Students' Preferences for some Elements of Cultural Diffusion and Globalization at Federal College of Education, Abeokuta, Nigeria

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Abstract: Foreign cultural traits and tastes seem to be prevalent among Nigerian students. This case study therefore attempted to investigate the impact of cultural diffusion and globalization on students' lifestyles at Federal College of Education, Osiele, Abeokuta. A sample of 275 students out of a total of 5,012 Nigeria Certificate in Education students had their opinion investigated through a 15 – item questionnaire. Using a randomized survey method with percentages and chisquare (X^2) test on two hypotheses, it was discovered that the students belong to the "split-personalities" class with a significant preferences for Eurocentric lifestyles. There was equally a significant difference between male and female views on some elements of cultural diffusion and globalization in the college. True African cultural renaissance was therefore recommended as a remedy.

Keywords: Cultural diffusion, Globalization and Split-personalities.

INTRODUCTION

Although culture is central to human life but itusually generates diversed – discourse among scholars [1]. Regardless of the divergencies in its definition however, it refers to the totality of the characteristics of a particular group of people involving their language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts [2] as well as their 'value for things, ideas, emotions and action' [3]. In their 'value for things', people are used to cultural burrowing through diffusion process. According to Spencer –Oatey [1], it is the belief of anthropologists that 90 percent of all things, ideas, and behavioural patterns found in any culture had their origins elsewhere.Consequently, cultural diffusion rather than invention and discoveries account for almost all the innovations and change in behavioural patterns that can be noticed in developing countries (Nigeria inclusive).

According to Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia [4], trans-cultural diffusion are of three categories viz: Direct diffusion which is always due to close contact especially through inter-racial/ethnic marriages, forced diffusion that occurs when one culture subjugates another like the issue of 'frenchificatioin' of countries such as Coted'ivoire, Niger, Cameroon and Republic of Benin in West Africa and indirect diffusion that happens when a culture passes through a middle man such as the plating of head by Nigerian male footballers abroad. It is observed however that most cultural diffusion through contacts are selective in nature, often lose their original form and they involve two – way process of origin and destination [1].

Looking at cultural diffusion within the context of neo-colonialism, many of the cultural burrowing in Nigeria are 'European – inspired' or consequences of 'westernization' and 'colonial imperialism' [5]. Westernization according to Tucker [6] is a thesis that severely underestimates the cultural resilience and dynamism of non-western cultures. According to him, it promotes western ethnocentrism which emphasizes personal liberty, gender and sexuality, human rights, foreign tastes, scientific and technological rationality. Indeed, westernization that arose as a result of colonial imperialism is seen by Udeani [7] as the erosion of the foundation of African cultural identity including African world-view, politics, social arrangements, religions, economics, educational system, arts, music, literature and languages" [8].

The "westernization theory" accounted for the adoption of English Language as Nigeria's Lingua Franca, Nigerians preference for coca-cola products, canned beaf, wearing of trousers, jeans, shirts, skirts and sweaters as well as imported machines. Religious cultural diffusion had also brought Christianity and Islam from the western and Arabian world respectively.

Globalization which is geared towards market deregulation and economic liberalization [9] is seen as another attempt at 'cultural unification and pacification'

threatening the world's rich cultural diversity [10]. As a complex interconnections between societies, cultures, institutions and individuals world-wide; globalization promotes 'global consumerism' and 'cultural hegemony' of the western world [6].

Eze [8] posited that the current phase of globalization has further alienated the African people from their roots as a result of the impact of information and communication technology. According to him:

> *Through the activities of the new media – the internet, email, facebook, twitter, cable and satellite televisions, African cultures are being systematically obliterated or erased from the face of the earth.*

Along this submission is an observation that African youths (including Nigerians) became more Europeanized than the Europeans such that they "parrot European songs and dance European music". They "know off hand all the football players and clubs in Europe and belong to each of these clubs, like Manchester United, Chelsea, Arsenal, Barcelona, Bayern Munich, Real Madrid etc; but know nothing about their local football clubs" [8]. Consequently, Nigerians like other Africans are in conflicting situation and become split – personality because cultural imperialism and globalization have made them to believe that their culture is inferior to that of the Europeans. As a "split personality", they are "neither wholly African nor wholly European" [8]. This study therefore attempted to investigate the "split-personality" in the Nigerian students at Federal College of Education, Abeokuta, Nigeria.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

The theories of social learning by Bandura [11] and social constructivism Vygotsky [12] are the bases for this study. Accordingly observational learning or participant modeling/imitation could account for the various elements of direct and indirect cultural diffusion witnessed in Nigeria. For instance, the wearing of foreign dresses, eating of foreign foods, playing of foreign music and imitation of foreign dances are consequences of social contacts and interactions between the Europeans and Nigerians during the colonial rule. On the other hand, social constructivism suggests that "every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first on the social level and later on the individual level" with language being developed by "cultural conditions" [12]. This theory suggests that of globalization as a reinforcement of neo-colonialism assisted to strengthen the acquisition of English language and western lifestyles by the Nigerian people. This therefore made Nigerians to become Europeanized – African.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in preferences of the students for some elements of cultural diffusion and globalization in the college.
2. There is no significant difference between male and female views on some elements of cultural diffusion and globalization in the college.

METHODOLOGY

This survey study covered a total population of 5012 Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) students at Federal College of Education, Osiele, Abeokuta. A sample size of 275 students cutting across the five schools in the college, amounting to 5.49 percent were randomly chosen for the study. 20.7 percent of the students were male while 79.3 percent were female. This in-proportional gender ratio wasso because currently and for the past three years, the college students' population ratio has been 1:5 in favour of the female students. To test the hypotheses, a 15-item questionnaire validated by two Social Studies Lecturers in the college was developed. Furthermore, a test – retest reliability coefficient of 0.69 was obtained for the instrument. Percentages and chi-square (X^2) statistics were used to analyze the questionnaire items.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study is a reflection of the split – personality of the students in the college. While 51.6% of the students prefer sometimes to speak English at home because in their opinion it makes them to look modern, 21.9% of them did not believe so as against 26.5% that always enjoy doing so. 56.4% of the students always prefer to do their holidays abroad than in Nigeria. More than 40% of the students always prefer to watch English and Indian films than their indigenous films with equivalent percentage sometimes doing so. While 41.8% of the students always prefer imported goodsand machines than locally made ones, 46.2% of them also sometimes prefer them, living only negligible 12% not preferring imported choice. This is in line with Udeani's [7] submission that 'westernization" has actually eroded African identity.

Indeed, only 18.2% of the students did not prefer to work abroad after schooling even though 62.9% of them would not like to marry white person. Although it is heartwarming that majority of the students (68.4%) would not like to shake hands with elders but more than 40 percent among them would prefer to wear foreign dresses like shirts and trousers to make them look smart. Overall, there is a significant difference in the preferences of the college students on some elements of cultural diffusion and globalization as shown in Table 1 ($X^2 = 50.93 > 5.99$ @ 0.05 level). This is in line with the submission of Eze [8] that Africans (including Nigerians) are "neither wholly African nor wholly European".

Table 1: Preferences of College students on some elements of cultural diffusion and globalization.

Preferences for European lifestyles	Total	Df	Mean	X^2cal	X^2tabl	Decision
Always	1286 (31.2)					
Sometimes	1590 (38.6)	2	1375	50.93	5.99	Sig
Not At All	1249 (30.2)					

$X^2 = 50.93 > 5.99$ @ 0.05 level.

As can be seen in table 1, majority (31.2+38.6 percent) of the students either sometimes or always prefer European and American ways of life than the African lifestyles and this is significant ($X^2 = 50.93$) at 0.05 level.

Table 2: Male versus female views on the impact of cultural diffusion and globalization in the college.

Sex	Always	Sometimes	Not At All	Df	X^2cal	X^2tal	Decision
Male	227 (266.6)	325 (329.6)	303 (258.9)				
Female	1059 (1019.4)	1265 (1260.4)	946 (990.1)	2	16.97	5.99	Sig

$X^2 = 16.97 > 5.99$ @ 0.05 level.

In percentage analysis, except on the item where majority of the male (64.9%) expressed their views that if given opportunities, they would always prefer to holiday abroad as against 54.1% of the female respondents; the female exceeded the male positively on Eurocentric preferences in the remaining fourteen items. This suggests that the female students in the college are more Eurocentric in their lifestyles preferences. This is even more evidential in the significant result obtained in table 2 ($X^2 = 16.97 > 5.99$@ 0.05 level).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is the need for yearly African cultural renaissance in which all the African heritage such as works of arts, mode of dressing, indigenous language contest, traditional food etc shall be displayed in youth camps to de-construct Nigerians mentality. In the views of UNESCO [13], the recommended African cultural renaissance must strengthen intercultural dialogue which can promote eco-tourism and foster creative cultural enterprises.
- Mother tongues should be used to teach Nigerian students in all subjects up till primary three. This is in line with late Professor BabsFafunwa's project at the ObafemiAwolowo University, Ile – Ife.
- Places of tourist attraction should be upgraded with modern day infrastructures so as to attract more patronage from people within and outside.
- More traditional films and music should be promoted in public media and the youth should be made to draw-out moral lessons from them.
- Nigerians should be ready to drop their foreign names and bear their indigenous names anywhere they find themselves as a mark of African pride.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that the outcome of this study revealed a deep impact on cultural diffusion and globalization on the college students. There is indeed cases of "split – personalities" among the students. However, it is hoped that the suggested recommendations if implemented will go a long way to remodel the students along the path of true African personalities.

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