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DRUMSPEAK



FACULTY OF ARTS
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST, GHANA



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UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST, GHANA**

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Scholarly articles are invited from scholars in the Humanities on any subject that is adequately researched publication. **Drumspeak is currently indexed in AJOL, EBSCO and African Research Journal.** All articles are subjected to rigorous assessment before being accepted for publication or otherwise. Contributors should adopt the APA or MLA documentation style. Manuscript should be typed, using Times New Roman, Font size 12, and double-spaced. The length of each paper should be a minimum of ten pages and a maximum of twenty-five pages. Each paper should contain an abstract of not more than one hundred and fifty words accompanied by five key words. Manuscripts should have a cover page indicating the title of the papers, the author's name, address (postal, email, and telephone), and biographical information, as well as institutional affiliation. The title of the abstract should appear on another page, and the main essay should start on the third page. Each contributor shall submit two hard copies to the mailing address below:

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EDITORIAL

This edition of the Journal is being published at a time when the Journal has been indexed on African Journals Online (AJOL) in addition to being on UCC's publication platform and benefiting from full Open Access. Efforts are continuing to make the Journal available and visible on Google Scholar and other academic and research platforms.

In tune with the interdisciplinary orientation of the Journal, the current edition, Volume 7 Number 3, continues to push the frontiers of research, contributing to knowledge and literature in the arts and humanities. It comes with an interesting and patterned collection, offering intriguing perspectives from studies in environment and migration, political communication, ethnicity and conflict, rhetoric, and religion, thus cutting across studies in sociology and cultural studies, language and politics. The six papers of this edition thus present topical and edifying issues concerning the challenges and prospects of modern society.

The first paper by Samuel Awuah-Nyamekye emphasises the importance of environmental education to promote sustainable lifestyle choices in Ghana. This is a vital intervention during a time when climate change and other environmental issues, especially in the extractive sector, are affecting Ghana and other countries worldwide. The second paper by Hannah Deloris De-Heer and Kwabena Sarfo Sarfo-Kantankah adopts a linguistic approach, using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), to analyse a recent protest in Ghana. In addition to filling a key research gap in discourse studies on protests in Ghana, the study demonstrates how linguistic tools can help understand the motivations behind social and political protests generally. The third paper continues the linguistic theme of the previous one. Authored by Chirimaunga Tendai and Mberi Nhira Edgar, this paper explores fieldwork that uncovered insights into the Chibarwe orthography in Zimbabwe. The next paper by Monsurat, M. Wonuola, and B. A. Ajijola sparks some controversy in media portrayals. It investigates gender-based violence against married men in Nigeria from the men's perspective and offers intriguing sociological insights that may be relevant across sub-Saharan Africa. In the following piece, John-Doe Dordzro examines the status of creative arts education in Ghana. This engaging paper relies on the perspectives of basic-level schoolteachers in Ghana to explore how creative arts is taught in Ghana. It provides valuable insights into the challenges faced in effectively teaching creative arts at the basic school level, which should interest Ghana's

education community. The collection concludes with a piece that is rooted in the journal's traditional focus. It is a sociological paper by Samson Kehinde Ademoya and Bisola Adewale Adekoya, which investigates aspects of the masquerading traditions and cultures of the Yoruba people of southwestern Nigeria.

Overall, these collections offer perspectives from across sub-Saharan Africa, serving as a foundation for ongoing scholarly discussion in the arts and humanities. The next edition of the journal will continue to emphasise this African-focused direction while remaining open to content from other regions. Therefore, we encourage our readers to submit their research for publication to help us advance scholarship on the continent and beyond.

Modestus Fosu (PhD)

Editor

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION, SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLE CHOICES AND THE BUILT-ENVIRONMENT: THE CASE OF GHANA¹

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Abstract

The unprecedented growth of cities and urban centres in our modern world, along with their associated environmental pressures, is a concern we must address to ensure a healthy life. Thus, concepts such as environmental education and sustainable lifestyle choices, as well as the built environment, represent deliberate and innovative efforts by scientists, environmentalists, and scholars to mitigate the adverse impacts resulting from human efforts to improve living standards on Earth. Currently, much literature exists in the field of Urban Development Studies that discusses environmental education, sustainable lifestyle choices, and the built environment. Nevertheless, evidence suggests that the desired impact is yet to be achieved. While some people recognise the importance of their consumption choices and care about environmental issues, most of them unfortunately do not translate their concerns into concrete actions when purchasing goods and services. The situation is worse in Ghana because most people are unaware of the impact of their lifestyles on the physical environment. Using a desk study and primary research approach, this paper explores the relationship between environmental education and sustainable lifestyles, and their combined impact on ensuring the well-being of the built environment in Ghana.

Keywords: Ghana, Urban Development, Urban Centres, Environmental Education, Sustainable Lifestyle Choices, built-up environment, Slums.

Introduction

¹ The content of this paper is a recast of a keynote address delivered by the author at the China-Africa Urban

Currently, much literature exists in the field of Urban Development Studies that discusses the issue of environmental education and sustainable lifestyle choices and the built environment (Pardo and Echavarren, 2021; Anderson et al., 2015; Kouamou and Pettang, 2008; Albert Novas Somanje et al, 2020; Cobbina and Darkwah, 2017; Cobbina and Erdiaw-Kwasie, 2018; National Development Planning Commission, 2022). Yet the literature seems to suggest that not much impact has been made from the efforts. In Ghana, the challenge extends beyond individual awareness to systemic limitations in infrastructure and policy implementation. These constraints complicate efforts to translate environmental concern into sustained behavioural and structural change within urban spaces.

The question then arises: is there justification for a sub-disciplinary field such as Urban Studies? The answer is an emphatic yes, given the urgency of contemporary realities. Urbanisation is occurring at an unprecedented rate in our history, bringing with it significant socio-economic, health and environmental consequences.

Although these challenges may be the case in many developing and some developed countries, the situation is different in Ghana especially in relation to the built environment. For instance, several initiatives have sought to make Accra, Ghana's capital city, the cleanest in Sub-Saharan Africa, but the aspiration remains largely unrealised. The World Bank's Water and Sanitation Programme (WBSP) reported that Ghana's economy was losing \$90 million annually (GHC420 million – 1.6% of GDP) due to poor sanitation (GNA, 2012). Furthermore, a sanitation survey conducted in 2008 ranked Ghana 14th out of 15 West African countries and 48th out of the 53 (now 54) countries on the continent, indicating limited progress in sanitation development (GNA, 2008; see also Awuah-Nyamekye, 2013).

Although these statistics are more than fifteen years old, subsequent developments suggest that the challenges persist. For example, the previous government, that assumed office in 2016 pledged that within two years every community in Ghana would be provided with toilets and water facilities. However, this commitment was not fulfilled during its eight year tenure. These factors demonstrate that urbanisation related challenges remain pressing concerns in Ghana.

Methodology

This paper presents findings derived from research conducted using data from two primary

sources. The first came from some key stakeholders such as Policy-decision makers, Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) (the institution mandated to enforce the environmental laws in Ghana), Town and Country Planning officials, and some Chief Executives of Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies in Ghana. The selection of the above groups was informed by the fact that they constituted the major stakeholders of the issues under consideration. These stakeholders were purposively selected and interviewed. The second source came from secondary material in the form of a review of existing literature in the field (of environmental studies or urban studies (Anderson et al.2015; Addo-Fordwuor, Dominic, 2014; Cobbina and Darkwah, 2017; Cobbina and Erdiaw-Kwasie, 2018; National Development Planning Commission, 2022) in Ghana. Aside from these two major sources for the data for the study, opinions of some urban dwellers in... were also purposively sought on the subject matter to supplement the data before a composite analysis of the data was done.

Conceptual Clarification of Key Terms

Environmental Education

In this paper, environmental education refers to the processes in which the individual or members of a society are equipped with the necessary knowledge, tools and skills to minimise the damage that results from their interaction with their local ecosystem.

Sustainable Lifestyle Choices

A sustainable lifestyle can be defined as a mode of living that consciously seeks to limit individual or collective consumption of natural resources. This approach entails the adoption of practices designed to minimise environmental degradation resulting from resource exploitation, thereby safeguarding ecological integrity, public health, and the well-being of current and future generations.

Built-Environment

The understanding of this concept in this study aligns with existing literature that generally views the concept as the human-constructed surroundings that support human activities, including buildings, transport systems and landscapes. It encompasses the design, construction, management, and use of these structures as an interrelated system impacting the behaviour and well-being of the people who utilise them. (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/engineering/built-environment>). Today, the definition of the built environment has been expanded by public health research to include healthy food access, community gardens, walkability, and bikability (<http://www.ieltsinternational.com/>). It is important to note that research has shown that the built environment not only consumes about 62% of final energy produced but is also seen as a major source of greenhouse gas emissions, emitting about 55% (Anderson et al.2015). This makes the built environment a key component in urban studies.

Urban/Urbanisation

The term urban may have different meanings depending on the country involved, but in this paper, I adopt the one provided by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) (2010), where the term urbanisation is used to describe the process of growth or increase in the population reported to live in localities classified as “urban” in Ghana. This is presented relative to the population living in localities that are defined as rural.

Urban Development

Kouamou and Pettang (2008) see the concept of urban development as ‘the act of improving living conditions, which are necessary for rest and for labour, for the health and education facilities, for the various exchanges and provisioning, for the moving of the population between their dwellings and their working place’.

This is, therefore, seen as a process that involves the socio-cultural, including economic and physical changes of cities, and the underlying factors for these changes.

Urban slum

Slum has been defined from various perspectives. But historically, the word “slum” was first used in London at the start of the 19th century to describe a “room of low repute” or “low, unfrequented parts of the town”, but it has since undergone significant change in meaning and usage (UN-HABITAT, 2003). Generally, Slums, and urban slums specifically, refer to settlements, neighbourhoods, or city regions that are unable to provide basic amenities to their residents. The people living in slums often endure unsafe and unhealthy environments (<https://egyankosh.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/94794/1/Unit-5.pdf>).

The above simply means that the term urban slum is a description of very poor and low-class settlement areas, either within or close to cities or large towns, usually unplanned and often their development is characterised by spontaneity.



Fig. 1. Part of Ashiaman, a suburb of Accra (photographed by the author, 2024)



Fig. 2. An area at Malam junction in Accra (photographed by the author, 2024)



Fig. 3 (photographed by the author, 2024)

Urban Agglomeration/ Conurbation/ Urban Sprawl

Closely associated with urban slums are terms such as urban agglomeration, Conurbation, and urban sprawl. These are terms which may be used interchangeably to describe the process where a city or town rapidly grows spatially to annex other nearby localities which originally were not part of the city or town such that it is difficult to find where the boundary of the city or town ends and the other “annexed” localities begin (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010; Chuanglin and Danlin, 2017). Often, the localities that eventually become part of the city or town may suffer from challenges of a lack of basic household facilities or services, including electricity, potable water supply, sanitation, health and education.

In Ghana, one may mention some areas in Kasoa, Adenta and Nsawam, which have been seen as suburbs or part of Accra, the capital city of Ghana.

RESULTS

Overview of Urbanisation in Ghana

Available literature indicates that Ghana’s population has not only witnessed rapid growth but also rapid urbanisation since its independence (Ghana Statistical Service 2010). This has partly been attributed to some of the policies put in place by the colonial administration, such as the development bias in favour of the large towns. This policy has been largely sustained by post-colonial governments. Nkrumah, for instance, sought to transform the country into a modern semi-industrialised state, making the state machinery the agent of development. He launched the 1963/64–1969/70 Plan for National Reconstruction and Development, focusing on industrialisation (GSS, 2014).

In addition, based on available data, the rising pace of urbanisation in Ghana has been driven by rural-urban migration, natural population growth in towns and cities, and the reclassification of villages as they reach the threshold population of 5,000 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2013, p. 223). In the same document, Ghana has transitioned from a predominantly rural to an urban population, with more than half (50.9%) of the country’s population residing in urban localities. For instance, Ghana’s urban population has grown from only 9.4 per cent in 1931 to 13.9 per cent in 1948, 23 per cent in 1960, 28.9 per cent in 1970, 31.3 per cent in 1984,

and 43.9 per cent in 2000 to 50.9 per cent in 2010. This makes Ghana one of the fastest urbanising countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) (Somanje et. al., 2020).

It is estimated that, by 2030, 65% of Ghana's population is expected to live in urban areas, which will be a 13.5% increase in just twenty years. Such rapid, urban growth puts pressure on infrastructure and services such as housing and water supply, while compounding undesirable effects such as pollution, waste, and urban poverty. (Ghana Urban Management Pilot Programme (GUMPP), 2012).

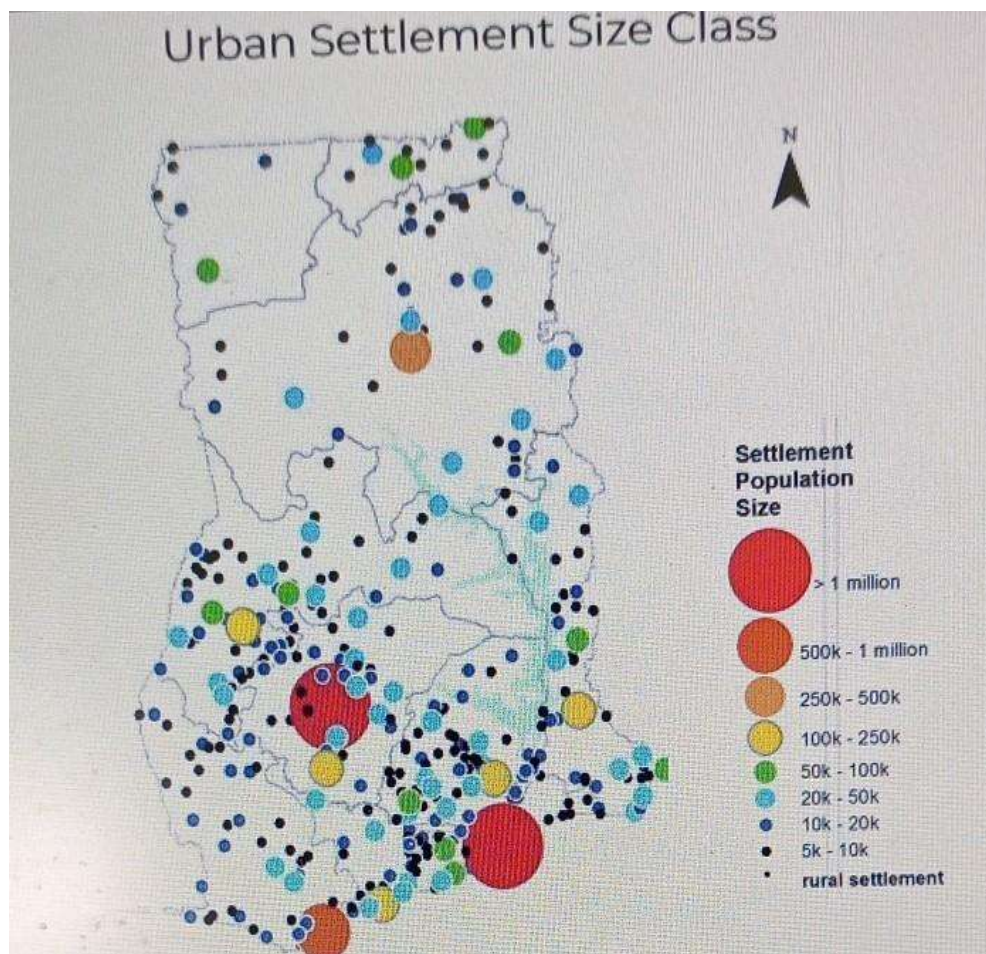


Fig. 4. Source: Mohammed Adjei Sowah, 2018

Just as it happens in other jurisdictions, Ghana relies mainly on survey and population census data for planning, including urbanisation and its related issues.

In Ghana, using the 2010 Population and Housing Census conducted by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), several reports have been prepared, including six monographs which were published in 2012 and 2013. The compilation was a collaborative effort between the GSS and Local consultants from research institutions and universities in Ghana, with funding from the Government of Ghana and various Development Partners (DPs). Since then, there have been an additional eight monographs, significant among these additional monographs is the one on ‘Urbanisation in Ghana’, which focuses on ‘population distribution in Ghana relative to the locality of residence (urban/rural), levels, trends and differentials in urbanisation in Ghana as well as the drivers of migration in Ghana’.

These make it imperative for us to delve into it and, particularly, the reason (s) for its rise and how to deal with its associated consequences.

The Associated Problems

It is a fact that Ghana’s political and administrative structure is underpinned by urban planning practice, but there is enough evidence to show that urban planning has failed to create liveable and functional cities in Ghana (Cobbina and Darkwah, 2017; Cobbina and Erdiaw-Kwasie, 2018; National Development Planning Commission, 2022). For instance, with the pace of urbanisation, many available free green lands are being used for the construction of buildings, roads, bridges, etc. Even wetlands or waterways are being filled for construction purposes. This negatively affects the greenery in the cities, particularly in cities such as Accra, Tema, and Kumasi.

Some of the major characteristics of urbanisation in Ghana

Loss of Green Spaces

Just as I have pointed out earlier, the green spaces in urban centres in Ghana are constantly being lost to activities such as building more residential areas, roads, educational institutions, markets, and other facilities. These developments, unfortunately, do not follow any proper or sustainable planning. Kumasi, for instance, used to be known as the ‘Garden city’ due to the green spaces found in the city, but today this accolade is being lost because of the fast rate at which the green spaces are being lost. A study by Addo-Fordwuor (2014) attributed the

situation to ‘the high land rent for other land uses, laxity in the enforcement of development controls and low priority to green spaces by city authorities.’ A mention can be made of the loss of the Kumasi town forest at Ahodwo roundabout, where we have the City Hotel situated on both sides.

The phenomenon of filling wetlands, valleys and waterways for the building of houses and other projects

It is now a common practice in the cities for people to buy land in waterways to build houses. River Subin in Kumasi, for instance, is now a dead river because people have built in the channel or the course of the river, such that it is difficult to see the original course of this river. This practice has resulted in flooding whenever there is a heavy downpour of rain. Another common scene emerging in urban communities in Ghana today is people using excavators to remove parts of the hills along the roads to build houses, and this has been causing mudslides to block even asphalted roads when it rains. A typical example is the road from the Kasoa toll booth to the Mallam junction area on the Cape Coast-Accra highway. This usually results in the conversion of a dual-carriage road into a single-lane road, always resulting in a traffic jam after the slightest rainfall on this part of the road. On many occasions, this has delayed drivers for more than an hour over a distance of less than a quarter of a kilometre.



Fig. 5. Traffic jam between Kasoa toll booth and Mallam junction on the Cape Coast-Accra highway (photographed by the author, 2024)

Poor Drainage system

Many of the drains in our cities are either open, shallow, or unable to contain the runoff water when it rains. This causes floods with the dirty water ending up in people's homes, shops, and other properties, causing the loss of properties or even lives at times.



Fig. 6 Some drains in Kumasi (photographed by a Research Assistant, 2024)

Closely connected with this is the fact that these drainages are misdirected, with most places getting flooded whenever it rains. An instance of this was the flood that occurred at the Kwame Nkrumah Circle in Accra in 2015, which claimed 154 lives and many injuries.

Blockage of demarcated access roads with buildings

It is important to note that, unlike the developed countries where agencies in charge of regulating buildings and other infrastructure follow laid down environmental protocols, in many cities/urban centres in Ghana, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) officials and the Building Inspectors at the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) are not doing their work as expected of them. This is because there is evidence that prospective land developers build in unauthorised areas. Aside from the above, in some instances, house owners make illegal extensions of their buildings and thereby create an obstruction to the original layout of an area, a situation that usually affects the proper road networks in those areas. Also, there is the problem of getting land for the purposes of dumping waste materials generated in the cities. Even in the little land that has been acquired, there is the problem of technological resources for developing sustainable and final disposal systems (Adjei Sowah, 2018).

Additionally, due to poor planning, many of the buildings have bad ventilation, and this has accompanying health problems for humans.

Urban Slum Development

Because of a sharp increase in population in the urban centres due to rural-urban migration and other factors, accommodation has become a problem in urban communities in Ghana. This situation has compelled many to live in makeshift structures, thereby creating slums in urban centres. In Accra, one can mention areas such as Sodom and Gomorrah, Amui Djor, Ashaiman, Agbogbloshie, Old Fadama, Jamestown, Maamobi, etc. In Kumasi, mention can be made of Kotokoo just behind the Suame Police station, Suame Magazine, Aboabo, Asawase, Oforikrom, Anloga, Ayigya Zongo, and Sisaakyi. In Takoradi, one can find slums at places like Kojokrom and New Takoradi.



Fig. 7. Kotokoo in Kumasi (photographed by a Research Assistant, 2024)



Fig. 8 Ashiaman in Accra (Photographed by the author, 2024).



Fig. 9. Malam junction area in Accra (photographed by the author, 2024).

The above-mentioned challenges have implications for the hospitality industry in Ghana. Mensah (2023) has this to say when it comes to the hospitality industry in Accra:

Within the hotel sector, the areas of concern for the environment include recycling of waste, waste management, clean air, energy and water conservation, environmental health, maintenance of permits such as building permits, compliance with legislation, purchasing policy and environmental education. Ghana's nascent and growing tourism industry

has experienced steady growth in hotels, but it is not exactly known how these hotels are embracing the concept of environmental management, within the context of sustainable tourism development (p.2).

At the GPSC Africa Regional Workshop in Abidjan in 2018 (14-16 May), Mr Muhammed Adjei Sowah, the Mayor of Accra, identified many key challenges of urbanisation in Ghana. A few are listed below:

- i. Inadequate policy provisions to facilitate the mobilisation of capital resources for city-level infrastructure projects
- ii. High cost in matching up collection services with the rate of waste generation due to the increasing population.
- iii. There is a deficit of 1.7 million urban housing units annually, leading to the proliferation of uncontrolled informal structures in open spaces in built-up areas.
- iv. & Kumasi, for example.
- v. On air quality in the urban areas, the mayor lists the following
 - Deteriorating air quality, especially along major transport corridors and industrial enclaves
 - High GHG emissions create heat islands; that is, people moving from hot weather areas to colder areas.
- vi. There is a weak research linkage between industry and academia.

The above constitute some of the major challenges that urban dwellers face in Ghana.

Lifestyle Choices of Urban Dwellers in Ghana

The lifestyle choices of urban dwellers in Ghana can be said to be very worrisome, and it is pertinent to list or mention some of them here:

- i. Conversion of toilets in houses into rooms for the purpose of giving them out for rent, contrary to building regulations in the country.
- ii. Open defecations, particularly along the beaches. In most cases, people defecate into black polythene bags and dump them in open gutters.

- iii. There is, from time to time, desilting of gutters through communal labour, but the sand and the other materials are left uncollected till the next rain takes them back into the gutters.
- iv. There is a huge patronage of used consumables such as fridges, car engines and other industrial machinery from Europe and America, which have the potential to emit chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) into the atmosphere. Edjekumhene and Cobson Coldbold (2011) report that there has been a significant rise in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Ghana, and this has put the nation into the net-emitter of GHG bracket.
- v. Constant importation of over-age cars into the country despite a penalty for that. The characteristics of such vehicles are the release of heavy fumes from their exhaust pipes to pollute the air (carbon emissions).
- vi. Some have connected their waste pipes to public gutters, and at times, one can see faecal materials dropping into gutters, giving a bad odour in the nearby vicinity. A disturbing phenomenon of this practice is that some of these are close to food vendors' spots.
- vii. Activities of some religious groups, particularly some of the Pentecostal-charismatic Christians who have made some of the few forested areas in the cities their prayer camps and other religious activities, directly destroy plants and animals in these ecosystems.

Obviously, the above practices are detrimental to a healthy environment and must be addressed to ensure a sustainable, healthy life in our urban areas.

DISCUSSION

The analysis has pointed out that concepts such as environmental education, sustainable lifestyle choices, and the built environment can be seen as conscious and innovative attempts by scientists, environmentalists, and other scholars to help mitigate the negative impacts emanating from humans' attempts to make life more comfortable in urban centres. The foregoing has also made it clear that the issues of environmental education, sustainable lifestyle choices, and most importantly, the built environment, which has been identified as the dominant source of energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, are crucial and, as such, need more attention in a developing country like Ghana. Obviously, problems such as not conforming to laid down

measures to ensure proper city lay outs, proper ventilation in building, proper waste disposal system, avoidance of urban sprawl, etc. will definitely pose a great challenge to a developing country such as Ghana, which is struggling to develop its education sector, deal with her health sector, solve huge accommodation and general infrastructural deficits in the face of inadequate economic and human resources. Confronting these mounting problems squarely will surely be daunting.

The following will serve to illustrate the magnitude of the problem confronting Ghana. I happened to meet two top officials from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at a workshop in Cape Coast in 2023. EPA is the institution mandated in Ghana to be responsible for ensuring that the country's environmental laws are strictly followed. Both presented the government's policy and guidelines on how environmental issues should be handled. Their presentations were interesting because, in theory (on paper), the country appears to have everything needed to maintain environmental health. However, in practice, the opposite is observed. I approached them during the lunch break and asked why we did not see what they were telling us. They admitted the challenge and expressed their frustration by saying that they were under-resourced by the central government to carry out their mandate. One of them said:

My brother, every year our budgetary allocations are not enough, and even what we are allocated is not fully given to us. He continued, would you believe that even we have to fuel our cars by ourselves to attend this workshop? (personal communication, 2023).

This situation obviously does not augur well for the country and thus calls for resolution.

The Way Forward

In the following paragraphs, I talk about some of the roles or contributions that both urban studies and policy decision-makers in the country can make in addressing the existential challenges I have been discussing.

1. Environmental Education, as discussed earlier, has to do with the process of equipping the individual or members of a society with the necessary knowledge, tools and skills to minimise the damage that results from their interactions with their environment. A sustainable lifestyle is also about the kind of living that aims at reducing the exploitation

of natural resources. Thus, it is about adopting a lifestyle that encourages people to minimise their use of natural resources with the view to reducing the damage of these interactions to the environment in order not to put the lives of both the current and future generations in jeopardy.

However, despite several reports and policies on urban administration and governance systems in Ghana, urban administration and governance have been weak in Ghana. Not even the current Municipal and Metropolitan Assemblies have been able to prove equal to the task. Yankson and Bertrand (2012, p.29) capture this thus:

This has compounded the problem of poor urban households in their attempt to access adequate and decent accommodation in the cities. A significant portion of the urban poor population lives largely in makeshift, unauthorised and unsafe housing, with the attendant health and other related problems.

This is where inputs from urban studies become imperative. The key aim of every educational institution is to serve the community in which it is established. What this implies is that Departments of Urban Studies should engage in more research to identify the problems at stake, particularly the new dynamics that urbanisation has assumed, which are impacting either directly or indirectly on the environment. The findings of such studies must be disseminated, particularly their harmful effects on human health.

- One of the core areas of urban studies is to expose people to the need to reduce the levels of consumption and the mainstream ways of purchasing and using products, including food and energy, with the view to maintaining the health of the environment. Therefore, with the right methodology coupled with the appropriate curriculum, Departments of Urban Studies should be able to come out with appropriate measures to address or minimise the effects of the various problems associated with urbanisation and its impact on the environment. Some of such measures that the curriculum should take cognisance of may include:
 - i. Making people understand the direct correlation between the environment and lifestyle choices
 - ii. blending theory with practice to get the full benefits of the study

- iii. Encouraging the planting of trees as a form of landscaping around private houses, worship centres, tourist destinations and other public places

The landscaping below is what I am talking about.



Fig. 10. Shoprite Mall at the West Hill area in Accra (photographed by the author, 2024).



Fig. 11. Author's own residence at Elmina in the Central Region of Ghana (photographed by the author, 2024).

- iv. Encourage the use of energy-saving bulbs and gadgets in the homes, worship centres and public buildings, etc.
- v. Constantly review the curriculum to confront the realities on the ground.
- vi. Sharing of research findings with community members

- vii. Understanding the concepts of responsible/sustainable/green/ethical consumption.
- viii. Reflecting on the importance of the effective use of natural and manufactured resources, and the minimisation of waste and pollution.
- ix. Increasing self-awareness of alternative consumption patterns
- x. ensuring that the people understand and appreciate the use of biodegradable materials or materials that can be easily recycled.
- xi. Leveraging on indigenous knowledge. At times, the input from indigenous people may be helpful since empirical research has shown that they are capable of living in harmony with their environment. Although they are mostly found in rural communities, some of their ecological values may be tapped into today's ways of addressing environmental problems (see Awuah-Nyamekye, 2014).
- xii. Growing Urban centres in Ghana need to have a generative impact on rural development to support rural life (Adjei Sower, 2018).
- xiii. internalising indicators for achieving the relevant Sustainable Development Goals in their local economies in urban areas in Ghana (Adjei Sower, 2018).
- xiv. Registering and acquiring building permits takes a longer time in Ghana. This encourages people to take the laws on building regulations into their own hands to corrupt and manipulate the system.

Policy decision-makers can also intervene through the following:

- Providing awards for the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies, such as 'the cleanest city award', to serve as an incentive or motivation for others to emulate.
- ensuring adequate funding for departments of urban studies to assist them in regularly reviewing their curriculum to confront the challenges of the time.
- facilitating constant interactions in the form of retreats or workshops between departments of Urban studies and key administrators of Metropolitan and Municipal Assemblies (Architects and Building Inspectors of the Assemblies, heads of Urban Roads and Sanitary Inspectors of the Assemblies) to update governments on changes in urban planning and development.

Other key actors that should not be left out in this interaction are the Ministry of Works and Housing and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA officials, in particular, must be compelled by the authorities to work in accordance with their profession.

- There must be a constant linkage between academia and industry, particularly the hospitality industry, to improve their facilities to modern standards. This has the potential to attract more tourists into the country, a practice that can earn the country some foreign exchange and also boost the local economy.

Furthermore, the government's policy of discouraging the importation of used goods that have the potential to worsen the greenhouse gas situation in the country should be implemented to the letter.

It is for these reasons that in this address, I have been advocating a continuous engagement with the issue of environmental education and sustainable lifestyle choices in Urban Development [Studies] discourse. This should happen till the desired outcomes, such as a better understanding of the close relationship between the concept of environmental education and sustainable lifestyle choices, are achieved.

Again, this continuous engagement should include how to explore more ways of living sustainable lifestyles, which will eventually have less destructive impact on the environment. I am also advocating that with proper methodologies and planning, environmental education and sustainable lifestyle choices discourse can inform policy decision-makers in city and urban planning initiatives in our modern societies and in Ghana in particular. Some of the ways of achieving this goal are for policy decision-makers to remove the barriers that hinder living a sustainable lifestyle. For instance, the regime for land registration and issuance of building permits should be re-examined and streamlined to prevent prospective land developers from illegal development in urban areas. Moreover, the Government should give serious attention to its affordable housing policy to improve decent accommodation in the urban centres to manage slum development.

Conclusion

The discussions in this paper have been on the issue of Environmental Education, Sustainable Lifestyle Choices and the built environment. The concentration has not only been on what these concepts stand for and the attendant problems connected with them, but also on the complexities associated with these concepts and how to deal with them in a developing nation like Ghana. In summary, I propose the application of intelligent construction ideas like smart lighting, energy-efficient systems and sustainable water management techniques, etc. What can be emphasised at this concluding stage is that all the points raised in this paper will be a mirage if we fail to address any of them, especially education. And just as the Kenyan Nobel Peace Laureate, Maathai Wandari, posited, ‘You cannot protect the environment unless you empower people, you inform them, and you help them understand that these resources are their own, that they must protect them’ (Maathai 2011). This implies that there is a need for continuous education for the citizenry to understand and appreciate the simple fact that there is a direct correlation between lifestyle choices and environmental protection and conservation. Once we lose sight of this, all our efforts will be in vain.

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DISCURSIVE PRACTICES IN THE LANGUAGE OF PROTEST: THE CASE OF #FIXTHECOUNTRY DEMONSTRATION IN GHANA

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Abstract

Although numerous studies have examined protest discourse across various global contexts, relatively few have focused on Africa, and even fewer on Ghana specifically. This gap is significant given the region's evolving democratic landscape and the role of protest as a means of political expression. Furthermore, while protest discourse has been explored through multiple theoretical frameworks, the application of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), particularly transitivity analysis, remains limited. This study addresses these gaps by analysing how language was used to construct discursive practices in the #Fix-the-Country protest in Ghana. Drawing on an interpretive content analysis of 137 placards and banners from the demonstration, the study applies transitivity analysis to demonstrate how different process types conveyed protester sentiments. The study found that material processes expressed resistance, relational processes signalled disillusionment, and mental processes revealed unfulfilled desires that fueled dissatisfaction and anger toward the government. The findings contribute to both protest discourse studies in Africa and theoretical claims within SFL, demonstrating how transitivity captures the linguistic construction of experiential reality in the contexts of dissent.

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Keywords: Language of Protest, Discursive Construction, Transitivity, Fix the Country, Ghana

Background

Protests are integral to all cultures' civil, political, economic and social life (Hill, 2018). Various situations spark them, but their core causes, especially in democratic countries, are persistent social injustice, socioeconomic precariousness, sociopolitical unhappiness, oppression, and disillusionment (Hall, 2016). By their ability to shift public discourse (Dunivin, Yan, Ince & Rojas, 2022), protests have historically sparked positive social change and improved the protection of human rights. They continuously help define and protect civic space around the world (Fernández-Molina, 2015). Additionally, they help citizens engage more and become informed as they promote representative democracy by allowing citizens to participate directly in public affairs (Begum, 2015). People share their opinions and ideas through language, expose governance flaws, and openly demand that authorities and other powerful organisations address issues and accept accountability for their actions (Ben-said & Kasanga, 2016). The protesters' actions include various elements such as voices, written language, visual images, colours, chants, or slogans used within a certain period and with a certain expanse in space (Begum, 2015).

The language used in protest employs linguistic resources that express feelings of disappointment, desperation, disapproval, and other discursive practices. Halliday (1984) argues that whenever we communicate with one another through language, we construct our experiences through the choice of processes, as demonstrated by transitivity analysis. This means people represent patterns of experience that go on around and inside them, buttressing Hill's (2018) claim that the language employed in protest is composed of carefully constructed sentences or expressions that inspire actions, elicit feelings, and serve as persuasive tools. Thus, examining protest discourse through transitivity is essential for identifying how language conveys action, emotion, and persuasion, thereby deepening our understanding of how language functions in protest contexts, especially in this digital age.

There is a substantial body of literature on the subject of protest discourse (Begum, 2015). Protest language is usually a mediational means of representing an action (Kasanga, 2014). As a result, protests require language in a specific manner: language that probes, resists,

and demands. There are several studies on protest, which have been done in different regions such as Asia (Al-Naimat, 2020; Arege, 2021; Begum, 2015; Rahmasari, 2021), Europe (Bekar, 2015; Hall, 2016; Kliuchnikova, 2013; Niesen, 2019; Payson, 2015; Woolfson, 2011), United States of America (Gallagher, Reagan, Danforth, & Dodds, 2018; Weber, Dejmanee & Rhode, 2018) and Africa (Ben-said & Kasanga, 2016; Kasanga, 2014; Makina, 2009). Unfortunately, the literature available so far shows few studies on the discourse of protest in Africa. This may be attributed to the relatively recent adoption of democratic governance in many African countries compared to their European and American counterparts. Sarfo-Kantankah (2022) argues that few studies are found in Africa, in general, and Ghana, in particular, especially in political discourse studies, possibly because democracy is still relatively young in Africa. Thus, our knowledge of how politics works in Africa might be limited, which calls for more studies on political practices and activities in Africa, particularly in Ghana. Therefore, this study adopts transitivity analysis within the SFL framework to investigate how linguistic processes represent protester experiences, demands, and discontent. In doing so, the study presents a context-specific, linguistic account of how experiential meaning is constructed in contemporary African protest movements. The study is informed by two research questions, namely:

1. What process types are dominant in the language of protest?
2. What discursive practices do the process types enact?

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: the next section presents an overview of research on (language of) protests. Section three does a theoretical review, while the fourth section describes the methodology. Section five presents the analysis, Section six focuses on the discussion, and the final section makes concluding remarks by highlighting our key arguments and the implications of the study.

Some previous studies on the discourse of protest

The study of protest or dissent as a form of political discourse is well established and has long been recognised as a catalyst for social change. Across different geographical contexts, scholars have examined protests to show their causes, evolution, and significance. Protest discourse has been approached as a reflection of grievance, a mode of resistance, a space for democratic engagement, and a persuasive tool for mobilisation. Rather than being regionally bound, studies

from Asia (Al-Naimat, 2020; Begum, 2015; Morva, 2016), Europe (Hall, 2016; Niesen, 2019), the Americas (Gallagher et al., 2018), and Africa (Kasanga, 2014; Ben-Said & Kasanga, 2016; Arege, 2021) contribute to broader thematic conversations. These include how language is used to enact resistance, justify civil disobedience, demand accountability, and articulate visions for change.

Protest as Resistance

Protests function as a means for marginalised voices to challenge dominant power structures. Language is used to articulate resistance, a mediational tool through which dissent is performed, and legitimacy is contested. In the Asian context, Al-Naimat (2020), Begum (2015), and Morva (2016) demonstrate how the language of protest expresses resistance by foregrounding solidarity among protesters with shared beliefs, despite unequal power relations. These studies emphasise the role of spatial and symbolic practices such as reclaiming the street as vehicles for collective identity and opposition. Similar perspectives emerge from Arege (2021), Kasanga (2014), and Ben-Said and Kasanga (2016), who found that in Africa, protest signs and slogans comprise culturally grounded narratives of resistance; therefore, in these contexts, resistance is verbal as well as multimodal. These embodied performances strengthen the semiotic impact of protest.

Protest and Social Change

Protests mostly emerge in response to structural inequalities and with the aim of provoking long-term transformation. Gallagher, Reagan, Danforth, and Dodds (2018) highlight that protest movements in the United States have historically catalysed public debate and social progress. Della Porta (1999) similarly observes that protests contribute to democratic evolution by enlarging the scope of public discourse. In South Africa, service delivery protests reflect persistent socioeconomic disparities, particularly among poor and working-class black communities. Chikulo (2016) notes that despite government commitments to post-apartheid development, significant service backlogs remain, prompting widespread protests. Alexander (2010) characterises these protests as a “rebellion of the poor,” marked by mass participation,

especially among unemployed youth. These protests signal grievance and enact resistance through the discursive redefinition of rights, dignity, and citizenship.

Protest Discourse and Democracy

Protest discourse is key in democratic participation. Enabling public critique and civic engagement allows protests to expand the boundaries of democratic deliberation. Fernández-Molina (2015) and Begum (2015) argue that protests help safeguard civic space by giving voice to the disempowered and compelling accountability from institutions. In Europe, Hall (2016) and Niesen (2019) examine how protesters use language to frame civil disobedience as a legitimate democratic act, thereby engaging in deliberative politics. Similarly, in South Africa, Netswera and Phago (2013) view protests as a contestation between public authority and the people, functioning as both coordinated and uncoordinated checks on power. Twala (2014) argues that the failure of the government to address community needs fuels ongoing protests, reinforcing its role as a feedback mechanism within democratic governance. These studies suggest that protests are beyond disruptions and are essential discursive practices that inform and shape democratic politics.

Protest Language as Persuasion and Justification

Language used in protest is rarely spontaneous; it is usually strategically constructed to persuade, mobilise, and justify action. Hall (2016) describes European protest language as both justificatory and deliberative, enabling protesters to rationalise civil disobedience while appealing to broader publics. Similarly, Woolfson (2011) and Payson (2015) show how protest language in transnational contexts functions as a rhetorical tool for mobilising resistance and confronting systemic injustice. In African contexts, Ben-Said and Kasanga (2016) explore how placards, slogans, and chants are semiotic resources used to create persuasive and emotionally resonant messages. This language constructs protest as morally legitimate through the alignment of personal grievance with collective purpose.

Studies show that throughout social history, countless social movements have emerged worldwide with purposes ranging from an exposition of political, economic, or social abuses to the complete usurpation of institutions (Jenkins, Wallace, & Fullerton, 2008). Protests often

take place against uncaring, self-serving and corrupt leaders, and are emblematic of a crisis of representation (cf. Chikulo, 2016). Thus, the current study contributes to the scholarly exploration and understanding of the role of language in the construction of social, political and economic protests. The paper demonstrates that the language of protests is a site for individuals, social and political groups to express a sense of belonging, self-expression and freedom of expression by which the disaffected confront injustice and call for political and socio-economic change and justice.

Theoretical review

Halliday's (1985) transitivity model, situated within the broader framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), underpins this study. SFL is a comprehensive, meaning-oriented theory of language that emphasises the relationship between linguistic choices and sociocultural context. As a semantically motivated and context-sensitive framework, SFL views language as a resource for making meaning, with categories such as the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions grounded in natural language use rather than abstract formal rules. That is, structures of language used in specified contexts present significant meanings, and these meanings are configured into metafunctions. Metafunction "encompasses the interpretation of language as a semiotic resource shaped intrinsically by the social functions it has evolved to serve" (Thompson, 2014, p.45). The metafunctions are categorised into three, namely: "the ideational (the experiential and the logical), the interpersonal and the textual" (Halliday, 1984: 108). The ideational metafunction is responsible for the linguistic resources speakers use to construe their inner and outer experience of the world through transitivity and ergativity. Meanwhile, interpersonal metafunction refers to the linguistic resources utilised in establishing interactive roles in a dialogue through modality and mood. The textual metafunction enables the construction of coherent, meaningful texts by combining the two metafunctions with theme and rheme (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). This study focuses on ideational metafunction, using transitivity analysis to uncover the experiences of the protesters. The ideational meaning refers to the grammatical resources for constructing our experiences of the world around and inside us (Prawiro, 2017). This is achieved through processes and their participants. Process refers to the verb (happening, doing, sensing, feeling, behaving, saying and existing) and its

expression of events, namely, physical, relational, mental, or emotional states (Halliday, 1984). This metafunction is analysed in terms of the transitivity system, thus, a choice between the six processes and the participants and circumstances associated with those processes (Haratyan, 2011). The process types identified by Halliday (1984) are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Process types

Process	Participants
Material	actor and goal/range/beneficiary
Mental	sensor and phenomenon
Verbal	sayer, receiver and verbiage
Behavioural	behave and phenomenon
Existential	existent

The transitivity system constitutes these types of participants and circumstances related to the processes (Lavine, 2010). With the process types and participant roles, each process type has a distinct participant role.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically guided by interpretive content analysis, to examine how protest language on placards and banners constructs discursive meanings. Interpretive content analysis was appropriate for this study because it moves beyond literal or descriptive interpretations to explore underlying meanings, motivations, and implications within a sociocultural context (Krippendorff, 2018). The data comprised placards and banners used during the #FixTheCountry protest held in Ghana in August 2021. Given the transient nature of protest artefacts and limited real-time field access, data were retrieved from digital sources, specifically Google Images and YouTube, using search terms such as “Fix the Country demonstration Ghana placards,” “Fix the Country protest slogans,” and “Fix the Country protest banners.” Online retrieval was considered methodologically valid, as social

media and digital platforms now serve as important archives for documenting protest practices, especially in contexts where access to physical data may be constrained. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 137 placards and banners based on three criteria: clarity of image, legibility of text, and uniqueness of message to avoid duplication. Each placard was treated as a unit of analysis and those containing multiple messages were segmented into clauses using clausal boundaries, following Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) framework. A clause was defined as a unit expressing a process, along with associated participants and circumstances. The analysis focused on the transitivity system of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which classifies clauses according to process types, namely material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioural, and existential. Each segmented clause was manually entered into Microsoft Excel for systematic analysis. Coding was carried out manually, and no predefined categories were imposed; rather, patterns and process types were identified inductively. To ensure trustworthiness and reduce researcher bias, a subset of 20 clauses was cross-checked by an independent expert in SFL. Discrepancies in the identification of process types were resolved through discussion, ensuring inter-coder consistency and analytic rigour. The placards were analysed individually, and the analysis focused on how specific linguistic choices reflected discursive practices. Ethical considerations were also observed by focusing mainly on the placards and banners and excluding identifiable images of individuals to ensure anonymity.

Analysis and discussions

This section analyses and discusses the data in line with the first research question: what process types are dominant in the language of protest? Since the research question is in two parts, the transitivity analysis will be done first, followed by the discursive constructions they enact. The section provides an overview of the data by listing the frequencies of the process types (see Table 2). Figure 1 shows the frequency of the processes in the language used on the placards and banners.

Process types and their frequencies

Our analysis shows that material processes appeared most frequently, that is, 83 (60.6%) clauses out of the 137 clauses analysed, which corroborates Thompson's (2014) assertion that

material processes form the broadest and most varied category in transitivity since they show actions.

Table 2: Frequency distribution of process types found in the data

Process type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Material process	83	60.6
Relational process	31	22.6
Mental process	10	07.3
Verbal process	08	05.8
Behavioural process	04	03
Existential process	01	00.7
Total	137	100

The relational process is the second most dominant process type. This process explains or describes a phenomenon (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Therefore, its presence seeks to explain and describe the current happenings in the county, demonstrating the protesters' awareness of the socio-political-economic situation in Ghana. This confirms Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) statement that the relational process reveals characteristics and allows identification. The next dominant process is the mental process that presents the protesters' feelings and thoughts, while the verbal, behavioural, and existential processes occur less frequently. In the subsequent sections, we describe the process types in detail. Before delving into the analysis of transitivity structures in the placard texts, it is important to clarify how this study operationalises the notion of discursive practices. Drawing on Fairclough (1992), we see discursive practices as how language use enacts social identities, relationships, and systems of knowledge. In other words, discursive practices refer to the strategic use of language forms in protest communication to construct meanings that challenge or reaffirm social power, accountability, and political legitimacy. In the context of protest, discursive practices are linguistic strategies through which protesters construct resistance, express dissatisfaction,

demand accountability, and project political agency. Thus, the analysis identifies process types in protest inscriptions and interprets how these types linguistically instantiate protest goals and social critique.

Material processes

The prevalence of dispositive material processes indicates that protesters framed their grievances in terms of urgent and actionable demands.

A material process is an action that interprets a change in the course of events occurring as a result of energy input. The two main types of material processes are (a) creative and (b) dispositive (Gerot & Wignell, 1993). The creative type creates the actor or objective as the event develops. As a result, the participant's existence—which could be either the actor or the goal—is the result. On the other hand, a dispositive material process modifies some characteristics of an already established actor or goal. From Table 3, the data show the frequency of creative and dispositive types of processes that were used by the protestors.

Table 3: Frequencies of subcategories of the material processes identified in the data

Material Process	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Creative	03	04
Dispositive	80	96
Total	83	100

The prevalence of dispositive material processes indicates that protesters framed their grievances in terms of urgent and actionable demands. While creative processes suggested future-oriented expectations, the dominance of dispositive processes shows a rhetorical emphasis on transforming existing conditions, reversing policy failures, and demanding political accountability. Below are examples of creative processes.

Example 1

[Government]	Create	Jobs
<i>Actor</i>	<i>Creative</i>	<i>Goal</i>

The process of construing experience as creation or bringing it into existence is due to the use of processes such as “create,” which brings into existence the goal of “jobs.” The implied actor is the government. Exploring the socio-political implications of this inscription on a placard reveals that the protesters are seeking jobs in Ghana. This is the case because unemployment has been one of the country’s major problems over the years. Sarfo (2016) and Sarfo-Kantankah (2018) state that Ghana’s youth are greatly concerned about the unemployment rate in the country. Due to their desperation, graduate students in Ghana founded the Unemployed Graduates Association in 2012, which demonstrates the severity of youth unemployment in Ghana. Despite the frantic efforts of various governments, the unemployment problem still exists. In response to the unemployment challenges, in 2006, the Government of Ghana established the National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP) under the then New Patriotic Party (NPP) government. Later, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) government changed the name to Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Agency (GYEEDA). In 2015, the NDC government changed the name again to Youth Empowerment Programme (YEP), “a more euphemistically positive name, signalling affirmation and attention given to the programme by the government” (Sarfo, 2016: 211-212). The programme highlights the problems of youth unemployment and various governments’ attempts to tackle them (Sarfo, 2016). This explains why the youth protested out of frustration, which is similar to what Alexander (2010: 25) notes about South Africa, where a key feature of protests “has been mass participation by a new generation of fighters, especially unemployed youth but also school students”.

Example 2

Corruption	Causes	Poverty
<i>Actor</i>	<i>Creative</i>	<i>Goal</i>

healthcare systems (people die due to lack of hospital beds; see example 4) and other socioeconomic and political inconsistencies, led Ghanaians to call out to the government to turn around these difficult situations. This structure critiques governance failure and reclaims citizen agency by assigning the government a responsibility to act. The protester, through this imperative construction, assumes discursive power to direct government behaviour.

Example 4

Stop	the no-bed syndrome	in our hospitals
<i>Dispositive</i>	<i>Goal</i>	<i>Circumstance</i>

In Example 4, “Stop the no-bed syndrome in our hospitals,” the command to ‘stop’ a systemic failure highlights health-related neglect. Here, the clause functions as a critique and as a call for structural reform. In the example above, “stop” is the material process and “the no bed syndrome” is the goal. The “no bed syndrome” refers to hospitals’ inability to accommodate new patients, especially in emergency rooms. The long-standing phenomenon highlights an imbalance in Ghana’s healthcare system (Africa Health Pot, 2021). Due to a lack of beds to contain them in hospitals, people pass away. This partly accounts for the reason masses of Ghanaians hit the streets to protest against the government. This usage reflects a broader discursive strategy of using material processes as tools for voicing public outcry against institutional collapse.

The foregoing analysis shows that through transformative/dispositive and creative material process types, the protesters projected actions or measures they expected the government to take for the betterment of the living conditions of the people. In addition, they used the dispositive process to determine what the government should do differently. It suggests that the protesters were interested in the government acting and working in the interest of the citizens. In the next section, we analyse and discuss relational processes, the second dominant process type used in the data. To this end, material processes were used to articulate the protesters’ experience of broken systems and to construct the protest space as one of public demand, resistance, and civic urgency.

Relational process

A relational process has two categories, namely, attributive and identifying. The attributive relational process has two participants, which are the Carrier (the entity that carries the attribute) and the Attribute. Also, the identifying relational process identifies one entity in terms of another. Intensive, circumstantial, and possessive are the three types into which these two can be classified. The intensive type demonstrates that entity x has a quality or value. The circumstantial type, in contrast, demonstrates that entity x is occurring on or at a specific time or day or that a circumstance x is determined to be a . Possessive shows that an entity x either has an attribute or that an entity is considered to be a possession of entity x . Table 4 lists the various relational process subtypes identified from the data.

Table 4: Frequencies of subcategories of the relational processes

Relational process	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Identifying		
Circumstantial	1	11
Intensive	8	89
Possessive	0	0 (100)
Attributive		
Circumstantial	3	14
Intensive	18	81
Possessive	1	5 (100)
Total	31	

From Table 4, the use of the intensive subcategory in both relational attributive and relational identifying was dominant. This intensive relational attributive process depicts that entity x is

attributed to *a*. The implication is that the protesters mostly described the state of affairs in Ghana. Instances are presented below.

Example 5

Galamsey	is	an unpatriotic behaviour
<i>Carrier</i>	<i>Intensive</i>	<i>Attribute</i>

From example 5, “Galamsey” is the carrier, and the attribute given to it is “an unpatriotic behaviour.” The inscription, “Galamsey is an unpatriotic behaviour,” constitutes one of the major socio-political issues being fought in Ghana. This clause links a specific social issue to a moral judgment. The attribute “unpatriotic” performs an ideological function as it discursively positions galamsey as anti-patriotic, thus inviting state action and citizen disapproval. *Galamsey* is a popular term coined from the expression *gather them and sell*, which refers to small-scale illegal mining (Blay, 2022). Galamsey has been topical in the country because of the adverse effects it poses to the environment and health due to the dangerous chemicals used by the illegal miners; destruction of land, which results in a decrease in food production; pollution of water bodies, which results in poor drinking water; falling educational standards in the affected communities and blatant disregard for laws, order and custom (Gatsinzi & Hilson, 2022). These findings align with Nartey (2022), whose examination of #OccupyFlagstaffHouse and #RedFriday campaigns revealed that protests in Ghana are intended to increase pressure on the government to address deteriorating social conditions. These factors collectively explain why Ghanaians took to the streets to protest against the government.

Furthermore, the intensive subtype of the relational process in the “identifying” mode denotes the assignment of an identity to something. This indicates that one entity is being used to define the identity of another (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Below are examples of intensive relational identifying processes found in the data.

Example 6

Why	Is	Dumsor	back?
<i>Token</i>	<i>Intensive</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>circumstance</i>

In example 6, “why” is the token, and “dumsor” is the value. This means that “dumsor” is identified through “why.” “Dumsor”, which is a Twi (a Ghanaian language) word, means “off-and-on”; it refers to erratic power supply, that is, frequent and unpredictable power outages in Ghana. Under the National Democratic Congress (NDC) regime (2012-2016), the country experienced persistent power crises, which worsened by 2016. Due to this, the then-opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP) promised to solve the incessant power outages for Ghanaians to enjoy a stable power supply. However, “dumsor” appeared to have resurfaced after a few years into the NPP Government’s reign, thus the question from the protesters, “Why is dumsor back?”

Example 7

Where	Is	the change?
<i>Token</i>	<i>Intensive</i>	<i>Value</i>

From example 7, “where” is the token and “the change” is the value. Here, “the change” is identified in terms of “where.” The NPP government promised Ghanaians during their political campaign that they would change Ghana’s socioeconomic situation. However, since they gained power, the change they promised regarding working on the exchange rate, ensuring quality education, and bettering the living conditions of the average Ghanaian has not seemed to have been fulfilled. Therefore, the protesters were asking where the change the NPP promised was.

Examples 6 and 7 use relational identifying processes to signal political betrayal and disappointment. The use of interrogatives enhances their rhetorical impact by transforming grievance into a public interrogation of political leadership. In both cases, relational processes support the discursive practice of disillusionment, a strategy of holding the government accountable by recalling broken promises. The analysis shows that the three subtypes of relational processes were identified in the data. First, the intensive relational process that defines or describes pattern *x* was dominant in the data. Hence, relational processes in the data serve to construct ideological opposition, moral judgment, and collective disappointment by highlighting how protesters reframe government actions (or inactions) through evaluative

attributions and identity critiques. This confirms Halliday and Matthiessen’s (2014) assertion that the intensive relational process reveals characteristics and identification.

Mental processes

The term mental process describes what occurs in the mind and includes concepts, ideas, and observations. A mental process represents four categories of actions, viz: perception, cognition, desire and emotion. The process always involves two participants, the senser and the phenomenon (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). The protesters employed mental processes to convey their feelings, thoughts, and perceptions of the nation’s problems. This is a reflection of the Ghanaian protesters’ inner thoughts. The stated goal of this type of process is usually to stir up pent-up emotions. Table 5 provides a list of the various mental processes identified in the data, with their classification based on the subtypes of the mental process.

Table 5: Distribution of the mental process sub-types

Mental Process	Frequency	Percentage
Perceptive	1	10
Cognitive	1	10
Desiderative	4	40
Emotive	4	40
Total	10	100

From Table 5, desiderative and emotive mental processes were primarily used in the protest. The desiderative mental process shows the desire of the protestors, which is captured in the processes of “need” and “want,” as indicated below.

Example 8

We	Need	Jobs
<i>Senser</i>	<i>Desiderative</i>	<i>Phenomenon</i>

From example 8, the senser is “we,” which refers to the protestors/citizens, with “need” being the desiderative process and “jobs” being the phenomenon, and this is an expression of collective aspiration. This mental process discursively frames the protestors as deserving citizens whose desires have been systematically neglected. The protestors are asking the government to create job opportunities in the country, which they desire. According to a World Bank report (2020) titled Youth Employment Programmes in Ghana, Ghana’s unemployment rate increased to 3.56% in Dec 2023, from the previously reported figure of 3.52% in Dec 2022. This demonstrates how persistent Ghana’s unemployment problem has been. The processes, such as “need”, project the desires of the citizens of Ghana. Another example is 9.

Example 9

[Government]	Change	your attitude
<i>Senser</i>	<i>Emotive</i>	<i>Phenomenon</i>

In Example 9, “Change your attitude,” the mental process is desiderative. The use of “change” addresses the government as a subject whose mindset must shift. This intensifies the interpersonal function of protest discourse, portraying protestors as emotionally affected and morally entitled. In this instance, “Government” is the senser, with “change” being the emotive mental process and “your attitude” being the phenomenon. This inscription refers to the attitude of the Government of Ghana. The Government aids foreign nationals to indulge in Galamsey activities, polluting water bodies, degrading lands, corruption and supporting governmental activities that do not help the country. Nevertheless, the cognitive and perceptive appeared least in the data because, in the language of protest, protestors share desires and feelings more than thoughts and perceptions (Niesen, 2019). Generally, using the subcategories of the mental process in the language of protest helps to figure out Ghanaians’ feelings and desires and their thoughts and perceptions. Hence, mental processes, therefore, enact discursive practices of

desire. They are tools of affective persuasion, used to articulate how the state has failed to align with public sentiment.

Verbal process

A verbal process represents the act of speaking, such as when reporting an event. At the intersection of mental and relational processes is the verbal process. As a result, it exhibits the traits of these two processes. Thompson (2014) states that it represents humans’ capacity for thought and meaning. One participant in this process—called *sayer*—is inherent and may be conscious or unconscious. This method was used to inform the government of how miserable the nation was and its citizens’ difficulties. Here are some examples of the verbal processes found in the data.

Example 10

Ghanaians	have spoken
<i>Sayer</i>	<i>Verbal</i>

From the instance above, “Ghanaians” is the *sayer* and “have spoken” is the verbal process. This inscription constructs a collective speech act, giving symbolic voice to the otherwise voiceless. It reframes the protest as a national consensus. The *sayer* “Ghanaians” functions as a metonymic representation of the people, asserting collective civic identity. This tells that Ghanaians have spoken their minds and aspirations. The street provided the space for Ghanaians to vent their frustrations, despair and desires.

Example 11

[Government]	Speak up
<i>Sayer</i>	<i>Verbal</i>

In this instance, “Government” is the *sayer* expected to “speak up”. This clause shifts agency to the government, urging it to become responsive. This is a discursive practice of demanding transparency and reclaiming accountability. This inscription shows that the verbal processes

used admonished citizens to fight for good governance and for the government to work towards the provision of what rightfully belonged to them. Therefore, the government should speak up for the country to know that all hope is not lost.

Behavioural processes

The behavioural process displays actions like grinning, laughing, and looking (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). It exhibits an external manifestation of our mental activity. For instance, while seeing is a mental process, looking at something involves doing so, making it behavioural. This process sits on the line between physical and mental processes (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). It has a single built-in participant, behavior. An important component of protest that projects the sentiments and actions of the protesters toward the government is the use of behavioural process forms. Examples of behavioural processes are shown below.

Example 12

Children	are still learning	under trees
<i>Behaver</i>	<i>Behavioural</i>	<i>Circumstance: place</i>

From the example, “children” is the behavior, and “are still learning” is the behavioural process. The children, as behaviors, symbolise a vulnerable population whose predicament indicts the state. The behavioural process here enacts a discursive practice of disillusionment, where the protest becomes a platform for exposing the ongoing hardship of what was promised to be worked on. This instance describes the lack of school infrastructure in the country by indicating that children are learning under trees. This has been one of the most pressing issues within the education sector. When communities lack properly built classrooms or structures for classes, the phenomenon known as “schools under trees” occurs. As a result, instruction and learning occur beneath a tree or trees, endangering both students’ and teachers’ lives. Additionally, this exposes teaching and learning to various interruptions, such as wind, rain, sunlight, and noises from animals. In general, successive governments have always received more blame for failing to support education by building enough classrooms.

Example 13

Arise	Ghana youth
<i>Behavioural</i>	<i>Behaver</i>

In the example above, “Ghana youth” is the behaver, and “arise” is the behavioural process. This functions as a behavioural command, a rallying cry that represents young people as political agents to rise against all the bad things that are being done. The imperative “arise” aligns the act of protesting with national renewal. One of Ghana’s patriotic songs is “Arise, Ghana Youth.” Throughout the demonstration, this was repeatedly chanted and written on placards. The song is the foundation for a challenge to Ghana’s youth to strive for greatness and significance. This is a clarion call to action that the Ghanaian youth will always look up to (BBC, 2021). The youth must now take action because Ghana needs them, and they cannot afford to sit aloof. The time for the youth to act is now, since Ghana demands their devotion, and they cannot afford to sit and not act to save the country. Behavioural processes thus mediate between mental states and physical action. They are used to dramatise suffering and to prompt collective awakening, reinforcing protest as a call to action.

Existential process

An entity’s existence is expressed through an existential process. It possesses both relational and material process characteristics. Usually, a sentence with an existential process begins with “there” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). There is only one inherent participant, an Existent, in this process. A being called an Existent can be conscious or unconscious. Since protests tend to focus more on actions and the expression of feelings than on processes, this kind of process is less frequently used. The data only shows one instance, which is shown below.

Example 14

There	Is	no better time	to fix it than now
	<i>Existential</i>	<i>Existent</i>	<i>Circumstance: purpose</i>

From example 14, the existent is “no better time.” This clause expresses temporal urgency. The use of “there is” projects the current moment as opportune and unrepeatable. This aligns with the discursive practice of immediacy, which legitimises public action as both necessary and overdue. This process indicates the protesters’ belief that if the government does not fix the country now, there will not be an appropriate time again. It shows the urgency of the protesters’ call for action.

The analysis demonstrates that protesters strategically used different process types to construct a range of discursive practices. These discursive moves reflect a contestation of political legitimacy and a reclamation of civic voice. By mapping transitivity structures onto protest discourse, the study affirms the utility of SFL in revealing how citizens use language to perform social critique and construct experiential meaning in times of political unrest.

Discussion: Discursive practices enacted through the transitivity system in the language of the #Fix-the-Country protest

This part focuses on discursive issues that emerged during the analysis: resistance, disillusionment, and desire. Despite allowing for political participation, social movements set protests apart from other types of political unrest (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015). Moreover, they show how people with similar identities have been mobilised for change. For instance, participants in the #Fix-the-Country demonstration had a common goal and traits, which allowed them to oppose the government’s policies.

The discursive construction of resistance

Tens of thousands of people in the country are without hope, and resistance through protests portrays an atmosphere of annoyance, disillusionment and outrage at the government system (Campbell & Wolbrecht, 2020). In this context, protest becomes a point for discursive enactments, that is, a way of using language to enact social agency, critique authority, and construct oppositional identities (Fairclough, 1992). In the #FixTheCountry protest, the language choices evident in the placards portray how transitivity structures, especially material and behavioural processes, were mobilised as rhetorical tools of resistance.

The dominant use of material processes in the data signals the protesters' intent to direct action toward those in power. Within this category, dispositive material processes outnumbered creative types, emphasising the transformation of existing socio-political conditions. These processes embody the linguistic projection of force and urgency. Protesters used these clauses primarily in the imperative mood, indexing resistance through commands. This performative use of language constructs a power dynamic in which ordinary citizens adopt a directive voice, resisting the perceived passivity, corruption, or inefficacy of political leadership. This aligns with Hill's (2018) view that protest is the verbal performance of dissent, and with Weber, Dejmanee, and Rhode's (2018), who found that protest language is often action-framed, focusing on doing rather than merely describing. Similarly, Fernandes (2012), analysing protests in postcolonial African states, describes a familiar pattern of citizens contesting the failure of elected officials to meet basic needs. The #FixTheCountry demonstration follows this script. Placard texts referenced unresolved national issues such as the Menzgold financial scandal, the Woyome judgment debt case, and the unfulfilled promises of successive presidents. These references, conveyed largely through material process structures, reveal how protesters used linguistic resources to resist state narratives of progress and development. Material processes in the protest placards thus become a site of social action. They are used to demand change, hold power to account, and reframe governance failures as matters of public urgency. This aligns with Kasanga's (2014) argument that protest language, especially through placards, constitutes a form of social action discourse, an embodied practice where written language enacts resistance and accountability. In addition to material processes, behavioural processes played a significant role in the discursive construction of resistance. Behavioural processes represent the outward expression of inner psychological states, bridging the mental and material domains (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). In the data, verbs such as *arise*, *are suffering*, and *are still learning* appeared as behavioural realisations of protest sentiment. For instance, in the inscription "Children are still learning under trees," the behavioural process "learning" implicitly condemns the state for infrastructural neglect. This construction functions discursively as a testimony of suffering, invoking public sympathy while simultaneously accusing the state of abandonment. Similarly, the verb "arise", a recurring feature of placards and chants, functions as a mobilising metaphor. It compels citizens, particularly youth, as

political agents capable of altering the status quo. The behavioural process here is performative. It enacts a call to political awakening, aligning with the protest's broader discursive strategy of urging civic participation and resistance to complacency. Moreover, behavioural processes contribute to what Fairclough (1992) terms "discursive resistance", that is, the use of language to challenge and transform social situations. These constructions elevate protest from mere complaint to a public performance of structural critique.

In sum, the discursive construction of resistance in the #FixTheCountry protest is achieved primarily through the strategic use of material and behavioural processes. While material processes foreground demands, commands, and action-oriented resistance, behavioural processes provide testimonial and mobilising functions that expose suffering and inspire collective agency. These transitivity choices form a linguistic repertoire of dissent, giving voice to the marginalised, challenging institutional power, and affirming protest as a legitimate mode of political participation in Ghana's democratic discourse.

The discursive construction of disillusionment

Disillusionment is a feeling of disappointment that results from the discovery that government promises and policies have not been fulfilled as protesters believed they would be during the campaigning season (Payson, 2015). Disappointment is a feeling of sadness or frustration that arises when deeply held expectations are not fulfilled. In protest discourse, disillusionment serves as a discursive frame through which citizens articulate their sense of betrayal, loss of trust, and moral indictment of political leadership. According to Sleat (2013), people who have lost faith in politics are often disappointed because political systems have failed to deliver the outcomes they anticipated, revealing a discrepancy between what is and what ought to be.

In the #FixTheCountry protest, relational processes were deployed as a primary linguistic resource for constructing disillusionment. As Gerot and Wignell (1993) explain, relational processes express states of being and are used to categorise (attributive) or identify (identifying) entities. Protesters used relational clauses to characterise the socio-economic condition of Ghana, define government failures, and expose the gap between expectation and reality. Placard inscriptions such as "Galamsey is an unpatriotic behaviour" or "Where is the change?" rhetorically position the government as having failed its people.

These relational clauses function discursively by foregrounding attributes such as corruption, broken promises, and mismanagement. They represent protestors' attempts to hold leaders accountable by redefining national identity and reassigning blame. By assigning negative attributes (Ghana is hard, the system is broken), protestors map their disillusionment onto the national condition, making it visible and public. Thus, relational processes become tools of redefinition and renaming, which is central to the language of disillusionment.

In addition, verbal processes amplify disillusionment by expressing unmet expectations and direct appeals to leadership. In this protest, verbal processes were used to reiterate campaign promises, highlight state inaction, and demand accountability. Placards such as "Speak up," "Ghanaians have spoken," and "Fix it now" serve both as commands and as reports on citizens' dissatisfaction. These verbal processes enact two discursive moves: first, they remind the government of its civic obligations and broken promises; second, they function as performative speech acts of disillusionment, reclaiming citizens' right to speak and be heard. As Morrison and Love (2015) argue, disillusionment in democratic settings often stems from a breakdown in political accountability and communicative reciprocity. When those in power stop listening, citizens begin to speak louder, and protest becomes their amplifier.

This discursive enactment confirms Margulies' (2018) view that disillusionment, while signalling discontent, also holds potential for political reawakening and transformation. It is therefore not a loss of faith but a call for systemic re-evaluation. The #FixTheCountry protest illustrates this through messages that, while voicing disappointment, also present demands and alternative visions, which Schmidt (2022) describes as the rhetorical power of solution-oriented resistance. Therefore, the dominant use of relational and verbal processes in this protest is a deliberate strategy to articulate and publicise disillusionment. These processes enact disillusionment by reframing political narratives, questioning authority, and insisting on the possibility of reform. In doing so, they transform the language of disappointment into a potent tool for civic engagement and democratic pressure.

The discursive construction of desire

The discursive construction of desire in protest discourse is often expressed through linguistic markers of longing, aspiration, and unmet needs, words and expressions such as "wanting,"

“wishing,” “longing,” and “craving.” In the #FixTheCountry protest, these desires were predominantly encoded through mental processes, which, according to Gerot and Wignell (1994), involve internal experiences such as feeling, perceiving, thinking, and desiring. Mental processes are inherently subjective, foregrounding the inner world of the protesters, their frustrations, hopes, and demands for reform.

In this study, mental processes, particularly desiderative (e.g., need, want) and emotive (e.g., hate, love), were key in projecting the collective desires of Ghanaians for improved governance and socio-economic justice. The discursive power of desire lies in its ability to transform individual suffering into collective action. As Payson (2015) argues, emotions such as anger, frustration, and aspiration often serve as triggers for political participation, particularly in environments where promises remain unfulfilled. Similarly, Margulies (2018) notes that moral outrage and perceived group efficacy are central socio-psychological conditions that drive protest behaviour. In the context of the #FixTheCountry protest, these emotions and desires were textualised and made public through mental process clauses. This aligns with Weisser’s (2008) assertion that emotion is instrumental in protest because it highlights lived experiences, personal narratives, and interpersonal connections. Protesters, through their language choices, assert what they think the government has failed to do, and what they feel and desire. Mental process types in the data thus present expressive and persuasive functions as they reflect affective positions and simultaneously mobilise collective sentiments.

Moreover, Kliuchnikova (2013) argues that citizens in democratic states often feel emotionally invested in their country’s social and political life. This emotional involvement translates into active engagement, as seen in placards bearing statements such as “We need jobs,” “We want better schools,” or “Change your attitude.” These expressions, grammatically realised as mental processes, signal the affective dimension of citizenship and the moral claims protesters make on the state. In this sense, the protest becomes a discursive arena where personal desires are transformed into political demands. As Peachy (2011) notes, the role of desire in democratic systems extends beyond emotion; it becomes a catalyst for shaping governance structures that reflect the will and needs of the people. It projects a better future by voicing what citizens feel is lacking in the present.

This analysis underscores how mental processes construct a discourse of desire that is political. Through this construction, protesters assert their right to participate in governance and demand recognition, dignity, and structural change. In conclusion, the mental processes identified in the #FixTheCountry protest reveal how language serves as a conduit for emotional expression, political agency, and civic engagement. Desire becomes a mode of resistance, bridging the psychological with the structural and turning individual affect into collective momentum for change.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine how protest placards from the #FixTheCountry demonstration in Ghana used language to discursively construct their experiences. By applying Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), the study analysed how various process types were employed by protesters to articulate political voice, critique governance, and demand accountability. The study found that material processes were the most dominant, with dispositive material processes accounting for 96% of all material processes identified. These processes were used to encode explicit actions demanded of the government. This dominance reflects how protesters utilise language to enact agency and pressure the state to act, an expression of discursive resistance that aligns with the findings of Weber et al. (2018) and Fernandes (2012). The frequent use of behavioural processes complemented this resistance by presenting the lived experiences and actions of citizens. In contrast, relational processes, especially those of the intensive attributive type, were used to describe states of being and identity to discursively construct disillusionment, a recurring theme reflecting the gap between political promises and the lived realities of citizens. Verbal processes also portrayed protest as a form of public reporting and moral appeal, further presenting the protesters' expectation that political leadership must be responsive and accountable. Mental processes, particularly desiderative and emotive subtypes, captured the emotional and psychological dimensions of the protest. The protesters expressed their inner thoughts and feelings by effectively constructing desire. These mental processes reflect collective hopes and disappointments. Therefore, the protest functions as a space for linguistic acts of resistance, disillusionment, and emotional expression.

The theoretical contribution of this study demonstrates that transitivity can be used to explore discursive practices in protest discourse, particularly in African contexts. It supports Fernández-Molina's (2015) claim that transitivity enables researchers to analyse how linguistic choices reflect and shape experience, while also affirming Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) assertion that language construes social reality. In doing so, the study contributes to the growing body of literature on political dissent. From a contextual perspective, the study highlights how Ghanaian protesters use language to demand accountability, express disappointment, and advocate reform. This echoes the view of Begum (2015) that democratic citizens often push back against state failures through organised resistance. In Ghana, the language choices on placards critique and express disillusionment while keeping alive the possibility of transformation. The #FixTheCountry protest reveals how ordinary citizens in a democratic African state use language to participate in political discourse, express collective emotions, and contest power. The study concludes that the language of protest is a constitutive resource through which resistance, disillusionment, and desire are enacted, negotiated, and made visible.

Based on the findings of this study, we recommend two key areas for further research. First, future studies could explore the textual metafunction in protest placards to understand how information is organized for emphasis and persuasion. Second, further research could examine indigenous language forms and code-mixing. Although this study focused on clauses written in English, it observed the presence of code-mixing, pidgin, and indigenous language forms, which hold significant sociolinguistic values.

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LINGUISTIC FIELDWORK: THE CASE OF CHIBARWE ORTHOGRAPHY IN ZIMBABWE

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Abstract

In contemporary language-related explorations, linguistic fieldwork is informing language development initiatives in key branches of applied linguistics such as phonology, morphology, lexicography, and sociolinguistics. This paper discusses the methodological issues in the practice of linguistic fieldwork, drawing on a case study on ChiBarwe orthography in Zimbabwe. The argument avowed in this paper is that orthography development requires fieldwork immersion, community involvement, and a systematic approach to deliverables that are consistent and linguistically accurate. It further argues that linguistic fieldwork in the context of orthographies does not solely involve data collection but also encompasses data verification, orthography validation, pilot testing, and community feedback under stringent ethical considerations. This study was guided by the Language Standardisation Model (LSM) as refined by Ayres-Bennett (2020), which outlines the key stages in developing a functional and accepted writing system for a language. Data were collected through practical fieldwork in which the researchers got immersed in the Barweland to collect data needed to develop a standard ChiBarwe writing system. In-depth interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions (FGDs), and elicitation (using the expanded Swadesh list for Bantu languages) were used during the fieldwork expeditions, and the findings were analysed qualitatively. The researchers also analysed existing draft orthographies developed for ChiBarwe to identify gaps, inconsistencies, and areas needing

refinement. Findings indicated that linguistic fieldwork for orthography designing follows three interrelated stages: pre-fieldwork, fieldwork proper, and post-fieldwork. Findings also indicate that dialectal variation and sociolinguistic identities complicated orthographic choices, yet community validation and pilot testing confirmed the orthography's accuracy, usability, and long-term viability.

Keywords: ChiBarwe, Language, Linguistics, Fieldwork, Standard, Orthography

Introduction

In Africa, many indigenous languages remain marginalised in formal education and official domains, often lacking standardised writing systems. As noted by Seifart (2006), the absence of practical orthographies is hindering literacy development, intergenerational transmission, and the preservation of indigenous knowledge. In the case of Zimbabwe, its linguistic landscape has a tapestry of indigenous languages, each with its unique cultural heritage and linguistic features. However, the documentation and preservation of most of these indigenous languages has often been overlooked, leading to a significant gap in available linguistic resources (Mumpande, 2020; Magwa, 2021). Thus, language documentation has not received the attention that it deserves, especially given the rich linguistic and cultural heritage in the country. Despite the lack of a clear language policy, the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 20) Act 2013 officially recognises sixteen languages, including ChiBarwe (Nhongo & Tshotsho, 2021; Chirimaunga, 2025). Notwithstanding this linguistic diversity, only two indigenous languages, Shona and Ndebele, have received considerable attention in terms of documentation and description, and the rest remain marginalised, which is ushering them into extinction (Jonhera & Nyoni, 2023).

It is within this context that the researchers embarked on a language documentation fieldwork aimed at not only preserving the ChiBarwe language and culture but also providing the Launchpad for the revitalisation of the language. The motivation of this community engagement is supported by Bower (2008), who avers that the endeavour of understanding and documenting a language often necessitates direct engagement with the communities that speak it. Such an engagement, known as linguistic fieldwork, formed the bedrock upon which detailed

descriptions of languages are built and linguistic theories are tested (Rozhanskiy, 2021). This aligns with the broader efforts to promote mother-tongue-based education (MTBE), as advocated by Bantu scholars such as Magwa (2021), Chimhundu (1993), and Prah (2012), who emphasise the pedagogical benefits of using learners' mother-tongue languages in education. It is upon this background that this study seeks to explore the linguistic fieldwork using ChiBarwe orthography development as a case study. Such an immersive methodology allowed researchers to gain authentic insights into the ChiBarwe phonemic inventory, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation as used in everyday conversation.

Objectives

This study seeks to:

- identify the fieldwork methodologies utilised in developing a comprehensive ChiBarwe orthography.
- examine the challenges encountered during linguistic fieldwork and explore the strategies employed to mitigate them.
- propose strategies for the implementation of the ChiBarwe orthography and the revitalisation of the language.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in the Language Standardisation Model (LSM) as refined by Ayres-Bennett (2020), which provides a structured approach to the development of functional and socially accepted writing systems. The LSM identifies a sequence of interrelated stages in standardisation, typically encompassing selection, codification, elaboration of function, and acceptance (Haugen, 1966; Ayres-Bennett, 2020). These stages ensure that standardisation is not merely a technical exercise in orthography design but also a sociolinguistic process that integrates community engagement, functional applicability, and cultural legitimacy. In the context of ChiBarwe, the LSM is particularly relevant because it recognises that linguistic decisions, such as grapheme choice or orthographic conventions, must be grounded in both structural linguistic evidence and the social realities of the speech community.

In this research, the selection stage involved identifying the dialectal base for the standard orthography, guided by both linguistic criteria and sociolinguistic considerations. Given the mutual intelligibility between ChiBarwe and ChiHwesa, the decision required careful balancing of identity politics with phonological representativeness. This aligns with the LSM's emphasis on deliberate choice of the form to be standardised, informed by fieldwork and consultation with native speakers (Ayres-Bennett, 2020). Codification, the second stage, entailed systematically representing ChiBarwe's phonemic inventory in written form, ensuring orthographic consistency and clarity. Here, the LSM's focus on technical accuracy dovetailed with best practices in orthography development, as discussed by Cahill and Karan (2008), who stress the importance of transparent sound-symbol correspondence for literacy acquisition.

The elaboration stage, as conceptualised in the LSM, involves extending the standard form to new functions and domains, ensuring it can serve a variety of communicative needs. In this study, elaboration was approached through the creation of literacy materials such as alphabet charts, folktales, and sample dialogues. These resources were designed to test the orthography's adaptability across genres and registers, reflecting Ayres-Bennett's (2020) assertion that functional expansion is critical for long-term viability. Acceptance, the final stage, was pursued through participatory validation workshops and pilot literacy testing. This resonates with the LSM's recognition that standardisation must be a collaborative process, where legitimacy is built through consensus and endorsement from both expert and lay stakeholders (Sebba, 2007). Through applying the LSM, this research not only followed a theoretically grounded process but also integrated iterative feedback loops between technical orthography design and community validation. The model's holistic perspective ensured that the proposed ChiBarwe writing system met the dual requirements of linguistic accuracy and sociocultural acceptability. In doing so, it provided a robust framework for navigating the challenges of dialectal variation, sociolinguistic identity, and literacy development. The adoption of the LSM in this context demonstrates its adaptability to African language standardisation processes, particularly in multilingual settings where political, cultural, and linguistic factors intersect.

Research Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research design, guided by the principles of linguistic fieldwork and language documentation. The primary objective was to develop a standard orthography for ChiBarwe through an interactive and participatory process. The methodology followed the three interrelated stages of orthography design, namely pre-fieldwork, fieldwork proper, and post-fieldwork, with an emphasis on immersion in the Barweland to collect both linguistic and sociolinguistic data relevant to the orthography development process. Before embarking on data collection, the principal researcher had the advantage of being a native ChiBarwe speaker. As Kadenge (2007) observes, there is an added advantage when a linguist researches a language they are familiar with, as such insider knowledge enables a deeper appreciation of grammatical patterns, phonological systems, and subtle sociolinguistic details. This positionality facilitated rapport with the community, enhanced access to participants, and enriched the interpretation of linguistic data. Scholars such as Chelliah and de Reuse (2021) further stress that insider status often strengthens reliability in linguistic documentation when balanced with reflexivity.

Data were collected using multiple methods to ensure triangulation and enhance reliability. In-depth interviews with elders, teachers, and community leaders were conducted to elicit perspectives on orthographic preferences, phonological representation, and spelling conventions. Questionnaires were distributed to a wider sample of speakers to capture attitudes toward existing draft orthographies and to gather data on literacy practices. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were employed to promote collective dialogue, particularly around contentious orthographic forms, and to allow for negotiation of community preferences, reflecting methodological recommendations by Denzin (2012), who emphasised the importance of triangulation for enhancing both validity and trustworthiness in qualitative inquiry. Elicitation techniques, including the use of the expanded Swadesh list for Bantu languages, were adopted to document phonemic inventories, lexical items, and grammatical structures systematically. In addition, the researchers analysed existing draft orthographies of ChiBarwe to identify gaps, inconsistencies, and areas in need of refinement. The combined use of these methods allowed for methodological triangulation, which Creswell and Poth (2018) argue is central to addressing validity concerns and achieving data saturation in qualitative research.

The study adopted a qualitative approach to data analysis, with field notes, transcriptions of interviews, and FGD recordings coded thematically. Patterns were identified in phoneme-grapheme correspondences, spelling practices, and community perceptions of orthographic legitimacy. Draft orthographies generated from the analysis were interactively validated with participants through workshops and follow-up interviews, ensuring that the process remained participatory and reflective of community needs. After validation by various stakeholders, necessary changes were effected, and the orthography proceeded to pilot testing in schools and communities across Barweland. The purpose of this pilot testing was to evaluate usability, assess pedagogical soundness, test learner comprehension, and determine community acceptance of the proposed writing system. Following pilot testing, the orthography underwent final validation before being prepared for publication as the definitive ChiBarwe orthography. Throughout the entire process, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE), the Ministry of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture and the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development (MHTEISTD) served as the critical in-line ministries providing oversight and institutional legitimacy. This cyclical and institutionally anchored approach aligns with Seifart et al. (2018), who argue that orthography development must move beyond mere data collection to include iterative verification, community engagement, and institutional endorsement. By allowing constant refinement, the study ensured the production of an orthography that was both linguistically sound, socially acceptable, and officially recognised for long-term viability.

Ethical considerations were central to this study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, with oral consent sought in low-literacy contexts and, where necessary, supported by communal legitimacy through local elders. Participants were fully briefed on the aims of the study, their right to withdraw, and the intended use of the data, in line with guidelines by UNESCO (2021). Confidentiality was maintained by anonymising participant data in field notes and publications. In addition, sensitivity to cultural protocols was observed, particularly in engaging elders and traditional leaders. As Bower (2015) highlights, ethical transparency and cultural sensitivity are fundamental to linguistic fieldwork, ensuring that both community trust and scholarly integrity are upheld.

Background to the Analysis and Findings

ChiBarwe Language

ChiBarwe is a Bantu language of the Niger-Congo family, traditionally classified within Guthrie's (1967) classification, which places it in the class N40 group together with Nyungwe and Sena. (Mangoya, 2012 & Chirimaunga, 2013). ChiBarwe is popularly known as ChiHwesa in Zimbabwe and is spoken primarily in the northeastern parts of the Nyanga District, Manicaland Province, near the border with Mozambique. Specifically, ChiBarwe or ChiHwesa is mostly spoken under Chief Katerere, who is of the Hwesa totem. Therefore, the Katerere kingdom is considered to be the heart of ChiBarwe/ChiHwesa in Zimbabwe and is mainly referred to as 'kuHwesa' with the language mostly spoken in areas such as Fombe, Avilla, Kazozo, Ruwangwe, Kadzere, and Nyamahumba, among others (Ndhlovu, 2007 & Mangoya, 2012).

As noted by Hachipola (1998) and Magwa (2021), ChiBarwe is also spoken in areas beyond the jurisdiction of Chief Katerere, in areas such as in the Mudzi district. Having taken the position that ChiBarwe is also known as ChiHwesa, we also argue that this variety is composed of dialects that have not been studied and labelled since not much research has been carried out on the language. However, an archaic form of ChiBarwe is reportedly spoken in specific locations along the Gaerezi River, such as Mhanje, Khoso, Kaitano, Musambanyama, and Munzara (Chirimaunga, 2013 & Magwa, 2021). In Zimbabwe, ChiBarwe gained official recognition as one of Zimbabwe's Officially Recognised Languages (ZORLs) (Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013). This theoretically mandates impartial treatment of the language by the state and government institutions. Efforts are underway to promote and develop these officially recognised but historically marginalised languages, including their use in education and media. Despite its official recognition in Zimbabwe, ChiBarwe remains unwritten and under-documented, factors that pose significant challenges to its vitality.

The Motivation for ChiBarwe Orthography

In Zimbabwe, the development of a standard writing system for ChiBarwe is an urgent and necessary step toward the preservation and revitalisation of this endangered minority language. As noted by Mangoya (2012), ChiBarwe has suffered decades of marginalisation, resulting in a

declining number of fluent speakers, particularly among younger generations. The dominance of Shona and English in education, media, and government institutions has contributed to the endangerment of ChiBarwe from being a viable language of communication in all spheres of their lives (Chirimaunga, 2013). It is disheartening that over four decades after gaining political independence, ChiBarwe speakers are being ‘forced’ to learn Shona as their first language in schools, and it is the only examinable indigenous language by the Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council (ZIMSEC) in Mashonaland, including Barweland. Jonhera and Nyoni (2023) support this assertion when they say this ‘Shonalisation’ wave, particularly in schools and media, has contributed to the perpetuated marginalisation of ChiBarwe and glorifies the existence of Shona, one of the national languages in Zimbabwe. Given these dynamics, ChiBarwe faces the real threat of extinction if immediate intervention through documentation and standardisation is not undertaken. Therefore, a writing system then plays a crucial role in the survival of ChiBarwe as it facilitates literacy, cultural transmission, and intergenerational learning.

In the 21st Century, language resuscitation is a global movement aimed at restoring the use of endangered languages through documentation, education, and community mobilisation (Seifart, 2006). Developing a ChiBarwe orthography aligns with this movement by providing the foundational tools needed for teaching and learning the language. Once written, ChiBarwe can be introduced into schools, religious spaces, community literature, and media platforms. This can stimulate new language domains and encourage pride among ChiBarwe speakers. The success of such revitalisation efforts is contingent upon a user-friendly, culturally relevant, and linguistically accurate writing system developed in collaboration with the speech community. These efforts are complemented by Mutasa (2006) when he points out that the rights of the people to their language are critical, regardless of whether they are numerically small or large, since language is identity. Similarly, Magwa and Mutasa (2007) allude to the fact that many marginalised African languages are under siege from both the imported European languages and the majority of indigenous African languages.

Another compelling reason for developing a ChiBarwe writing system lies in the recognition of linguistic rights. Language is a core component of identity, and the ability to read and write in one’s mother tongue is a fundamental human right (Dziva & Dube, 2014). Article

2 of the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights (1996) asserts that all language communities have the right to codify, standardise, and use their language in public and private life (De Varennes, 2021). The lack of a ChiBarwe writing system limits access to this right and perpetuates systemic inequalities. By contrast, providing the ChiBarwe-speaking population with a standard orthography enables them to participate more fully in social, educational, and political processes. It affirms their identity and ensures their voices are represented in Zimbabwe's multicultural fabric. The rationale is further strengthened by the ongoing United Nations International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022–2032), which aims to draw global attention to the critical status of many of the world's minority languages (U.N. Secretariat, 2022). This initiative emphasises the documentation, preservation, and revitalisation of endangered languages as a means of safeguarding linguistic diversity and cultural heritage (Hutson, Ellsworth & Ellsworth, 2024). In this context, ChiBarwe becomes a test case for Zimbabwe's commitment to the UN's call for action. Zimbabwe can showcase its role in promoting sustainable multilingualism and inclusive national development, in line with international frameworks, by investing in the development of a ChiBarwe writing system.

From a policy perspective, the 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe explicitly lists ChiBarwe as one of the sixteen Zimbabwe's Officially Recognised Languages (ZORLs). This official recognition, on paper, must be followed by meaningful implementation in which orthography development is foundational. Some of the other officially recognised indigenous languages, particularly Shona and Ndebele, already possess well-established writing systems and are used widely in education, media, and administration (Jonhera & Nyoni, 2023). Conversely, ChiBarwe remains underdeveloped in these domains due to the absence of an official orthography. Developing a standardised ChiBarwe writing system helps to close this gap and ensure that the constitutional promise of linguistic equality is realised. Moreover, Mudenda (2021) notes that the desire to uplift the minority language-in-education has been reflected in the Education Act Amended 2020, which made huge steps in mitigating the hegemonic influences of Shona in the country in languages that are supposed to be taught at schools. It stipulates that:

1. Every school shall endeavour to:
 - (a) Teach every officially recognised language.

- (b) Ensure that the language of instruction shall be the language of examination.
 - (c) Ensure that the mother tongue is to be used as a medium of instruction in early childhood education.
2. School curricula shall, as far as possible, reflect the culture of the people of every language used or taught in terms of this section.
 3. The use of any language in terms of subsections (1) and (2) shall be subject to:
 - (a) The availability of resources to the State for giving effect to these provisions, and
 - (b) The availability of teachers, examiners, textbooks, and other educational materials is necessary for instruction in any of the languages.

(Education Act of Zimbabwe, 2020)

This 2020 amendment of the Education Act came after widespread disgruntlement from various sections of the Zimbabwean population, speaking and non-speaking these minority languages, to the discriminatory nature of the previous language-in-education policy, and also to place it in line with the 2013 Constitution's founding provisions (Chirimaunga, 2025). Consequently, subsection (1) of the 2020 Education Act amendment is a progressive attempt to include all officially recognised languages in schools, which is a commendable move by the government in combating linguistic hegemony. Thus, although aligned with the new constitution, the Education Act amendment (2020) still falls short of the expectations of the minority languages in that it has empowered government officials to use the 'lack of resources' excuse as a legal position to deny the minority languages an opportunity to develop and be introduced fully in education (Chirimaunga, 2025). Therefore, there is a pressing need to develop a comprehensive ChiBarwe orthography to provide the foundational linguistic tools necessary for its inclusion in education and literacy programmes. Without a standardised writing system, policy intentions remain unimplementable.

Findings and Discussion

This section presents and analyses the findings of the study in line with the research objectives outlined in Section 2. Specifically, the study sought to (i) identify the fieldwork methodologies

utilised in developing a comprehensive ChiBarwe orthography, (ii) examine the challenges encountered during linguistic fieldwork and explore the strategies employed to mitigate them, and (iii) propose strategies for the implementation of the ChiBarwe orthography and the revitalisation of the language. The analysis is therefore organised thematically to ensure that each objective is adequately addressed. This approach provides clarity, coherence, and alignment between the stated goals of the research and the empirical data gathered, while also facilitating a systematic discussion of the linguistic and sociolinguistic dimensions of orthography development.

Fieldwork methodologies

The development of the ChiBarwe orthography was premised on the systematic adoption of rigorous linguistic fieldwork methodologies. In line with Seifart et al. (2018), who emphasise that orthography design must move beyond abstract theorisation to practical immersion in linguistic communities, this study adopted a combination of pre-fieldwork planning and fieldwork immersion as central methodological pillars. Before data collection began, the principal researcher's positionality as a native ChiBarwe speaker proved an asset. Kadenge (2007) argues that insider knowledge enables the researcher to detect subtle phonological contrasts and sociolinguistic details that outsiders may overlook. This positionality not only enhanced linguistic sensitivity but also facilitated rapport with participants, who often remarked during interviews that one of our own is the right person to help us write our language properly. Such insider trust was particularly important in encouraging open participation, especially in rural communities where suspicion of outsiders is common.

Pre-fieldwork preparations involved an extensive review of previous draft orthographies and related documentation for Bantu languages, alongside the design of instruments such as interview schedules, questionnaires, and elicitation wordlists. The expanded Swadesh list for Bantu languages was adapted to suit ChiBarwe phonological and lexical patterns, thereby allowing systematic collection of core vocabulary. As Chelliah and Reuse (2020) suggest, effective fieldwork requires a balance between structured elicitation and naturalistic observation, ensuring that the data collected reflect both controlled environments and authentic language use. To this effect, the study incorporated spontaneous speech recordings from

marketplaces and social gatherings, which complemented formal interviews by capturing natural communicative patterns. Participants often expressed pride in their everyday language use. Such data reinforced the need for an orthography grounded in lived language practices rather than purely theoretical abstractions.

During the fieldwork proper, multiple tools were deployed to ensure triangulation and strengthen reliability. In-depth interviews with community elders, teachers, and cultural custodians provided insights into phonological representation and orthographic preferences. For instance, elders insisted on the importance of accurately representing vowel length contrasts, which they felt were central to meaning distinctions. Questionnaires distributed to younger ChiBarwe speakers revealed patterns of literacy practices and attitudes towards previous attempts at orthography development, with many respondents highlighting difficulties in distinguishing certain digraphs, trigraphs, and quadrigraphs. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were particularly effective in stimulating debate around contentious graphemes. In one FGD, participants engaged in an animated discussion over whether “zv” and “bzv” should be represented distinctly, demonstrating the value of participatory methodologies in negotiating orthographic consensus. These varied data sources were systematically triangulated, following the argument by Denzin (2012) that the use of multiple instruments increases both validity and reliability in qualitative research.

Elicitation methods provided further systematic documentation of ChiBarwe phonology and lexicon. Participants were asked to pronounce items from the expanded Swadesh list, while the researchers recorded phonetic variations. This method was particularly useful in mapping dialectal differences between speakers from Gaerezi and Ruwangwe. Observational notes revealed subtle sociophonetic variations, such as the tendency of younger speakers to adopt Shona-influenced forms in urbanised settings, which highlighted the dynamic interplay between ChiBarwe and dominant languages. As Obiero (2010) observes in his work on minority language documentation, capturing such variation is critical in preventing orthographies from fossilising one variety at the expense of others. Moreover, oral literature, including folktales and songs, was documented to capture prosodic patterns and culturally embedded metaphors. A participant in Nyamagoromondo narrated the folktale of “*Suro naMutiro*” ‘Hare and Baboon’,

and the recording of the performance illustrated how intonation, rhythm, and formulaic expressions could inform orthographic decisions.

Taken together, the combination of pre-fieldwork preparation, immersion in Barweland, and methodological triangulation provided a robust foundation for orthography development. The participatory nature of the methodologies ensured that the emerging orthography was not merely a linguistic artefact imposed from above, but rather a reflection of community realities and preferences. Using diverse tools ranging from structured elicitation to spontaneous speech and oral literature, the study not only documented ChiBarwe's phonemic inventory and lexicon but also incorporated sociolinguistic insights that enhanced the usability and legitimacy of the orthography. In this way, the methodological approach responded directly to the objective of identifying fieldwork methodologies and demonstrated the value of integrating linguistic expertise with community-driven validation.

Challenges Encountered and Mitigation Strategies

As noted by Bower (2008), linguistic fieldwork is frequently confronted with a wide range of challenges. Similarly, the process of developing the ChiBarwe orthography presented logistical, sociolinguistic, methodological, and ethical difficulties that required adaptive strategies. One of the main challenges in the ChiBarwe orthography fieldwork was dialectal variation. Speakers along the Gaerezi River and in Ruwangwe showed subtle but consistent phonological differences, making consensus on standard forms contentious. For example, prenasalisation of consonants (e.g., *pf* vs. *mpf*, *ts* vs. *nts*, *psv* vs. *mpsv*) and the */ndw/* cluster, often realised as */-iw-/* in passive verbs, e.g., *pendiwa* for *pendwa* 'be painted', varied across regions and age groups. Opinions differed on whether distinct graphemes were needed or if a single representation sufficed, as some dialects neutralised these contrasts. Lexical preferences also varied, with certain words linked to cultural identity, making orthographic choices politically sensitive. To address this, the team used comparative analysis to identify shared phonological patterns and conducted community workshops to negotiate grapheme choices, fostering consensus, reducing tensions, and promoting shared ownership of the orthography.

This dialectal variation extended beyond phonology to lexical preferences, with certain words for everyday objects differing across regions. While some respondents regarded these

differences as trivial, others linked them to cultural identity, making orthographic compromise politically charged. Chelliah and Reuse (2020) emphasise that such dialectal diversity complicates standardisation, often requiring compromise and transparency. To mitigate this, the research team employed comparative analysis across dialects and prioritised graphemes that represented shared phonological patterns. Community workshops were then used to negotiate these choices, with one participant asserting: “*Kana tikaseenzesa bzvamunada imwepa wakuGaerezi, bzinanga bzvisiri bzvawathu kuRuwangwe.*” ‘If we only use what you from Gaerezi prefer, then it will not reflect our Ruwangwe variety. These participatory forums helped to defuse tensions and promote a sense of shared ownership.

A second challenge related to sociolinguistic identities and language politics, particularly the tension between ChiBarwe and ChiHwesa name tags. On purely linguistic grounds, the two varieties share almost identical phonemic inventories, making it difficult to draw a watertight distinction. However, participants from the Hwesa community resisted the term “ChiBarwe,” associating it with Barwe District in Mozambique and derogatory stereotypes, especially of poverty and backwardness. During FGDs, Hwesa speakers frequently emphasised their preference for “ChiHwesa” as a label of identity, even though their linguistic forms were mutually intelligible with ChiBarwe. This reflects Fishman’s (1991) observation that language is not merely a neutral medium of communication but a marker of identity and power relations. To navigate this tension, the researchers foregrounded linguistic underpinnings rather than sociopolitical labels, while still acknowledging the sensitivities of Hwesa participants. Workshops deliberately avoided framing the language choice in exclusionary terms, focusing instead on “shared patterns” of sounds and spelling. While this did not fully resolve the socio-political disputes, it enabled progress towards orthographic consensus by shifting attention from contested identities to practical linguistic representation.

Another challenge was low literacy levels in rural communities, which complicated the processes of data elicitation and consent. Many participants in the Munzara and Chabundo areas had limited familiarity with formal research protocols, and written consent forms were often misunderstood. As UNESCO (2021) stresses, informed consent in low-literacy contexts must be culturally adapted to ensure genuine participation. In this study, verbal consent was sought, with elders co-signing decisions to legitimise participation. Similarly, elicitation tasks such as

wordlists or dictation exercises had to be simplified to match participants' literacy levels. One teacher in Kazozo remarked during piloting that "*wenango wanapusa kuyerenga asi waribe kujaira kunyorha kwamutauro wathuyu*" 'some of our people can read, but they are not used to writing this language'. To address this, the researchers used oral literature, songs, and folktales to capture data in contexts where literacy was not a barrier, a strategy consistent with Grenoble and Whaley's (2006) call to adapt methods to community realities.

Logistical constraints also presented significant hurdles. Fieldwork was conducted in geographically remote areas with poor infrastructure, making travel and communication difficult. Many ChiBarwe-speaking communities are located in remote areas such as Fombe, Chapatarongo, and Kadzere, where infrastructure is underdeveloped. Accessing these sites often involved navigating poor road networks, unreliable transport, and long travel times, especially during the rainy season. As Brickell (2018) highlights, remoteness necessitates careful planning and extended stays to optimise data collection. In our experience, partnering with local leaders and language coordinators proved crucial. Motorbikes and extended village stays allowed deeper engagement with speakers, consistent with Thieberger and Berez (2017), who advocate immersive approaches in under-documented languages.

Language shift, particularly among youth in areas, such as Ruwangwe, presented a significant sociolinguistic challenge. The increasing dominance of Shona and English in schools, media, and everyday communication has created noticeable intergenerational gaps, with younger speakers often exhibiting limited proficiency in ChiBarwe. This trend not only complicates linguistic documentation but also threatens the long-term vitality of the language (Hinton et al., 2018). Many youths struggled to recall certain words, idiomatic expressions, or subtle phonological distinctions, which are crucial for developing a robust orthography. To mitigate this, younger participants were deliberately paired with fluent elders during elicitation sessions. This pairing served a dual purpose: it ensured linguistic accuracy and facilitated the transmission of cultural knowledge embedded in language use. One youth participant remarked, "*Ndiri kufunda mazwi matsva kubva kuna sekuru, uye zvinoita kuti ndide mutauro wedu.*" 'I am learning new words from my grandfather, and it makes me love our language.' Elders, in turn, expressed satisfaction that younger generations were actively engaging with their heritage. This intergenerational model echoes the findings of Bavin and Osborn (2020), who highlight

that such collaborative approaches not only enhance data collection but also foster language revitalisation and strengthen community identity.

A final but equally significant challenge was the negotiation of authority between academic experts and community stakeholders. Linguists involved in validation workshops often pushed for phonemic precision, while community members prioritised usability and simplicity. This tension reflects Sebba's (2007) observation that orthography design is not purely a linguistic exercise but a sociopolitical negotiation where competing interests must be balanced. In one validation session, an elder insisted: "*Tinada kunyora bzvidadonhae, kuti wana wathu wareke kugunda kuyerega*" 'We want simple writing so that our children will not struggle to read', directly challenging the linguists' preference for graphemic distinctions. To reconcile these divergent positions, the team adopted a participatory approach that gave equal weight to technical accuracy and community usability. This echoes the Language Standardisation Model (Ayres-Bennett, 2020), which emphasises iterative dialogue between experts and speakers as a pathway to durable acceptance of orthographies.

Overall, the challenges encountered during ChiBarwe orthography development emphasise the complexity of linguistic fieldwork in multilingual and politically charged contexts. However, by employing strategies such as comparative analysis, participatory validation workshops, culturally sensitive consent procedures, and creative logistical adaptations, the research team was able to mitigate these barriers. Crucially, the use of methodological triangulation ensured that findings were not undermined by any single limitation, while continuous dialogue with stakeholders reinforced the legitimacy of the process. This reflects the argument by Seifart et al. (2018) that orthography development is as much about navigating social realities as it is about linguistic description.

Strategies for Implementation and Revitalisation of the ChiBarwe Orthography

The successful development of an orthography is only the first step toward language revitalisation. For ChiBarwe, the long-term viability of the orthography depends on effective implementation across educational, cultural, and digital platforms. As Bamgbose (1991) argues, orthographies achieve legitimacy when they are widely taught, published, and used in official

and informal domains. In the case of ChiBarwe, participants consistently emphasised the importance of integrating the orthography into schools, particularly in areas such as Kadzere and Ruwangwe, where the language is widely spoken. Teachers suggested that primers, readers, and supplementary materials be developed for early childhood education. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) was identified as a critical stakeholder for embedding ChiBarwe literacy in the curriculum, aligning with Zimbabwe's Education Act (2020), which supports the teaching of minority languages.

Beyond education, revitalisation requires active community engagement to ensure intergenerational transmission of the language. Grenoble and Whaley (2006) stress that community buy-in is the most decisive factor in language survival. In this study, respondents highlighted the importance of using ChiBarwe in cultural domains such as folktales, songs, and traditional ceremonies. Elders advocated for the documentation of oral literature in the newly standardised orthography to safeguard cultural heritage while simultaneously promoting literacy. The Ministry of Sports, Arts and Recreation, as well as the Department of Curriculum Development and Technical Services (CDTS), were therefore identified as key partners in bridging literacy and culture by funding and supporting projects that embed the orthography into everyday cultural practices.

Digitalisation also emerged as an important strategy for ChiBarwe's revitalisation. Youth participants noted that for a language to thrive, it must adapt to new digital spaces such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and TikTok. This aligns with recent scholarship by Makhachashvili, Kovpik, and Bakhtina (2024), who argue that digital media provides unprecedented opportunities for minority languages to expand their presence and vitality. The inclusion of ChiBarwe keyboards, predictive text systems, and digital storybooks in e-learning platforms was recommended by both teachers and young participants. These insights point towards the role of digital humanities initiatives in ensuring that ChiBarwe literacy is not confined to classrooms but becomes part of everyday communication among younger generations.

Another strategy lies in institutional support and policy alignment. Obiero (2010) stresses that without state recognition and resourcing, minority language orthographies often remain symbolic rather than functional. The ChiBarwe orthography project benefited from recognition in the Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013), which listed ChiBarwe as one of the

officially recognised languages. However, sustained implementation requires coordinated action across ministries. In addition to MoPSE and the Ministry of Sports, Arts and Recreation, the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development (MHTEISTD) must take a leading role in producing ChiBarwe teaching materials, training teachers, and funding university-based research into the language. The endorsement and involvement of these ministries would strengthen the legitimacy of the orthography and ensure continuity across primary, secondary, and tertiary education systems.

Crucially, pilot testing in schools and communities provided evidence of the orthography's usability and long-term viability. Through literacy sessions involving alphabet charts, folktales, and dictation tasks, participants highlighted graphemes that were intuitive and those that required refinement. As Frawley (2003) argues, pilot testing bridges theory and practice, revealing how abstract orthographic decisions function in real literacy contexts. The iterative process of revising and re-validating the orthography after pilot testing ensured that the final version was linguistically accurate, pedagogically sound, and socially acceptable. Importantly, this process generated enthusiasm within the community, with teachers reporting heightened interest in developing ChiBarwe reading clubs and adult literacy programmes. Such excitement highlights the broader revitalisation potential of the orthography, since motivation is a key driver of language use in both formal and informal settings.

Finally, revitalisation strategies must consider the sociopolitical dynamics of identity. As noted in section 7.2, tensions between ChiBarwe and ChiHwesa identities complicated acceptance of the orthography. While the Constitution recognises ChiBarwe, Hwesa speakers continue to resist the label due to its association with Mozambique. To address this, the researchers emphasised inclusivity by framing the orthography as a shared linguistic resource rather than a tool of exclusion. This strategy resonates with Hornberger and King's (1998) idea of "continua of biliteracy," which highlights the need for flexibility in standardisation to accommodate diverse identities. The project fostered a sense of shared ownership, even among groups resistant to the ChiBarwe label, by engaging Hwesa communities in validation and pilot testing. Taken together, these strategies highlight that orthography development is not an end in itself but a foundation for language revitalisation. The project seeks to ensure both functional literacy and intergenerational transmission by embedding ChiBarwe in schools, cultural

practices, digital platforms, and policy frameworks. The combination of community participation, institutional support, and interactive validation underlines the argument of Seifart et al. (2018) that sustainable orthographies must be co-created by both experts and speakers, rooted in local realities while projecting into future domains of use.

Conclusion

This study examined the development of a standard ChiBarwe orthography through linguistic fieldwork guided by the Language Standardisation Model (Ayres-Bennett, 2020). Objective one showed that immersion in the Barweland, supported by interviews, questionnaires, FGDs, and elicitation, provided reliable linguistic data, with methodological triangulation and the insider positionality of the researcher strengthening validity. Objective two revealed that dialectal variation and tensions between ChiBarwe and ChiHwesa identities complicated orthographic choices, yet validation workshops and community dialogue enabled compromise in line with best practices (Chelliah & Reuse, 2020). Objective three demonstrated that sustainable implementation requires integration into schools, cultural practices, and digital platforms, with pilot testing confirming usability and acceptance. Institutional support from MoPSE, the Ministry of Sports, Arts and Recreation, and the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development was critical in legitimising the process. Overall, the study affirms that orthography development is both a linguistic and sociocultural process, and its success depends on balancing technical accuracy with community ownership.

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PERCEPTION OF NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AGAINST MALE AMONG MARRIED MEN IN ILORIN, KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Globally, gender-based violence is a social menace that has broken many marriages. Meanwhile, the mass media, especially newspapers, are change agents championing the eradication of this problem. Newspapers play a key role in raising awareness about the dangers of this social issue. Scholars have studied newspapers and gender-based violence mainly from the female perspective, while the male perspective is more or less ignored. Therefore, this study examines how newspapers cover gender-based violence against married men in Ilorin, Kwara State. Individual differences theory serves as the theoretical framework for the study. A survey research method was used to gather data from 311 married men selected from Ilorin South Local Government Area of Kwara State. The data were analysed with the help of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. Frequency tables and simple percentages were used to present the results. The findings show that married men in Ilorin, Kwara State, perceive newspaper reports on gender-based violence against men as inaccurate, biased, and sentimental, concluding that Nigerian newspapers do not provide detailed reports of these incidents compared to those involving women. The study concludes that this coverage has led married men

concludes that this coverage has led married men to avoid confrontational disputes in marriage. It also recommends that newspaper organisations should give more attention to gender-based violence against men to educate the public about the dangers involved in this issue.

Keywords: *Gender-based violence, married men, newspaper coverage, violence against male*

Introduction

In Nigeria, like most African societies, domestic violence is gendered and culturally patterned (Bature, 2020) as female majorly do experience gender-based violence caused by men (World Bank, 2019). For instance, there are a series of reports of sexual assault and other forms of violence against women in Nigerian society, such as the proliferation of baby production factories, husbands or wives murdering the other, among others (Eteng et al., 2021). Also, a review on violence against women by the WHO (2013) shows that women are mostly sexually assaulted by non-partners and partners.

However, men and boys can also be victims of Gender-Based Violence (Sikamikami et al., 2023). This violence is mostly committed by their intimate partner (Mbandiwa, 2020). In many developed countries and some developing countries, such as the USA, China, and Nigeria, inclusive, males have reported incidences of assault such as pushing, shoving, slapping, grabbing, and hitting (Nabukeera, 2020). For instance, the Lagos State Government states that 1,108 men reported domestic violence in six years (*The Nation Newspaper*, June 2, 2023). Also, the *Nigerian Tribune* indicates that 25% of men suffer violence in Nigeria (*Nigerian Tribune*, May 8, 2022). These types of assaults can lead to physical injuries and long-term health problems, as well as emotional and psychological trauma. This implies that violence against men is real. However, there is a low level of data on abuse of men (*The Punch*, December 11, 2022). This may be based on societal expectations and stereotypes that men should be able to protect themselves, or they may be ashamed to admit they are victims. The report in *The Punch* adds that out of the 110 cases of sexual gender-based violence in 2022, only four are males (*The Punch*, December 11, 2022). Similarly, in 2024, 17,415 gender

violence cases were reported (*The Punch*, 7th February 2025), in which the majority were female. Thus, GBV against males is underreported in Nigeria.

Meanwhile, previous research on gender violence has shown that media coverage of gender violence can have a significant impact on public attitudes towards the issue (Sulaiman et al., 2021). This is because the media, especially the newspapers, can shape perceptions of the prevalence and severity of gender violence, influence beliefs about the causes and consequences, and shape attitudes towards the victims and perpetrators of the societal problem (Ogwuche & Shamo, 2019). This is based on the assumption that the mass media, especially the newspapers, are powerful media that can influence public opinion on issues (Wonuola et al., 2023). However, literature is well-grounded on Gender-Based Violence against females and mass media; there is little or no empirical study on Gender-Based Violence against males and mass media. For instance, Ojemeru et al. (2022) examine gender-based violence in Nigeria under the dimension of "uMedia Dimension". The findings of the study reveal that male right to discipline or control females contributes to the violence against female. Similarly, Okafor et al., (2023) investigate "knowledge and attitude toward media campaigns against Gender-Based Violence among Nigerian women in southwest, Nigeria" and discover that social economic facets such as academic achievements, religion, cultural factors, among others affect people's attitude towards the menace.

It is, therefore, evident that studies have examined gender-based violence against women in Nigeria; there is little or no exploration of the phenomenon from the male angle, even though males have also been the victims of GBV. For instance, a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), the *Purple Lifeline Connection*, discloses that over 25 per cent of men suffer abuse at the hands of their partners in Nigeria (*Nigerian Tribune*, May 8, 2022). More so, the Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency, Lagos State, reveals that 1,108 men report domestic violence in six years (*The Punch*, 8th August 2023). Based on the foregoing, there is a need to fill the existing gap by exploring the mass media and GBV against males. This study, therefore, examines the perception of newspapers' coverage of Gender-Based Violence against men among married men in Ilorin, Kwara State.

The study is guided by the following objectives: to determine the extent to which married men in Ilorin are exposed to Gender-Based Violence reports against male in the

Nigerian newspapers, to examine the perception of married men in Ilorin to Gender-Based Violence reports against male in the Nigerian newspapers; and to establish the perceived consequences of newspapers coverage of Gender-Based Violence on marital conflict among married men in Ilorin.

Conceptual Framework

Gender-Based Violence and Newspapers

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) violates human rights as stated in the 1999 Constitution as amended. For instance, Chapter four, Section 34(1) of the 1999 Constitution entrenched human rights as fundamental in Nigeria. The subsection categorically stated that ‘no person shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999).

More so, chapter two, section 17 (1a-d) of the constitution adds that the Nigerian State’s social order is founded on the ideals of freedom, equality and justice, and that discrimination on the grounds of sex, religion, and ethnicity, among others, is prohibited. To curb this menace, Nigeria as a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Charter of African Human Rights; both of which aim to protect individuals against violence and other actions that interfere with fundamental freedom and human dignity (Africa’s freedom struggles and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, December, 2018) have put up several measures in line with the tenets of the Nigerian constitutional provisions on human rights. Specifically, attention is focused on Gender-Based Violence among women with less concentration on violence against men. For instance, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (November 25, 2023), in collaboration with the Nigerian governments at all levels, marks the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women in Nigeria on 25th November 2023. In addition, the World Health Organisation (WHO), in partnership with the Nigerian government, on 14th November, 2020, created awareness on GBV against women to curb the incessant occurrence of GBV against women in Nigeria (WHO, 14 September 2020). This indicates that the general assumption is that GBV affects only females. The assumption may be due to the unwillingness of male victims to speak out, and this may be responsible for less reporting of male victims in the Nigerian mass media, especially the newspapers.

Globally, gender-based violence against males has become a serious issue. For instance, the United Nations (2020) finds that women often threaten their male victims. The victimisation of men by their female partners is a serious social problem, and it is largely ignored by society. This societal ignorance of male victims may be due to the inability of male victims to admit being victims of intimate partner violence (*The Punch*, June 1, 2022). Incidence of home-based violence against men is high, though it is under-reported, and this, consequently, is responsible for very little information about the menace (Machado et al., 2020). Hence, many cases remain unreported. Domestic violence against men is a term describing violence that is committed against men by their intimate partner (Kolbe & Büttner, 2020). Machado et al. (2020), therefore, suggest that a focus on gendered risk of violence in public health policy should target male-to-male public violence and male-to-female intimate partner abuse, with no mention of female-to-male abuse. With the rise of the men's movement, and particularly men's rights, there are some advocacy campaigns for men as victims. For instance, the Lagos State government, through its Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency, unveils 'The hidden crime, Violence against men' initiative in Ikeja on 5th June, 2023, as a measure to encourage men that experienced domestic violence to speak up (*The Punch*, 4th June, 2023). Thus, more attention is globally focused on gender-based violence against women, with little or no exploration of the phenomenon from a male angle.

Previous Studies on Media and GBV

Several scholars have examined gender-based violence with a focus on females. For instance, Okafor et al. (2023) examine "knowledge and attitude toward media campaigns against gender-based violence among Nigerian women in Southeast, Nigeria." The study discovers that socioeconomic factors such as academic achievements, religion, cultural factors, among others, affect people's attitudes towards Gender-based violence. The study recommends that a clear understanding of the relationship between dominant cultures and the suppression of women should inform future campaigns on GBV. Similarly, Miller and Demirbilek (2023) investigate "the role of social media in the fight against gender violence." The findings reveal that social media campaigns play a crucial role in the fight against gender violence against women, as it

provides a space for survivors, activists and advocates to connect and discuss the way forward. The study recommends future studies to examine other methods for fighting gender violence.

In addition, Governor and Clever (2023) investigate “newspaper coverage of gender violence in Nigeria with specific attention to *Daily Trust* and the *Daily Sun*” within the duration of 24 months. The findings reveal that the *Daily Trust* and *The Daily Sun*, and the Nigerian newspapers in general, have contributed to the fight against persons based on their gender. The study, therefore, recommends that the Nigerian newspapers should improve their coverage of gender violence with a view to promoting a gender violence-free society. Finally, Christian et al. (2023) examine “empowering women facing gender-based violence amid COVID-19 through media campaign.” The study discovers that the media campaign affects women’s attitudes towards gender on marital equality or on the justifiability of violence. The study recommends that media campaigns should focus on increasing women’s knowledge, hypothetical use and reported use of available resources.

Based on the review of the previous study on GBV, there is a dearth of studies on GBV against males, as the previous studies focus on GBV against females.

Mass Media, Gender-based Violence and Male Victims

Gender-based violence (GBV) is not only against women but also against men (Walker et al., 2020). It can be referred to as a violation of human rights (International Rescue Committee, August 22, 2023). International Rescue Committee (August 22, 2023) adds that GBV can manifest in various ways which include physical violence; assault or slavery, emotional or psychological violence; verbal abuse or confinement; sexual abuse, including rape; harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation; socio-economic violence, which includes denial of resources; and sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse. Gender-based violence is multi-dimensional as it affects both males and females.

However, male victims of domestic violence are like orphans, since society, caregivers, law enforcers, and the judicial services pay less attention to them (United Nations, 2020). Males have been falsely framed as perpetrators of domestic violence (Gongazalez et al., 2023). Though one cannot compare the figures of domestic violence between men and women, since it is clear from the World Health Organisation, the International Rescue Commission, and other

documents that women are the main victims of domestic violence, the treatment given to male victims is different (Shuler et al., 2013; *The Punch*, 14th November, 2023). This submission may be based on the conclusions of Mbandiwa (2020) and John and Jonathan (2023) that the large number of male victims of domestic violence hardly report to the authorities and professionals about their abuse due to some individual and social reasons. Hope et al. (2021) support this submission by adding that the inability of men to report their abuse is based on their belief that nothing or little action would be taken against the perpetrators. Hence, there is a stereotype in GBV. This may be responsible for the low coverage of GBV against males in the mass media, especially the newspapers.

Newspapers as change agents in a society are endowed with the ability to correct societal menace by setting the agenda on issues that require attention from the public and government. Newspapers can achieve this by reporting incidents of gender violence committed by men and women and also raising awareness about the issue and its impact on victims and society. However, newspapers need to report this issue responsibly, using sensitive language and avoiding victim-blaming or perpetuating stereotypes (Ekweonu, 2020). Additionally, newspapers can also cover efforts to prevent and address GBV, such as educational campaigns and support services for victims. Hence, the Nigerian newspapers should also set an agenda on male victims of GBV.

Theoretical Framework

The study is underpinned by the Individual differences theory. Individual differences theory is propounded by Cattell-Horn-Carroll in 1980 (Baran & Davis, 2014). The theory proposes that individuals respond differently to the mass media messages according to their psychological needs, and that individuals consume the mass media messages to satisfy those needs (Jane et al., 2018). This implies that individuals' values, needs, beliefs, and attitudes play a major role in their manner of reaction to the media messages. Hence, different people will react differently to the same information or message. That is, individuals' reaction to media messages or content will differ based on their motivation, prior beliefs, values, bias, intelligence level, socioeconomic class, geographical region, age, sex, among others (Jane et al., 2018). Thus, married men in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria, perceive the newspaper coverage of domestic

violence against men differently. The theory is, therefore, relevant to this study as it implies that married men will respond differently to the media content on Gender-Based Violence against men.

Methods and Materials

The study adopts a descriptive design, with the survey research method used to gather data for the study.

Population of the Study

The population comprises the married men in Ilorin South local government area in Ilorin metropolis. According to the Independent National Electoral Commission 2023 report, the total registered male voters in Ilorin South are 163,701. Hence, the population for the study is 163,701.

Sample Size

The sample size for the study is 320. A multi-stage sampling procedure is used to determine the sample size. At the first stage of sampling, the wards in Ilorin South are retrieved from the local government headquarters. They are : *Agbeyangi/Gbadamu/Osin, Gambari I, Balogun Gambari, Ibagun, Apado, Iponrin, Magaji Are I, Magaji Are II, Marafa/Pepele, Maya/Ile-Apa, Oke Oyi/Oke Ose/Alalubbose and Zango*. Simple random sampling is also used to select four wards: *Gambari I, Balogun Gambari, Magaji Are Zango, and I*.

At the second stage of sampling. A purposive sampling technique is used to select married men who access newspapers for information on gender-violence against males. The choice of the purposive sampling technique is predicated on the nature of the study. Since the study requires information from married men who have access to Gender-Based Violence against males through newspapers, the purposive sampling technique seems to be appropriate. The table below presents the respondents from the selected wards.

Table 1: Respondents' sample size

Listed Wards	Number of respondents
<i>Gambari I</i>	114
<i>Balogun Gambari</i>	65
<i>Magaji Are I</i>	99
<i>Zango</i>	42
Total	320

Hence, the sample size for the study is 320.

Research Instrument

A questionnaire is used to gather data from the respondents. The questionnaire contains two sections: Section A and Section B. Section A is based on questions that aim to achieve the objectives of the study, while Section B focuses on demographic variables. The questionnaire contains seventeen (17) closed-ended questions designed to elicit information about the respondents' demographics, exposure, perception and perceived consequences of newspaper reports of Gender-Based Violence on marital conflict.

Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument

The study employs content validity and a pre-test method to ascertain the validity of the instrument. Content validity is achieved by subjecting copies of the instrument to vetting by two senior lecturers selected from the Department of Mass Communication and Centre for Peace Studies, Al-Hikmah University. Their suggestions were incorporated. Thereafter, the pre-test method is adopted by distributing 30 copies of the instrument to 30 randomly selected married men in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State. The copies were collected and analysed. The findings reveal that the instrument is valid as the variables therein measured what they are aimed to measure.

To ensure the reliability of the instrument, the test-retest reliability technique is used, in which the same copies of the questionnaire were re-administered to the same set of people after two weeks of initial administration. The copies were collected and analysed. The findings reveal that the instrument is reliable, as the findings correlate with the initial findings.

Method of Data Analysis

Data are gathered with the aid of two well-trained research assistants. Data gathered are analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Simple percentages, tables, and frequency counts are used to present the findings and discussion, followed immediately. Out of the 320 questionnaires, only 311 copies were retrieved. Hence, 311 copies of the questionnaire are analysed.

Findings

Research Objectives Explication

The data gathered through the administration of questionnaires are analysed to proffer answers to the research objectives. The study measures the extent, perception and perceived consequences of newspaper reports of Gender-Based Violence against males on marital conflict.

Extent of exposure to gender violence report against males in the Nigerian newspapers:

The respondents' level of exposure is measured by four (4) closed-ended questions. The questions focus on the respondents' level of exposure and means of exposure.

Perception of married men to gender based violence reports against males in the Nigerian newspapers:

The respondents' perception is measured by seven close-ended questions. The questions focus on awareness, victims, adequate reportage of the conflict, as well as attitude and the level of influence that the message has on them.

Perceived consequences of newspaper coverage of gender-based violence on marital conflict:

The perceived consequences of the reportage are measured by six close-ended questions. The study assesses the consequences, such as knowledge of handling marital conflict, ability to prevent marital conflict from degenerating into violence, and seeking marital counselling.

4.2 Research Findings

Table 1: Demographic Variables of the respondents

Respondents' Demographic Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
18-24	8	3
25-31	117	37
32-38	128	41
39-45	44	14
46 and above	14	5
Total	311	100
Religion		
Islam	288	93
Christianity	23	7
Traditional	0	0
Total	311	100
Occupation		
Civil servant	92	30
Self-employed	173	56
Private sector employee	27	9
Student	0	0
Unemployed	19	6
Total	311	100

Table 1 shows the demographic variables of the respondents. It is discovered that 8(3%) of the respondents are within the age of 18-24, 117(37%) are within the age of 25-31, 128(41%) are within the age of 32-38, 44(14%) are within the age of 39-45 while 14(5%) respondents are between 46 and above of age. The table also shows the religion of the respondents, and it is discovered that 288(93%) of the respondents practise Islam, 23(7%) of the respondents practise Christianity, while nobody practises traditional religion. More so, occupation of the respondents shows that 92(30%) are civil Servants, 173(56%) are self-employed, 27(9%) work in a private firm while 19(6%) are unemployed.

It can, therefore, be deduced from Table 1 that married men in Ilorin are above the age of 24, are self-employed, and practise the Islamic religion.

RQ1: What is the extent to which married men in Ilorin are exposed to gender violence reports against married men in the selected newspapers?

Table 2: Extent of Exposure to gender violence reports against married men

Item	Frequency	Percentage
How often do you read the newspaper?		
Every day	184	59
Seldom	74	24
Every week	31	10
Monthly	18	6
Occasionally	4	1
Total	311	100
Do you access content on gender violence against married men?		
Yes	311	100
No	00	00
Total	311	100
What are the sources of accessing newspaper reports on gender-based violence against males?		
Radio Newspapers' Reviews	131	42
Newspapers	8	3
Social media (E-newspapers)	172	55
Others		
Total	311	100

How often do you get exposed to gender violence reports against married men in the newspaper?

Every day	143	46
Sometimes	97	31
Every week	35	11
Monthly	7	2
Occasionally	29	9
Total	311	100

Findings from Table 2 display the extent to which married men in Ilorin are exposed to gender violence reported against married men in the Nigerian newspapers. It is gathered that 184(59%) of the respondents read newspapers every day. 74(24%) read newspapers seldom, 31(10%) read newspapers every week, 18(6%) read newspapers monthly while 4(1%) read newspaper occasionally. From these findings, it is deduced that the majority of the married men in Ilorin read newspapers. Also, another result shows that 293(94%) of the respondents read newspaper content on gender violence against married men, while 18(6%) do not read newspaper content that relates to gender violence against married men. The findings also indicate that 131(42%) of the respondents access gender-based violence reports through radio programme newspapers reviews, 8(3%) access the reports through hard copy, while 172 (55%) access the reports through e-newspapers. Hence, most of the respondents access the reportage through e-newspapers. More so, 143(46%) of the respondents affirm that they read about gender violence reports against married men in newspapers every day, 93(31%) sometimes read gender violence report against married men stories in newspapers, 35(11%) read gender violence reports against married men in newspapers every week, 7(2%) read gender violence reports against married men in newspapers monthly while 29(9%) occasionally read gender violence report against married men in newspapers.

It can, therefore, be deduced from Table 2 that the majority of the respondents are highly exposed to gender violence reports against married men in the Nigerian newspapers, as 293(94%) of the respondents read newspaper content on gender violence against married men.

RQ2: What is the perception of married men in Ilorin of gender violence reports against married men in the selected newspapers?

Table 3: Perception of married men in Ilorin of gender violence reports against married men in the selected newspapers

Perception of married men	Frequency and Percentage				Total percentage
	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Newspaper covers news on gender violence against married men	13(4%)	27(9%)	154(50%)	117(38%)	311/100%
Most times, women are guilty of gender abuse against married men in a newspaper report	31(10%)	48(15%)	92(30%)	140(45%)	311/100%
Most times, men are found guilty of gender violence reported against married men in a newspaper	88(28%)	105(34%)	64(21%)	54(17%)	311/100%
Newspapers always give detailed reports on gender violence against married men	146(47%)	119(38%)	25(8%)	21(7%)	311/100%
Newspaper reportage on gender violence focuses more on women	25(8%)	52(17%)	211(68%)	23(7%)	311/ 100%
Newspapers always portray men as being guilty in the conflict	40(13%)	33(11%)	173(55%)	65(21%)	311/100%
Newspapers hardly report follow-up stories on gender violence against males.	28(9%)	17(5%)	193(62%)	73(24%)	311/100%

Findings from Table 3 show the perception of married men in Ilorin of gender violence reports against married men in the Nigerian newspapers. It is gathered that 40(13%) disagreed that newspapers report news on gender violence against married men. 271(87%) agree that

newspapers report news on gender violence against married men. Thus, newspapers report news on gender violence against married men.

Moreover, 79(25%) of the respondents disagree that women are guilty of gender violence against married men in the newspaper reports, and 232 (75%) agree that most times, women are guilty of gender abuse against married men. Thus, newspapers present women as being guilty of gender abuse against married men. More so, 193(62%) of the respondents strongly disagree that men are guilty of gender violence reports against married men in newspapers, and 118 (38%) agree that most times, men are found guilty of gender violence reports against married men in newspapers. Thus, newspapers report on gender violence against male present women as being guilty of the offence. In addition, 265(85%) of the respondents disagree that newspapers always give detailed reports on gender violence against married men, and 46 (15%) agree that newspapers always give detailed reports on gender violence against married men. It can therefore be deduced from the findings that newspapers do not give detailed reports on gender violence against married men. In addition, 265 (85%) respondents disagree that the Nigerian newspapers always give detailed reports on gender violence against married men, while 46(15%) agree. Hence, the Nigerian newspaper reports of gender violence against males are inaccurate. Furthermore, 77 (25%) of the respondents disagree that Newspaper reports on gender violence focus more on women, while 234(75%) agree. This implies that there is gender disparity in the Nigerian newspaper reports on domestic violence. In addition, 73 (23%) respondents disagree that the Nigerian newspapers always portray men as being guilty in the conflict, while 238 (77%) agree. Hence, the Nigerian newspapers accord more significance to women than men in gender-based violence reports. Also, 45(14%) disagree that the Nigerian newspapers hardly report follow-up stories on gender violence against males, while 266 (76%) agree.

It can therefore be deduced from Table 3 that married men perceive newspaper reports on gender violence against males as inaccurate, biased and sentimental compared to the reports against females. This submission is based on the findings that 265 (85%) respondents disagree that the Nigerian newspapers always give detailed reports on gender violence against married men. Hence, the Nigerian newspaper reports on gender violence against males are inaccurate.

This finding is corroborated by *The Punch* (14th November 2023) that women and girls are mostly affected by gender-based violence.

RQ3: What are the perceived consequences of newspaper coverage of gender-based violence on marital conflict among married men in Ilorin?

Table 4: The perceived consequences of newspapers’ coverage of Gender-Based Violence on marital conflict among married men in Ilorin

Factors	Frequency and Percentage				Total
	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Gender violence report against married men makes me always shout at my partner whenever we have a misunderstanding	134(43%)	148(47%)	19(6%)	10(3%)	311/100
Newspaper content on gender violence against married men deters me from being confrontational to my partner.	122 (39%)	113 (36%)	45(15%)	31(10%)	311/100
Exposure to a newspaper story on gender violence against married men makes me pay attention to my partner.	42(13%)	24(8%)	108(35%)	137(44%)	311/100
Newspapers report on gender violence against males, which empowers me with the skills to manage marital conflict	66 (21%)	33 (11%)	161 (52%)	51 (16%)	311/100
Gender based violence against males through newspapers deterred me from engaging in confrontational conflict with my spouse.	23(7%)	51(16%)	213 (69%)	24(8%)	311/100 %
Newspapers report on gender-based violence to enhance the establishment of Non-Governmental Organisations that focus on male victims.	17(5%)	27(9%)	235(76%)	32 (10%)	311/100 %

Table 4 presents the perceived consequences of newspaper coverage of Gender-Based Violence on marital conflict among married men in Ilorin. 282(90%) of the respondents disagree that gender violence reports against married men make them always shout at their partners whenever they have a misunderstanding, while 29(10%) agree. In addition, 235(75%) of the respondents strongly disagree that newspaper content on gender violence against married men deters them from being confrontational to their partner, while 76(25%) agree. Additionally, 66(21%) of the respondents strongly disagree that exposure to newspapers' stories on gender violence against married men makes them pay attention to their partner, while 245(79%) agree. Moreover, 99(32%) disagree that the Nigerian newspaper reports on gender violence against males, empower them with skills to manage marital conflict, while 212 (68%) agree. More so, 74(24%) of the respondents disagree that gender violence against males through newspapers debarred them from engaging in confrontational conflict with their spouse, while 237(76%) agree. Also, 44 (14%) of the respondents disagree that the Nigerian newspaper reports on gender violence enhanced the establishment of Non-Governmental Organisations that focus on male victims, while 267(86%) agree. It can be deduced from Table 4 that the Nigerian newspaper reports on gender violence against males have contributed to the reduction of domestic violence among married men in Ilorin, as they perceive the reportage to be partly responsible for why married men refrain from confrontational arguments in their matrimony. This is supported by the submission of the majority of the respondents, 212 (68%), that the coverage of male victims in GBV has empowered them with skills to manage marital conflict.

Discussion of the Findings

This study aims to unveil the perception of newspaper coverage of gender violence against males among married men in Ilorin, Kwara State. Findings of the study revealed that: (i) majority of the respondents are highly exposed to gender violence reports against male, (ii) married men perceive newspapers reports on gender violence against male as inaccurate as the Nigerian newspapers do not give detailed reports on the incidents; and (iii) the perceived consequences of newspapers reports on gender violence against male among married men in Ilorin is that the reportage is partly responsible for why married men refrain from confrontational argument in their matrimony.

Married men are highly exposed to gender violence reported against males in the Nigerian newspapers. The finding corroborates with Governor and Clever (2022), who submitted that newspapers have been effective in raising awareness on Gender-Based Violence. Also, the findings relate to Ekweonu (2020), whose study discovers that mass media are interested in the public health-related issues that domestic violence can cause in society. The finding is also in consonance with Agudosy and Ikegbunam (2020)'s perspective on the Agenda-setting theory that through effective and repeated reporting of an issue in the focal points of the news media, people will get to know about the activity and possibly act in line with the media directives on such development. This theory makes the mass media a critical opinion controller and director of public views and discourse on prevailing issues around the world. Hence, newspapers are critical in keeping people abreast of the happenings in a society.

In addition, married men perceive newspaper reports on gender violence against males as inaccurate, as newspapers do not give detailed reports of the incidents. The finding is in relation to the tenets of Individual differences theory, as viewed by Perrin et al. (2019); Baran and Davis (2014), that individuals have a way of viewing a particular message on media based on their predispositions. The perceived inaccuracy of the reports may be predisposed by the submissions of Hope et al. (2021) that men are disinclined to report their abuse as they believe no or little action would be taken against the perpetrators.

The perceived consequence of newspaper reports on gender violence against males among married men in Ilorin is that the reportage is partly responsible for why married men refrain from confrontational arguments in their matrimonial homes. The finding corroborates with Menon et al. (2020) that newspapers have a crucial role to play in combating Gender-Based Violence as they can raise awareness on the issue, challenge cultural norms and attitudes, hold perpetrators accountable and influence policy. This may therefore imply that the Nigerian newspaper coverage of Gender-Based Violence against males has contributed significantly to the eradication of marital conflict in Nigerian society.

5. Conclusion

The study investigates the perception of newspaper coverage of Gender-Based Violence against males among married men in Ilorin South, Kwara State, Nigeria. Findings from the study establish that the Nigerian newspapers contribute to shaping married men's understanding of GBV against men as they create awareness about the menace in the Nigerian society. In addition, married men in Ilorin, Kwara State, perceive the newspaper reports on gender violence against males as inadequate, as the Nigerian newspapers do not give detailed reports of the incidents. However, the coverage has prompted married men to refrain from any matrimonial argument that is confrontational in nature.

Hence, the study has contributed to the existing knowledge by reaffirming the submission of the individual differences theory that people have different ways of interpreting a phenomenon. The findings of the study also inform the Nigerian policy makers on the need to empower the Nigerian law enforcement agencies to pay utmost attention to Gender-Based Violence reports against males. In addition, the study informs the Nigerian Government at all levels, especially at the grassroots levels, to collaborate with Non-Governmental Organisations and other stakeholders in peace and national development, such as community leaders and mass media organisations, to create a robust awareness on Gender-Based Violence against males.

The Nigerian newspaper coverage of Gender-Based Violence against males is, therefore, critical in strengthening marital bonds; promoting peaceful marital relationships, thereby enhancing individual and national development.

Arising from the conclusion of this study, the study is significant to other researchers and all stakeholders in peace and conflict studies, such as peace advocacy, facilitators, newspaper organisations, media regulatory agencies, etc. The study would enable newspaper organisations to accord significance to Gender-Based Violence against males to enlighten people about the danger inherent in the menace. The study would also enable peace advocacy together with Non-Governmental Organisations to embark on an advocacy campaign on the need to eradicate Gender-Based Violence in society, as this will strengthen individual and national development. The study is also significant to future researchers who are interested in comparative studies on the framing pattern of newspaper coverage of domestic violence against males and females.

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EXPLORING THE STATE OF CREATIVE ARTS EDUCATION IN GHANA: THE CLASSROOM TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This paper explores the state of creative arts education in Ghana by asking primary school teachers about their experiences teaching the creative arts since its implementation in 2007. The study examines the respondents' personal experiences and training, as well as their perceptions of arts education. In-depth interviews with participants reveal the significant impact their interactions with various art disciplines have on their roles as facilitators of creative arts in schools. The findings identify a variety of approaches that facilitators use for teaching and learning activities. This research not only uncovers insights into the educational value that each teacher assigns to Creative Arts as a subject but also highlights their levels of confidence and preparedness to teach these disciplines. Both generalist and specialist primary teachers participating in this study identify several issues they believe act as barriers to teaching the creative arts effectively.

Keywords: *Creative arts, arts education, music education, teaching and learning, curriculum design*

Introduction

The creative arts are widely recognised as powerful expressions of human creativity, as evidenced by numerous references in art history, theory, and educational literature (EganadelSol, 2023; Liggett, 2023). Historically, art has nurtured societal desires and aspirations while promoting civility and peace. Creative Arts Education significantly enhances the human condition, offering intrinsic and extrinsic benefits that improve quality of life. Assertions that art can uplift the spirit, foster civility, and inspire moral conduct through its profound appeal have become commonplace (Caruso, 2014). Despite this, the understanding of creativity and perceptions of the arts within African societies, particularly in Ghana, remain contentious.

Despite recent economic growth, Ghana continues to grapple with deep-seated poverty (Ochi, 2023). Consequently, generating creative ideas for societal change has been slow. Education is recognised as essential for rapid economic development (Jahantab, 2021; Litsareva, 2017), yet it must foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Over the years, Ghana's basic school curriculum has undergone significant revisions to unlock citizens' potential for national development. Among these revisions was the introduction of the Creative Arts curriculum in 2007, designed to cultivate critical, scientific, and imaginative thinking in primary school students while laying the groundwork for design and technological skills (NaCCA, 2018).

Approximately twelve years later, Ghana's basic education system is undergoing another transformation with the implementation of a new Standards-Based Curriculum. Former President Nana Akufo-Addo highlighted this shift in his third State of the Nation Address, noting that the new curriculum developed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA) focuses on strengthening the acquisition of the 4Rs (reading, writing, arithmetic, and creativity) as foundational skills for lifelong learning. This change aligns with international best practices advocating for a five-year review of the school curriculum.

Despite the positive intentions behind the Creative Arts curriculum, the teaching and learning of this subject have become areas of concern for primary school teachers in Ghana. Challenges include difficulties in interpreting the syllabus (Aboagye & Yawson, 2020), a lack of teaching resources (Aboagye & Yawson, 2020; Cobbold, 2017; Dordzro, 2020), inadequate lesson planning skills (Osei, 2006), and a lack of requisite knowledge among teachers to

effectively implement the curriculum (Adjepong, 2018; Alhassan & Abosi, 2014; Cobbold, 2017). These challenges prompted my interest in this study.

Preliminary observations revealed two significant scenarios underscoring the necessity of this research. First, colleagues teaching Creative Arts in public primary schools—many of whom are generalist teachers – often seek clarification on basic concepts in music and dance. Second, as a part-time Music and Dance tutor at a public university in Ghana, I conducted a pilot study assessing the status of Creative Arts education in schools. Alarmingly, many teachers did not engage with the performing arts aspects of the curriculum.

These scenarios highlight the challenges hindering the effective implementation of the Creative Arts curriculum in public basic schools in Ghana. Consequently, I decided to investigate the teaching and learning of Creative Arts in public primary schools within the Cape Coast metropolis. This study aims to understand the difficulties associated with the subject and provide recommendations for improvements. The paper is structured as follows: First, the literature review examines existing research on Creative Arts education, focusing on its significance and the challenges faced by educators. Next, the methodology section outlines the research design, data collection methods, and analysis techniques employed in this study. Following this, the findings will be presented, highlighting key themes and insights gathered from participants. Finally, the discussion will interpret the findings in the context of the existing literature, and the conclusion will summarise the main points and offer recommendations for improving Creative Arts education in Ghana.

A Brief Literature Review

A major concern among Creative Arts education professionals globally is whether generalist primary teachers, with little or no background in the arts, can effectively teach and attain the learning potential of Creative Arts in schools (Adjepong, 2018; Alter, Hays & O'Hara, 2009). Generalist teachers are often perceived as lacking the requisite experience and training to teach the Creative Arts effectively. Holt's (1997) study of art education in the UK found that primary education falls below satisfactory performance in over one-third of schools studied. He notes that most generalist teachers are hardworking but have a limited understanding of materials and lack knowledge about art, attributing this to their training.

The most substantial hindrance to effective teaching and learning of the Creative Arts in primary schools is a lack of confidence among teachers. This diminished confidence leads teachers to feel they are not artistic. Studies indicate that teachers' self-perceptions regarding their artistic abilities directly connect to their effectiveness as Arts educators (Welch, 1995). In a study by Housego (cited in Welch, 1995), two significant factors attributed to a teacher's self-perception were identified: teaching self-efficacy, whether individuals believe they have the skills to assist student learning, and their preparedness to teach. Russell-Bowie and Dowson's (2005) study of 936 generalist primary teachers across five countries revealed that most had very little formal background in any art forms, and that background strongly predicted confidence and enjoyment in teaching, regardless of gender.

Eisner (1997, 2002) and Holt (1997) argue that values and attitudes are fundamental to the role and purpose of Creative Arts in education. Eisner (1997) asserts that we expect generalist primary teachers to teach subjects they do not know or love, which can perpetuate low esteem for the Creative Arts among teachers. Pateman (1991) describes the increasing marginalisation of Creative Arts in British primary schools, attributing this to heightened accountability and national testing in core subjects, alongside teachers' insecurities. He concludes that it is unsurprising that overburdened teachers, feeling insecure in the arts, treat these subjects as peripheral (p. 19).

Problems with primary teacher self-efficacy, values for the Creative Arts, and arts knowledge have been identified in major national research investigations. Alter, Hays, and O'Hara (2009) indicate that generalist teachers are often required to teach all subjects, including "important" subjects like mathematics and literacy, alongside arts education. Wilkins (2009) notes that some subjects are taught more than others, depending on the teacher's confidence and background. Research by Tengepare (2020) shows that teachers bring a variety of backgrounds and confidence levels to their teacher education courses. Jacobs (2008) indicates that many have little prior experience or confidence in art forms, often carrying negative attitudes toward the arts into the school setting.

Local research on creative arts has been conducted by Addo and Adu (2022), Adjepong (2018), Boafo-Agyemang (2010), Nortey, Bodjawah, and Poku (2021), and Opoku-Asare, Tachie-Menson, and Ampeh (2015), among others. However, none of these studies approached

the subject from the teacher's perspective, focusing instead on classroom teachers' personal experiences and training, as well as their views on Arts education.

Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research approach to explore the state of Creative Arts education in Ghana from primary school teachers' perspectives. The primary aim was to gather in-depth insights into their experiences, perceptions, and challenges in implementing the Creative Arts curriculum. A phenomenological research design was employed, which is suitable for understanding individuals' lived experiences (Creswell, 2013). This design allows for exploration of how teachers perceive and interpret their experiences in teaching Creative Arts, providing a rich, descriptive account of their perspectives.

A total of twenty primary school teachers participated in this study, selected through purposive sampling from twelve different schools across the Cape Coast metropolis. This method ensured that participants had relevant experience and knowledge regarding the Creative Arts curriculum. The research questions guiding this study focused on teachers' perspectives and how these perspectives influenced their teaching and learning approaches to creative arts. Specifically, the study addressed two questions: (a) What personal and professional experiences shape teachers' understandings of the Creative Arts and pedagogy? (b) How have these experiences shaped teachers' ability to present and form Creative Arts experiences for their students? These questions investigated the key meanings participants assigned to their Creative Arts pedagogical practices.

The main data collection instrument used was in-depth interviews. Before the interviews, I visited schools and attended creative arts classes to gain firsthand insights into the teaching and learning processes. This familiarisation enabled me to identify the twelve schools that comprehensively teach creative arts. The selected schools were purposively chosen to represent institutions committed to offering a full curriculum in creative arts.

In addition to school visits, six focus group discussions were conducted with basic schoolteachers from the selected schools to investigate critical aspects of teaching Creative Arts in primary education. Each focus group, moderated by the researcher, consisted of approximately eight participants. All interviews were audio-recorded. Focus groups are

effective for exploring collective views and experiences, allowing participants to engage in dialogue that reveals deeper insights into social dynamics and shared challenges (Krueger & Casey, 2015). These discussions facilitated an exchange of ideas and concerns, providing a platform for teachers to articulate critical issues they face in delivering creative arts education. This information guided the design of the semi-structured interview guide used in the main data collection and triangulation.

Building on insights from the focus groups, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the most senior creative arts teacher from each of the twelve schools, along with eight additional teachers identified based on their contributions during focus group discussions. In-depth interviews provided access to knowledge about the meanings and interpretations individuals assign to their lives and events (Johnson, 2001). Semi-structured interviews allow flexibility in questioning while ensuring key topics are covered, enabling researchers to probe deeper into participants' experiences (Gill and Baillie, 2008). The interviews were spaced out and conducted over seven months (April to October 2018) at participants' campuses, early morning before school, after school, or during breaks, ensuring minimal disruption to their teaching responsibilities.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) and Naeem et al. (2023), which involves identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns or themes within qualitative data. The analysis process began with familiarisation, where the researcher became acquainted with the data through repeated readings of the transcripts. This immersion allowed for a comprehensive understanding of participants' narratives. Initial coding involved highlighting significant statements and phrases to identify potential themes, distilling the data into manageable segments reflecting participants' experiences. Theme development organised identified codes into broader themes encapsulating participants' experiences, synthesising data to construct a coherent narrative. Themes underwent a review process to ensure they accurately represented the data and addressed research questions, enhancing analysis credibility. Member checking was employed to validate findings; participants reviewed preliminary results to ensure interpretations resonated with their experiences (McKim, 2023).

Ethical approval was obtained from the University of Cape Coast's Institutional Review Board. Informed consent was secured from all participants, ensuring they understood the

research purpose and their right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the study, with pseudonyms used in reporting to protect participants' identities.

Results

Demographic information was gathered on all participants. A summary of the participants' backgrounds is provided in Table 1. This table includes the participants' pseudonyms used to identify and distinguish between the participants to ensure anonymity. It includes their gender, context, the classes they teach, their age, and their teaching experience.

Table 1: Demographic information on participants

Participants	Gender	Context	Age	Teaching Experience
Akos	F	Class 4 (A teacher in an Urban school)	30-40	11 years of experience
Nancy	F	Class 2 (A teacher in a Rural school)	40-50	17 years of experience
Joe	M	Class 3 (A teacher in a Rural school)	30-40	12 years of experience
Kofi	M	Class 4 (A teacher in a Rural school)	25-30	8 years of experience
Abena	F	Class 6 (A teacher in a Rural school)	30-40	15 years of experience
Krakari	F	Class 1 (A teacher in an Urban school)	50-60	25years of experience
Atsu	M	Class 5 (A teacher in an Urban school)	40-50	14 years of experience
Lizzy	F	Class 5 (A teacher in an Urban school)	25-30	10 years of experience

Adzo	F	Class 3 (A teacher in an Urban school)	30-40	24 years of experience
Afia	F	Class 2 (A teacher in an Urban school)	50-60	20 years of experience
Joan	F	Class 6 (A teacher in an Urban school)	30-40	9 years of experience
Jane	F	Class 6 (A teacher in an Urban school)	25-30	10 years of experience
Datsa	M	Class 4 (A teacher in a Rural school)	30-40	12 years of experience
Wobube	F	Class 3 (A teacher in a Rural school)	25-30	8 years of experience
Isa	M	Class 2	30-40	14 years of experience
Maria	F	Class 1	30-40	12 years of experience
Bright	M	Class 5	25-30	10 years of experience
Julie	F	Class 1	50-60	27 years of experience
Mina	F	Class 3	40-50	17 years of experience
Ese	F	Class 4	40-50	16 years of experience

As shown in Table 1, participants represented a variety of backgrounds and ages (between 20 and 60 years). The participants' level of expertise in teaching the Creative Arts was one of the factors that determined who was targeted to participate in the study. The teachers included in the study had varying levels of teaching experience. The participants included both male and female teachers, even though female teachers make up the vast majority of all primary schools visited. The participants taught at various levels in primary school, including different classes

and stages from primary one to primary six. The sample included schools with varying student populations, ranging from one-teacher schools to very large multi-class per grade schools with a high proportion of students; schools located in urban and rural areas. The diverse backgrounds and characteristics of both participants and schools provided a typical cross-section of schools and teacher profiles in the Cape Coast metropolis.

The findings revealed several concerns raised by participants about the teaching expectations of the primary school curriculum, particularly the learning outcomes for the Creative Arts. Several factors were identified as impediments to meeting all teaching expectations. A summary of some of the key issues that teachers frequently referred to in their interviews included the following: interrelated issues of time and the quantity of curriculum material requiring coverage, the broad scope of subject content within the Creative Arts, teachers' evaluation of their own Creative Arts knowledge and skills, the level of confidence expressed by individual teachers to teach performing Arts disciplines, perceptions of the value and status given to the Creative Arts, and gender issues.

Time constraints

The major talking point for all participants has been the issue of time allocation and the quantity of subject matter to be taught at the primary school level. In total, more than twelve participants used the statement “the basic school curriculum is overcrowded” and “we have a crowded primary curriculum” to describe the state of the primary school curriculum in Ghana. It was difficult for these teachers to cope with the extensive number of subjects they were expected to teach, including Creative Arts, which in itself is an integration of Performing Arts, sewing, and Visual Arts. For example, Kakari said, “I just think that the people at the helm of affairs in this country think that primary school teachers are superhumans, and they are supposed to be good at everything, but people are not like that.” Akos disputed the idea that primary teachers could teach anything. She corroborated this by saying, “No teacher can do all areas perfectly...the subjects are just too much for one person to handle.”

Ensnared with priority issues, participants' general feeling of being overwhelmed resulted in most teachers cutting down on the amount of time they devote to Creative Arts instruction in the classroom. Through my interviews with the participants, it became clear that

most of them (about 17 out of the 20 participants included in the study) did not major in any of the performing arts or visual arts strands at the College of Education. This resulted in participants admitting that they teach what they are comfortable teaching. Some even revealed they use the time allocated for the teaching of Creative Arts on the school timetable to catch up on other lessons. This was vividly captured by Abena when she said:

Me, I did not major in Music, Dance, Visual arts, or even Sewing when I was in the training college. The only opportunity I had to do anything in those areas was in my first year of college, when we were introduced to those symbols of music and dance notation and stuff like that. In fact, I don't know how to sing or dance, so I find it very difficult when it comes to the teaching of creative arts. Most times, I use the creative arts period to teach something else, or when it comes to worst, I only ask them to take their workbooks and their pencils and draw or sketch something. I also sometimes ask them to sing one or two songs.

In addition, some teachers felt that the low amount of time they devote to the Creative Arts was a result of the huge amount of time they put into the preparation of teaching and learning materials necessary to facilitate activities in a creative arts lesson. Kofi stated, "The preparation in the Creative Arts takes time, and, as you know, there is not much time in the school day for these sorts of things." Furthermore, the majority of teachers believed that time in the primary classroom was spent on core subjects like English and Mathematics. The increased emphasis on students' literacy and numeracy achievement puts additional demands on their time. In the following reflection, Datsa described a situation in which he felt other subject areas had been neglected. He stated:

In this country, all we think about is examinations, good results, and certificates. Since the creative arts are not offered at the JHS level and are also not examinable, the seriousness that it deserves is not given to the subject. Just take a look at the school timetable, and you will see exactly what I am talking about. Come! Just look (pointing at a sheet of paper pasted on a wall close to the

chalkboard), see the time allocation for English and Maths, and compare it to an integrated subject like Creative arts and the picture will be clear to you.

According to at least eleven other teachers, the priority of specific subjects necessitates a negotiation about how much time can be assigned to Creative Arts. This issue also came up several times during informal conversations with some primary school headteachers.

Scope of the subject area

Overall, the expectation of Creative Arts teaching and learning was viewed as unrealistic, requiring a breadth of knowledge and skills that most of the twenty teachers felt they lacked. The scope of the Creative Arts, which includes Visual Arts (Two-dimensional arts: drawing, painting, colour work, printmaking, patternmaking, letting and camera/electronic arts, etc. Three-dimensional art: modelling, casting, carving, weaving, paper craft, sewing/stitching, crocheting, construction and assemblage), and Performing Arts (music, dance, and drama) (NaCCA, 2019, p. xxii), was shown to be very broad, and the teachers thought it was beyond the skills and knowledge of most people. Lizzy, for example, saw this as a huge demand on their personal skills and knowledge. She stated:

I mean, it is asking a bit too much to suggest that a person can actually adequately master the three broad subject areas that make up the creative arts. This is so unthinkable. Especially when we don't even have a course at the Training College with the title Creative Arts, but we are expected by magic to have creative arts teachers. Just look at drama, music, dance, sewing and visual arts, I am not sure if you will get anyone at all in the whole world (laughing) who is good at all of these.

As most of the other teachers in the study agreed, Lizzy also considered it almost impossible, even for those specifically trained in the Performing Arts, to learn and master all aspects of these fields.

Experiences, Skills, Knowledge, and Confidence

A series of sequential stages outlined how experiences, skills, knowledge, and confidence are acquired and dynamically linked (Passarelli and Kolb, 2012). This series of events began with the individual as a child, progressed to a trainee teacher, and finally to a qualified teacher, with each successive developmental stage determined by prior personal experiences with the Creative Arts. Limited and negative experiences in any of the Arts disciplines at any stage of their lives appeared to impede the acquisition of discipline-related skills, lowering the teacher's confidence in teaching the subject. A conceptual model for facilitating Creative Arts learning (Alter, Hays, & O'Hara, 2009) based on the central concepts and themes was adopted. These emergent features form dynamic relationships and interrelationships. This model is shown in Figure 1.

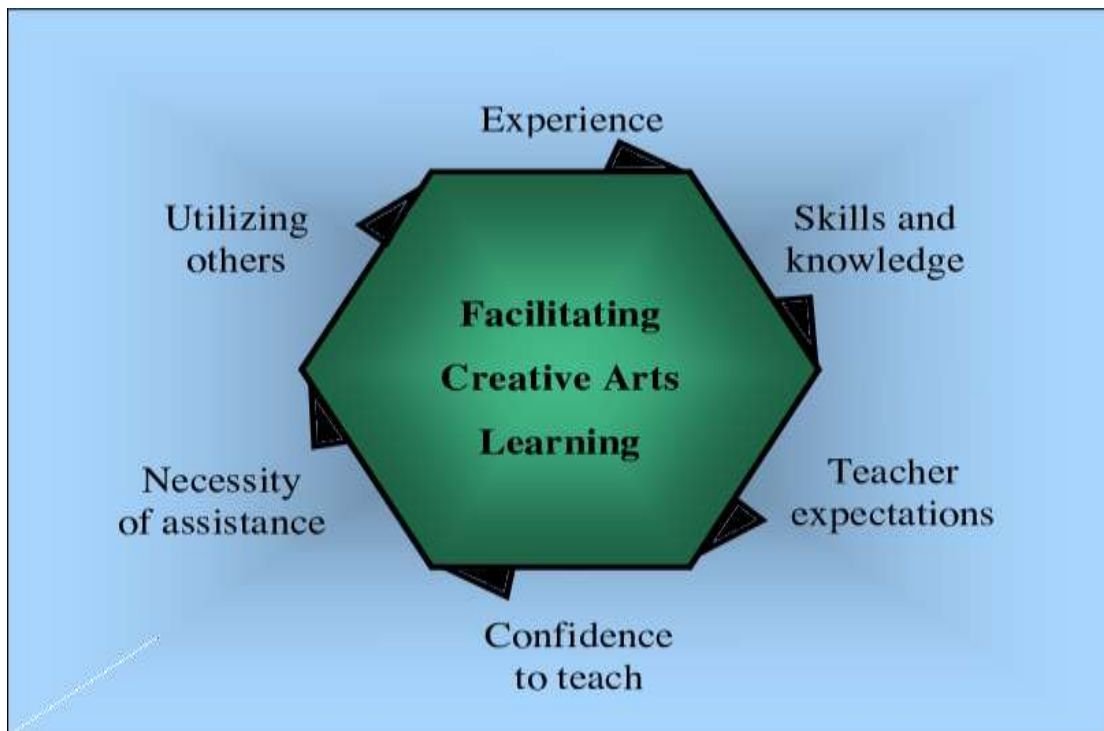


Figure 1: Conceptual model of creative arts learning (Alter, Hays & O'Hara, 2009).

A cycle of facilitation is presented in Figure 1 for creative arts learning. The figure depicts how the participants progressed from content knowledge and delivery in the Creative Arts to the application and start of the teaching and learning process. Points in the cycle represent various stages of awareness. These stages highlight the participants' approaches and perspectives

towards Creative Arts as primary pedagogy. The data revealed varying levels of teacher confidence when teaching in the three Performing Arts disciplines. The words and phrases participants used in describing the degree of confidence they had in themselves toward the teaching of Creative Arts were categorised by the researcher into three levels: high confidence, medium confidence, and low confidence.

To begin, words and phrases such as “uncomfortable,” “I’m really hopeless”, “it’s daunting,” and “I have no idea of music, dance, visual art or sewing” suggested a lack of confidence. These words were used by the participants to describe areas where they felt truly uncomfortable. Second, phrases such as “I’m not completely ignorant”, “not as confident as my major area,” “reluctant to teach”, and “not overly confident” indicated a medium level of confidence. Participants’ medium confidence levels indicated that they had reservations about teaching specific aspects of the Creative Arts. Third, statements such as “I’m confident”, “I’ve always felt comfortable”, “I love teaching arts”, and “I just enjoy it” indicated a high level of confidence. Participants demonstrated confidence in areas where they believed they possessed significant skills and knowledge to effectively facilitate student learning, as well as areas where they had personal interests. The above findings are summarised in Figure 2 below.

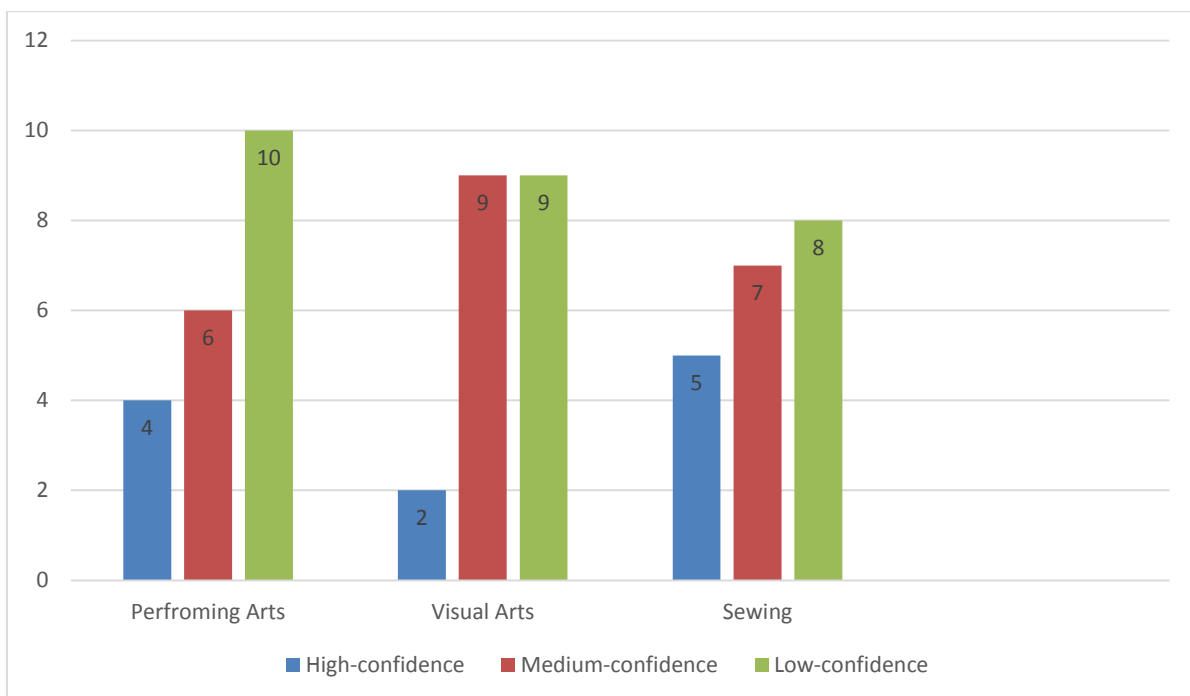


Figure 2: Bar chart representing confidence levels of teachers

Generally, a comparison of participants' responses regarding their level of confidence in each subject area, as displayed in the table above, showed that most participants had low confidence levels in teaching all the strands that made up the Creative Arts subject. In sum, we can see how participants' levels of confidence in teaching differ across the three strands in Figure 2.

Surprisingly, each of the participants felt very comfortable discussing areas of the Creative Arts in which they lacked adequate skills and knowledge. Participants also spoke with greater passion and detail about areas where they believed their skill and knowledge levels were higher. Interestingly, six out of twenty respondents stated that they invite resource persons to help them learn various aspects of the Creative Arts. For example, some participants stated that they used resources such as "traditional musicians," "colleagues," and "highly qualified people." This delegation of teaching responsibilities was viewed as a way to improve the quality of teaching and learning. However, it was done parsimoniously since most times remuneration for such invitees becomes the burden of the teacher who solicited their help. The delegation of teaching ranged from entire lessons to partial, and lastly, a few teachers also indicated they sometimes work in partnership with supervisors and Culture Coordinators. As many as thirteen participants stated they delegated the responsibility for teaching the performing arts aspect of the Creative arts, cultural and choral activities to other people, three in visual arts and four in sewing. The reason behind the total delegation was that these participants were generally not comfortable teaching these specific subject areas. Ese and Kofi, who are teachers coming from the same school, revealed the creative manner in which they handle the situation in their school. In their school, it was a consensus among the teachers to dedicate Fridays to the study of the Creative arts. So what happens is that, after spending some time in their respective classes, the students later congregate outside for Creative Arts. By doing this, the deficiencies of the individual teachers are taken care of by other teachers who are more capable of teaching various strands of the curriculum.

In general, participants felt that their skills and knowledge in each of the Creative Arts strands were insufficient for effective delivery. As many as sixteen participants reported that their pre-service teacher training in the Creative Arts was inadequate and that they were extremely dissatisfied with their experiences. Mina, for example, when asked to describe the training she had received, explained:

Hmmmm, everything was just so wrong from the beginning. My knowledge of the Arts is just so poor. Most of us didn't have the opportunity to study music, dance, drama or even visual arts at the basic school or Senior High level. At Teacher Training College, I had to do Music and Dance for just one semester, and then for sewing, I can remember doing a little of that at Junior High School.

Mina, like many of her colleagues, was pretty much disappointed in the educational system and felt she should have gained a lot more from her Basic, Senior secondary, and tertiary educations.

There were some differences in how younger and older teachers viewed their initial pre-service Arts education training based on their work experience. Teachers with twenty or more years of teaching experience stated that they were exposed to music and dance during their teacher training, but they did not take it seriously. Other participants with five to ten years of teaching experience indicated that they had been exposed to music, dance, and drama in bits and pieces within the context of the Creative Arts. However, it was interesting to note that, while each participant admitted to having some level of art tuition, they all presented their teacher training as limited.

Teachers' Value of the Arts

All twenty participants in the study believed that the Creative Arts had value in education and society. These teachers focus not only on their own subject-related values but also on their perceptions of the values and attitudes held by students and society as a whole. On a personal level, participants expressed their appreciation for the Creative Arts for providing foundational skills for learning and development. They described how they used the Creative Arts to "develop fine motor skills," "aid in the development of social skills," "develop student confidence," and "enrich learning throughout the curriculum as cross-curricular programming."

Even though they valued the Creative Arts for their role in promoting these outcomes, the findings also revealed that societal values and attitudes may have limited the scope of the Creative Arts. It was noted, for example, that there was a general perception that learning in the Arts was not considered a serious academic exercise, but rather a hobby. In part, this may have

explained why many of the teachers made comments that were related to how the Creative Arts were 'not as academic' as other curriculum areas. Many also admitted that Creative Arts subjects were not taken seriously and that the priority given to them was often lower compared to other areas within the primary curriculum.

Participants frequently revealed their preference in one or two of the Creative Arts strands during our interview sessions, but these were mostly hobbies they developed as children. Seven of the participants interviewed mentioned family support as a major influence. According to these individuals, their families had both positive and negative influences on their interests and skills development. People like Datsa, Bright, and Isa chose Music and Dance as their major against the wishes of their parents. On the contrary, Joan, Lizzy, and Jane indicated their families were supportive of their engagement in the performing arts as children by providing them with opportunities to learn some musical instruments outside of school. These were regarded as hobbies developed casually over time.

When asked about the status of arts education in Ghana, fifteen participants believed that certain negative dominant opinions and perceptions had contributed to its low status. Several participants stated that their students are always excited and interested in Creative Arts as a subject, but parents' and other people's attitudes discourage them. Participants, including Afia, stated that families had narrow perceptions of the Creative Arts. For example, Afia said:

I know that some of my students have special talents and skills, and I am sure their parents know that too. But they never actually think that there is a career to be made out of it, or that there is a life that can be filled with it. For example, we have this kid who is very good at visual arts; this guy can sketch anything he sets his eyes on, but his parents refused to get him crayons, a paint brush, and the necessary things he needed to develop his talent. They think it is a waste of time to paint. Every parent wants their child to become a lawyer, doctor, engineer, and so on. No parent wants their child to take up a career in the performing or the fine Arts. They see it as the final resort if there is nothing else to turn to.

In her opinion, many people continue to believe that the Creative Arts are just for entertainment and relaxation without a useful or economic purpose. This meant that not only is there less pressure on schools to strengthen their Creative Arts programmes, but parents also do not pay much attention or invest in training their wards in the Arts in and/or outside of school.

Afia discussed at length the wide range and possibilities of learning experiences provided by current teaching practices. She expressed deep regret for the deficiencies and gaps in her own education. Overall, participants stated that they valued the field because of the outcomes and opportunities it provided. This value encompasses both the confidence that students can gain as learners and the growing demand for Creative Arts skills in a variety of occupations.

Religious Orientation and Gender Issues in Creative Arts Education

The findings also revealed that religion and gender are significant influences on how students practice and experience various aspects of the creative arts. Overall, nine teachers reported that religious practices and gender differences had a significant impact on the types of activities that could be offered to students in the Creative Arts. In many of the interviews, participants differentiated between Christian, traditional, and Islamic religions, describing how teachers and students reacted to specific activities. For example, Kevin said, “The girls like making things with their hands, weaving, all that sort of stuff. Boys not so much, the boys like the drawing and the painting.” Kevin, like the other teachers who mentioned gender differences, believed that students responded to different aspects of the arts based on gender stereotypes in their communities.

The issue of gender bias was most pronounced when teachers discussed the subject of the playing of traditional instruments, especially the traditional drums. Some teachers mentioned heavy neglect of female students studying drumming. Many of them believed that a major contributing factor was the fact that female students found drumming to be a thing for boys. For example, Jackie stated, “A lot of girls aren’t particularly enthusiastic about playing traditional instruments.” Jackie explained:

There are these traditional beliefs that girls do not drum. Girls are not even allowed to get near or touch these instruments. I once had this girl in my class

who was quite good at playing the drums, so I selected her to represent my school in the playing of the *atumpan* (talking drum) at the Inter-school Festival of Arts and Culture. My decision did not go well with the other teachers, including my headmaster, so they substituted her for a boy. She was not allowed to develop her talent in drumming.

It was interesting to note that, based on the religious affiliations of teachers and the belief that traditional instruments possess certain mystical powers or spirits, some teachers avoided the teaching of traditional music and dance, and this meant practical lessons in the subject area were often forfeited. In this sense, teachers' likes and dislikes potentially affected the regularity and attention paid to the Arts in the schools. However, great efforts were being made on the part of some teachers to move away from stereotyped gender roles and religiosity. Isa, who is a Muslim, has this to say:

I find my students so creative and so energetic they never think twice about performing in music, dance, or drama. Despite my Islamic background, I took the performing arts seriously since I knew that my job as an educator included teaching the performing arts. Things are changing a bit these days. Whereas fifteen or so years ago, where I am coming from, parents would object to their wards engaging in the performing arts. Even today, I have other Muslim friends who are teachers teaching at the primary level, but still do not teach the performing arts strands of the creative arts.

It is also important to note that both teachers' and students' families, home backgrounds, and upbringing are influential in shaping how they experience and perceive the Creative Arts (Alter, Hays & O'Hara, 2009).

Discussion

This study demonstrates how the participants' life experiences influenced how they approached and taught the Arts subjects. Participants' skills, knowledge, and confidence in teaching each subject area were all directly related to their prior experiences in the Creative Arts. Teachers'

perceptions of their level of Creative Arts experience significantly influenced their initial engagement in pre-service training, which inevitably shaped how they later approached and facilitated students' experiences. The skills and knowledge acquired through education before becoming a primary school teacher appeared to be a significant predictor of their level of confidence. In turn, these levels of confidence influenced the intensity of instruction in each of the Creative Arts strands. Positive Arts experiences among teachers represented the acquisition of skills, knowledge, and confidence, which they claimed they could later apply to quality Arts instruction in the classroom.

Participants' responses indicated that they were largely overwhelmed by the demands of teaching content knowledge and skills in all Creative Arts subjects in the primary classroom. All the respondents believed that it was impossible, even for those who had received formal training in the arts, to know and teach all aspects of this field. Teachers who believed they lacked Arts experience, knowledge, and skills in one or more of the Creative Arts subjects found it difficult to develop students' understanding in these areas. The majority of these teachers stated that they either taught to their strengths by focusing on the creative arts strand in which they felt most confident, or they delegated partial or full responsibility for teaching to others with greater expertise. However, the delegation of teaching does not happen frequently due to a lack of funds to remunerate the resource persons. The findings show that teachers were most confident in teaching visual arts and least confident in teaching sewing and performing arts, particularly music. This finding partially corroborates Bodilly, Augustine & Zakaras (2008), who revealed that “music and visual arts tend to be taught more than the other art forms” (P. 1). The participants attributed their lack of confidence to insufficient training in the performing arts, the complexities of music, dance, drama as a discipline, and a perceived lack of personal musical ability. The majority of participants used straightforward approaches to introduce students to the performing arts, with an emphasis on developing fundamental skills. In contrast, the approach taken in the visual arts demonstrated to participants that students were not only given structured learning tasks but also allowed to express their creativity. They described how they allowed students to explore a variety of visual arts media and activities in the classroom.

All of the teachers in the study agreed that the quality and quantity of Arts education they received at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels did not adequately prepare them for their current role as creative arts teachers. This finding supports Russell-Bowie and Dowson's (2005) study of 936 generalist primary teachers from five countries, which found that the majority of teachers had little formal training in any of the art forms. Many of the participants mentioned the limited number of learning activities in their pre-service tertiary courses. The frequency with which comments are made about a lack of depth and relevance in these courses indicates that Creative Arts education curricula at this level require reform. Aside from improving the effectiveness of tertiary teacher-training programmes, the findings of this study indicate that there is an urgent need for increased support for qualified teachers in the classroom. Most participants described a situation in which they received little or no in-service training and support when the Creative Arts Syllabus was implemented in schools.

One possible solution to help improve the situation is to organise workshops and more training programmes to compensate for the teachers' lack of prior art experience. Though it may present its own set of challenges, as research has shown that it is difficult to compensate for a lack of Arts background in teacher training programmes (Barton, Baguley, & MacDonald, 2013), it is the only option available under the current circumstances. The challenges associated with the creative arts are not limited to the current context. Many studies have been conducted on the various strands of the creative arts in other parts of the world, such as Ashton (2016) on Visual Arts, Wright (1999) on Drama, Franklin (2000) on Music, and Power and Klopper (2011) on Dance, and all discovered the same or similar challenges.

Though the data for the current study were collected in 2018, before the implementation of the new standards-based curriculum in 2019, the issues raised in this paper remain relevant because the creative arts curriculum was not significantly revised in 2019. The only change was to remove the sewing component, leaving the performing arts (music, dance, drama) and visual arts, which continue to place a significant burden on classroom teachers. There is an urgent need to evaluate creative arts teaching and learning in Ghanaian basic schools so that all issues concerning its implementation can be addressed.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study provides valuable insights into the challenges faced by primary school teachers in effectively balancing their teaching responsibilities in the Creative Arts. It identifies several practical issues and curriculum considerations that influence teachers' approaches, contributing to a better understanding of the values and attitudes impacting creative arts education in primary schools. The findings highlight a contentious issue in Ghana's primary education system: whether it is realistic to expect primary teachers to effectively teach all aspects of the curriculum, particularly the Creative Arts, without adequate preparation. The study supports the claim that the curriculum places an unreasonable burden on teachers' subject matter knowledge, resulting in Creative Arts suffering more than other subjects. The breadth of knowledge required to teach all Creative Arts subjects effectively exceeds the skills of most primary teachers. Additionally, the study reveals that recent departmental directives have prioritised Literacy and Numeracy, adversely affecting the Creative Arts. Teachers face difficulties in maintaining consistency in the Arts curriculum due to time constraints and the subject's lower priority. There is a significant gap between the expectations of the curriculum frameworks and the art-related preparation available through initial teacher education courses. This raises the critical question of whether this situation can be changed, as teachers often feel inadequately prepared in the creative arts.

Considering the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. The Teacher Training Division of the Ghana Education Service (GES) should collaborate with Teacher Training Colleges to train specialist Creative Arts teachers. This approach will help address the significant demands of Creative Arts, which general classroom teachers find challenging to teach effectively.
2. Given the integrated nature of Creative Arts and the associated time constraints, educators must develop innovative strategies to maximise learning opportunities. Training student teachers in effective time management, planning, and organisation skills is essential for enhancing productivity and ensuring comprehensive coverage of necessary topics.
3. Active monitoring and supervision of teaching quality are crucial for maintaining educational standards. The Inspectorate Division of GES should work with head

teachers to ensure that all subjects, including Creative Arts, are taught effectively. Head teachers should not only inspect lesson plans but also supervise lesson delivery in classrooms.

4. Addressing the influence of religious orientation and gender in the creative arts classroom is vital. Educators should promote inclusivity, gender equality, and equity to create a supportive learning environment. This can be achieved through discussions and activities that challenge gender stereotypes and expose students to diverse artists and creative works.
5. There is a need for continuous professional development opportunities for generalist teachers to enhance their creativity and teaching practices. Workshops, seminars, and conferences can provide new strategies for engaging students in creative arts activities. Additionally, assigning expert teachers as resource persons across school districts can help disseminate knowledge and best practices.

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MASKING TRADITION IN IPARA-REMO, OGUN STATE, SOUTHWESTERN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF PROVENANCE, FORMS AND COSTUMES OF SOME SELECTED MASQUERADESING

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Abstract

Masking traditions are a prominent socio-cultural practice among the Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria. Though, the study of Yoruba masks has enjoyed the attention of several scholars, both local and foreign, and diverse views have been postulated on how they were perceived, especially in relation to their forms and functions, there has not been any on the masking tradition of Ipara-Remo in Remo division of Ogun State, a Yoruba sub group of Southwestern Nigeria. The most relevant existing work is the one on Egungun masquerades of the Remo Yoruba by Marrilyn H. Houlberg (1978), it was however not sufficiently detailed. This paper therefore presents the findings of a recent research work carried out on masking traditions in Remoland particularly in Ipara-Remo, in Ogun State, southwestern Nigeria. The paper attempts to trace the origin of some of the various existing masking traditions: their imagery/forms, costumes, function as well as the similarities noted in the various types in Ipara-Remo. Three distinct masking traditions were recognized; these are Egungun masks and masquerades, Oro masks and Agemo masks. From these three groups, twenty different masking traditions were identified and examined. Out of these twenty masking traditions, one is found to be of the Oro type, two Agemo type while the remaining seventeen are of



the Egungun type. This may indicate the popularity of Egungun over Oro in Remoland. This paper also attempts a classification by provenance. It classifies Egungun masks into three types: the community owned mask and masquerades, the section/group-owned masks and masquerades and the privately-owned masks and masquerades. Finally, the costumes, carved imagery, and the forms and functions of each of the masks are also discussed against the background of their socio-cultural significance in Ipara-Remo.

Keywords: *Costume, Forms and Functions, Masking Traditions, Socio-Cultural Practice, Remo Division, Yoruba Sub-group, Southwestern Nigeria.*

Introduction

Remo is a Yoruba sub-group of Southwestern Nigeria. It is one of the four major provinces/divisions in Ogun State. Others are Ijebu province, Egba province and Egbado/Awori (now Yewa) province.⁴ Before the unification of the diverse groups of people in Remoland, a recorded intelligence report on the Ijebu/Remo district revealed that there were two conflicting traditions about the origin and history of the Remo⁵. Like some other ancient cities or groups, the sources for the early history of the Remo are also limited to oral tradition, which was carefully handed down by their forefathers. According to Remo mythology, *Akarigbo*, the paramount ruler of Remoland, is said to be a crowned chief of the Irewo quarters in Ile-Ife who migrated with his followers and founded some of the various towns in Remoland. It is also held that the name Remo is derived from the Irewo quarters in Ile-Ife.

Tradition has it that there were thirty-three towns/ villages in the then Ijebu-Remo land. This is why they are referred to as “*Remo metal orogbon*” or “*Remo metalelogbon*”. Which literally means Remo thirty-three traditional towns. But with state creation and boundary adjustments, many of these towns have been grouped with other states, while some others have been put in their proper division. For example, towns like Ikorodu, Imota, Agbowa-Ikosi,

⁴ Adekoya, S. K. 1999. Remo Masking Traditions: A Study of Forms and Function in Ipara Remo. An Unpublished M.A. Dissertation, Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

⁵ Abel, A.F. 1935. Assistant District Officer. "Recorded Intelligence Report on Ijebu-Remo District.

Igbogbo and Epe are now in Lagos State, while Odogbolu, Okun-Owa, and Aiyeye, which were formerly classified among the thirty-three towns in Ijebu-Remo according to Abel in his reports, are now under the jurisdiction of the Awujale of Ijebuland. This leaves about twelve major towns/villages and twelve quarters in Sagamu, leaving twenty-four towns/ villages/ quarters as present-day Remo.

Ipara Remo is a town in the Remo North Local Government area in Remo province of Ogun State. It is the last Remo town to the north that shares a boundary with Ibadan in the present Oyo State. It is one of the towns that claim migration from Ile-Ife. There are two conflicting traditions about how Ipara-Remo was founded. The first version of the traditions reveals that Oguola, a hunter - warrior and a prince of Irewo quarters in Ile-Ife and his wife Oroye, founded Ipara-Remo. According to tradition, Oguola and Oroye left Ile-Ife to hunt and while in the forest hunting, they got to the place now known as Ipara-Remo. They consulted an oracle, and the oracle instructed them to settle there, assuring them of prosperity. It is possible that Oguola knew that he might not return to Ile-Ife, so he carried along with him his paraphernalia of office, such as the staff, a beaded crown decorated with sixteen birds (*Ade Eleye merindinlogun*). As a warrior, he carried his Dane gun, spear and arrow, which he used in hunting.

The second version also has it that the same Oguola, a warrior and a prince from Irewo quarters in Ile-Ife, and his wife Oroye, founded Ipara. It, however, holds that before they departed from Ile-Ife, they consulted an Ifa oracle who gave them an Iron chain which they dropped on the ground and followed its movement to the final destination. The chain is said to have gone under the ground before reappearing at a place where it directed them to settle. The chain came out of the ground at a place called *EJINA* in Ipara-Remo. This is why the people of Ipara-Remo are referred to as *Omo atile run bi atorin*, meaning: “the people that grew up from the soil like whip”. Because the other end of the iron chain that Oguola and Oroye followed to Ipara is still believed to be at Irewo quarters in Ile-Ife, the people of Ipara are greeted as *Omo Ojumo to mo loni, Iyen ti Olufe, Ile to mo loni, Iyen ti Onipara*, meaning “Today’s dawn belongs to Olufe, today’s daybreak, all for Onipara”. Also, because they followed an iron chain underground moving like a snake, they are called *Omo a fi ewon rin bi ejo*, meaning: “the people who travel with an iron chain moving like a snake” .

Ipara-Remo occupies a unique position in Yorubaland. It was a permanent military base for the Ijebu and Remo warriors during the various Yoruba intertribal wars. Oral tradition has it that Ipara-Remo was the only town in the entire Ijebu and Remo that was never conquered. It was revealed that Oguola loved his children so much that he built an underground bunker to hide them during warfare in order to save them from the aggression of the enemies who might want to take them as slaves. This is why Ipara people are referred to as *Omo a ba ile soro kile lanu*, meaning: "Descendant of he, whose command opens up the ground".

Relationship between *Oro* and *Egungun*

Early scholars who have at one time or another written on *Oro* and *Egungun* regarded them as secret cults and men's deities, which perform the same functions as intermediaries or links between the living and the dead (ancestors). Morton-Williams once reiterates that since both *Oro* and *Egungun* perform identical functions, traditions should present them as brothers⁶, but, in fact, they do not have much in common. For instance, *Egungun* is a secret cult that allows women membership, while *Oro*, on the other hand, does not give room for any woman participation: it is strictly forbidden for women to know its secret. According to Afolabi, *Oro* is regarded as the head of all deities⁷, while Ogunba claims that *Oro* is as old as man on earth⁸. However, for the purpose of this study, some aspects of *Oro* masking traditions would be examined alongside *Egungun*, which is more prominent in Ipara -Remo.

Origin of *Egungun* (Masking Tradition) in Remoland

Egungun are regarded as the collective spirits of the ancestors who occupy a space in heaven; hence they are referred to as *Ara Orun*, meaning "dwellers of heaven". These ancestral spirits are believed to be in constant watch over the people on earth. They bless, protect, warn and punish their earthly relatives depending on how their relatives remember or neglect them. The ancestral spirits have collective functions that cut across lineage and family loyalty. They

⁶ Morton-Williams, P. 1956. "The Egungun Society in Southern Yoruba Kingdom" Proceedings of the third Annual Conference of the West African Institute of Social and Economic Research Ibadan, 90-103.

⁷ Afolabi, S.O. 1998. Oro festival Music in Oyo Town, Unpublished M.A. Dissertation, Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan.

⁸ Ogunba, O. 1973. *Yoruba Traditional Religion*, Ibadan: University Press.

collectively protect the community against evil spirits, epidemics, witchcraft and evildoers, ensuring the well-being, prosperity and productivity of the whole community in general. This is why they are celebrated annually.

Egungun appearances reassure the Yoruba of life after death. Every member of a Yoruba community seems to be involved in the worship of *Egungun*, since everybody has at least one ancestor to call upon. Nevertheless, men are more exposed to *Egungun* mystery than women, and only the members of the *Egungun* society know the secrets and functions of *Egungun*. In essence, *Egungun* tradition is a secret cult just like *Oro* and *Agemo*. Few women know the *Egungun* mystery, and such women are not to divulge the secrets of the cult. They adhere strongly to the saying that:

*Aya Oje lo le mo,
Bobirin ba mo awo,
ko gbodo so*

Meaning:

It is only the wife of an *Egungun* cult member who can know their secret
If women know cult secrets,
They must never tell.

The origin of *Egungun* in Yorubaland has attracted some discussions by different scholars and researchers. These early writers on the origin of *Egungun* in Yorubaland found out that written materials about the cult are scarce, so they have had to rely on oral traditions and rituals relating to *Egungun*. The principal sources of studies of *Egungun* are *Odu-lfa* (*Ifa*-Corpus) and *Esa Egungun* (chants). Traditions collected during *Egungun* festivals and professional *Egungun* entertainments supplement these sources, while information from a few secondary sources is employed by them. One is aware of the limitations of oral traditions, but they are capable of giving a fairly accurate account of what is described in the oral traditions. They tend to emphasise the myths and legends or give religious interpretation to historical events. Both the *Egungun* chant and *lfa*-Corpus could be subjectively rendered depending on who recites them.

They could even be distorted or falsified. However, if they could be weighed along with other sources, it may be possible to attempt some plausible explanations for these traditions.

According to Morgan, Iba Oluyole was the man who introduced the *Egungun* masquerade to the Remo⁹. It is said that during an *Egungun* festival, one *Egungun* masquerade annoyed him so much that, in anger, he sold him as a slave, fully clad in his *Egungun* regalia, to an Ijebu-Remo slave trader. The man took the *Egungun* to Remo, where the particular *Egungun* began to teach the secrets of the *Egungun* cult to the Ijebu. With this act by Iba Oluyole, *Egungun* drummers in Ipara Remo added this verse to the *Egungun* praise name:

Egungun kan ko de Ijebu ri.

Iba' lo m'egungun wo'gbo Remo:

Egun' f'aso. Iyanda si fa so

Ebe I'ambe "Yanda ko to faso

Egungun sile.

Meaning:

Egungun never entered Ijebuland before

It is Iba Oluyole who introduced *Egungun* to the forest of Remo.

Egungun wanted to keep his regalia

Iyanda also wanted the regalia

We have to appeal to Iyanda before he can allow the *Egungun* to go away fully clad in his regalia.

“ Another tradition”, according to Ogunba, states that Remo towns received *Egungun* from their Egba neighbours¹⁰, while the people of Ijebu Igbo received the cult from Ibadan. The cult was introduced into Ife, Ijesa and Ekiti communities by the fleeing emigrants from the northern Yoruba towns that were deserted in the early 19th century and since then, *Egungun* has become

⁹ Morgan, K. 1985. *Egungun Masquerades in Ibadan: A study of the Origin and Forms of Major Masquerades*, Ibadan: Chipman and Hall.

¹⁰ Ogunba, O. 1973. *Yoruba Traditional Religion*, Ibadan: University Press.

a Yoruba ancestral cult. Ogunba¹¹ maintains that the *Oba* of each community found the cult a useful weapon for political, economic and social control of their people.

Mangiri posited that masking is the most popular, the most versatile, and the most entertaining public performance in most ethnic groups in Africa¹². This acceptability by the people and frequent display that unite and invigorate different groups weary of domestic activities in an area makes it a tradition. Masked figures, which are generally face coverings used largely in ritual activities, disguise the wearer and usually communicate an alternate identity that is believed to be a spirit entity¹³.

Provenance of *Egungun* in Ipara

According to oral tradition, the first *Egungun* to be seen in Ipara town is *Elegbojo or Egbojo* (Figure 1). "*Egbojo*" is said to have come from Oyo during the reign of *Alaafin* Abiodun Atiba in the 18th century. This masquerade is believed to have come into the town one afternoon and started moving about. The first compound it entered was the Oloyede family compound because it heard the sound of a drum coming from the compound. But when the masquerade entered the compound, it was not well received. The reception was so poor that the masquerade left the place and later went to a place called Ijabata and met a member of the Bisayo family who happened to be a renowned *Gangan* (talking drum) drummer. It was received well, and since then, the Bisayo family has been the custodian of the first *Egungun* in the town. *Elegbojo* is so respected among the *Egungun* cult in the town that during any of their functions, it is accorded a respected position. The popular saying in Yorubaland that *Elegbojo ni Baba Egungun*, meaning: "*Elegbojo is the father of all Egungun*", substantiates this.

¹¹ Ogunba, O. 1973. *Yoruba Traditional Religion*, Ibadan: University Press.

¹² Mangiri, S.G. 2014. "Masking Art Tradition as a Cultural Manifestation of Olugbobiri People of Nigeria", *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 4(11).

¹³ Mangiri, S.G. 2014. "Masking Art Tradition as a Cultural Manifestation of Olugbobiri People of Nigeria", *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*,



Figure 1:

Elegbojo Masquerade in Ipara-Remo

Source: Samson Kehinde Adekoya (1996)

Origin of *Oro* Cult in Ipara-Remo

According to Finni Sopenu¹⁴ and Soboye Sunday,¹⁵ both the *Alaha Oro* and *Olumale Oro* (the two major leaders of the *Oro* cult), respectively in Ipara-Remo, it was never heard in any of the existing traditions of the town that the *Oro* cult was introduced to the town from somewhere else. This is why they refer to their *Oro* headpiece as *Isese Ipara* (Ancient and Indigenous), this

¹⁴ Oral interview held with Pa. Sopenu Finni, Age: 85, *Alaha Oro* (Leader of *Oro* Cult) at Ipara-Remo, *Conversation with one of the authors*, 1998.

¹⁵ Oral interview held with Pa. Soboye Sunday, Age: 85, *Olumale Oro* (Leader of *Oro* Cult) in Ipara-Remo, *Conversation with one of the authors*, 1998.

is to say that the *Oro* cult may have started in Ipara-Remo. But when its origin is not known, this information could be plausible if Fadipe's assertion that the *Oro* mystery is of greater importance among the Ijebu and Egba than between any other Yoruba sub-group", is anything to go by¹⁶. More so, during the period mentioned above by Fadipe in his assertion, all the present Remo towns, including Ipara, were regarded as Ijebu.

Traditional festivals constitute an important aspect of the socio-cultural life of the Yoruba. It has been mentioned earlier that the *Oro* cult dovetails into the *Egungun* cult. *Oro* and *Egungun* festivals, as well as others, are celebrated elaborately annually between September and December in Ipara-Remo. This period is known as *Abo ojo* or *Abo'jo*, meaning: "dry season when rainfall had stopped for the year, and farmers have little or no work in the farm", when different types and shapes of masks are used for cultural festivals and various other activities ranging from dances to rituals and traditional competitions.

The African Concept of the Mask

There has not been a universal definition for the word 'mask'. The availability of many kinds and different styles in various places gave it its multi-purpose nature, which has even made it somehow difficult for people to arrive at or agree on a particular and acceptable definition. For instance, to some people, it is a representation of an ancestral spirit. Some people see it as a protector, while some see it as an object of play used in entertainment or to derive fun. Hence, people tend to define it the way they perceive it, or based on the purpose it serves them. For instance, Casimir, Nwakego and Umezinwa posited that in Africa, a mask is fundamentally a spiritual and metaphysical value before it is transformed into a socio-cultural value that helps the African people to create their sense of what constitutes order, law, authority and the proper way people should be governed¹⁷. They maintained further that masks are representations of the African ancestral origin and authority that account for what constitutes human value, worth and meaning. They believe that the spiritual ancestors are the source of life, order and continuity in any African society.

¹⁶ Fadipe, N. A. 1991. *The Sociology of the Yoruba*, Ibadan: University Press.

¹⁷ Casimir, K.C.A., Nwakego, O. S. & Umezinwa, E. 2015. "Masking Traditions and Their Behavioral Functions in Accounting for Stability and Order: A Critical Exposition of Select Study of West, East and Central African Masks", *Open Journal of Political Science*, 5, 115-127.

Oyejide asserts that the mask is as old as man's history, and the importance of the mask cannot be overemphasised in any given environment among the Yoruba¹⁸. It is regarded as a vital entity in the African socio-cultural life. Mask, in the African setting, is conceived as a false face or covering for the face, often shaped to form a representation of human or animal features. A mask is also perceived to be a form of disguise. It is an object that is frequently worn over or in front of the face to hide the identity of a person and his features, to establish another being. These essential characteristics of hiding and revealing personalities or moods are common to all masks. However, Hornby defines a mask as a covering for part or all of the face, worn to hide or protect it or something that covers the face and has another face painted on it.¹⁹

There are many kinds and different styles of masks in various places. This illustrates both the underlying purpose of commemorating and continuing the power of the ancestors and also the great variety of art forms in Africa. Masks may also differ in style from figures because of the manner in which they are used or because of the differing rates of destruction and replacement. Some masks are naturalistic: pleasant or impassive, some are terrifying, and others are abstract or formal; however, whatever their forms, they illustrate the universal conviction that "Death is not the end of human life". Although men whose bodies are hidden under robes, wear masks, they are supposed to represent spirits who must not be referred to as human beings.

Mask makers have shown great resourcefulness in selecting and combining materials for their production, among such materials are: wood, animal skin/leather, metals, shells, fibre, mat, clothes, and thread. In some cases, raffia is used. Generally, masks are used with a costume, often so complete that they cover the whole body of the wearer. The masks are made of a great variety of materials, all of which have a symbolic connection with the mask's total imagery.

Classification of the Masking Traditions in Ipara Remo

Masking traditions in Ipara-Remo fall into three major groups: (i) *Egungun* masquerades; (ii) *Oro* masks; (iii) *Agemo*. Having discussed the origin of the *Egungun* masquerade and the *Oro*

¹⁸ Oyejide, J.O. 1989. "The importance of masks to the inhabitants of Aramoko in Ekiti West Local Government", Unpublished N.C.E. Project, Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo, Nigeria.

¹⁹ Hornby, A.S. 2000. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, Oxford: University Press.

cult, respectively, and their relationships, it is considered imperative to distinguish between masks and masquerades. Although they are two different entities, they dovetail to form the two paraphernalia usually used in *Oro*, *Agemo* and *Egungun* cult activities.

Mask: According to Wingert, masks have served an important role as a means of discipline and have been used to admonish²⁰. Common in China, Africa, Oceania, and [North America](#), admonitory masks usually completely cover the features of the wearer. Some [African peoples](#) hold that the first mask to be used was an admonitory one. Cole (1985), cited in Casimir et al., informed that African masks should be seen as part of a ceremonial costume²¹. They are used in religious and social events to represent the spirits of ancestors or to control the good and evil forces in the community. They come to life, possessed by their spirit in the performance of the dance, and are enhanced by both the music and atmosphere of the occasion. Some combine human and animal features to unite man with his natural environment. Alluding to the foregoing, Wingert, while analysing mask of wood, shell, cloth, raffia, and pigment from the Kuba Culture of the Democratic Republic of Congo, observed that many masks are primarily associated with ceremonies that have religious and social significance or are concerned with funerary customs, fertility rites, or the curing of sickness²². Other masks are used on festive occasions or to portray characters in a dramatic performance and in reenactments of mythological events²³. Masks are also used for warfare and as protective devices in particular activities or during inclement weather²⁴. In many cultures throughout the world, a judge wore a mask to protect himself from future recriminations. In this instance, the mask represents a traditionally sanctioned spirit from the past who assumes responsibility for the decision levied on the culprit²⁵. Whereas, Casimir et al noted that many African societies see masks as mediators between the living world and the supernatural world of the dead,

²⁰ Wingert, P. S. 2024. Encyclopedia Britannica online

²¹ Casimir, K.C.A., Nwakego, O. S. & Umezina, E. 2015. "Masking Traditions and Their Behavioral Functions in Accounting for Stability and Order: A Critical Exposition of Select Study of West, East and Central African Masks", *Open Journal of Political Science*, 5, 115-127.

²² Wingert, P.S. 2024. Encyclopedia Britannica online

²³ Wingert, P.S. 2024. Encyclopedia Britannica online

²⁴ Wingert, P.S. 2024. Encyclopedia Britannica online

²⁵ Wingert, P.S. 2024. Encyclopedia Britannica online

ancestors and other entities²⁶. They posited that masks became and still become the attribute of a dressed-up dancer who gave it life and word at the time of ceremonies²⁷.

In this study, a mask could be defined as any material, be it wood, raffia, mat, leather, fabrics, beads, ivory, coral, plastic, metal, or other materials, often shaped to form a representation of human or animal features meant to obscure one's identity: it is a form of disguise. Masks could be grouped into a facemask or a helmet mask. Whichever way, it is an object that is worn over or in front of the face to hide the identity of a person and, by that, establish a new or a strange being. These characteristics of obscuring and revealing a personality's mood are common to all masks. However, the purpose for which the mask is made determines its features, as observed by Bleakley, that "one should be able to ascertain the function of a mask through its form, being beautiful or terrifying"²⁸.

Masquerade: It is another concept that does not agree with a single or universal definition. Jegede defines it as an entity, which includes mask, colourful costume, drumming and singing²⁹. Whereas Pemberton sees it as the totality of the costume/regalia, including mask and other figures/image(s) that may be present as part of the costume used in Egungun and other cult activities³⁰. From these two definitions, it is possible to say that a mask is a unit among many other items that make a masquerade among the Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria. But, then the definition by Jegede sounds more plausible because of its composition, which includes an entity (a living being) and a living being, as we are all aware, carries the costume. Although they (masquerades) are regarded as ancestral spirits, this definition cannot be considered as universal or sufficient to adequately explain the meaning and scope of the concept of masquerade. While the Yoruba see it as representation of their ancestral Spirit (*Ara-Orun*) who is invited to visit the earth physically, the Igbo regard it as masked Spirit used in all that is held

²⁶ Casimir, K.C.A., Nwakego, O. S. & Umezina, E. 2015. "Masking Traditions and Their Behavioral Functions in Accounting for Stability and Order: A Critical Exposition of Select Study of West, East and Central African Masks", *Open Journal of Political Science*, 5, 115-127.

²⁷ Casimir, K.C.A., Nwakego, O. S. & Umezina, E. 2015. "Masking Traditions and Their Behavioral Functions in Accounting for Stability and Order: A Critical Exposition of Select Study of West, East and Central African Masks", *Open Journal of Political Science*,

²⁸ Bleakly, R. 1978. *African Masks*, London: Thames and Hudson

²⁹ Jegede, D. 1988. *Art by metamorphosis: selection of African Art from the Spellman College Collection*, Binghamton: Spellman College, Atlanta Georgia.

³⁰ Pemberton, J. 1978. "Egungun Masquerades of the Igbomina Yoruba", *African Arts*, 2(3), 65-76

secret, mythical, magical, mysterious and supernatural while the Mama people of Jos Plateau see the appearance of masquerades as something connected with agricultural festivals: masquerades appear at different stages of the agricultural cycle, for funerals of cult members and to commemorate their legendary hero who taught them their agricultural skill.

From the above definitions of mask and masquerade, one can easily say that a mask is only worn on the head or face alone, while a masquerade means a container or a reliquary that houses an entity: the costume covers the whole or every part of the wearer to the extent that no part is exposed or revealed to the public. Mask or masquerade could be grouped into two: (1) Zoomorphic; (2) Biomorphic/Anthropomorphic. Zoomorphic: These are masks and masquerades that are styled in the form of animals; a typical example in Ipara-Remo is the *Ekun* (Leopard) mask (Figures 2a and 2b). Biomorphic/Anthropomorphic: These are masks and masquerades derived from, related to, or incorporating the form of living beings or human attributes into their total imagery. Interestingly, Ipara masking traditions cover the two groups.



Figure 2a:
Ekun (Leopard) Masquerade in Ipara-Remo
Source: Bisola Adewale Adekoya, (2021)

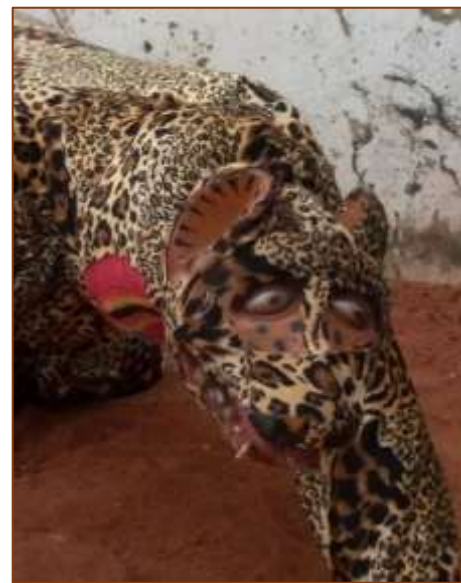


Figure 2b:
Carved Leopard Mask attached to the
Costume
Source: Bisola Adewale Adekoya (2021)

Ipara-Remo town is divided into two major quarters (Esepe and Oke-Aro), almost equally by the market road that passes through the town. These divisions bring about an interesting competition, especially in *Egungun* and *Oro* festival activities as well as during some other prominent social-cultural activities like *Ayo* game, hunting expedition and sporting activities during their Oguola's (founder's) day celebration. Masking tradition falls into three groups: *Egungun* masquerades, *Oro* and *Agemo/Olire* cult activities. During this research, it was discovered that these *Egungun* masquerades and the masks used in *Oro* cult activities, respectively, are varied in styles, techniques and purposes. Among the existing *Egungun* masquerades in the town are *Elegbojo* (Figure 1), *Ekun* (Figure 2), *Oroku* (Figure 3), *Oyeniwo* (Figure 4), *Bata* (Figure 5) selected for this paper; others are: *Agbomola*, *Layole*, *Onisigu*, *Etiyeri*, *Ape*, *Asofo*, *Saba*, *Lyalode*, *Olabode* and *Aiyekonogbon*, etc.

Those used in *Oro* cult activities include "*Isese Ipara*" (Oro head piece), and that of *Agemo/Onire* is the *Olire*, which is also known as *Boromo Ipara* (Figure 6) and *Agemo* (Figure 8-10). Scholars like Adepegba³¹, Houlberg³², Drewal³³ and Pemberton³⁴, who have written on the masks and masquerades in Yorubaland at one time or another, made several classifications based on the forms, functions and costumes of the masquerades as well as their stylistic group, type and the geographical location of the masks. There has not been any classification by provenance of these paraphernalia used in *Oro* and *Egungun* cult activities. Hence, the submission by these scholars is based on their observational perspective of masks and masquerades with strong aesthetic connotations as opposed to the functional roles of deities ascribe to them by the owners. However, the reliability of the custodians/aides and worshippers on the supernatural power of the masks and masquerades indicates that they have a deeper meaning within the society in which they exist. Hitherto, this research work classifies the ownership of the existing masking traditions in Ipara-Remo into three groups, as shown in the table below.

³¹Adepegba, C.O. 1984. Yoruba Egungun: Its Association with Ancestors and the typology of Yoruba Masquerades by their Costume. Seminar Paper, Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan.

³²Houlberg, H. Marilyn 1978. "Egungun masquerades of the Remo Yoruba", *African Arts*, 2(3), 20.

³³Drewal, H. J. 1978. "The Art of Egungun among the Yoruba peoples", *African Art*, 11, 18-19.

³⁴Pemberton, J. 1978. "Egungun Masquerades of the Igbomina Yoruba". *African Arts*, 2(3), 65-76

Table 1: Classification of masking tradition in Ipara-Remo

OWNERSHIP	EGUNGUN	ORO/AGEMO
Community	<i>Elegbojo Oroku</i>	<i>Onire (Boromo Ipara), Agemo</i>
Section/Group	<i>Agbomola, Layole, Onisigu, Ape, Ekun (Leopard), Asofo/Lagbaji.</i>	<i>Isese Ipara</i>
Private	<i>Bata, Oyeniwo, Saba, lyalode, Olabode, Aiyekonogbon, Etiyeri</i>	

From the table above, one can see that private individuals do not own the *Oro* or *Agemo* masks. However, for more clarification on the forms and functions of the masking traditions, each tradition will be discussed one after the other according to its ownership group.

Egungun Masquerade Morphology and Functions

As earlier stated, out of the twenty different masking traditions examined for this study, fifteen belong to the *Egungun* masquerade cult group. These are: *Elegbojo, Oroku/Aara, Agbomola, Layole, Onisigu, Asunmo, Lyalode, Ekun, Saba, Bata, Aiyekonogbon, Asafo, Ape, Oyeniwo, Etiyeri* and *Olabode*. Seven of them make use of masks made from wood and other assorted materials, ranging from fabrics to beads. Each of the two major quarters in Ipara town has its own masquerades, similar in both forms and functions to the other quarters, except that their names differ. For example, in Esepe Quarters, there is *Agbomola*, which is similar in form and function to *Layole* owned by the Oke-Aro/Igodo Quarters. The ownership of these masquerades is categorised into three:

- (1) Those that are owned by the community at large
- (2) Those owned by different sections/groups
- (3) Those owned by private individuals.

The above forms the basis of how the *Egungun* masquerade morphology and functions will be discussed. Among the *Egungun* masquerades owned by the community are *Elegbojo* and *Oroku*. Those owned by the different sections/groups are *Agbomola, Layole, Onisigu,* and *Ape*, while privately owned masquerades include *Bata, Saba, Lyalode, Ekun,* and *Olabode*.

Selected Masquerades and their Costumes

Costume, according to Hornby, is defined as the clothes worn by people from a particular place or during a particular historical period. It is also defined as the clothes worn by actors in a play or film/movie, or worn by somebody to make them look like something else³⁵. The last sentence here well defines the use of costume for masquerading. Masquerade costumes in Ipara-Remo are made from different materials of different colours, ranging from hand-woven fabrics (*Aso-Oke*), raffia, mats, velvets, Ankara and poplins. Costume is one of the identifiable or distinguishing factors in masking tradition in Ipara-Remo.

Elegbojo or Egbojo (Figure 1): This is said to be the first *Egungun* masquerade to be seen in Ipara-Remo, as believed by the people. It came from Oyo during the reign of Alaafin Abiodun Atiba in the 18th century. *Elegbojo* appears very simple and naturalistic in form. The costume is made of expensive dark blue hand-woven material: 'Aso Oke', sewn into a simple, loose, long and almost sack-like shape. Its short and loose leggings are joined straight to the trunk, made without any outlet for the arms. As such, the masquerade keeps its hands inside the costume. No sculpture (mask) is employed (as the headpiece of the costume), nor is any material attached to it. This costume completely covers the wearer to the extent that no part of the wearer's body is exposed or revealed to the public. In the face, a net often woven from threads of different colours is attached to provide a space for vision for the wearer who enters the costume through a slit created at one side of the costume.

Egbojo is owned by the community at large. It is accorded the respect to dance last during *Egungun* cult activities. It dances at a very slow pace typical of old age. Apart from dancing last during functions, it carries the "Obuko" (He-goat) that the *Egungun* cult members use in the burial ceremony of their dead member. The he-goat is usually carried from the deceased's house to the grave where the rituals will be performed. When this is done, the people say: *Egbojo ti gbe Obuko*, meaning *Egbojo* has carried the *Obuko* (He-goat). It is also used in fertility rituals for barren women.

³⁵ Hornby, A.S. 2000. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, Oxford: University Press

Ekun (Leopard Mask) Figure 2: It is the only masquerade that falls into the zoomorphic/animal form types of *Egungun* in the town. It belongs to the Ogbodo/Oliwo compound in the Ijabata area of the Oke/Aro section of the town. According to Chief Sobade Lolade Sosanwo, the idea of 'Ekun mask' started a long time ago in the town and later died down for some time before Late Pa Teriba Awotola Sowanwo revitalised it³⁶. The *Ekun* costume is composed of two parts: (i) a Leopard face helmet-type mask attached to the costume, which is sewn in the form of an animal (Leopard) shape with the legs and hands well defined, (ii) a small tail at the buttocks and a net on the face of the masquerade under the helmet mask through which it sees. The masquerade is always in a crawling position. Apart from the fact that the leopard's face is naturally depicted on the helmet-type headpiece, the personal identity of the masquerade is obscured, but takes the form of a life leopard. The leopard mask is carved in such a way that it depicts a hungry and salivating leopard with its mouth wide open. Its ears are straightened up, and its eyes are also open *in search of prey*. *Ekun* is employed for entertainment during festivals and burial ceremonies. It is magical and skilful; it climbs and descends trees and roofs with a thread.

Oroku/Aara: *Oroku* (Figure 3) is said to have been brought to the town from Ede, a town in the present Osun State, Southwest Nigeria, by Sanni Inaibi, who went with some other people from Ipara to fight a war, which they eventually won. *Oroku* Masquerade happened to be the head of the slaves at Ede by then. This is why it is praised as: *Oroku Anijalapo Baba Eru Ede*, meaning *Oroku*, the troublesome father of the slaves at Ede.

³⁶ Oral interview held with Chief Sosanwo Sobade Lolade, Age: 65, Baale Ajagba Village, *Conversation with the authors*, 2021



Figure 3:

Oroku Anijalapo masquerade, Ipara-Remo

Source: Samson Kehinde Adekoya (2020)

Its costume is made of expensive fabric materials ranging from stripped hand-woven material (*Aso Oke*) to a plain red poplin fabric material. The *Aso Oke* is sewn into a simple, loose, long, sack-like costume. In this costume, the hands are separated, unlike in *Elegbojo's* costume, in which the hands of the masquerade are in the costume. The masquerade, after wearing the sack-like *Aso Oke* from the top, folds the remaining portion behind, and a rope is used to tie it neatly to the body with some piece of cloth tied to the belly to make it look obese. The red poplin fabric is sewn into "*Dansiki*" (a small flowing gown), which is worn on top of the sack-like costume. The "*Dansiki*" is often decorated on the shoulder with the military sergeant rank: this is to show that the *Oroku* masquerade was used at Ede to guard slaves. There is also a net on its

face through which the masquerade sees. By the left hand-side of the forehead is a ball-like attachment, which is believed to house some magical (supernatural) powers. The people call it "Akara" (bean cake). So they address *Oroku* as 'Alakara gudugbe' (One with a big bean cake).

Except for the obscured personal identity under the face net, the total imagery has a male adult shape with a big tummy. To show how troublesome it is, it often carries whips and pursues children and adults who tease it. Also, it normally carries a bag where it keeps its gift items. According to Pa. Raimi Sobanke the custodian, the masquerade is so powerful and magical to the extent that in the past, it used bare feet to quench burning fire and used bare hands to remove boiling palm kernel from fire and take it to the *Osugbo*: it was decreed that nobody should boil palm oil around the huts that people were living in then and people used to violate this law. Hence, the owner of the palm kernel will pay a fine to the *Osugbo*³⁷. The elders in the town now recognised the unique strength of the masquerade, such that whenever they had to perform any sacrificial rites, they call upon it to carry out the rituals wherever they should be taken. *Oroku* also pulls a crowd during *Egungun* cult functions.

Oyeniwo Masquerade (Figure 4): *Oyeniwo* masquerade is owned by an individual. *Oyeniwo* masquerade activities in the town started around the early 80s. It was introduced to Ipara-Remo from Ilara-Remo in Remo North Local Government Area of Ogun State by one late traditional Chief called Osoro Baba Ojo. This masquerade costume composed of three parts, the leggings made separately into a pair of trousers; the underwear takes care of the chest and the hands with gloves covering the fingers while the big costume is made up of expensive fabric materials, all of bright and contrasting colours of 'Aso-oke', damask, Ankara and velvets in a patch work of long thin pieces joined to the helmet that holds the Cow horns. *Oyeniwo* masquerade is mainly for entertainment during festivals and other ceremonies.

³⁷ Oral interview held with Pa. Raimi Sobanke, Age: 85, The *Oroku* Custodian. *Conversation with the authors, 1998*



Figure 4a:

Oyeniwo in Ipara-Remo

Source: Bisola Adewale Adekoya, (2021)



Figure 4b:

Oyeniwo in Ipara-Remo

Source: Bisola Adewale Adekoya, (2021)

Bata (Figure 5): It is the most common type of masquerade in the town. It is owned by individuals (young or old). It resembles '*Elegbojo*'. The only difference is that *Elegbojo* is bald while the *Bata* masquerade has rectangular-shaped leather with which animal (Ram) fur is attached to its head. *Bata* costumes are made of fabric, mostly blue or black marocain and striped materials, sewn into a sack-like shape costume with a face net through which the masquerade sees. From the forehead down to the chest is an overspread of a rectangular-shaped cloth with a panel and bits of cloth of bright and contrasting colours. There is no outlet for the arms in the *Bata's* costume; the masquerade keeps his hands inside the costume just as in *Elegbojo's* costume. The costume completely covers the masquerade, and the masquerade's personal identity is thereby hidden from the public. This type of masquerade is the one to which Adepegba³⁸, Drewal³⁹ and Pemberton⁴⁰ refer to as *Egungun onidan*, meaning: "Performer of Miracles".

³⁸ Adepegba, C. O. 1984. Yoruba Egungun: It's Association with Ancestors and the typology of Yoruba Masquerades by their Costume. Seminar Paper, Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan.

³⁹ Drewal, H.J. 1978. "The Art of Egungun among the Yoruba Peoples", *African Art*, 11, 18-19.

⁴⁰ Pemberton, J. 1978. "Egungun Masquerades of the Igbomina Yoruba". *African Arts*, 2(3), 65-76



Figure 5:

Bata masquerades and one of their aides in Ipara-Remo

Source: Samson Kehinde Adekoya (2020)

Origin and Ownership of *Oro* and *Agemo* Masks in Ipara Remo

Onire/Olire Boromo Ipara (Figure 6): It is a dance mask owned by the entire community. There are two conflicting traditions about its origin in Ipara-Remo. The first tradition, according to Mureni Ogunleye, has it that *Onire* was imported into the town from Idomowo Quarters in Ijebu-Ode by a group of brass-smiths who came to the town on a business trip and discovered that the place was prosperous and decided to stay there⁴¹. This tradition is questionable because, although there is *Onire* and *Agemo* masking tradition in Ijebu Ode, women are forbidden to watch their activities, while in Ipara-Remo and other Remo towns, women are permitted to watch *Onire/Agemo* activities. See (Figures 6-9)

⁴¹ Oral interview held with Mureni Ogunleye, Age: 70, Retired Secondary School Teacher, *Conversation with the authors*, 2021.

The second tradition of origin is by Nosiru Awosola⁴² and Oguntayo Ogunyabo⁴³, who asserted that *Onire* was brought to the town from Ile-Ife and it is regarded as a living deity (*Orisa*), rather than the *Egungun* that represents the spirit of the dead ancestors. The Ife tradition is more plausible as the true origin of *Onire* in Ipara Remo. This is because it resembles the descriptive account of “Igbo masquerade that was used as a stratagem by which the Igbo disguised themselves to terrorise and plunder the Oduduwa group who drove them out of Ife”⁴⁴. But then it was not conceived as a deity. Its costume is made of *Iko* (raffia) fibre runs of different colours, which covers the wearer from head to toes and a headpiece known as 'Ade'(Crown) made of polished red coral with nine chameleons built around it and a parrot feather standing upright on top of the 'Ade'. It is the tallest of all the masking traditions (about 9ft). It is huge and round in shape, like a standing log of wood, with the coral headpiece seated firmly on top of it. It is also the most striking and magnificent in appearance. Because of this unique size and round form, it is being praised as: *Omo oyi rara woja*, meaning: The one who walks majestically and roundly into the market.

Agemo (Figures 7-10): The Community at large also owns *Agemo*, a dance mask. Both *Agemo* and *Onire* usually perform the same day, but in most cases *Agemo* performs before *Onire*. They have the same tradition of origin and the same sets of people who are the custodians of *Agemo* are also the keepers of *Onire*. *Agemo* is simple but unique in appearance. Its costume is made of raffia, woven into a local mat with pigments used to draw lines and different shapes on the mat. The wearer rolls the mat around himself. The total imagery looks like a barrel. There is no specific portion for vision for the wearer; he probably sees through the tiny space in between the warp strands of the mat. It is magical: the wearer can turn or change into various things during the performance. It is regarded as a deity, and people worship it.

⁴² Oral interview held with Nosiru Awosola, Age: 75, Agemo Devotee in Ipara-Remo, *Conversation with the authors*, 1998

⁴³ Oral interview held with Oguntayo Ogunyabo, Age: 75, Oke-Aro Section *Apepe* Group Leader, *Conversation with the authors*, 1998

⁴⁴ Babyemi, S.O. 1980. *Egungun among the Oyo Yoruba*, Ibadan: Oyo State Council for Arts and Culture.



Figure 6:

Olire/Boromo Ipara in Ipara-Remo

Source: Olori'tun Simbo Ogunnubi (2023)



Figure 7:
Agemo in Ipara-Remo

Source: Samson Kehinde Adekoya, (2020)



Figure 8:
Agemo in Ipara-Remo

Source: Samson Kehinde Adekoya, (2020)



Figure 9:
Agemo in Ipara-Remo

Source: Samson Kehinde Adekoya, (2020)



Figure 10:
Agemo in Ipara-Remo

Source: Samson Kehinde Adekoya, (2020)

Isepe Ipara (Oro Headpiece): The two distinct sections, Esepe and Oke-Aro, own the Isepe Ipara series. None of its present custodians knows its origin. They make use of them during their 'Oro festivals' as dance masks. Each consists essentially of a carved headdress, which is divided into two parts: the lower portion and the upper portion. The lower portion is fitted on the carrier's (dancer's) head like a helmet. The upper portion contains the superstructure. Its subjects/ assemblages are depicted in far more realistic terms. The dancer dresses like a woman, and his identity is easily known. *Isepe Ipara (Oro head piece)* is in a series. The sculptures are carved from wood and are much more compact. They are similar to the *Epa* head piece/headdress of the Northeast corner of the Yoruba region occupied by the Ekiti. Unlike the *Epa* headdress, which is carved from a log of wood, *Isepe Ipara* is an assemblage of different figures on the two to threestep platforms arranged on top of each other. *Isepe* is purely a dance mask. For secrecy and forewarned instruction from the community, I will not be able to publish the picture in this article. However, *the Isepe* headdress is similar to the *Magbo* headdress of the Ijebu (Figure 11).



Figure 11:

Magbo Oro Head dress

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Conclusion

In Yorubaland, *Egungun* masquerade activities are widespread, constituting one of the most popular religious phenomena in Remoland. However, it has since been taken beyond the realm of ordinary religion. It is now conceived as a medium of artistic expression through which pomp and pageantry are displayed. The existence of different types of costume designs, whose owners have been classified into three: community, sections/groups, and private individuals are the basis of this research study.

There are two conflicting traditions about the introduction of *Egungun* into Remoland, the first tradition, regarded as the Ibadan tradition, which credits the introduction of *Egungun* to Remoland to Oluyole (the founder of Ibadan) and the second tradition, which is the suggestion made by Ogunba that Remo towns received *Egungun* from their Egba neighbours” .

However, among the Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria, it is generally believed that the *Egungun* cult started in the old Oyo Empire and spread to all other parts of the Yoruba-speaking country in the early 19th century, as asserted by Adepegba (1984) and Pemberton (1978). However, Marilyn H. Houlberg (1978) claimed that “*Egungun* masquerades of the Remo Yoruba do not have carved wooden masks as part of their costume.” This paper does not support this assertion or give credence to previous studies. It has revealed that some *Egungun* masquerades in Remoland use masks/carved images. In Ipara-Remo, typical examples include *Ekun* (Leopard) masquerade, *Agbomola* masquerade, *Layole* masquerade, *Onisigu* masquerade, and *Saba* masquerade, to mention a few.

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Review Format for Author(s)

<i>Comment(s) or concerns raised by reviewer(s).</i>	<i>How the revision was done.</i>	<i>Give a bold typeface in the portions in the paper where the revisions occur and indicate the page(s) as well.</i>
<p>1.The title. There are three words in the title that give the impression that they are separate concepts for elaboration in the article: 'provenance', 'formalism' and 'costume'. 'Provenance' has to do with origin, and indeed, the writers provided ample demonstration of the origin of masks. The word 'formalism', however, presents an ambivalent situation. In one respect, it gives one the sense of form, which the paper has addressed. In another respect, the appearance of 'formalism' in the title evokes the notion of the critical theory of formalism which places premium on the form and structure of a work of art rather than on its origin, context, etc. As a theory that arose as a reaction to romanticist criticism, formalism often</p>	<p>The word 'formalism' in the title has been changed to 'form' as advised/suggested by the reviewer?</p>	<p>The word formalism has been changed to form in the title.</p> <p>In the abstract, though has been replaced with and as suggested by the reviewer. Still in the abstract, is has been replaced with presents as suggested. On page 3 the English/literary meaning of Remo <i>meta'lelogbon</i> have been provided. On page 4, the sub-theme has been spaced. On page 5 “being” has been deleted as suggested. On page 8, the referencing issue has been addressed. The issue raised on page 9 is part of our research and not Oyedeji’s opinion. The rearrangement suggested on page 10 has</p>

<p>ignores issues of origin of texts, sociocultural influences and authorship. It is interesting to note, however, that the writers in this article have conjoined this word with provenance, which evidently concerns itself with the origin of an art work. The first encounter with the topic would give a reader the notion of formalism as a critical theory to be expounded on at some point in the article. The authors may have to disambiguate the term and provide ample elucidation on what exactly their focus is. Would the article lose anything if the word 'formalism' is changed to 'form'?</p> <p>2. A number of issues identified in the write-up to do with language use, and formatting have been commented on in-text and the writers need to pay attention to them.</p> <p>3. I am not really sure what</p>	<p>All other issues raised by the reviewer have been addressed in the paper.</p> <p>The issue of reference style has been addressed in the paper. The references have been changed to Footnote as requested by the editorial team.</p>	<p>been done. Masquerade in the Yoruba context as observed on page 12 represents ancestral spirit. It does not have any relationship with the 17th century 'masques' in England.</p> <p>As suggested on page 17, the labels of all the figures have been moved to the bottom of all the figures. The word 'it' on page 19 has been capitalised as suggested. On page 20 the word 'Morphology' has been changed to Origin and Ownership of <i>Oro</i> and Agemo Masks to address the observation of the reviewer. Similarly on page 22 'the' has been capitalised as suggested. The observation on page 24 as regard clarity of the statement has been re-framed. The sentence has been reconstructed to emphasise among the Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria. Also, the word 'spreads' on</p>
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<p>reference style is required by the journal. What I see here is not the APA style which has become commonplace. The authors may have to confirm with the editors about the appropriate style.</p>		<p>page 24 has been changed to ‘spread’ as suggested.</p>
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