AbayomiAdeyemi), HerjohkeHartheybayor (AjokeAdebayo), PholarchadeyBukkholar (FolashadeBukola), Desawlar-Desola, Chormolarphe (Komolafe), HerheeshaHormohshalewa (IssaOmosalewa), QotzhmHormotoysaw (KazeemOmotosh), HarceconbiDharmielolerh (AkanbiDamilola), etc.

In line with Komolafe (2014:50-55), other key spelling strategies for customization of names aside the re-spelling type include the: *reverse spelling* (Bayo-Yoba, Tunde-Ednut); *segment swapping* (Tobi-T-boi, Jonah-Najoh); *inter-lingual literal translation* (Ola-wealth, Dimeji-Turn Double), *truncation/shortening* (Ebun-Bun, Fashiku-Fash, Gloria-Glo); *blending* (DamilolaSalako-Dansal, DapoOyebanji-D'banj, Toba Bello-T-Bell); *reduplication* (Shade-Shad-shad, Joshua- Jo-jo, Yemi-Yemyem); *conversion* (Funsho-Fun show, Joke-Joke); *initialism* (SholaKolade-SK, KehindeKolawole-KK); *lexicalization of abbreviation* (Bola-Beejay/BJ, GoodluckEbele Jonathan-GEJ); *mathematical symbolization* (Dimeji-D2, Fola-4lar, Teni-Xny, Tunde-2ndey, Tutu-2-2); *transcription* (Busrah-Bushrat, Désire-Desire); *affixation* (Bukola-Bukky, Femi-Femoo, Ade-Adesco, Yomi-Yommex); etc.

On the whole, tracing the factors responsible for the neglect of tradition-based names, Blount and Sanches (1977:vi) identify factors such as change of social customs, cultural norms, names difficult to pronounce, impact of forces of modernization, education, secular and democratic thinking, press, cinema, TV and other means of communication with strong tendencies of influence.

Conclusion

This study discussed the premium placed by the Yoruba on names and identified that from all ages and in any culture, names provide copious information about their bearers. Such information could be determined by the position in the family, circumstances of birth, parental and financial situations, family expectations, links with the departed family members, ancestral history and a way of keeping records. Like the indigenous language, personal names are important national cultural traits of identification across the globe. No society can live in isolation but rather interact, a prerequisite to the understanding of social dynamics. With the internationalization of certain languages as lingua francas, the use of personal names has become the most obvious index of authenticity. As nothing sticks so fast as a name and nothing more difficult to eradicate, young Yoruba parents and educated elites are fast losing the knowledge and the basis for giving certain names to new born children.

The study traced the neglect of tradition-based names and trends which are highly detrimental to Yoruba indigenous names due to several factors. These include: little or no

knowledge of many modern midwives and parents on Yoruba culture; difficulty in knowing some *amulorunwa* names (i.e. Ige, Oke) in cases of babies born via caesarian operations, and embrace of new opportunities created by Western system leading to the decline in (traditional) professional-based names (i.e. Ayanwale). Besides, medical demystification cum religious negation to the *abiku* phenomenon as well as embarrassing reactions or disapprovals by the biological parents on praise names such as *Adunniomogekun* (Adunni the daughter of a leopard) emanating from the grandparents or the aged are undeniable. In some other ways are: difficult pronunciation of some names, the school system that emphasizes the surname, the thinking language of the youths and civilization in vogue leading to Anglicization or customization of names as well as the intensification of Islamic and Christian names to children to the extent of giving foreign names to domestic animals.

From all said, the blind acceptance and great irregularities in names now borne by the Yoruba had caused the loss of either the first name or surname or both. While every culture borrows, modifies and integrates; the alarming loss of identity via names is an ugly trend which needs to be discouraged and unlearned as most of the changes in the value systems in favour of the alien values are for worse; implying that the future is most probably bound to be worse than the present, which is already unbearably bad. While Anglicizing of names used as index of "civilization" may in a way reveal the linguistic creativity of youths, the phenomenon is a danger signal to conventional literacy and cultural identity. The paper calls on the Yoruba to investigate the traditional cultures and see what can be retained, rejected or modified to blend with parts of Arabic and Western cultures to which they have been exposed. Blending the two cultures after much satisfactory filtrations is the architect and molder of the social personality as civilizations never needed and do not need to be replaced by alien civilizations and cultures without even knowing their meanings and backgrounds. God exists totally outside of culture while humans exist totally within it. In conclusion, the resultant synergy among the stakeholders and socialization agents in the inculcation of cultural values and all-round education of a child should not be under-estimated. As it is widely held among the Yoruba that "*ojumerinniibimo, igbaojunii woo* (a child is born into a family but it is the responsibility of the society to exemplarily nurture and train), collaborations become indispensable for the society to survive the intrigue or any test of time.

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