

Innovations

Sociological Challenges of Yoruba Spiritualities and values in Nigeria: A Contemporary Opportunities for the Development of Research in Africa

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Abstract

Previous studies have focused on various aspects of Yoruba spiritualities and values in Nigeria with little attention paid to the sociological challenges of the phenomenon. Traditional Africans especially the Yoruba of Nigeria are grossly endowed with rich and unprecedented traditional values which signifies a contemporary expression of African belief system. The Yoruba are mostly found in the southwest of Nigeria, now divided into six states, namely Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ekiti and Ondo. There are also Yoruba people in other states of Nigeria and beyond. Central to the Yoruba belief is their unique concept about the Supreme Being and traditional values as demonstrated in their ways of life. The work discovered that the force of modernity has influenced these beliefs and values with particular reference to the Yoruba of Nigeria. Emile Durkheim's functional theory, which describes religion as a tool for social effectiveness was adopted. The paper concludes on a note of recommendation, by calling on Nigerians and African researchers to cherish the Yoruba beliefs and values with its practical moral lesson towards peaceful co-existence in the society. Thus, the research work seeks to strengthen the knowledge of readers by adopting a qualitative and historical method to investigate this research on the subject matter.

Keywords: Challenges, Yoruba, Spiritualities and values, Nigeria, Research in Africa.

Introduction

The work is sociological challenges of Yoruba spiritualities and values in Nigeria as contemporary opportunities for the development of research in Africa. Religion is the strongest element in African culture and exerts great influence upon the conduct of the African people. Religion is closely bound up with the traditional way of Yorùbá life; therefore, religion has shaped the lives of Yorùbá people, at the same time life has shaped their religion (Odejobi, 2014). The principal elements that made up African spiritualities especially among the Yoruba are belief in Supreme Being and the cult of ancestors. Thus, the Yorùbá traditional society is a corporate and religious society. Ogungbile (1998) identifies two major forms of identity in Nigeria-religious identity and ethnic identity. To become a member of a community one must participate in the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and festivals of that community (Mbiti, 1970). Religion is definitely embedded in African culture.

Religion therefore is the strongest element in traditional African culture which exerts great influence upon the conduct of the African people. Religion is closely bound up with the traditional way of African life; hence religion shaped the lives of Africans, at the same time life shaped religion as well. To detach oneself from the religion of one's community is to be severed from one's root and kinships (Mercado, 2009). Religion is the focal point of Yorùbá culture as pointed out by (Idowu 1973, 23) that the keynote of their life is their religion. In all things they are religious; hence, religion forms the foundation and the all governing principle of life for

them. Religion is also considered to be “collection of cultural systems, belief systems, and worldviews that relate humanity to spirituality and, sometimes, to moral values. Spirituality is not only necessary but a very significant part of our lives. Most people would find it very difficult to live without religion. Adherents of Yoruba traditional religion believe that the world is created by a divine power and has influence on their lives. In other words, most religions, especially the Yoruba spiritualities have some contemporary expressions of their belief system in the African concept of God (or Supreme Being) and in Ancestors. Thus, this could be considered as a sociological challenge of Yoruba spiritualities and values that should pave way as contemporary opportunities for the development of research in Africa.

Theoretical Background: Emile Durkheim’s Functional Theory

Emile Durkheim’s functional theory, which describes religion as a tool for social effectiveness was adopted as the framework for the study. The research was premised on Emile Durkheim’s theory of religion. The theory deals with the role of religion in a modern society, which is commonly referred to as functionalism. This means that religion plays a role within the society in terms of social function or functioning. Durkheim gives a sociological interpretation to religion, which is the creation of society. He believes religion is built and used by societies as a means of control. So he focuses his attention on the impact and contribution of religion to society’s social needs (Dzurgba, 2002).

Durkheim considers that the life of men in society is closely linked with their religious beliefs and practices. He argues that there is truth about religion which sociologists should embrace because of its continuing and universal power. To put it simply, religion plays a role in social life for individuals and the entire society. He felt that religion had been a true social factor because of some substantial positive impacts on individuals and society. Religion’s main function is essentially to create and sustain a sense of solidarity. He argues that religion promotes the maintenance of order in society, by creating conditions conducive to good well-being, discipline, solidarity, and cohesion between culture and knowledge. Religion also contributes to social integration and the functioning of various state institutions on the basis of a single, universal value system. According to Emile Durkheim, religion is contributing to social stability and improving the adjustment of society as a whole. His analysis took into account the general importance of religion and practice to people’s everyday lives. He doubts the survival of any society without the existence and support of religion. It is because of religion that, in his view, human civilization and social life have been laid down for the continuation of existence. Therefore, religion increases confidence and adherence to the values, norms and rules of traditional society, such as in the case of the people of Nigeria (Odudele, 2013).

In the context of the interaction between religion and society, the relevance of this theory to our studies is apparent. Religion influences the way we behave, think, social values, desires, action and character formation. Consequently, among the Yoruba peoples of Nigeria there is a need for maintaining order, progress in human welfare, self-discipline, social solidarity and cohesion. Thus, Yoruba spirituality has a crucial role to play in the maintenance of their cultural values and renders opportunities for the development of research in Africa. Yoruba spirituality and research development should therefore, have symbiotic relationship. Without consideration of the situation, it may be difficult to resolve the challenges of Yoruba spirituality and values in Nigeria as a contemporary opportunities for the development of research in Africa. This theory shows that spirituality benefits people all over the world and makes it easier to gain a better appreciation of this phenomenon. It is in this context that this Durkheim’s theory is of paramount importance to this research work.

Methodology

Qualitative methods have been systematically employed as part of the research in this field, using both Primary and Secondary Sources for historic ethnography. Observations, surveys, sociological and interactive models of inquiry have been used to collect the main data. So the methods used in this study have been based on sociology and interactive models of investigation from an historic point of view. Due to the

nature of the studies, which have been interdisciplinary, these methods are appropriate. Sociology is a study of the nature and development of society and social conduct, as defined by Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2010). This can also be described as a scientific examination of the relationship that exists between people who live together in this society (Odudele, 2006). It means that sociological research looks at human, environment and ideological aspects of society. Given the fact that the study was oriented towards social interactions, a sociologist's model of enquiry has become an adequate tool. In this case, twenty-four people in various categories were subjected to an oral conversation using both systematic and unbound methods at the time of need. In this context, when discussions on multidisciplinary matters such as the case at hand are to take place, interactive investigative models play an essential role. It is useful for researchers, who would wear two lenses and be free to move from one discipline to another.

Challenges of Yoruba Spiritualities and African concept of God

The word God is European name we called supreme deity or being meaning owner and creator of heaven and earth. Many people, especially philosophers have tried to prove or disprove the existence of God. Many have doubted the existence of God, while others have given up such probe because they felt that the existence of God cannot be known. There are the people commonly referred to as *agnostics*. While those who believe in the existence of God are known as *theists*; and those who do not believe in the existence of God are called *atheists*. Hardly can you come across an atheist (except late Tai Solarin) in traditional Africa and especially among the Yoruba people. The people grow up with the knowledge of God: but it is a pity that many western investigators have the mistaken idea that Africans cannot conceive God, and as such have no idea of the divine (Odudele, 2010).

According to E.B. Idowu (1973), from the fact of revelation, we realize that there is no place, age or generation, which did not receive, at some point in its history, some form of revelation. The core of revelation in African traditional religion is found in the peoples concepts of God. Many western scholar, missionaries, including present day African Christian and Muslim fanatics have quite often claimed that traditional African have no idea of God, and that they do not worship him. Such ideas always manifest themselves in some Christian songs with appeals such as these:

"Those of you who do not know God come and let us worship Him together. If your God is dead try mine. Unbelievers will not go to heaven, and they have no salvation." (Idowu, 1996)

These overzealous missionaries and narrow minded scholars went further to say that Africans are untutored and low in intelligence and therefore cannot conceive God. They believe that God can only be revealed in the Bible or Quran. While E.B. Idowu (1996) used Islamic tradition to illustrate that no one has a clear picture or idea of God. We therefore accept Martins Luther's idea that *deus absconditus et revelatus*, that is, God is hidden and yet he reveals himself. The hidden part of God is more and greater than the revealed part of him, thus, the real nature of God eludes human intellect and comprehension, and here lies the mystery of God (Nabofa, 2002).

Africans have their own forms of theology and knowledge of God. J.S. Mbiti (1970) observes three possible explanations for the origin of African belief in God. These postulations are based on natural elements and the helplessness of man in certain situations in his life.

- i. Wonders of the universe.
- ii. Efficient control of the universe.
- iii. Human limited powers e.g. death, calamity and other natural disasters.

Thus, to contribute to a better understanding of spirituality in professional and everyday practices towards the development of new theoretical frameworks, other African concept of God as seen in the names and attributes of God should be critically elucidated.

Names of God

S/N	Tribe	Name Given To Him	Meaning Of The Name
1	Plateau	a. Nan b. Dengnana	God's above God above
2	Rivers	a. Tamuno b. Tamara c. Wonyeshi	Supreme God Supreme God Our mother
3.	Cross river	a. Ata abasi	God Almighty/God is real.
4.	Anambra & Imo	a. Chineke b. Chukwu	Great God/God who creates. Great God/God who creates.
5	Igbo	a. Obasidin-elu b. Chi c. Olisa	God above Guiding Angel Almighty God
6.	Bendel (b) Edo Urhobo Isoko Itsekri	a. Western Ijaw (Tamara) b. Osanobua/Osayi c. Oghene/ Omemama d. Oghene e. Uwa	Creator The source being/God is the creator. Supreme being/Creator of the universe. One who has in abundance /Wealth.
7.	Ebira	a. Ohunmorihi b. Ada-iyieba	Supreme God Heavenly Father.
8	Nupe	Soko	God
9	Hausa	Ubangiji	Supreme Deity
10.	Tiv	a. Aondo	God of creator of heaven & earth
11	Kataf	Gwaza	The creator of all
12.	Yoruba	a. Olorun b. Eleda c. Elemi d. Olojo oni e. Olusesan f. Olodumare g. Alewilese	The owner of heaven The Creator/Maker The owner of life Owner of day to day Rewarder of man according to his merit. Almighty/one who has in abundance One who promise and fulfill.

***Source:** Interviewed people in Nigeria between November 10, 2018 and June 25, 2019.

Beyond Nigeria

S/N	Tribes	Name Given To Him	Meaning Of The Name
1	Ewe & Fon of Dahomey	a. Nana-buluku b. Ma-lisa	The great ancient deity (some see him as a female) Supreme deity (some said Mau is female while lisa is the male).
2	Akan & Gait Ghana	a. Odomankoma b. Onyame c. Nana d. Totrobonsu e. Borebore	Full of abundance or compliments. Supreme God/satisfaction great ancestor. The one who causes rain to fall abundantly. Creator/Originator

3.	Mende & Kono of Sierra-Leone	a. Ngewo b. Meteka c. Yataa	Great Spirit/Satisfied One who does not die The great one/one whom you meet everywhere.
4	Dogon of Mali Republic	a. Amma	The Supreme being
5	Banum of Cameroon	a. Nyi	He who hears and sees everywhere.

**God among the Kono is the one who remains, does not die, does not move, is permanent, unchanged, immortal, eternal and reliable. And in whom, for whom, with whom and by whom all things live.*

As we can see, Africans have cleared concept of God, they believe God has no equal because He is a class by Himself. He is the creator and at the same time he cannot die. Let us consider the attributes of God.

Attributes of God are those words or phrases ascribing traits, properties, qualities or characteristics to the Supreme Being. It is what people think about God, his roles, positions, character and relationship to the world and the supersensible realm. Those attributes could be found in liturgies, sound, proverbs, stories etc and not in the name only (Odudele, 2010).

God is the creator

In traditional African belief, it is believed that God is the creator of everything both visible and invisible. There are several African names of God, personal names, wise-sayings, proverbs and myths all over the continent, which try to explain and affirm the African idea that God is the creator of all things. That is why God is regarded as Eleda among the Yoruba people.

God is the absolute controller of the universe

In traditional African belief, the world is under the unitary control of one Supreme Being, and that is God. All other authorities and powers exist because God created them and allows them to exist and function. For instance, the name for God is *Osanobua* among the Edo Benin, which literally means: the source being, or God, who carries, sustains and maintains the universe.

God is one

Africans have non-belief in a world created by many gods but one. Hence, all over the continent, there are places each of which is considered to be the sacred city, the sacred grove, or the sacred spot, especially because it is believed, according to the Yoruba cosmology, that such a place is the centre of the world. This clearly shows that in the thinking of the people, God is one.

He is Judge

Throughout Africa, God is known as the judge. He is the impartial judge because he sees and knows everything. There is no human action or thought that is hidden from him. The Yoruba people have a saying

that nothing is hidden from Him. The Yoruba people have a saying that even though a person who steals in the dark may not be seen or caught by the earthly ruler, the king of heaven is looking at him. Thus, God's judgment is sure and inescapable.

God is Immortal

Africans believe strongly in the immortality of God. While it is possible for the divinities, spirits, ancestors and human beings to die or suffer extinction, God is always there, constant and lives forever. *Oba Aiku* in Yoruba means God has no end, he lives forever.

God is everywhere

In Yoruba, God is a *Atererekaye*, that is one who spreads all over the universe. Africans belief that Gods power pervades the whole universe, his presence is felt and seen everywhere.

God is all-knowing

The true traditional African mind believes that there is nothing that is hidden from God. According to the Yoruba, God is *Arinurode*, that is, God knows everything. Whatever thing you do in the dark or secret, God knows it. God knows your thought that you have told anyone.

These attributes of God can also be divided into three parts, namely:

- The internal attributes of God
- The moral attributes of God.
- The active attributes of God.

The Internal Attribute of God

This deals with the self-existence of God. He is the first and he is leading by himself as the maker of all things. He is unique; he has no class, no rivals nor equal. God himself is unmade and exists on his own without depending on anybody. It is also believed that there is nobody beyond God.

The Moral Attributes of God

The moral attributes of God has to do with his behaviour. It is generally believed that God is merciful, lovely, kind and compassionate. We also believe that God can give comfort especially during the time of crisis and needs. God is faithful, trustworthy and always good. God brings to his creature good health, prosperity, longevity, richness, good harvest, sunshine and abundantly rains. The Yoruba refers to him as "*oba ti kise oba ika*", that is, the king that is good and does not cruel.

The Active Attributes of God

This deals with Gods anger or wrath. It is believed that God punishes Man's transgression by means of sickness, sorrow, ill-luck, misfortune or sudden death. When this happens, they decide to find solution to it in from of sacrifice to appease the wrath of God. The anger of God is closely linked within his justice. For instance, among the Yoruba, they believe in the power of sango, in Nupe they have *sokogba* and Igbo, *amadioha*. It means God of thunder as a deity that expresses the anger of God as well as his righteousness. Thus, to the true African mind, the European invention of a God of Africa is a derogation of his greatness and dignity (Arinze, 2001).

Yoruba Spiritualities and African Belief in Ancestors

Every religion has to face the eschatological question of what happens to man after the present life, and the answer depends upon man's conception of the deity. The cult of ancestors is an important feature in African belief. The belief in ancestors springs from the idea that death does not mean the end of human life

among the people of Africa. Thus, there is the general belief that communion and communication are possible between the living and the dead.

According to African belief, the deceased are truly members of the family on earth; but they are no longer of the same fleshy order as those who are still actually living in the flesh on earth. They are closely related to this world; but are no longer ordinary mortals (Oso, 1978). They have become spirits and are therefore not restricted by time and space. The reality of the existence of ancestors constituted one of the most important features of African religion and in fact Yoruba spirituality. According to Mercado (2009), the functions of the Ancestors in the society includes:

- They are guardians of family affairs, traditions and ethics.
- They act as invisible police of the family and communities (protection).
- They are factors of cohesion in traditional African society.
- They act as intermediaries between man and God.
- They can punish evil doers in the society.
- They are called upon to discharge certain task which would benefit the community especially when there is no one else to do it. For instance, among the Yoruba, when an Oba becomes unbearingly despotic, the *Egungun* would discipline such a despotic Oba at the Egungun shrine. For Oderinde (2011), *Egungun* also performs the important function of expelling undesirable element from the community.

There are conditions that determine peoples' entry into the ranks of Ancestors. It is obvious that the ancestral beliefs act as a form of constant reminder or social control by which the conduct of individual is regulated (Ogunade, 2010). It must be noted however that it is not every person who dies that becomes an ancestors. To qualify to become one certain conditions must be fulfilled. These are:

- a. Old age
- b. Transparently clean life while on earth.
- c. Procreation i.e. one must have married and have children.
- d. Good death i.e. certain deaths are considered bad such as committing suicide.
- e. All funeral rites of the dead person must have been performed.
- f.

Derivation and Enforcement of Cultural Values in Yoruba Traditional Societies

There are divergences in views on the source of Yoruba cultural values among African Traditional Religion scholars. A common grand is identified at the end of the analysis. According to Oloruntele (2002), morality has naturally been acquired and developed in humans. Moreover, he pointed out that morality in a particular area could be immoral at another location. However, Awolalu and Dopamu (1979) argue that, in principle, cultural values are the fruits or offspring, not only human inventions. God has been putting His law in man's heart from the very beginning, and endowed him with an understanding of right and wrong. Such things as forbidden and must not be done are taboos. Nabofa 2000 argues that, through experience of life, the elders and leaders of African societies have come up with the methods. This was borne out of meticulous studies and observation from family members from which they know what should be done and what should be avoided by the family members. Such taboos should be permanently embedded in their subconscious, which is subsequently passed on from one generation to another (Nabofa, 2002). Idowu (1962), on the other hand, was even more inclined to think that morality is essentially a fruit of spiritualism and has been dependent upon it since its inception. The view held by the school of thought that moral values are sociologically rooted did not appeal to him. He also opposed those who opined that what we call morality is little more than making a common sense. The two schools of thought did not connect religion and morality to one another at all.

It is possible to deduce from this point of view that Yoruba values are founded on a religious basis. With the Yoruba, what have been named 'tabu' took their origin from the fact that people discerned that there

were certain things which were culturally approved or disapproved by the Deity (Omojola, 2010). It is important that we have a clear idea of the way Cultural Values were translated into Yoruba traditional society to be able to make some concrete suggestions on how modern societies should live up to these values. Williamson (1995) writing about the Akan of Ghana, records that abstinent of his once marked that "in the olden time, there was no policemen and no need of them; the gods were the policemen". In this light, ethical values are in principle upheld by two major categories, the religious and social factors, according to what we observed from my interactions with some Yoruba elders who deliberately set out for that work.

According to Williamson (1995), he argues that "the customs and traditional ways of life sanctioned by the spirit-ancestors and the gods provided the frame work of the Akan cultural code". Similar statements are echoed again and again by many Yoruba elders recently interviewed. In Africa, natural disasters are benefits enjoyed from Olodumare (Supreme Being) the deities, spirits and ancestors are for those who keep the cultural values, whereas violation attracts the wraths and punishment by the spirit-powers. This is what keeps people doing the right thing and avoiding things they're wrong about. Therefore, it is said that spirituality has a very close correlation with morality for the Yoruba. In response to the actions of humans, according to this belief, rewards and punishment are coming from the Supreme Being. The Yoruba are going to tell us about a person, "Iwa re laye yii ni yoo da o lejo", your character on earth will judge you. It means that the deity judges man's character, in this respect, as described by Awolalu and Dopamu (1979).

The Yoruba, of other African tribes, are beginning to realize that nothing is hidden in front of Olodumare's All-seeing eyes. One of His attitudes is that: 'A bi eti lu kara bi ajere', that is, God is having eyes full all over His body. That is why they usually say, "A-mookun jale, bi oba aye ko ri o, oba oke n wo o"- "You who steals in the cover of night, know for sure that if the earthly king does not see you, the heavenly king (God) does." This enhances people's adherence to cultural values in traditional African societies, whether in public or secret.

In order to enforce cultural values in traditional Yoruba society, the beliefs of the people about the various gods have also been invoked. It is futile to wish to commit a crime in secret, for no violation of cultural values (whether publicly or in secret) can escape the divine justice. In reference to the opinion of the people interviewed, it was stressed that in the African traditional society, cultural values are not the creation or invention of the society, rather, the expression of a transcendental moral order which is beyond man's comprehension and which must be accepted by both man and society. Besides, according to my informant there are some anti-divinities who punish cultural offenders on behalf of the supreme Deity among the Yoruba in particular and other tribes across Africa in general. The divinity of thunder and lightning Sango and Sokogba between the Yoruba and the Nupe is a good example. The wrath of the goddess may be called upon an unknown thief if there are any cases of theft. Similarly, in the case of criminals who do not confess their crimes, Esu divinity may be invoked. These constantly show man the need to be culturally upright and be of good conduct to avoid the wrath of deities (Ige, A.87years, a Chief and Herbalist in Ikere Ekiti, interviewed, October 15, 2022).

It is apposite to add that in African traditional society, there are socio-religious groups and societies which enforce the compliance of cultural values. For instance, in the Yoruba ethnic group there are mainly sociological organizations created to maintain law and order within a society such as Ogboni societies or Oroboni cults. According to Nabofa (2002), Ogboni is a council of elders; whose duties are to meet periodically for the purpose of settling mutual disputes, defending themselves against charges and discussing general matters which concern the well-being of the community. The Oro group is said to be militant arm of Ogoni Aborigin. They're going to punish offenders, declare anyone who breaks the law guilty. They would say "Oro gbe e", that is "Oro has carried him away into the spirit world". The cultural connotation of this that any family where the victim of Oro came from was regarded and treated with contempt in the society, no lady or young man would even want to marry from the family. This, in fact, led to fear in the hearts of the people, which, in turn, led to a check on the behaviour of the community. (Arinze, 2005).

Yoruba Spiritualities and Values as Opportunities for the Development of Research in Africa

It is uncertain if Yoruba spiritualities and values would not soon die a natural death and that it might soon become a thing of the past in modern Nigeria. In the face of the rapid spread of Christianity, Islam and modernity in Africa, it is doubted if the highly venerated of divinities would not be lost like lost gods of England. It is also noted that the practitioners of the indigenous religion and values have no united voice as others have. The people in the African traditional religious practice are in the minority and on the decline on daily basis. It has become unfashionable for anyone except the old person to declare himself as an adherent in the public in this civilized time.

The death of the ATR custodians and destruction of most shrines and sacred spots for creation of social amenities is another factor against the survival of ATR. Besides, the influence of modernization and the drifting of young men and women into the urban areas is robbing many traditional cultic centers of their adherents (Hall, 2006). Many of these youths are later converted to the other religion. Thus, the new religious movements, other Pentecostal churches and the many new self-acclaimed Gods pose a stronger challenge to the Yoruba spiritualities and values in Nigeria. They appear to have taken over most of the functions of the ATR and thereby making it redundant. However, in spite of the above negative attitudes towards the religion, we must not take this mere appearance for reality. There is no living religion globally that has not taken into itself some elements from other religion and cultures. There is still a very strong hope that ATR may still persist because of the following reasons:

Rising Local Interest

There is rising interest in the religion, culture, spiritualities and values of the Africans especially that of the Yoruba such as traditional festivals, practice of medicine, ceremonies, sacrifices and so on. This research work has revealed that many scholars and students have considered Yoruba spiritualities and values as a joyful discovery of a valuable heritage which has been lost. Thus, Africa is blessed with so many indigenous spiritual and cultural treasures.

Divided Loyalty

There is a divided loyalty among many Christians and Muslims in contemporary Nigeria towards their religious faith. As a result of chronic poverty, misery, disease, illiteracy, crisis, hunger, thirst, homelessness, destitution, dejection and hopelessness prevalent among the vast majority of citizens of this country most of the people are at heart still attached to their own indigenous beliefs. It is a well-known fact in strictly personal matters relating to the passages and crisis of life, African religion is regarded as the final succor by most Africans and most especially among the Yoruba of Nigeria.

Nationalism

A new interest has been generated with regard to everything African nations, and the general search for African identity throughout the continent. This has also strongly aided the popularization of the African religion. This is in attempt to facilitate the critical exploration of Yoruba spirituality within the theory and practice of the phenomenon.

Global Interest

The new interest in Yoruba spiritualities and values is not restricted to Africa. It is obviously a global one. This religion is being taught in every higher institutions of learning throughout the world and there are both white and black Professors and Lecturers in the field. The global interest is not only academic, but Yoruba spirituality is being practiced at home and abroad. This has paved way for global research development with a difference and better understanding of Yoruba spirituality in professional and everyday practices as a contemporary opportunities for the development of new theoretical research in Africa.

Recommendations and Conclusion

In the recent times, it could be argued that people attach little or no importance to Yoruba spiritualities and values as an inevitable output of modernity. The interview conducted are strongly in support of this assertion. Thus, the Yoruba should make frantic efforts to salvage and protect their cultural values and particularly their spirituality from threats of modern and sociological challenges.

In conclusion, the Africans especially the Yoruba people of contemporary Nigeria are distorted by the historical tragedy of European exploits over Africans. The foreigners who brought the imported religion to us made the people to forget their own religion as not being important. The people take their own religion to be inferior. Hence, there was a wrong name or errors of identity. The early Christian missionaries used derogatory or pejorative terms like primitive, pagan, health, fetish, native, magical, polytheist, backward, animistic, savaging, idolatry etc. to describe the religion of Africans. These terms were used in an attempt to downgrade our spiritualities. Africans were wrongly taught that everything about Africans were bad. The people therefore became alienated from their own religion, culture and society. For all these to be happening in contemporary Nigerian society becomes a serious problem that required academic inquiry. Thus, this research work aims to facilitate the critical exploration and better understanding of spirituality in professional and everyday practices towards the development of new theoretical frameworks.

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