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Sociology & Culture

An Action Research Study

Leadership Program Design

Highlights

Culture as the Bedrock

Participation in Virtual Communities

Discovering Thoughts, Inventing Future

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Exploring a Diverse Team's Approach to Inclusive Leadership Program Design: An Action Research Study

By Linda M. Lyons & Shelbee Nguyen Voges
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Abstract- This study explored how a diverse team influences the action research process and what team dynamics emerged when employing the stages of action research when tasked to develop an academic program aimed at inclusive leadership. Tuckman's (1965) stages of group development and an action research design conceptually frame this study. The researchers use a mixed methodology utilizing quantitative data from the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) to assess the team's level of intercultural sensitivity, along with qualitative observations and interviews to determine if the team's diverse composition contributed to the academic development process. The results of the study showed: team dynamics, a safe work environment, and intentionality had the greatest influence on the team's success in academic program development. Findings of this study can be used to inform faculty, administrators, and facilitators on the utility of action research methods when collaboratively developing academic programs and other pertinent initiatives that comprise individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Keywords: inclusive leadership, diverse teams, action research, intercultural competence.

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Exploring a Diverse Team's Approach to Inclusive Leadership Program Design: An Action Research Study

Linda M. Lyons [α] & Shelbee Nguyen Voges [σ]

Abstract- This study explored how a diverse team influences the action research process and what team dynamics emerged when employing the stages of action research when tasked to develop an academic program aimed at inclusive leadership. Tuckman's (1965) stages of group development and an action research design conceptually frame this study. The researchers use a mixed methodology utilizing quantitative data from the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) to assess the team's level of intercultural sensitivity, along with qualitative observations and interviews to determine if the team's diverse composition contributed to the academic development process. The results of the study showed: team dynamics, a safe work environment, and intentionality had the greatest influence on the team's success in academic program development. Findings of this study can be used to inform faculty, administrators, and facilitators on the utility of action research methods when collaboratively developing academic programs and other pertinent initiatives that comprise individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Keywords: inclusive leadership, diverse teams, action research, intercultural competence.

I. Introduction

Higher education institutions struggle to reconcile valuing diversity in leadership teams aimed at academic development and other institutional initiatives. In a recent survey about organizational leaders' opinions about diversity, data revealed that 98% believe that diversity and inclusion are supported by their organization, but, "few of the organizations surveyed have significant numbers of senior leaders of color-those representing a specific ethnicity-and very few have substantive, measurable practices in place to improve racial and ethnic diversity" (Koya, 2015, p. 1). The growing student demographics, which is nearly half of the total student population, require leadership development that reflects the interests of the communities they serve. Because of the disparity between the value for diversity and actual diversity in leadership, higher education institutions "may not be developing academic program solutions that effectively address the needs of the populations they're working to serve" (Brennan, 2015, p. 1).

To remedy this gap, a diverse team, comprised of undergraduate peer leaders, academic developers and instructors came together to participate in an action research project which aimed at developing an inclusive leadership academic development program. Carver and Klein (2013) note, "the use of action research to study leadership development remains uncommon, especially among leadership educators" (p. 162). Given the everchanging demographics across institutions of higher education, stakeholders are now asked to think intentionally about how collaborative, or team based, program leadership development manifests when there is a focus on diversity. The purpose of this research was to explore how action research can be used to discern the nuances of a team's collaborative efforts aimed at inclusive leadership program design. This examination was guided by the following probing questions:

- How did the team's demographic indicators influence the action research process?
- What team dynamics emerged while using the stages of action research process?

II. Relevant Literature and Conceptual Framework

As our continually changing, diverse globalized society calls for new emerging leaders across all industries and disciplines, planning and developing programs, which aim to develop inclusive leadership, can be challenging. Academic program development is comprised of a set of planned approaches, systematic activities that include analyzing program context and needs, collaborating with instructors in setting objectives, selecting and organizing learning activities and evaluating program effectiveness (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2011; Knox 1990; Sisco & Guglielmino, 1997). There is no unique best practice for academic program design. A variety of factors, such as goals, needs, participating individuals or groups, and contexts will have to be considered when planning academic development programs for adult and higher education (AHE) learners (Fitzpatrick, Sander &Worthen, 2011). Oftentimes, collaborating or forming cohesive teams, can prove difficult, especially when engaging stakeholders across faculty, staff, student and

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administrative groups. Caffarella (2002) uses the following metaphor when describing program planning in a work team environment:

> *"Planning programs for adults is like swimming in the ocean. Some days the ocean is calm and welcomes people with open arms… On other days, when the surf is somewhat rough and the waves higher, the ocean provides challenges for even the best of swimmers" (p 1).*

Harland and Staniforth (2008) further suggest that the fragmented nature of the academic development field also creates additional obstacles when it comes to core values and shared vision of any given academic development program. These obstacles may be compounded as institutions are more intentional about incorporating diverse perspectives in leadership teams for academic development. Scholars conclude that academic program development must be individualized and contextualized to "suit local situations" (Harland & Staniforth, 2008, p. 670). These can include, but are not limited to the aforementioned institutional and individual goals, needs, and objectives. The aim of this action research project attempts to understand the dimensions of a team's collaborative efforts when developing an academic program in inclusive leadership.

a) Action Research

Calvin and Klein (2013) note that while there is much known about what constitutes a quality inclusive leadership preparation program "much less is known about how these features are implemented at the program level" (p. 163). This study explores nuances of building collaboration among team members comprised of various social demographics, such as race, age, and gender, and how this composition might be implemented at the program development level when employing action research. Action Research is a participatory process and democratic partnership that involves stakeholders-community of interest-to be engaged in systematic inquiry and investigation of a problem (Stringer, 2007; Herr & Anderson, 2005). Bish, Kenny and Nay (2013) note that that the participatory nature of action research and leadership development are natural partners, because awareness and adaptability garnered from workplace and life experiences, are not always acquired through formal training or even recognized by developers themselves. This is especially true when it comes to developing culturally inclusive leaders (Bennett, 2009).

The four phases of the action research, also referred as instructor self-study, allows the academic developers to examine their own practices for the sake of bettering that practice and overall program implementation. Coghlan and Brannick (2010) indicated four basic phases of action research are: (a) *constructing*: exploration of context and purpose; (b) *planning action*: describing how to implement the action; (c) *taking action:* implementing plans and creating interventions; and (d) *evaluating action*: examining the outcomes of the action. Utilizing the four phases of action research allows developers to explore both known and unknown dimensions of diversity in order to develop academic programs aimed at inclusive leadership. The four phases occur in a cyclical non-orderly movement that may or may not present intended results. However, incorporating evaluations of each phase allows the researchers to make appropriate adjustments based on evidence of actual behaviors and/or outcomes, and allows for evaluating of what is being learned through the process (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). This becomes centrally important as developers and stakeholders discover and navigate their own understands of cultural difference in an effort to foster inclusive leadership practices so that they can then implement these attributes at the program level for future student leaders.

The theoretical frame underpinning the four stages of action research is not approached as linear, but as a process that is a fluid cyclical movement between practice, reflection and learning (Jaipal & Figg, 2011). Similarly, planning academic programs, which aim to develop inclusive leaders, is seldom a step-by-step process. Like the stages of action research, academic program developers often work with a number of planning components and tasks simultaneously, which may not be conducted in any standard order. Additionally, employing action research is ideal as universities recognize the importance of utilizing collaborative, or team based, approaches to bring together instructors, administrators and academic developers as mutual stakeholders in program design and implementation that focus on inclusive leadership (Weber & Lupart, 2011).

b) Collaborative Teams

Tuckman's (1965) stages of group development serves as another component of the conceptual framework for this study. This action research project attempts to bridge understandings in academic development and implementation by asking questions about how a team's demographic indicators influence collaboration? Additionally, what team dynamics emerged while using the stages of the action research process? The foundation of any given academic development program relies heavily on shared vision and a collaborative identification of a problem (Zuber-Skerritt & Louw, 2014). While small groups of stakeholders across the higher education institution might come together with similar motivations to address the issue of inclusive leadership program development, collaborative relationships can be difficult to cultivate because of different backgrounds, learning styles and experiences (Ejiwale, 2014). In other words, not all groups come together to form collaborative teams. Kolowski and Bell (2003) note that the main

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distinguishable difference between groups and teams is that teams are interdependent on one another to achieve any given organizational task. Thus, for purposes of this research, the use of team is used to underscore the interconnected nature of team members in developing an academic program aimed at inclusive leadership.

Tuckamn (1965) posited that teams, like action research, encounter non-linear processes which become necessary to meeting task requirements. Those stages are: (a) f*orming*: acclimation to the task, (b) s*torming*: team resistance and divergences surface, (c) n*orming*: open communication to achieve mutual consensus and, (d) p*erforming*: interdependence around tasks and goal achievement. This can be hindered or made more complex depending on the diversity of any given team. Diversity of a team can be determined by the extent to which members are different from one another (Forsyth, 2010). However, teams which are diverse in their makeup can find increased perspectives, cognitive resources, problem solving approaches collectively improving decision-making (Grace, 2012). Diverse teams may also encounter a broader range of expertise, knowledge, insight and ideas, with informal communication and social integration occurring concurrently (Grace, 2012; Forsyth, 2010). Because this academic development program is aimed at developing inclusive leaders, it was imperative for team members to be able to gauge their own reactions and responses to cultural differences during the constructing phase of the study. Their experiences, individual role and lessons learned could then be an additional tool utilized in the facilitation of development program.

c) Inclusiveness and Intercultural Sensitivity

To establish a base line for how team members make sense of cultural differences, the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) was utilized. This would also serve as a diagnostic resource in the actual development program once implemented. The DMIS is a stage-based model defining degrees of intercultural sensitivity, and to what extent an individual is inclusive of those who are culturally different. Bennett (1993) defines intercultural sensitivity as the way people make meaning of cultural difference and the varying kinds of experiences that accompany these different constructions. Bish et al. (2013) comments, "the identification of issues that may influence leadership development is imperative" and can be helpful to overall program planning and design within the action research design (p. 286).The DMIS, used in wide popularity, provides a framework for understanding how people experience cultural difference through six distinct orientation stages: *denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, and integration* (Bennett, 2009). These stages also suggest what individuals do not see or think; therefore, the DMIS also highlights how people's cultural patterns both guide and limit their experience of cultural difference and the degree to which they are inclusive in intercultural settings (Bennett,1986). Table 1 outlines the DMIS's intercultural development stages and the orientation levels in detail (Bennett, 2009).

Table 1 : Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

Intercultural Stage	Orientation Level
Ethnocentric: one's own culture is experienced as central to reality in some way.	***Denial:*** the state in which one's own culture is experienced as the only real one; disinterested in cultural difference ***Defense***: the state in which one's own culture (or an adopted culture) is experienced as the only good one; us vs. them mentality; threatened by cultural differences ***Minimization***: the state in which elements of one's own cultural worldview are experienced as universal; expect similarities and correct others' behavior to match their expectations
Ethnorelative: one's own culture is experienced in the context of other cultures.	***Acceptance***: the state in which one's own culture is experienced as just one of a number of equally complex worldview; not in agreement, but curious about and respectful toward cultural difference ***Adaptation***: the state in which the experience of another culture yields perception and behavior appropriate to that culture; one's worldview expands to include constructs from other worldviews ***Integration:*** the state in which one's experience of self is expanded to include fluid movement in and out of different cultural worldviews *(Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003).*

The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), is employed in this action research study as a tool that measures the orientation levels of the DMIS, interprets an individual's or group's level of engagement in diversity and intercultural competencies, and identifies the associated transition issues around that specific

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orientation (M. J. Bennett, 2009). This theory-based instrument measures the first five levels of the DMIS—denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, and adaptation as defined in Table 1. Each stage indicates a particular cognitive structure that is expressed in certain kinds of attitudes and behavior related to cultural difference. By recognizing the underlying cognitive orientation toward cultural difference, predictions about behavior and attitudes can be made, education can be tailored to facilitate movement into the next stage and assist individuals and diverse teams in effective collective work (Bennett & Hammer, 1998). As the research team explores their own orientation level of the DMIS, using the IDI as a diagnostic tool, they can make sense of how to best facilitate progression through these stages for themselves and their program design as well as gain practical insights for implementation across a variety of student groups.

III. Methodology

This action research study attempts to shed new insight on academic development design and implementation that fosters inclusive leadership by asking questions about how a team's demographic indicators influence collaboration? Furthermore, researchers focused on what team dynamics emerged while using the stages of action research process. The research was conducted at a public comprehensive four-year institution of higher education located in the Southeast region of the United States where the current enrollment of full-time equivalent students exceeds 30,000. The institution offers baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degree programs, with a commitment to providing academic and co-curricular programs that contribute to students' academic development. Due to the increase growth in the demographics in the student population, there was a concern that additional programs and interventions were needed to enhance current multicultural education and programs that focused on intercultural competence development. Through the school's Quality Enhancement Program (QEP), programming started to focus on global citizenry and the development of cultural awareness.

a) Participants: The Research Team

The academic unit in this study is comprised of two academic developers, one instructor and two undergraduate peer leaders. The purpose of using peer leaders is to provide services and support to fellow students who are recipients of these development programs. As the result of interactions between more experienced and well-trained peers, students can develop a stronger sense of community, greater social and academic integration, and a rich network of resource and referral agents dedicated to their success (Shook & Keup, 2012).The academic unit, also referred to as the research team, was charged with providing interdisciplinary programs with the intent to cultivate meaningful and measurable experiences in leadership development, multiculturalism, and civic engagement for undergraduate students. The target academic development program was to be designed and implemented for a learning community that consists of high academic achievers in the Honors College. This group of learners consisted of first-year students just entering the institution for their four-year degree program. The action research team's primary task, which was established in the study's constructing phase, was to coordinate the design, delivery and evaluation of all curricular and co-curricular activities implemented to expose the students to learning that will promote inclusive leadership. The research team's demographics consist of two Caucasian males, two Caucasian females, and one African American female. Ages vary from 21 to 56 and all members identify as citizens of the United States. Table 2 offers more information about the roles and backgrounds of the members of the team.

Table 2 : Team roles and background

Title	Role	Profile	Years of Service
Manager	Oversees the three year program's operations; assists with class/module lectures throughout the year; coordinates external events; manages education abroad trips; and participates/supports the community engagement projects.	Caucasian Male	3
Instructor for Honors Courses	Serves as the instructor for the required honors courses which focus on global engagement, leadership trends and global leadership curricular. Also promotes student development through team building and prepare students for domestic and international engagements that will utilize intercultural dexterity.	Caucasian Male	7

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Facilitator/ Researcher	Serves as diversity subject matter expert and certified IDI assessor. Assist in the program planning/development of curricular and co-curricular activities with the attempt in building intercultural competencies. Additionally implement IDI and conduct assessment of participants' level of intercultural competencies; provide interventions to address gaps in intercultural skills as well as examine and obtain an understanding of learners' transformation process when incorporating innovative programs for using intercultural skills.	African-American Female	8
Undergraduate Peer Leaders	Peer leaders are upper class men who have been selected and trained to offer support and services to their peers. Additionally, peer leaders assist first-year students in their transition into college and support them in their efforts towards meeting educational goals both in their academic discipline and in the leadership program.	2 Caucasian females	3

IV. Procedure and Data Analysis

Mixed methods were employed to explore how the diverse leadership team builds collaboration to design and implement new academic development programs aimed at inclusive leadership. Herr and Anderson (2005) suggest that mixed methods can be useful in action research to offer more robust and descriptive insight. Additionally, a triangulation of sources helps to provide context and rich background so that results can be implemented into actual practice (Herr & Anderson, 2005). The leadership team took the IDI as a self-assessment diagnostic tool to measure their intercultural competence level as well as use the results as a tactical approach to determine their perceptions about cultural difference and how that influenced the creation of a cohesive team. By exploring their own orientation level on the DMIS theoretical framework, they could make sense of how to best facilitate progression through these stages for themselves, their program design and gain practical insights for implementation across a variety of student groups.

Qualitative methods were used to collect data from a variety of sources, and again, to optimize triangulation. During weekly team meetings the researcher would capture group discussions via audio recording devices and field notes. Data were also collected through direct observation of group dynamics and team interactions, as well as individual interviews with each team member. The purpose of the one-on-one interviews was to gain personal insights, observations, perceptions and feedback on the team's work and cohesiveness as well as their observation of the action research experience.

All data were transcribed and analyzed to reveal reoccurring themes and data discrepancies. When reviewing the data, the four general stages of qualitative data analysis was applied (Ruona, 2005): *Data Preparation:* organizing data findings; categories based on important/key findings (cleaning); create filing system; *Familiarization:* In-depth review of data collected to gain a sense of the information and reflect on its overall meaning; *Coding:* Assigning a label/designation to various aspects of the data to be easily retrieved; placing data into specific categories and; *Generating Meaning:* interpretation of the data; identifying reoccurring themes/messages. The coding process was helpful and reviewing data concurrently with data collection allowed for readjustments to the inquiry process as new discovery of data findings emerged.

a) *Findings*

There were a variety of salient findings which addressed the research questions that guided this study: 1) how did the team's demographic indicators influence the action research process and, 2) what team dynamics emerged while using the stages of the action research process? The study's results referenced that the diversity make-up of the team was not solely limited to cultural background. Although the team varied in age, race, ethnicity, and gender, findings indicate that academic background and the approach to the task of developing inclusive programs uniquely impacted the action research process. For example the researcher observed the steady increase in group engagement and the comfort level of the team's collective work during meetings, classroom instructions, and in social settings. Baseline data was collected on how the team perceives culture differences through the administering of the IDI as a pre and post assess. Although this brought awareness around the team's cultural differences, team dynamics that emerged, like building a safe and inclusive work environment, members felt were key elements to the collaboration process and were also among important findings.

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b) Diverse Team's Impact on Action Research

Tuckman (1965) suggests that a natural group environment occurs when groups are created to do a task or professional function. The team's intimate size and group dynamics influenced the work conducted through the action research process and the task to develop an inclusive leadership program. During the action research *constructing phase* the team was formed and discussed approaches to developing, delivering, and evaluating academic programs for their students. Additionally the team determined their timeframe for conducting the work and how to go about achieving the goals and objectives of their charge. This included initial conversations as it pertained to creating development programs for the students. For example, the members, mutually identified their purpose, established their tasks, acknowledged team roles, and recognized key stakeholders and resources needed to meet their goal. "It is important that the constructing step be a collaborative venture" (Coghlan&Brannick, 2010, p. 9).

The results of the group's pre IDI assessment indicated that the team identified themselves in the beginning stages of adaptation—the state in which the experience of another culture yields perception and behavior appropriate to that culture (Bennett, 1986). Most people assume that their proficiency level is high and tend to hold overly favorable views of their abilities in many social and intellectual domains; they expect to succeed at achievement tasks (Brown, 1990; Kruger & Dunning, 1999). This orientation on the IDI instrument is known as the "perceived orientation". Figure 1 shares the results of the team's pre IDI assessment results. This visual indicates how the leadership team perceives their collective orientation level in comparison to where they actually fall on the spectrum, which is known as the "developmental orientation."

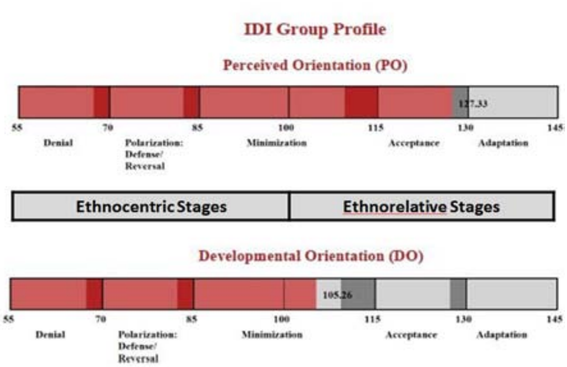

Figure 1 : Leadership Team's IDI Pre Group Profile

The developmental orientation results indicated that the team was actually located in the Minimization stage. As stated in the literature review, Minimization is the orientation stage within the DMIS that acknowledges surface differences, but only focuses on similarities among cultures, masking a deeper understanding of cultural differences (Bennett, 1986). In addressing how the team's diversity impacted the project, the researchers utilized Tuckman' (1965) forming stage to gauge how the team members made sense of roles and responsibilities in the beginning phases. The researcher and principle investigator (PI) recognized some of the formative influences of the team's makeup and how this might have influences the action research process. She notes in a private reflection:

> *"It is obvious I'm the only member on the team from an underrepresented group. But whenever we talk about potential topics around diversity or approaching race related issues with the learners, it seems like I'm the go-to person for this specific subject area."*

Tuckman (1965) explains that team interactions in the storming phase can be slow and less deliberate when developing inclusive programs due to: (a) assumption of levels in authority and positionality, (b) team cohesion was not yet established, and (c) rapport needed to be developed. It is possible that the nature of the PI's role as lead researcher, and the only group member of color present, challenged the group's productivity and collaborative efforts around designing inclusive module because of the team's assumption of having an expert in the field to address that specific area of program development.

During initial weekly meetings and through the team's constructing process, the researchers noticed from observations in team meetings and group discussions that full team participation and interaction were not evident. This is a normal phenomenon when teams are forming -- creating group norms and getting acclimated to the task-- for the first time (Tuckman, 1965). This promoted an increase in probing questions around the team's collective work and targeted feedback from those members who were less vocal so that the group could graduate into the next group development phase, which was the storming stage. An additional challenge that may have limited the group's collaborative engagement in the storming stage was members' perceptions of the PI. The PI reported:

> *"I wish Kevin would stop pointing out how the project is my baby and central to my research agenda. He keeps stating my expertise in the field, when really I'm just as new to this subject as well as this approach too. I want and need to also learn from other members."*

It is a strong possibility that being perceived as the subject matter expert, having held a position as the Chief Diversity Officer, and being centrally concerned with intercultural competence in her research agenda could discourage or limit the input from other members of the research team. Another team member echoed:

> *"At first I perceived that your work (PI's study) was the key component and driving force to our changes in the way we conduct our work, but I realized it really introduced us to another way of doing things and empowered us to work together towards something better."*

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It is evident that, the team's cultural diversity was not the only characteristic that had an impact on the research process. There were other elements in addition to different roles and backgrounds of the team members which influenced the action research process. Again, when reflecting on the group's IDI results the focused turned to the social demographics of the leadership team which are identified through gender, age, race and ethnicity. The team acknowledged their differences, but still recognized that the collective work done by the group created unity and synergy. One of the student peer leaders, Cindy shared:

> *"I think we are, as a team, all very different people so we bring different things to the group that strengthens our collective work. The combination in the variety of age, gender, and race, allowed for us to grow as a team when recognizing our uniqueness and how we can capitalize on bridging all those various traits, skills, and attributes together to achieve a common goal and task."*

Team members observed that there was an innate ability each member brought to the team that merged unique attributes into one cohesive unit. Amanda's and Cindy's responses indicate that once perceptions were acknowledged and shared, the team could leave the awkward stage of storming and graduate into the norming phase where differences amongst opinions and roles were appreciated (Tuckman, 1965). Strengths of each team member are recognized in this stage and celebrated as added value to the collaborative process and task development at hand. The collected talents demonstrated a sense of comfort and collective engagement when working with one another. During a series of weekly meetings, the group started to show incremental signs of bonding as a cohesive unit. The group further engaged in orientating themselves, as well as understanding the work and goals of the team. The other peer leader, Amanda noted:

> *"Diversity in age, gender, and race provided a beautiful array of perspectives in the collaboration process. Cindy and I, two twenty-year olds, were able to contribute perspectives on the curricular, more closely aligned with what the students might think while those members of the team who are older than us provided insights on the curricular that incorporated more 'real world' experience."*

After continuous team interactions and building camaraderie, trust, and rapport all members were able to recognize their individual strengths and contribution to actively engage and mutually commit to the task. Coghlan and Brannick (2010), indicate that this is an indication of the construction stage of action research, team members collectively explore the context and purpose of the task or project.

c) Team Dynamics

During the constructing stage, establishing a safe environment of mutual respect and open communication is important. This allows for all members to be comfortable in sharing insights on intercultural learning regardless of their assumed role or positionality within the team. As the planning process continued, there were new discoveries of team members' experiences around intercultural development and the sharing of new knowledge garnered further development of team cohesion. Team members shared:

> *"What I can appreciate about our work as a team, there is an openness atmosphere and respect we have for each other; everyone's input is equally considered regardless of your role at the institution"*

> *"As we work this out, I thought I would bring us donuts today to get us relaxed and going this morning with our work"*

Collaboration among team members can be a challenge if the ability to genuinely learn and work together is not present (Nissila, 2005). The team successfully used collective engagement by synthesizing the various degrees of experience and knowledge among the team membership. Regardless of power or position within the university, the team integrated the various levels of members' expertise to foster collective ownership of producing appropriate programs for the students. For example, during weekly team meetings, Kevin, would take the initiative in seeking everyone's input and made a point to always indicate that his thoughts and ideas might not be perfect; other insights were needed from everyone. This allowed for not only building rapport, but also established a safe working environment where all team members' input was heard and the use of free flowing ideas was not judged or criticized. The team continued to gain trust and a comfort level with each other where shared vision was developed and a collective dialogue was demonstrated when exploring the action research process. I shared this specific statement with a team member during a weekly meeting:

> *"There is a comfort level that makes me feel that we are all on the same page and an easy work flow as we learn more on how to merge our styles into a collective whole. I believe conflicts are naturally going to occur, but we as a group have minimal conflicts and work well together."*

In action research, the *planning* stage is a continuation of the constructing stage and allows for the leadership team to verify their work as well as to be in a safe working environment that promoted individuals to speak openly and engage actively without fear of judgment as well as obtain clarity and understanding of their work. The planning stage involved determining the individual and collective roles, creating a timeline for implementing specific program logistics, and establishing meeting dates/times. The team met weekly for planning sessions. Cervero and Wilson (1998) defines planning as a social activity whereby people construct educational programs by negotiating

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personal, organization, and social interest in contexts marked by socially structured relations of power. At this time, members discussed, evaluated and designed all programming functions appropriately based on students' learning needs and previous classroom observations. There is no more crucial aspect of the program development process than objective setting; the need to set objectives provides a forum for deciding on major program thrusts and levels of expected achievement (Galbraith, Sisco, & Guglielmino, 1997). During the team's brainstorming and planning process it was determined what new modules and/or restructuring of current modules were needed to produce effective learning materials and activities for the participants.

The collaborative team dynamics fused rapport within the team, transparent communication, roles established by the team members, and the deliberate use of individual skill sets when building team cohesion. The demographics of the team supported members to identify specific roles in the implementation process. For example, the instructor and academic developer respectively shared:

> *"I find learning from each other's experiences to be much more impactful to the team's process when collectively designing development programs."*

> *"The demographics of our team enable us to think deeper around intercultural learning, based on our own experiences and then collectively bridge our individual knowledge toward creating new knowledge for ourselves as a team and for our students."*

The team successfully used collective engagement by synthesizing the various degrees of experience and knowledge among the team membership. Regardless of power or position within the university, the team integrated the various levels of member's expertise to foster collective ownership of producing intercultural programs. For example, during weekly team meetings there was a safe environment where all team insights where heard and the use of free flowing ideas were not judged or criticized. The team continued to gain trust and a comfort level with each other where shared vision was developed and collective dialogue demonstrated when exploring the action research process.

Weekly sessions continued to focus on the student's learning needs, but also were used for both reflection on the work being done by the team, and an opportunity to continue to build and establish team cohesions. Those members, who initially thought that they posed less experience than more seasoned members, felt a mutual ownership to the team's process. This environment of mutual respect and transparent communication built on the group dynamics and encouraged members to learn from each other. When asked by the researcher of the team's working relationship, several members commented:

> *"This is a great team; I've never seen a group interact and work so well together."*

> *"The diversity amongst us creates synergy that helps with our work with the students."*

> *"Open communication and the comfortable work environment that we have established make the teamwork ease."*

> *"Your work (the researcher) has kept the team focus and reminds us that we have to continue to connect the learning as we go along; critical to have someone facilitate our learning because other members may miss vital aspects to the collaborative work being done"*

This focus was not limited to the work conducted for students, but also for the process that the team used to engage in a collective group approach to program design. Team members echoed these sentiments by noting:

> *"We must continue to be intentional in our process in promoting the learning and the development of academic skills in inclusive leadership."*

> *"Evaluating the team's process needs to be continuous to measure and assess our work; benchmark where we are, what is working, and what needs to be done differently"*

Team members indicate their graduation into the performing stage at this point with a clear commitment and frictionless orientation to the task of thinking about the development of the program, but also in the designing and implementation of that program.

d) Taking Action

Addressing social-category differences when team membership consists of a variety of diverse characteristics such as race, gender, and age, better navigates potential barriers in bridging team cohesiveness in order to effectively conduct the action research process. The third action research stage, *taking action*, consisted of implementing activities that the leadership team collectively planned for the students. This included on-going interactions with the participants of the cohort, facilitating the programs, re-evaluating the intervention's outcomes and administering assessments. Activities for the initiative included the students' welcome orientation and social events held during the summer of 2012, and the implementation of the honors course conducted in the Fall semester of 2012.

In addition to the taking action phase was the team analyzing the data collected for assessing the effectiveness of the activities developed and implemented for the program, which segued into the fourth stage, *evaluating the action*. When examining the outcomes of the action the team collectively evaluated the learning process for the students as well as assessed the collaborative efforts when designing and administrating the activities of the program. Throughout the implementation (taking action) stage the team was also evaluating and making changes as appropriate.

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During these team meetings were the opportunities to point out what was working successfully with the overall program as well as dialog around what needed to be improved. A major outcome for this portion of the team's collective work was to schedule a full day retreat in the summer of 2013 to review all findings around the work of the leadership team, the cohort's learning outcomes, and to revise procedures as needed to improve the leadership program for the incoming Fall of 2013 participants.

V. Discussion and Implications for Research and Practice

Student centered is defined as the need for individualizing instruction based on the recognition that learners differ in cognitive processing, personality, ways of making meaning, educational attainment, and other attributes (Nuckles, 2010). The team collaboratively acknowledged that students should be exposed to learning opportunities that would provide the knowledge and skills that are necessary to be inclusive leaders at the university, and beyond their college of experience. Although the group was socially demographically diverse, the group shared commonalties when being intentional in their approach to program development and teaching best practices. The team focused on designing, implementing and evaluating appropriate interventions and learning opportunities with the intention of developing student's knowledge, skills and attributes in intercultural settings.

Brennan (2015) writes about how powerful, effective and beneficial diverse teams, or teams that vary in cultural backgrounds, can be in leadership roles within the higher education organization. When participating in the process of academic development, the team discovered an appreciation of their own diversity and experiential learning. This promoted the merger of various concepts and ideas when designing, implementing, and evaluating development programs. When team members were asked to reflect on their experience of using the action research approach, several articulated that the process kept the team focused, allowed for all to take ownership in the process, enabled the team to use the expertise of members and shared vision to be intentional in their work, and continuous evaluation of the teams process allowed for readjustments as needed when working with the students.

Implications to the field can inform faculty and instructors on action research methods when developing programs through a collaborative approach and team interactions. It also provides an initial framework for the analysis of group dynamics when working on collaborative team initiatives and task. Findings indicated that team dynamics and demographics impact the forming stages in ways that influence team interactions and should be reviewed constantly when working collectively at the task at hand. Knowledge of the team dynamics, the group's intentionality, and their perceptions on working together and having a safe environment, emerged from the study as team influences when using the stages of action research in program development and can be used not only in higher education, but in other industries when cultivating team interactions and learning.

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Post-Adoption Beliefs Influencing Continued Participation in Virtual Communities

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Abstract- This study aims to investigate what motivates individuals to continue to participate in virtual communities. A comprehensive model that incorporates the antecedents of individuals' behavioral intention to continued participation in virtual communities is proposed and empirically tested. The data for this study were collected through a Web survey and analyzed using structural equation modeling. The results indicate that attitude toward participating in virtual communities is a significant predictor of continuance intention. The strongest influence on attitude toward participation was found for perceived enjoyment. Perceived usefulness and subjective norm were found to have significant positive influences on attitude toward participation. The implications of the results of this study are expected to contribute to identifying key predictors of individuals' continued intentions to participate in virtual communities and provide insights into effective strategies to vitalize virtual communities in the post-adoption stage.

Keywords: virtual community, continued participation, perceived usefulness, enjoyment, social presence, subjective norm.

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POSTADOPTIONBELIEFSINFLUENCINGCONTINUEDPARTICIPATIONINVIRTUALCOMMUNITIES

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Post-Adoption Beliefs Influencing Continued Participation in Virtual Communities

Jong-Ae Kim

Abstract- This study aims to investigate what motivates individuals to continue to participate in virtual communities. A comprehensive model that incorporates the antecedents of individuals' behavioral intention to continued participation in virtual communities is proposed and empirically tested. The data for this study were collected through a Web survey and analyzed using structural equation modeling. The results indicate that attitude toward participating in virtual communities is a significant predictor of continuance intention. The strongest influence on attitude toward participation was found for perceived enjoyment. Perceived usefulness and subjective norm were found to have significant positive influences on attitude toward participation. The implications of the results of this study are expected to contribute to identifying key predictors of individuals' continued intentions to participate in virtual communities and provide insights into effective strategies to vitalize virtual communities in the post-adoption stage.

Keywords: virtual community, continued participation, perceived usefulness, enjoyment, social presence, subjective norm.

I. Introduction

Virtual communities have proliferated rapidly and gained popularity in recent years. With the proliferation of the Internet and mobile services, virtual communities have become important channels for social interaction and communication. The highly interactive nature of the Internet and mobile services has facilitated the rapid growth of virtual communities. With the growth of virtual communities, a broad range of communication and activities that had taken place offline have migrated into virtual communities. These migrations have improved the efficiency in people's communication and broadened interpersonal relationships. In virtual communities, people communicate with each other, exchange ideas, share knowledge, and build social relationships. They enable people to interact with others without the barriers of time and space. According to a survey conducted by the Center for the Digital Future (2008), online community members reported feeling as strongly about communities online as those in the real world. Lin (2009) emphasizes virtual communities as the most effective means of establishing new social relationships through Internet-based technology.

Rheingold (2000, 5) defines virtual communities as "social aggregations that emerge from the net when enough people carry on those public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace". Hagel (1997) defines virtual community as a group of people interacting in cyberspace predominantly for their own common interests, relationship building, transactions, and fantasies. The concept of virtual community is also referred to as computer-mediated community, online community, electronic community, or e-community (Wang and Fesenmaier 2014).

Researchers identified the fundamental needs of virtual community members in their online activities as functional, social and psychological needs (Preece 2000; Wang et al. 2002). Virtual communities may satisfy community members' functional needs to fulfill specific activities by enabling transactions such as buying products and gathering information without the restrictions of time and space. Social needs are met when members communicate with each other, form meaningful relationships, and build trust. Psychological needs may include identification, involvement, unity/-belonging, and relatedness (Wang et al. 2002). Virtual communities can satisfy certain basic psychological needs of community members and make them a part of members' lives. Wang and Fesenmaier (2014) consider the hedonic needs to join virtual communities in addition to functional, social and psychological needs. Hedonic needs explain that people join virtual communities for their enjoyment and entertainment purposes. From the hedonic perspective, people as pleasure seekers engage in virtual communities to experience excitement and fun.

Based on the results of in-depth interviews with members of travel and gourmet virtual communities, Tsai and Pai (2013) identify three dimensions of community characteristics influencing members' proactive participation: social, hedonic, and utilitarian. As the social dimension of community characteristics, they identify member receptivity and member involvement. They also identify enjoyment as the hedonic dimension and informativeness as the utilitarian dimension of community characteristics. Li and Lee (2013) assert that there is a social cycle process for membership development in virtual communities. The process encompasses joining virtual communities, staying silent, becoming active, quitting, or becoming inactive again. For virtual communities to be sustainable, they need to be fostered properly. Continuous participation of

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members is crucial to the sustainability of virtual communities, thus the understanding of the drivers that lead them to participate and share their interests are critical for the success of virtual communities.

Certain virtual communities have been successful, demonstrating their great potential. However, decreases in the level of participation are often shown in many virtual communities after the initial adoption of users. It is reported that half of new users abandoned their accounts in the social network websites soon after they created their accounts (Li 2011). Although the initial adoption is an important indicator of the success of virtual communities, the ultimate viability of them is dependent on continued participation of members. Despite the importance of continued participation of members for the sustainability of virtual communities, the understanding of the determinants of members' continuous participation has not been well established. This study explores the factors affecting individuals' continued participation in virtual communities.

This study aims to explore what motivates individuals to continue to participate in virtual communities. It investigates the antecedents of behavioral intention to continued participation. Continued participation in virtual communities may be determined by a number of variables. In this study, a comprehensive model that incorporates the antecedents of individuals' behavioral intentions to continued participation is proposed and empirically tested. The implications of the results of this study are expected to contribute to identifying key predictors of individuals' continuance intentions and provide insights into effective strategies to vitalize virtual communities in the post-adoption stage.

II. Theoretical Background and Research Model

Based on the extensive literature review, this study proposes and validates the antecedents of behavioral intention to continued participation in virtual communities. A research model in this study attempts to explain one's intention to continue to participate in virtual communities. The research model is depicted in Figure 1.

Attitude has been shown to be a significant predictor of behavioral intention in the extensive research. According to Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), attitude is formed based on a collection of underlying behavioral beliefs about the expected outcomes of a behavior and the favorable or unfavorable evaluation of these outcomes. The relationship between attitude and behavioral intention has received substantial empirical support (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980; Davis 1986). Bhattacherjee and Premkumar (2004) found that attitude influenced intention of continuous use of computer-based training systems. In a study by Mäntymäki and Salo (2011), attitude toward using the social virtual worlds was found to have a positive effect on continuous use intention. In a study to investigate motivational factors to knowledge sharing, Chennamaneni *et al*. (2012) found that attitude exerted a significant influence on behavioral intention to share knowledge. In addition, in a study to examine virtual community members' knowledge-sharing intentions toward Chinese Wikipedia, Ho *et al*. (2011) reported that attitude toward knowledge sharing was positively associated with intention to share knowledge in a virtual community. Based on prior studies, it is hypothesized that attitude toward participating in a virtual community is positively associated with one's intention to continued participation

Hypothesis 1: Attitude toward participating in a virtual community is positively associated with one's continuance intention.

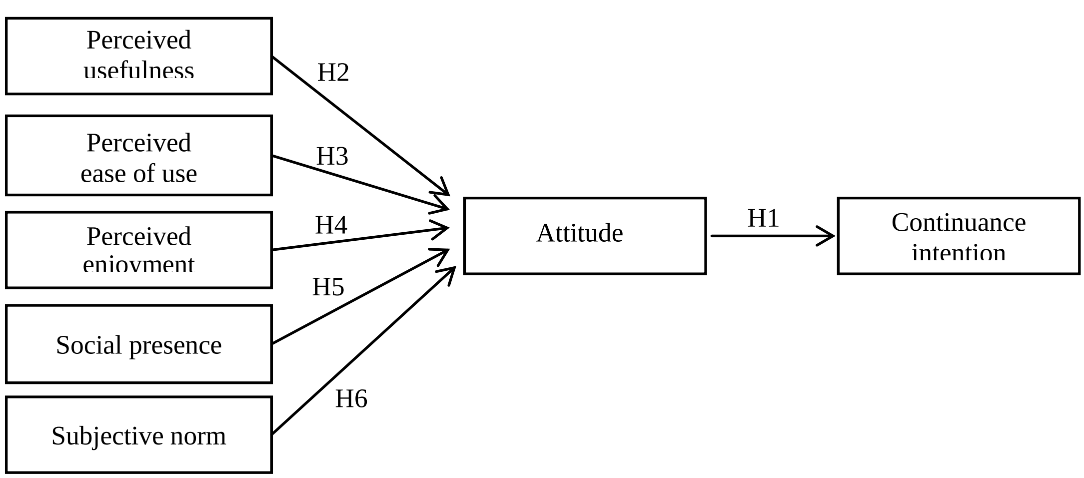

Fig. 1 : Research model

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Perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use have been shown to affect one's attitude toward using information technology. In the technology acceptance model (TAM), perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are validated as two internal belief determinants affecting users' attitude, which in turn affect users' behavioral intentions to adopt the technology (Davis, 1989). A number of studies applied TAM to explain users' continuance intentions in the post-adoption stage in that continued usage is an extension of adoption (Karahanna 1999; Lee and Tsai 2010; Venkatesh and Brown 2001; Venkatesh and Davis 2000). Perceived usefulness is defined as the degree to which a person perceives that the use of a particular system enhances his or her job performance (Davis 1989). Bhattacherjee (2001) also included perceived usefulness in the expectation-confirmation model and validated its consistent power in explaining continued usage behavior in the post-adoption stage. When a person perceives that a virtual community is useful to him, he is likely to form a positive attitude toward participation. Thus, this study hypothesizes that perceived usefulness is positively associated with one's attitude toward participation in a virtual community.

Hypothesis 2: Perceived usefulness is positively associated with one's attitude toward participation in a virtual community.

Perceived ease of use refers to the degree to which a person perceives that the use of a particular system is free of effort (Davis 1989). A significant effect of perceived ease of use on attitude toward the system has been validated in prior research on information system adoption (Davis 1989; Wang *et al*. 2012). Easy-to-operate functions and user-friendly interfaces are likely to lead community members to form a positive attitude toward participation in a virtual community, thus accessing the community without abandoning it. Thus, it is hypothesized that perceived ease of use is positively associated with one's attitude toward participation in a virtual community.

Hypothesis 3: Perceived ease of use is positively associated with one's attitude toward participation in a virtual community.

Motivation theory explains that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations drive individual behaviors (Deci and Ryan 1987). Intrinsic motivation refers to the pleasure and satisfaction gained from performing a behavior, whereas extrinsic motivation emphasizes performing a behavior to achieve valued outcomes such as improved job performance (Davis *et al*. 1992). Prior studies have demonstrated that perceived enjoyment as an intrinsic motivator influences one's attitude toward using certain information technology services (Davis *et al*. 1992; Thong *et al*. 2006; Van der Heijden 2004). Perceived enjoyment refers to the extent to which an activity is perceived to be enjoyable in its own right, apart from any goals or rewards derived from performance consequences (Davis *et al*. 1992; Deci and Ryan 1987). Since the participation in virtual communities can be explained with intrinsic motivation such as pleasure and fun, the research model in this study incorporates perceived enjoyment as one of the salient beliefs influencing attitude toward participation. It can be expected that individuals who experience enjoyment from participating in a virtual community are more likely to form positive attitude toward participation. Thus, it is hypothesized that perceived enjoyment is positively associated with one's attitude toward participation in a virtual community.

Hypothesis 4: Perceived enjoyment is positively associated with one's attitude toward participation in a virtual community.

Virtual communities serve people's needs for communication, information, and entertainment (Lin 2006). Social presence is critical for effective communication in social networks, and a lack of social presence results in communication weakness in virtual communities (Koh *et al*. 2007). Elaborating social presence theory, Short *et al*. (1976, 65) defines social presence as the "degree of salience of the other person in the mediated interaction and the consequent salience of the interpersonal relationships". Social presence is also explained as the degree to which a medium is perceived to convey a feeling of human contact, sociability, and sensitivity (Yoo and Alavi 2001). Gunawardena and Zittle (1997) explain social presence as the degree to which community participants perceive that the other person is physically present or real in their engagement in virtual communities.

Social presence is essential to developing social relationships and a sense of community in virtual communities (Kreijns *et al*. 2003; Paloff and Pratt 2005). It is considered the central design principle for social community technologies (Ijsselsteijn and Riva 2003). Social presence can be enhanced when people share their experiences and ideas with human images and testimonials in virtual communities (Crutzen *et al*. 2013). Previous studies reported that social presence influenced usage behavior of various social websites (Chui *et al*. 2008; Lee 2006; Nov *et al*. 2008). Crutzen *et al*. (2013) suggests that social presence results in a positive user experience, thus positively affecting their attitude toward using the social websites. Building on prior studies, it is hypothesized that social presence is positively associated with one's attitude toward participation in a virtual community.

Hypothesis 5: Social presence is positively associated with one's attitude toward participation in a virtual community.

The need to consider social influence on user acceptance of information technology has been emphasized by researchers. Davis (1989) suggested

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the need to explain the effect of social influence on user acceptance of information technology in future research although he did not explicitly include social norm in the TAM. In the TAM2 developed by Venkatesh and Davis (2000), subjective norm was included to explain a user's adoption behavior. Subjective norm is defined as a "person's perception that most people who are important to him think he should or should not perform the behavior in question" (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975, 302). It refers to an individual's perception of social pressure from an important referent group to perform or not to perform a specific behavior (Chennamaneni *et al*. 2012). It is based on normative beliefs of whether the behavior is accepted and encouraged by significant referents. An individual's attitude toward participation in a virtual community may be influenced not only by his/her own motivations, but also by significant referents (Davis *et al*. 1989; Zhou 2011).

Subjective norm may exert an influence on participation behavior through the process of compliance because people tend to achieve favorable reactions from significant others. Compliance occurs "when an individual accepts influence because he hopes to achieve a favorable reaction from another person or group" (Kelman 1958, 53). Considering the social nature of interpersonal interactions in virtual communities, it is expected that subjective norm affects one's attitude toward participation in a virtual community. If people who are important to a person recommend him to participate in a virtual community, it is likely to affect his attitude toward participation. Prior studies reported the positive influence of subjective norm on information technology adoption (Bock *et al*. 2005; Cabrera *et al*. 2006; Venkatesh *et al*. 2003). Srite and Karahanna (2006) contend that, through informational and normative influence, subjective norm may reduce uncertainty about whether or not system use is acceptable and valuable. Cheung *et al*. (2008) found that social relationship was the most common motivator for contributing to online forums. Kim *et al*. (2009) reported a positive impact of subjective norm on attitude toward use of airline B2C eCommerce websites. Building on the earlier studies, it is hypothesized that subjective norm is positively associated with one's attitude toward participation in a virtual community.

H6: Subjective norm is positively associated with one's attitude toward participation in a virtual community.

On the basis of the previous discussions, the research model in this study proposes a framework for understanding the predictors that influence behavioral intention to continued participation in virtual communities. These predictors are incorporated into the research model to examine what drives individuals' continued participation in virtual communities.

III. Research Method

a) *Measures*

The research model in the present study includes seven constructs, and each construct is measured with multiple items. Table 1 presents the operational definitions of the constructs for the research model. The measurement items were adapted from pre-validated measures in the prior literature to enhance content validity (Straub *et al*. 2004). The measurement items were customized for this study to adapt to the virtual community context. All items were measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from (1) 'strongly disagree' to (7) 'strongly agree.' The English-language measurement items were translated into Korean by the researcher of this study. To ensure the semantic consistency of the original and translated versions of the measurement items, a bilingual English-Korean speaker checked the items by translating them back into English. To ensure the applicability of the questionnaire, a pretest was conducted with seven undergraduate students who had experience participating in virtual communities. The questionnaire was refined based on their comments on the wordings and format of the questionnaire to improve the clarity and understandability. The final measurement items of the constructs and their sources are presented in Table 2.

Table 1 : Operational definitions of the constructs

Construct	Operational definition
Perceived usefulness	The extent to which a person perceives that participating in a virtual community would improve his or her job performance
Perceived ease of use	The extent to which a person perceives that it would be easy to participate in a virtual community
Perceived enjoyment	The extent to which participating in a virtual community is perceived to be enjoyable in its own right, apart from any goals or rewards derived from performance consequences
Social presence	The degree of salience of the other person in the mediated interaction and the consequent salience of the interpersonal relationships in a virtual community
Subjective norm	A person's perception that most people who are important to him think he should or should not participate in a virtual community
Attitude	A person's overall evaluation of participation in a virtual community
Continuance intention	A person's intention to continue to participate in a virtual community

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Table 2 : Measurement items and sources

Construct	Measurement item	Source
Perceived usefulness	(1) I find my participation in the virtual community to be useful in my job. (2) Participating in the virtual community improves my performance in my job.	Kim, 2006
Perceived ease of use	(1) It is easy to participate in the virtual community. (2) I feel that the virtual community's interface is easy to learn.	Mäntymäki and Salo, 2011; Wang et al., 2012
Perceived enjoyment	(1) Participating in the virtual community is pleasant. (2) I have fun participating in the virtual community.	Van der Heijden, 2003
Social presence	(1) There is a sense of sociability in the virtual community. (2) There is a sense of human contact in the virtual community.	Gefen and Straub, 2003
Subjective norm	(1) Most people who are important to me think that I should participate in the virtual community. (2) Most people who influence my behavior think that I should participate in the virtual community.	Ajzen, 1991
Attitude	(1) To me, participating in the virtual community is good. (2) To me, participating in the virtual community is valuable.	Chennamaneni, Teng and Raja, 2012
Continuance intention	(1) If I could, I would like to continue my participation in the virtual community. (2) I will try to participate in the virtual community in my daily life.	Bhattacherjee, 2001

b) Data Collection

The data for this study were collected through a Web survey targeting those who have experience participating in virtual communities designed to share information and contents. The questionnaire was posted on a Web-based questionnaire host, where opt-in respondents participated as a panel. The panelists were notified about the study in an email announcement with a hyperlink to access the survey. An email message on the Web survey was sent to the panel, and participants were invited to fill out the questionnaire. The survey was conducted from October 21 to 30 in 2014. The respondents were asked to describe the name of one of the virtual communities they participated in and provide the responses based on their experiences with participation in the virtual community.

A total of 132 responses were collected with some invalid questionnaires, resulting in 127 valid responses. Table 3 presents the results of the frequency analysis conducted to find the characteristics of the respondents. Fifty-two percent of the respondents were male, and 48 percent female. The age of the respondents was largely distributed in their twenties and thirties: 20-29 years old (47.2 percent) and 30-39 years old (37.8 percent). 7.1 percent and 3.1 percent of the respondents were 10-19 years old and 40-49 years old respectively. 4.7 percent of the respondents were over 50 years old. In regards to the occupation of the respondents, 53.5 percent were employees, and 34.6 percent were students. 5.5 percent and 4.7 percent of the respondents were homemakers and independent businessmen respectively. The remaining 1.6 percent did not fall under any of the above categories. In regards to the length of membership in the virtual community, 41.7 percent of the respondents reported having participated in the virtual community for 2-3 years and 40.2 percent reported over 4 years. The remaining 18.1 percent reported having participated in the virtual community for less than one year.

Table 3 : Characteristics of the respondents

Respondent characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	66	52.0
	Female	61	48.0
Age	10 - 19	9	7.1
	20 - 29	60	47.2
	30 - 39	48	37.8
	40 - 49	4	3.1
	Over 50	6	4.7

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Occupation	Student	44	34.6
	Employee	68	53.5
	Homemaker	7	5.5
	Independent businessman	6	4.7
	Other	2	1.6
Length of membership in the virtual community	Less than one year	23	18.1
	2 - 3 years	53	41.7
	Over 4 years	51	40.2
Total		127	100.0

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IV. Data Analysis and Results

For the empirical analysis of the data, the descriptive statistics and influential statistics were conducted using SPSS 17.0 and AMOS 5.0. The descriptive statistics and reliability test were conducted using SPSS 17.0. The estimation of the structural equation model for testing the model fit and hypotheses was conducted using AMOS 5.0.

a) *Estimation of the Measurement Model*

The data were evaluated for reliability and validity, and the validated data set was analyzed using structural equation modeling. To assess internal consistency of the constructs, the reliability of the measures was calculated by using Cronbach's α test. Cronbach's α coefficients greater than 0.70 are considered acceptable (Nunally 1978). All measures demonstrated adequate reliability with Cronbach's α coefficients ranging from 0.806 to 0.895 (Table 4). Thus, all constructs in the research model exhibited good internal consistency as indicated by Cronbach's α coefficients.

Table 4 : Reliability of the measures

Construct	Cronbach's α
Perceived usefulness	0.841
Perceived ease of use	0.806
Perceived enjoyment	0.892
Social presence	0.818
Subjective norm	0.837
Attitude	0.839
Continuance intention	0.895

Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to test the unidimensionality of the constructs in the research model that are composed of multi-items. Confirmatory factor analysis tests whether the theoretically defined or hypothesized factorial structures of the scales in the measuring instrument under study are valid (Wang and Wang 2012). In this study, the fit indices including the χ^2 statistic, goodness-of-fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), root mean square residual (RMR), normal-fit index (NFI), and comparative fit index (CFI) were used to evaluate the fit of the measurement model. A value of CMIN/DF (chi-square fit index divided by degrees of freedom) less than 3 indicates an acceptable fit between the hypothetical model and the sample data (Carmines and McIver 1981). The GFI and AGFI are acceptable when the values are greater than 0.90 respectively. A CFI greater than 0.90 indicates a good model fit. The RMR is the square root of the mean of the squared discrepancies between the implied and observed covariance matrices, and it is considered acceptable when the value is less than 0.05. The results of confirmatory factor analysis are presented in Table 5. The fit statistics for the model are as follows: CMIN/DF = 1.467, RMR = 0.037, GFI = 0.922, AGFI = 0.854, NFI = 0.935 and CFI = 0.978. Thus, the results verify that the model fits the data well.

Table 5 : Confirmatory factor analysis of the measurement model

Construct	Measurement item	Standardized factor loading	Standard error	Critical Ratio	AVE	Composite reliability
Perceived usefulness	PU2	0.867			0.939	0.968
	PU1	0.837	0.095	9.719***		
Perceived ease of use	PEOU2	0.776			0.867	0.929
	PEOU1	0.870	0.208	5.269***		
Perceived enjoyment	PEN2	0.916			0.958	0.978
	PEN1	0.879	0.071	13.482***		
Social presence	SP2	0.685			0.863	0.924
	SP1	1.014	0.238	6.830***		

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Subjective norm	SN2	0.841			0.936	0.967
	SN1	0.857	0.098	9.957***		
Attitude	ATT2	0.841			0.949	0.974
	ATT 1	0.861	0.078	12.148***		
Continuance intention	CI 2	0.922			0.963	0.981
	CI 1	0.879	0.063	14.386***		

Fit Statistics : CMIN = 87.174, CMIN/DF = 1.467, RMR = 0.037, GFI = 0.922, AGFI = 0.854, NFI = 0.935, CFI = 0.978.
*: $p < 0.05$, **: $p < 0.01$, ***: $p < 0.001$

The validity of the measures was assessed in terms of convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity is defined as "the extent to which multiple attempts to measure the same construct are in agreement" (Campbell and Fiske 1959). Convergent validity of the measures was assessed by using confirmatory factor analysis. To demonstrate convergent validity, the standardized factor loading of each measure should be greater than 0.50 (Fornell and Larcker 1981). As shown in Table 5, all items exhibit high loadings on their corresponding constructs, ranging from 0.685 to 1.014. The analysis of the data verifies that for all measures in the research model, the items measuring the same construct load onto a single factor, thus demonstrating the unidimensionality of the constructs.

In addition, average variance extracted (AVE) is calculated to assess convergent validity. An AVE greater than 0.50, indicating that "50% or more variance of the indicators should be accounted for," supports internal consistency (Chin 1998, 321). The AVE measures of the constructs range from 0.863 to 0.963, exceeding the minimum required level (Table 5).

Discriminant validity refers to "the degree to which items differentiate among constructs or measure distinct concepts" (Igbaria and Iivari 1995, 596). Discriminant validity was assessed by comparing the interconstruct correlations and the square root of the AVE. To demonstrate discriminant validity, the square root of the AVE should be greater than the interconstruct correlations, indicating that "the constructs are correlated more highly with their indicators than with other constructs in the model" (Igbaria, *et al*. 1995, 102). As presented in Table 6, the square root of the AVE for all constructs (in diagonals) is greater than the inter construct correlations (off-diagonals), indicating that all the constructs meet the criteria for adequate discriminant validity.

Table 6 : Interconstruct correlations

Construct	M±SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Perceived usefulness	4.94±1.013	.969						
2. Perceived ease of use	5.56±0.839	.326***	.931					
3. Perceived enjoyment	4.89±1.004	.512***	.302**	.979				
4. Social presence	4.55±0.998	.423***	.163	.535***	.929			
5. Subjective norm	4.30±1.113	.427***	.097	.568***	.481***	.967		
6. Attitude	4.96±0.934	.591***	.173	.736***	.475***	.679***	.974	
7.Continuance intention	5.09±0.978	.666***	.311***	.661***	.473***	.510***	.773***	.981

***p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001*

Note. Square root of the average variance extracted shared between the constructs and their measures (in diagonals); interconstruct correlations (off-diagonals).

b) Estimation of the Structural Model

The structural model was tested to examine the relationships between the constructs in the research model. The results of the structural model estimation are presented in Table 7. The overall fit statistics verifies that the hypothesized model provides a good representation of the structures that underlie the observed data (CMIN/DF = 1.698, RMR = 0.047, GFI = 0.904, AGFI = 0.834, NFI = 0.918, and CFI = 0.964).

Hypothesis 1 specified a positive direct relationship between attitude and continuance intention. The results indicate that a significant positive effect of attitude on continuance intention (path coefficient = 0.932; $p < 0.001$), in support of Hypothesis 1. Hypothesis 2 proposed a positive direct relationship between perceived usefulness and attitude. For the relationship between perceived usefulness and attitude, the results support that perceived usefulness provides a significant predictor of attitude (path coefficient = 0.290; $p < 0.001$), in support of Hypothesis 2. Hypothesis 3, which specified the relationship between perceived ease of use and attitude, is not supported. Hypothesis 4 proposed a positive direct relationship between perceived enjoyment and attitude. The results support the significant positive relationship between perceived enjoyment and attitude, as specified in Hypothesis 4

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(path coefficient = 0.425; p < 0.001). On the other hand, the effect of social presence on attitude is not statistically significant (Hypothesis 5), indicating that social presence is not a significant determinant of attitude toward participation in virtual communities. Hypothesis 6, which specified the relationship between subjective norm and attitude, is supported, indicating that subjective norm is a significant determinant of attitude (path coefficient = 0.228; p < 0.01). The results of path coefficients and path significance for the model are shown in Figure 2.

Table 7 : Results of hypotheses test

Hypothesis	Path	Estimate	Standard error.	Critical ratio	p
H1	Attitude → Continuance intention	0.932	0.091	10.291***	0.000
H2	Perceived usefulness → Attitude	0.290	0.074	3.921***	0.000
H3	Perceived ease of use → Attitude	-0.049	0.079	-0.612	0.540
H4	Perceived enjoyment → Attitude	0.425	0.087	4.868***	0.000
H5	Social presence → Attitude	-0.022	0.083	-0.271	0.786
H6	Subjective norm → Attitude	0.228	0.076	2.981**	0.003

Fit Statistics: CMIN = 103.554, CMIN/DF = 1.698, RMR = 0.047, GFI = 0.904, AGFI = 0.834, NFI = 0.918, CFI = 0.964

***: p < 0.01 ***: p < 0.001*

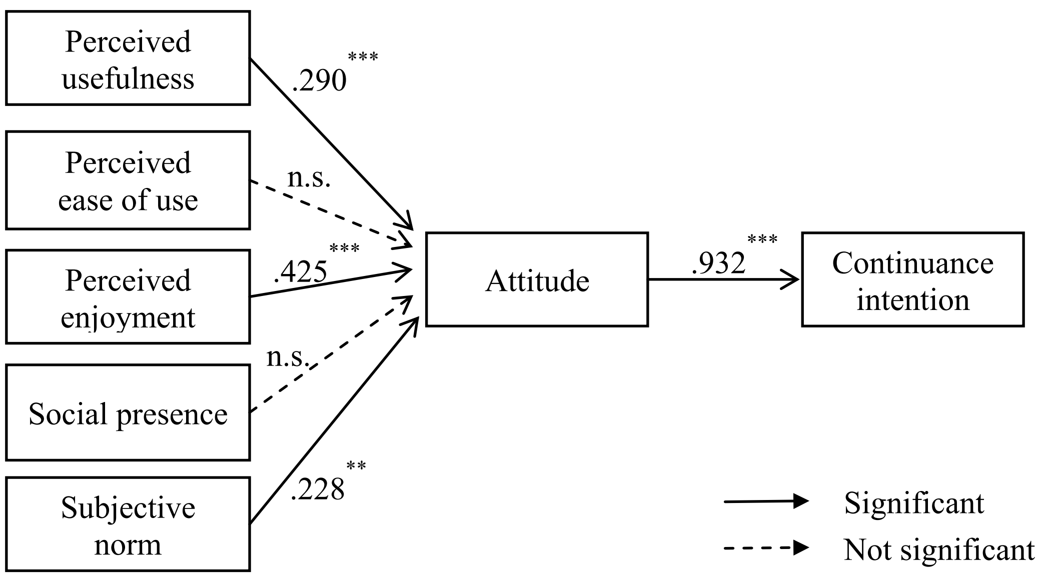

Fig. 2 : Structural model results

V. Discussion

To enhance our understanding of what drives people to continue to participate in virtual communities, this study investigated how the antecedents affect behavioral intention to continued participation. The results obtained from the present study indicate that attitude is positively associated with individuals' behavioral intention to continued participation. It is suggested that attitude toward participating in virtual communities is a significant predictor of continuance intention. The findings support previous studies that reported a significant positive relationship between attitude and behavioral intention (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980; Bhattacherjee and Premkumar 2004; Ho *et al.* 2011).

In the present study, perceived usefulness was found to have a significant influence on attitude, suggesting that perceived usefulness exerts a positive impact on attitude toward participation in virtual communities. The positive effect of perceived usefulness on attitude implies that individuals are likely to form positive attitude toward participation in a virtual community when they perceive it to be useful to them. In the context of virtual community, participants tend to perceive it useful when they can obtain valuable information and services that can help them enhance their performance (Lin 2009) Considering that perceived usefulness is a significant determinant of attitude, it is recommended to promote positive beliefs about the utility of virtual communities by facilitating the environment in which participants can share informative contents and build positive relationships. Thus, for a virtual community to be sustainable, it is important to provide contents and services that are valuable and useful to the members on an ongoing basis (Koh, *et al*. 2007).

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On the other hand, perceived ease of use was not found to be positively associated with attitude. The results suggest that perceived ease of use is not a significant determinant of attitude toward participation. A possible explanation for lack of significant influence of ease of use on attitude found in this study may lie in the moderating effect of length of membership in a virtual community. Ease of use may not exert a significant influence on participants' attitudes once they became familiar with the interfaces of the virtual community in the post-adoption stage. Further research can be pursued to examine possible moderating effects of length of membership in virtual communities.

The strongest influence on attitude was found for perceived enjoyment. The strong influence of perceived enjoyment implies that participants will build favorable attitude toward participation in virtual communities if they perceive it to be enjoyable in its own right, apart from any goals or rewards derived from performance consequences. The importance of perceived enjoyment as an intrinsic motivator in system usage has been emphasized in previous studies (Davis *et al*. 1992; Deci and Ryan 1987; Van der Heijden 2004). Given the significance of perceived enjoyment as an influence on participants' attitudes found in the present study, it is suggested that practitioners need to provide hedonic features in virtual communities to facilitate continued participation. In addition to reinforcing the utility of the contents and services shared in the virtual communities, enjoyable and fun features should be provided to facilitate individuals' continued participation.

Social presence was not found to be significantly associated with attitude, indicating the lack of positive influence of social presence on attitude toward participation. A possible explanation for this lack of significant effect may lie in a limited impact of social presence on user perception. In a study to test whether social presence elements increase website use, Crutzen *et al*. (2013) reported a limited impact of social presence elements on actual website use. They found that even though social presence elements attract attention, the frequency and duration of fixations on the social presence elements were limited in comparison with fixations on the main text. Shen *et al*. (1996) point out that different dimensions of social presence may elicit different psychological and/or social psychological process, thus influencing motivation and subsequent virtual community participation in different ways. It is argued that multi-dimensional conceptualizations of social presence need to be adopted to understand its effects on virtual community participation. Further research may investigate how different channels exert distinct influences on the effect of social presence on virtual community participation.

In the present study, subjective norm was found to have a significant positive influence on attitude, indicating that subjective norm is an important predictor of attitude toward participation in virtual communities. The results suggest that if people important to a person recommend him to participate in a virtual community, it is likely to influence his attitude toward participation. It implies that individuals' perceptions of social pressure from important referent groups exert significant influences on attitude toward community participation, which in turn affects continuance intention. Given that individuals' perception of whether the participation is encouraged by their circle of influence is an important predictor of their attitude, positive comments are considered crucial in promoting virtual communities.

VI. Conclusion

This study examined what motivates individuals to continue to participate in virtual communities in the post-adoption stage. An integrated model that incorporated the antecedents of individuals' behavioral intention to continued participation was empirically tested to identify key predictors of individuals' continuance intention. The findings from the present study may provide insights into effective strategies to vitalize virtual communities.

The findings suggest that attitude predicts behavioral intention to continued participation and mediates the effects of its antecedents on continuance intention. Among the antecedents of attitude, perceived enjoyment was found to exert the strongest influence on attitude toward participation. Perceived usefulness and subjective norm were identified as significant determinants of attitude. Overall, the theoretical model in the present study received empirical support and provided a foundation for further study of what motivates individuals to contribute their resources to virtual communities and benefit from them, thus enabling the viability of virtual communities.

Individuals' continued participation in virtual communities cannot be forced. Instead, it is necessary to build a facilitative environment to vitalize the virtual communities. By identifying motivational drivers influencing individuals' intentions to continue to participate in virtual communities based on empirical evidence, the present study contributes to improve our understanding of what should be preceded to facilitate the vitality of virtual communities.

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Culture as the Bedrock of a People's Identity: An Exploration of Ifeoma Chinwuba's *Fearless*

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Abstract- The colonial process which brought the coloniser and the colonised into a long period of co-existence and cohabitation which led to a master-servant relationship was not without major effects on the colonised up to the post independence era. As a way of curbing these effects on the colonised mentality, African writers, Nigerian inclusive have resorted to writing of works that would incorporate the use of cultural artifacts so as to depict their image and true identity. Through the lens of post-colonialism this herculean task of looking inwards and making use of that which is African, is made possible. Post-colonial theory is used to examine the ramifications of colonisation for both the coloniser and the colonised, as portrayed in the novel, Fearless of Ifeoma Chinwuba. The paper therefore, concludes that it is only when the colonised people begin to look inwards and appreciate the things that make them who they are culturally, that the recuperation of African culture as against western ideologies can positively be achieved. The textual analysis is specially based on the post-colonial discourse elements of hybridity, appropriation, abrogation, untranslated words and affiliation.

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Culture as the Bedrock of a People's Identity: An Exploration of Ifeoma Chinwuba's *Fearless*

Chris K. Ukande

Abstract- The colonial process which brought the coloniser and the colonised into a long period of co-existence and cohabitation which led to a master-servant relationship was not without major effects on the colonised up to the post independence era. As a way of curbing these effects on the colonised mentality, African writers, Nigerian inclusive have resorted to writing of works that would incorporate the use of cultural artifacts so as to depict their image and true identity. Through the lens of post-colonialism this herculean task of looking inwards and making use of that which is African, is made possible. Post-colonial theory is used to examine the ramifications of colonisation for both the coloniser and the colonised, as portrayed in the novel, *Fearless* of Ifeoma Chinwuba. The paper therefore, concludes that it is only when the colonised people begin to look inwards and appreciate the things that make them who they are culturally, that the recuperation of African culture as against western ideologies can positively be achieved. The textual analysis is specially based on the post-colonial discourse elements of hybridity, appropriation, abrogation, untranslated words and affiliation.

I. Introduction

The colonial process that has been for centuries, has brought about an interaction and a co-existence between the colonised and the coloniser that the former is permanently subjected to a continuous subjugation, oppression, repression and suppression of their culture and identity, even though the formal process of colonialism is brought to an end. Many African nations, Nigeria inclusive, have fervently been devising means and ways of being on their own, and not totally depending on the West, who first and foremost, masterminded the colonial process and system on the African continent.

It is quite glaring to note that this dependency that these African nations have cultivated is not only noticed in their socio-economic and political spheres of life, but also in their literary endeavours. Thus, in order to get out of this gridlock, writers all over Africa have consciously or unconsciously been doing the best they can, especially as it concerns the projection of a truly African culture and identity in their artistic works that make such works quite distinct from for instance the westernised works. Nigerian writers too, particularly those of them who write from a post-colonial standpoint, are involved in this task of a resonance of their culture and identity in their various literary works. Nigerian post-colonial writers have no doubt, taken the bold step of incorporating into their artistic works discourse elements that are hinged on the indigenous languages and cultural trappings of the Nigerian people, in order that they can be seen as truly being crusaders and custodians of the Nigerian people's identity. This in effect, has heralded a new dawn for the people of Africa in general and Nigeria in particular.

Suffice it to say that Chinua Achebe is recognised as one of the first Nigerian writers who have demonstrated the ability to register a true sense of cultural identity and nationalism on the one hand, and the liberation of the Nigerian/African from colonial mentality on the other hand. This sort of attitude was first noticed in his *Things Fall Apart* (1958). Regarding Achebe's reconstruction of the West's misrepresentation of Nigeria/Africa's image, Charles Nnolim States, thus:

> Achebe is the inaugurator of the great tradition of the Nigerian novel – that tradition which is concerned with cultural assertion or cultural nationalism which stresses and promotes the innate dignity of the blackman and makes creative use of our myths, legends, rituals, festivals, ceremonies and folklore. (197)

Thus, from the days of Achebe to the present, the Nigerian novel in particular and short stories in general, have had a strong tradition of showcasing the cultural traits of the Nigerian people. Many Nigerian writers who can be regarded as taking after Achebe, Chinwuba inclusive, have characteristically included in their literary productions, words and phrases that are from the language of their origin. This form of expression includes the use of pidgin English. This is systematically done in order to create an English grammatical structure that helps in distorting the use of Queen's English so as to produce a true sense of Nigerian flavor.

II. The Perspective from which Ifeoma Chinwuba Writes

Post-colonialism is the hallmark that forms the corpus of Chinwuba's writing. Post-colonialism as a theory is described variously by different exponents. One of such exponents is Chris Rohmann. In discussing the theory of post-colonialism, he corroborates that it is a

> Movement in social and literary criticism that presents responses to the effects of European IMPERIALISM on colonized peoples. Post-colonialism offers a "counter narrative", related by and on behalf of formerly colonized

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> peoples, to the ETHNOCENTRIC assumptions of Western culture. The term "postcolonial" thus implies not only "after the colonial era" but also a critical approach that arises from and contests the premises of, colonialism. (309)

The above gives a clear indication that post-colonial literatures are those works that are written in total rejection of the Western, canonical European literature. The simple reason to this is that the colonial project was made possible mainly through the use of literature to do so. Especially, the British were known for aggressive literary washout of indigenous literatures and cultures, which led them to replacing them with the then canonical, British literature in standard English. Post-colonial literature therefore, provides a "counter narrative", related by and on behalf of formerly colonized peoples" (309), so as to reclaim that African aesthetics and culture which of course, make the literature of the African, a utilitarian kind.

On his part, Terhemba Shija states that

> ---[p]ost-colonialist interpretation can be suited in the deliberate deprivation of citizens of basic amenities of life by a minority ruling class which seeks to perpetuate the subjugation of the masses. It also questions the concept of globalization which dubiously claims to reduce the world into a global village with all citizens of the world actively and spontaneously participating in business and other activities. (7)

The above scenario is indicative of the fact that post-colonialism is one theory that investigates the activities of the ruling class, in a capitalist society, that are quite exploitative and suffocating, and then creates a voice for a people who have been made voiceless beginning from the days of colonialism to the present era of globalization. It also chronicles the fact that the problems of the Third World Countries are such that solutions to them can be gotten within as a means of striving to achieve an identity and a way of solving problem that would be devoid of Westernise influence and control.

Che Guevera emphasises the intrinsic value of post-colonialism in the following words:

> [i]t deals with cultural identity in colonized societies; the dilemmas of developing a national identity after colonial rule; the ways which writers articulate and celebrate that identity (often reclaiming it from and maintaining strong connections with the colonized); the ways in which the knowledge of the colonized (subordinate) people has been generated and used to serve the colonizer's interest; and the ways in which the colonizers literature has justified colonialism via images of colonized as perpetually inferior people, society and culture. (2)

Post-colonial writers, the likes of Ifeoma Chinwuba, attach much importance to the question of cultural identity, because when a people's culture is looked upon with disdain or as being inferior, or treated with prejudice, the need to rectify the dented reputation of such culture results in a re-awakening and re-affirmation. Che Guevera's position on self-identity as a core concern of post-colonialism is endorsed by Kirsti Bohata who postulates that the theory

> [o]ffers a structure within which the past can be interrogated with the aim of reconstructing the present. It is a strategic methodology, a self-conscious act of cultural and historical imagination and, as such, is rich with possibilities for peoples whose stories and histories have been suppressed, neglected, untaught. (15)

Discussing post-colonialism, Homi Bhabha affirms that

> The wider significance of the post (colonial) condition lies in the awareness that the epistemological limits of these ethnocentric ideas are also the enunciative boundaries of a range of other dissonant, even dissident histories and voices …, the colonized, minority groups. For the demography of the new internationalism is the history of postcolonial migration, the narrative of cultural and political Diaspora, the major social displacements of peasant and aboriginal communities, the poetics of exile, the grim prose of political and economic refugees. (18)

The aforementioned scenario explicates a basic phenomenon which centres on a mission of self-recovery by the colonised. A recovery of the lost identities that was occasioned by the incursion of colonialism, therefore, becomes the hallmark of the once colonised people. Thus, the question of identity traverses post-colonialist thinking from the days of Senghor's negritude movement to the days of Gayatri Spivak, Frantz Fanon, Ashcroft et al's who are some of the exponents of post-colonialism. Being that the colonial power had fundamentally had a disruption and distortion of indigenous cultures and identities in the past, it is quite remarkable to agree then that as Bhabha's quote above suggests, post-colonial migrant groups or the aboriginal people could be seen as returning the compliment in somewhat modest and more subtle manner or fashion.

a) *Post-Colonial Discourse Elements*

For the purpose of analysing Ifgeoma Chinwuba's *Fearless,* the following post-colonial discourse elements of appropriation, abrogation, hybridity, untranslated words and affiliation will be used as the basis for a proper discourse of the text, and what each of this means will be explained.

b) *Appropriation*

Being that English Language has had a hegemonic influence over the indigenous languages from the days of colonialism to the present, writers all over Africa, having had a history of colonialism, felt the need to free themselves from this sort of cultural gridlock by resorting to the principle of appropriation. In the words of Ashcroft et al, appropriation means "the process by which the English language is taken to bear

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the burden of one's own cultural experiences; or … to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own" (38). In subscribing to the above view, Chinua Achebe writes, "I feel the English language will be able to carry the weight of the African experiences, it had to be a new English, still in communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit new African surroundings" (23).

c) Abrogation

The process of abrogation is one that is quite different from appropriation, the main concern of which is the seizure of English language. In discussing what abrogation translates into, Ngugi wa Thiong'o defends it in the following words, "the most obvious problem is one of language. The fact that you are writing in a foreign language means that you are operating in a foreign cultural framework. This often leads African writers standing as referees between the common man and elite" (34). What this means is that the grammatical structure of English language is distorted, bringing into being a grammatical structure that is unique and of African origin only.

d) Untranslated Words: Cultural Nationalism

The whole essence of the use of indigenous words without having to gloss over them, is done to create cultural independence. Most African writers use this as a systematic way of keeping the Western world at bay in their literary productions. It is in this connection that Ashcroft states that "the technique of the selection of lexical fidelity which leaves some words untranslated in the text is more widely used device for conveying the sense of cultural distinctiveness" (64).

e) Hybridity

This is a process whereby two phenomena are brought into one environment to make a whole single identity. Kristi Bohata writes that "hybridity arises from cultural contact and interchange. While for the individual this may be a painfully divisive experience, in terms of cultural production the hybrid luminal space becomes an exciting and fertile area of cultural production" (25).

f) Affiliation

Affiliation is a sort of strategy that allows the coloniser's identification with indigenous socio-political value system. In literary criticism therefore, it allows the independent reading of texts, that is, without having to fish out or bring out parallel trends with, or, measure them against, western "classics", with little or no respect for their cultural milieu.

Bill Ashcroft speaks further of this notion in the following words

> While filiation suggests a utopian domain of texts connected serially, homogously and seamlessly with other texts, affiliation is that which enables a text to maintain itself as a text, …affiliation sends the critical gaze beyond the narrow confines of the European and canonical literary into [the] cultural texture [of] the status of the author, historical moment, conditions of publication, diffusion and reception, values drawn upon, values and ideas assumed, a framework of contextually held tacit assumptions, presumed background, and so on. (105)

The above scenario is indicative of a shift from filiative to affiliative status of literary works in Africa, which in essence, brings about a showcasing of the exploration of Africa's rich cultural heritage in literary texts that are of African origin. Ashcroft elaborates further as he says: "By thus stressing the affiliations of texts, its origins in cultural and social reality rather than its filiative connections with English literature and canonical criteria, the critic can uncover cultural and political implications that may seem only fleetingly addressed in the text itself". (Key Concepts 56).

g) Synopsis of the Novel

This is a 256-page novel. It chronicles the story of Ralph, a white boy, who often falls sick while in London, and as a way out of this predicament, his father decides to take a job in a Mission School in Nigeria as Education Supervisor. He attributes his child's illness to the weather condition of London and so, feels that the only thing that can be done in order to ameliorate this health anomaly, is to take him to an African environment where the weather condition would serve as a remedy.

The novel is divided into three parts. Part 1 gives an account of Ralph's arrival in Umudo with his father, Matt. It leads us into Matt's activities in Umudo and his son's initiation ceremony into the world of adults. Part 2 discusses the various initiation activities that boy's of Ralph's age, Ralph inclusive, go through on Snake Island. From this discussion, we are meant to understand that they have all had a successful initiation ceremony. Part 3 introduces the arrival of the initiates from Snake Island and Ralph's journey back to London in order to administer African herbs on his sick mother who had been sick before his departure to Africa.

h) Polemic Analysis of the Text

In order to pursue a cultural stance, Chinwuba tries as much as possible to depict instances in the text that would be devoid of western characteristics. One of the ways of doing this is the use of appropriation in her *Fearless*. The first instance that the use of appropriation is noticed is when she discusses the initiation ceremony. Being that Ralph the white boy has to undergo this ceremony, Udego, Ralph's friend educates Ralph on the ways of the people of Umudo. The essence of this is to get him acquainted with the cultural traits of his new environment before his day of initiation. His indoctrination is done in these words:

> We learn more dances, wrestling, hunting, music, and the history of our land. Finally is the circumcision. And the tribal mark. It is the main thing. After that, we are given a few days rest, for the wound to heal. Then we return to

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> merriment and feasting, wrestling and dancing. And the harvest. (61)

The author in the above, succeeds in using the English Language in expressing a true African tradition and experience that allow the teenagers the opportunity to be initiated into the adult world. Once children receive Ralph's sort of education, which also affords them the opportunity of knowing their people's history and that which makes them distinct from other people, such children seize to be children as their mother would wish at the point of departure for the initiation ceremony, "may you go well as a boy and return safely, a man. May you bear the pains like a man and not cry out in disgrace" (183).

In discussing the costume that gives the prospective initiates distinct appearance from other children, Chinwuba narrates that, "they watched as in the square, young lads of similar heights to the lad, clad in raffia skirts and headgear, danced towards the new boy. Their bare chest and legs were sprinkled with a red liquid, interspersed with white chalk" (13). This portrayal aside, the kids are usually given an indoctrination which prepares them for the great day of initiation, in order to be stoical as they journey into maturity. Chinwuba similarly employs appropriation showing how valuable kola nut is to the African and how the pouring of libation among Africans shows reference to their ancestors. As can be seen in the following quotation, the pouring of libation, links the living and the dead, and the kola nut is itself a source of life to Africans:

> He had witnessed the pouring of libation by the local chief, and the breaking of something called kola nut by the elders. Was this real; was he really in Africa, in Umudo, about to head – primary school across the path? As he listened to one welcome address after the other, some via interpreters, his mind voluntarily went back to London, a few weeks ago. (14)

Chinwuba demonstrates how efficacious African herbs can be, hence, the determination of Phoebe, Ralph's mother, to be cured by African herbs, since her ailment defies orthodox treatment. In her strong belief in African herbs, she calls her son and says to him, "There are many great medicine men in Africa. They may have the herb already for this disease without our knowing it. If so, find it, son" (29). Consequently, Ralph on getting to Africa, and through his friend's father Ofokansi, the great medicine man, he gets the herbs for his mother's cure. He returns to London to administer the herbs on her.

He washed the other leaves. He brought a clean glass and one by one, squeezed their liquid into it. It did not amount to much. Hardly a third of the glass. He approached his mother's bed, glass in hand. There was no way he could make the patient down this. Then an idea occurred to him. He cut a tiny slit in the plastic intra-nevous bag and poured the thick dark concoction into it. It turned green. (249)

Apart from the use of appropriation, Chinwuba also makes use of abrogation in her *Fearless.* This is done through the use of one of the characters in the text. Uwa who happens to be the cook and house help for Matt, the white man, communicates all through in pidgin English. The use of pidgin in this work gives it a special form of communication which W. D. Ashcroft writes about in the following expression.

Syntactic (and orthographic) fusion can signify differences in a number of ways, but as the index of a cultural gap it is the difference which distances rather than which identifies. The fascinating thing here, of course, is that difference is constructed in reference to another learned language, pidgin bears not a culture, but an historical and political reference to difference. (7)

Thus, what distinguishes Chinwuba from Achebe for instance, is that Chinwuba's use of pidgin brings to limelight the fact that the variety is an association to a range of socio-economic statuses covering urban workers and the commoners of the society rather than a projection or a depiction of blacks working for the whites. This then follows that the use of pidgin English in her work does not indicate a bestardised version of Queen's English as a result of colonial contact and subjugation, but a resource that results from the urban and rural working classes alike, thus, making it a language of national expression in generally accepted and recognised social contexts within the Nigerian polity.

Some examples in the text suffice the foregoing discussion: "He going to bathe in the stream. You want follow him?" (57) (He wants to go and bathe in the stream. Do you want to follow him?), "Oyibo pepper, if you eati pepper, you will yellow more, more" (60) (A song that says if a white person eats pepper, he or she will become whiter), "Junior go late for school, get cane for back" (64) (Junior has gone late to school, and had a cane on his back for being late), "I think you want eat for white man house. Eat, let us see" (88) (I think you want to eat in a white man's house. Eat, let us see), "Thank your gods that it is rice that Uwa cook today" (89) (Thank your gods that it is rice that Uwa has cooked today), "Small master no go school?" (116) (Has small master not gone to school?) and "Master tell Uwa, sweep yard, fetch water, wash cloth, cook food. He no tell Uwa what for do if small master body hot. O-o Uwa, what kind trouble be this?). (Master tells Uwa to sweep th yard, fetch water, wash cloth, cook food. He did not tell Uwa what to do when mster is sick).

In handling culture in a manner that makes it a signpost of a people's identity, Chinwuba still weaves her narration around the initiation ceremony again. In this way, she writes: "No one had warned him in London about this aspect of a boy's life in Africa. What was more baffling was the ease with which Ralph had accepted this alien custom, had yearned for it, had embraced it, had become engulfed in it" (183). Two different cultures

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from two different geographical terrains are presented in the above. We see that in Africa, for one to fully become a man, one must undergo an initiation ceremony that has been enshrined in a people's custom and, therefore, has become part and parcel of such a people's way of life. In the western world, this is not so. Therefore, Ralph's strong desire to be part of a custom his father considers alien and barbaric, avails the young man an experience in hybridity.

Also, Chinwuba makes use of hybridity in terms of how Ralph gets cured by the African weather condition, as she presents the African weather as being medicinal on the skin of Ralph. "Was this the sickly boy who had spent countless days in his London bed, who missed school on account of one illness or the other? Who had occupied several hospital beds in his short life time? This change was remarkable. Drastic"(183). Indeed, Matt is surprised at his son's recovery in an African community and wonders why his son whose life story in London has been characterised by much sickness, suddenly becomes strong and healthy in Africa. This shows how Ralph adapts to the African weather more positively and quickly than expected.

In terms of the use of untranslated words/expressions, Chinwuba has not made much use of this, but she however, touches on this in her work slightly. In the text, the following are noticed: "Omenma" (58) (Doer of good), "Okepa" (59) (Big foot), "usu" (78) (Bat), "Obi" (49) (An area in a man's house meant for receiving visitors), "Ogbuagu" (50) (Killer of lion), "Okwe" (79) (A game of seeds), "Bia" (81) (Come), "Nmiri" (81) (water), "Ogene" (105) (A musical instrument in form of a gong), "Iba" (118) (Malaria), "Dibia" (medicine man), "Ndo" (219) (Sorry), "Daalu" (246) (Thank you) and "Ise" (245) (Amen).

In her use of affiliation, Chinwuba shows how dance is part and parcel of a people's cultural life. As such, the music that facilitates dance in every occasion, embodies the people's socio-cultural and historical deeds that have been associated with great heroes in the past. Dance is therefore, one of the phenomena that gives a particular people their true identity that makes them distinguishable from other people. By way of affiliation, Chinwuba portrays the socio-cultural value system of the people of Umudo, during the reception of Matt, the new supervisor of Mission School in the following words

> The musicians had come early. Hours before noon they had assembled their instruments and were now beating the whole village to a frenzy. The sound of the drum and the gong could be heard from far away. The flute was not as loud. Together, the result was rhythmic tune. People sat patiently, their bodies involuntarily moving to the beat of the music. Some tapped their feet, others twisted their bodies this way and that …(6)

Again, just the way dance is considered an important aspect of a people's culture in the physical realm amongst humans, so also it is amongst masquerades in the spiritual. In the Snake Island, Chinwuba consciously presents a scenario of masquerade dance.

> The other masquerades also mixed with the initiates. They danced some complicated steps, all the while howling fiendishly. One stood on one foot, and somersaulted. Dance steps mixed with different types of acrobatics. His mask was the skill of a crocodile. It exuded thick smoke. Evil-Smoke without Fire, he was called. There were so many spirits dancing about and raising dust. (200)

Characteristically, the Igbos are known for eating a particular food recipe that is popularly known as 'fufu' in a very stylish manner, that distinguishes them from other people. As Ralph the white boy and his friends are about to eat in Amandi's house, Chinwuba depicts the children's eating habit, as she writes: "each cut out a bit of fufu, rolled it into a ball, dipped it into the soup plate and swallowed" (54), and Ralph who watches this with a lot of surprise, does same as Chinwuba express that "Ralph took a handful of fufu and made to put it directly into his mouth, but the others stopped him. Dip it into the soup first. Then swallow. He tried it and was overtaken by a bout of coughing" (55), therefore, food, especially 'fufu' which is an important aspect of the culture of the Igbos, is brought to bear on Chinwuba's narration, and as such, giving it national and international recognition and identity.

Proverbs too, are part of the things that constitute the lives of Africans, and as such, they are highly cherished and valued as cultural artifact. In the recognition of this all important role of proverbs in the socio-political and cultural lives of the African people in general and Nigerian people in particular, Chinwuba weaves into her narration some of the proverbial sayings that make living more meaningful to Africans in the following

> Usu, the bat, is neither a bird of the air, nor animal of the ground. He says he knows how ugly he is; that is why he goes out only in the dark. Let the eagle perch and let the hawk perch; the one that says no to the other, may its wing break. The frog does not hop in the day time unless something is after its life. Whatever is begotten of the snake, must resemble a snake. (78)

III. Conclusion

From the foregone, the paper has successfully shown that Ifeoma Chinwuba writes from a post-colonial perspective, especially as she uses her work to appropriate the coloniser's language and adapt it to 'bear' the burden of the African/Nigerian people. To give the work a truly Nigerian touch, Chinwuba makes sure that it bears in it that which can be classified as the cultural identity of the Nigerian people of Igbo extraction. Again, the paper has revealed through the work of Chinwuba that Nigerians after all, have their own culture,

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and as such, such culture can better be appreciated if we begin to look inwards, and then reduce to a considerable measure the influence of the westernised world on the one hand, and that even though we recognise the culture of the western world, we should not totally undermine our culture as a people, on the other hand. This goes to say that no matter the amount of the influence of western cultural traits on our reasoning, we should make it a point of duty to always consciously be aware of that which gives us our identity as a people and makes us who we really are. It is by doing this, that we can be seen celebrating and grappling with the things that are truly ours as a people. Suffice it to say that as a cultural crusader, Chinwuba depicts that she is socially committed to the task of a promotion of the culture of the Nigerian people in general and that of the Igbo people in particular.

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Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights: How Far have the Yoruba Women of Nigeria Gone

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Abstract- The four core coordinates of human existence- culture, society, religion and family- have continued in locating women and men in specific social contexts. Using a qualitative data collection approach, the study examines the context of married Yoruba women's sexual and health rights focusing on their rights to make responsible sexual and reproductive decisions. Findings reveal interplay between gender and sexuality. Beliefs and images about masculinity and femininity result in the men feeling that they must initiate sex, dominate and conquer their wives, without being sensitive to their emotional needs. The logic that follows from this is the fact that men presumably are granted the unconditional sexual access to their wives, while women on the other hand lack sexual autonomy. The study concludes that there is relativity of power between married men and women in sexual intercourse no matter the level of the woman's socio-economic status instigated by the social conditioning.

Keywords: yoruba, women, sexual rights, reproductive health rights, emotions, communication, culture, family, religion, society.

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SEXUALANDREPRODUCTIVEHEALTHRIGHTSHOWFARHAVETHEYORUBAWOMENOFNIGERIAGONE

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Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights: How Far have the Yoruba Women of Nigeria Gone

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Abstract- The four core coordinates of human existence-culture, society, religion and family- have continued in locating women and men in specific social contexts. Using a qualitative data collection approach, the study examines the context of married Yoruba women's sexual and health rights focusing on their rights to make responsible sexual and reproductive decisions. Findings reveal interplay between gender and sexuality. Beliefs and images about masculinity and femininity result in the men feeling that they must initiate sex, dominate and conquer their wives, without being sensitive to their emotional needs. The logic that follows from this is the fact that men presumably are granted the unconditional sexual access to their wives, while women on the other hand lack sexual autonomy. The study concludes that there is relativity of power between married men and women in sexual intercourse no matter the level of the woman's socio-economic status instigated by the social conditioning.

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I. Introduction and Statement of Problem

The roots of gender based discrimination run deep and lie buried in culture, customs, beliefs and superstitions. The issues relating to what has come to be known as the women question or why women are relegated to the background has become very prominent in the last few decades. The four core coordinates of human existence - culture, society, religion and family, have continued in locating women and men in specific social contexts, defined their roles, designed their activities and created processes of centrality- marginalization, visibility- invisibility and rooting- uprooting and rerouting (Aluko, 2009). This discrimination is reflected in our daily lives, be it areas of health, education, job opportunities or rights. The complexity and multi-layered realities of gender in our society need to be deconstructed for us to be able to work towards creating an equitable future.

Specifically, women's subordinate position has been linked intimately with the institution of marriage. The traditional form of marriage across cultures placed women at a disadvantage position (Aina, Aransiola and Osezua, 2006). With limited choices in sexual and health decisions, and the inability to abstain from sexual intercourse, women are forced to endure domination by their husbands in marital relationships. Thus, a link has been found between gender inequality and the sexual health conditions in any society. It is also a truism that the general neglect of women's health is a major hindrance to women's full participation in the development process. Any serious attempt at transforming the quality of life (most especially health) at the household level must necessarily have a better understanding of sexuality dynamics at this level, and much more importantly an appraisal of the marriage contracts as these exist in our society today.

A recent global study revealed that over 35 percent of women worldwide have experienced physical or sexual partner violence or non-partner sexual violence (World Health Organization, 2013). That is 818 million women (United Nations, 2013) – almost the total population of Sub-Saharan Africa. The most common form is abuse by an intimate partner, which has profound consequences on the health and well-being of women and their families, as well as effects on wider communities and development outcomes (WHO, 2013). In Nigeria, the 2013 NDHS reported that overall, 25 percent of ever-married women age 15-49 report ever having experienced emotional, physical, or sexual violence from their spouse, and 19 percent report having experienced one or more of these forms of violence in the past 12 months.

It is against this backdrop that this paper examines the extent to which Yoruba women have been able to exercise their sexual and reproductive health rights focusing on rights to make responsible reproductive choices; rights to sexual autonomy; rights to sexual expression; and rights to sexual freedom, going beyond the focus on ideological aspects of masculinity. This is because it is generally assumed among the Yoruba of southwest Nigeria that women do not have personal choices to make when it comes to sexuality (Harcourt, 1993). This assumption makes it difficult for women to face the reality of lack of decision making power within the family. As husbands and household heads, men control the sexuality of their wives (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1994). Wives are bound to comply with their husband's sexual demands as refusal is a major source of strife, the taking of other wives or the keeping of "outside wives" (Karanja, 1987). However, the irony of the Yoruba women's situation and position is that, unlike others they are known to have a

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relatively high social status derived from a high level of economic independence whereby they can on their own engage in paid job or engage in trading activities and earn income. The ability to keep and control the income that accrues from their trading activities (Odebode 2004; van Staveren and Odebode 2007) are important issues that give women in the region some leverage over their African sisters elsewhere. This implies that sexual decision-making among the Yoruba is characterised by certain specific structural and cultural problems which needs to be investigated and examined. The major question addressed in the study therefore is, do Yoruba women actually or in any way have any control over their sexuality despite improved socio-economic status?

II. Clarifying Concepts and Definitions: Sexuality, Sexual Health and Sexual Rights

Sexuality according to WHO (2004) is "a central aspect of being a human throughout life and encompasses sex, gender, identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction". Jemiriye (2006) also defined sexuality as "the condition of having interpersonal behaviour or relationship between male and female which may be associated with, leading up to, substituting for or resulting to or from genital union. It is the phenomena of sexual instincts and their manifestations especially within the two human organic divisions called male and female".

Sexual Rights according to the 14th World Congress of Sexology (1999) "are universal human rights, based on inherent freedom, dignity and equality of all human beings". Since health is a fundamental human right, so is the result of an environment which recognizes, promotes and defends sexual rights.

Sexual health therefore, is "a state of physical, emotional, mental and social being in relation to sexuality: it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity" (WHO 2002). Sexual health is that enabling environment wherein the sexual rights of an individual are protected. As a result, sexual health can be said to be in place in the context of a marriage where the following sexual rights are expressed:

- Rights to sexual freedom: These include rights of individual or both spouses to express their full sexual potential. It however excludes all forms of coercion, abuse, or any form of exploitation.
- Rights to sexual pleasure: These refer to the rights of both partners within the marriage context to engage in sexual pleasure which is a source of physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.
- Rights to sexual autonomy: Here, both spouses are able to make decisions about the sexual life within acceptable social ethics. This however presumes level of sexual equity between both partners in the marital union. It involves control of one's body from any form of feature or mutilation and violence of any sort.
- Rights to privacy: Closely related to sexual cautionary are the rights to sexual privacy. It includes rights to determine intimacy as long as it does not intrude on the other partners.
- Rights to sexual expression: For a sexually healthy marital union, there must be an unreserved expression of sexual acts by both partners which could take the form of communication, touch, and emotional expressions.
- Rights to make responsible reproductive choices: These rights imply that within the marriage context, partners can make reproductive choices as to the number of children and the spacing, as well as full access to means of fertility regulation.
- Rights to sexual education: These rights afford both partners to have access to productive and socially acceptable means of accessing sexual education.
- Rights to sexual health care: These should be available to both partners in the marriage union especially in the prevention and treatment of sexual disorders or other sexual health concerns.

The issue of sexual health has become very important, especially with the emergence of the pandemic of human immunodefiency virus (HIV) infection, increasing rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and growing recognition of public health concerns such as gender related violence, and sexual dysfunction. In order to achieve sexual health, people must be empowered to exercise their sexual rights. A denial of such power is what usually leads to sexual violence. Sexual violence in marriage has been described variously, and encompassing a variety of un-holy experiences which include (WHO, 2002):

- Rape within marriage, and/or while dating;
- Unwanted sexual advance,
- Forced marriage or child marriage
- Denial of rights to use contraception or to adopt other measures to protect against sexually transmitted disease,
- Spousal support for forced prostitution (usually because of personal gain) etc.

Africa, especially the sub-Saharan Africa has the worst indicators of women's health especially with regards to reproductive health (Aina, et al., 2006). This is an indication that there is still a pervasive violation of women's rights especially their sexual rights, due to prevailing cultural practices in this part of the world. Sexual violence has its roots in cultural discrimination

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against women, which supports the subordination of women in marriage and marital relations. Hence, women in most of the Nigerian cultures are meant to endure, rather than enjoy marriage. The discriminatory practices against women are often used to explain the social placement of women in most African societies – 'poor, powerless, and pregnant'. No doubt, the social placement of women in our society has implications for their sexual health, while the denial of power to exercise sexual rights continues to violate the rights of women to sexual health. According to WILDAF (2005), the overt emphasis on traditional values and lack of respect of women's consent in a marital union has impeded marital relations in many parts of Africa. Furthermore, failure to define discrimination of women as an issue of concern has further worsened the status of women and led to the violation of their sexual rights as espoused by the declaration of sexual rights.

III. The Status of Women among the Yoruba

Yoruba women are both autonomous and subordinate to men. Autonomy arises through a fairly rigid sexual division of labour, which excludes women from most agricultural work, and means that traditional women work independently of their husbands and not jointly or cooperatively with them (Lloyd 1974). Despite women's autonomy, however, many aspects of the social system give men greater seniority and control than women. Men are permitted several wives, but women may have only one husband (Aderinto, 2001; Alaba, 2004; Dopamu and Alana 2004). Double standards of sexual morality for husbands and wives with the risks of infection and diseases such as HIV/AIDS limit women's life choices concerning their health, happiness and career. Whereas husbands maintain the right to control their spouses' desires for extramarital sexual activity, most wives do not try to exercise such control over their spouses (Orubuloye, Caldwell and Caldwell, 1992).

Infact, the literature is replete with assertions that because African society is largely patriarchal, men dominate family decision-making. The extension of this reality to sexuality appears to fuel some discord in the literature on who really determines timing and the frequency of sex between heterosexual married partners. Some studies report that men controls sexuality in conjugal unions than their female counterparts (Isiugo-Abanihe 1994; Oyekanmi 1999), and that women cannot resist sexual advances from their husbands even when they perceive their health is at risk (possibility of contacting STIs) (Bammeke 1999; Adewuyi 1999). In essence the position established by scholars indicates that women are at a disadvantage in sexual negotiation or control relative to their husbands' privileged and stronger position in African culture. On the other hand, some other studies have indicated that women exact considerable influence in negotiating sex in marriage (Orubuloye (1995: 231; Orubuloye, Caldwell and Caldwell, 1991; Orubuloye et. al.1997; Ogunjuyigbe and Adeyemi, 2005; Wusu and Isiugo-Abanihe, 2008). In view of these discordant voices on the subject matter, this present study is very germane. The question now is: If Yoruba women do have control over their sexuality at all, to what level?

IV. Theoretical Perspective

This study is based on the feminist social rights perspective on women's sexual and reproductive/health rights, which defined the terrain of reproductive and sexual rights in terms of power and resources: power to make informed decisions about one's own fertility, childbearing, child-rearing, gynaecologic health, and sexual activity; and resources to carry out such decisions safely and effectively. This terrain necessarily involves some core notion of "bodily integrity", or "control over one's body". However, it also involves one's relationships to one's children, sexual partners, family members, community, and society at large; in other words, the body exists in a socially mediated universe.

Critics have raised several fundamental problems about rights discourse: its indeterminate language, its individualist bias, its presumption of universality, and its dichotomization of "public" and "private" spheres (Correa & Petchesky, 1994). However, rather than abandoning rights discourse it can be reconstructed so that it specifies both gender, class, cultural, and other differences and recognizes social needs. The point is, sexual and reproductive/ health (or any other) rights understood as private "liberties" or "choices", are meaningless, especially for the marginalised, without enabling conditions through which they can be realised. These conditions constitute social rights and involve social welfare, personal security, and political freedom. Their provision is essential to the democratic transformation of societies to abolish gender, class, racial and ethnic injustice.

By implication this perspective has linked reproductive/health and sexual rights to development, and has challenged all legalistic notions of civil and political rights that still dominate the human rights field. Democracy movements in most societies easily invoke rights when it comes to voting, or forming political parties or trade unions. Why should concepts like "reproductive rights," "bodily integrity," and women's right to sexual self- determination be any less adaptable? The construction of a legal and normative boundary between "public" and "private" insulates the daily, routine practices of gender subordination especially in the home (Dixon-Muller, 1993). Feminist writings (Bunch 1990; Elias 1991; Cook 1993; Copelon

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1994) and actions in defence of women's rights build on these critiques to challenge the customary reluctance of states and international agencies to intervene in traditionally defined "family matters".

There is need to develop analytical frameworks that respect the integrity of women's reproductive and sexual decisions, however constrained, while also condemning social, economic, and cultural conditions that may force women to "choose" one course over another. Such conditions prevail in a range of situations, curtailing reproductive/health choices and creating dilemmas for women's health activists. For reproductive decisions to be in any real sense "free", rather than compelled by circumstances or desperation, requires the presence of certain enabling conditions as mentioned earlier. These conditions constitute the foundation of reproductive and sexual rights and are what feminists mean when they speak of women's "empowerment".

Such enabling conditions or social rights are integral to reproductive /health and sexual rights and directly entail the responsibility of states and mediating institutions for their implementation. Rights involve not only personal liberties (domain where governments should leave people alone), but also social entitlements (domains where affirmative publication is required to ensure that rights are attainable by everyone). They thus necessarily imply public responsibilities and a renewed emphasis on the linkages between personal well-being and social good, including the good of public support for gender equality in all domains of life.

The issue therefore is, when are reproductive and sexual decisions freely made and when coerced? Bodily integrity includes both "a woman's right not to be alienated from her sexual and reproductive/health capacity (e.g., through coerced sex or marriage, denial of access to birth control) and her right to the integrity of her physical person (e.g., freedom form sexual violence, from unwanted pregnancies, from sexually transmitted diseases)" (Dixon-Mueller 1993). It also implies affirmative rights to enjoy the full potential of one's body- for health, procreation, and sexuality. What therefore do we say of women suffering the consequences of sexually transmitted diseases, who find themselves in a social circumstance that further increases their risk of exposure to sexually transmitted infections and their complications? This shows women's lack of sexual self-determination. This shows that the individual (liberty) and the social (justice) dimensions of rights can never be separated, as long as resources and power remain unequally distributed in most societies. Thus the affirmative obligations of states become paramount, since the ability of individuals (women in particular) to exercise reproductive and sexual rights depends on a range of conditions not yet available to many people and impossible to access without public support.

V. Methods

Study area: The study location was carried out in Ibadan, the capital city of Oyo State. Located in south-western Nigeria, 78 miles inland from Lagos, it is a prominent transit point between the coastal region and the areas to the north. The population of Ibadan was 2,550,593 according to 2006 census results (National Population Commission 2010). The principal inhabitants of the city are the Yoruba People. The abundance of women who were economically empowered or with improved socio-economic status in Ibadan metropolis made it a choice place for the study.

Data collection procedure: The analysis presented in this paper is based on qualitative data collected in the study population, which are purposively selected for this research. Twelve focus group discussion sessions, comprising about six to ten people per group, giving a total of 114 participants of mainly Yoruba tribe living in Ibadan metropolis, were conducted to generate qualitative data. As a result, four criteria were applied in forming the discussion groups: level of education, occupation, age and ethnic background. The discussions were taped, after obtaining permission from participants. The tapes were transcribed, sorted and analyzed by manual content analysis, which is a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding and identifying themes or patterns.

Research instrument- Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guide: The aim of the FGDs was to examine the extent to which Yoruba women can exercise their sexual and reproductive health rights. The key interview questions fell into four main categories:

- Background information: Respondents were asked questions on age, marital status, level of education, religion, type of occupational group they belong to.
- Family structure and communication level: respondents were asked questions on areas of spousal communication and decision making process.
- Gender roles in sexuality and sexual behaviour within the marriage: respondents were asked questions on rights to sexual expression, sexual freedom and sexual autonomy.
- Rights to make responsible reproductive choices: respondents were asked questions the use of contraception.

VI. Findings and Discussions

a) *Background Information*

Majority of the participants in the FGD were below 40yrs of age and in the sexually active, reproductive stage of the life-span. The mean age of the

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women was 30yrs. Also majority have post-secondary education. The least occupational group was trading/business activities, while others were involved in other different professions like banking, lecturing, teaching, medical doctors, nursing etc.

b) Family Structure and Communication Level

Respondents reported both extended and nuclear family set up. For those from extended family set up, they reported that they rarely talked to their spouses or spent time with them. Most couples came together at night for sex, having only limited contact with the spouse during the day- a situation hardly conducive to the building of satisfying and harmonious relationships. There were no outings where the couple could enjoy some privacy and get to know one another. Several respondents expressed the absence of such opportunities and time. As reported by a market woman (trader):

> We never used to talk much to each other. Where do I have the time? Is it me that I have to leave home early to go to the market to sell my wares, or him that has his business to face? We hardly go out together………

However, those in nuclear units reported discussions on daily household matter, non-task oriented sharing and outings with the spouse. Sharing household responsibilities provided opportunities for communi-cation which brings them closer. Communication is a core element of the marital dyad upon which all sexual and non-sexual interactions rest. The complexity and multiplicity of factors involved in spousal sexual interactions include verbal and non-verbal communication, positive/negative aspects of the sexual relationship, presence/absence of violence and concern for the sexual health of the self and spouse. In order for intimacy to occur, the couple need to talk and spend time together. Such interactions were evident among some of the women, who reported that they (husband and wife) made time to talk to each other regularly about their daily routines, hopes and dreams. A respondent said:

> After coming back from work, we sit down to share the day's happenings. He tells me about his work, his problems, even shares any financial difficulties with me. I too tell him about what I did the whole day. We talk about the children, especially about their studies. We both enjoy each other's company (Secondary School Teacher).

Another woman who describes her union as a happy one said:

> We talk a lot about what we need to do in future, how to save money. We discuss about our lives. I personally love talking. When am burdened, I feel a lot better after talking to him, because of his kind advice (Nurse).

From the above, it can be inferred that respondents who reported a general satisfaction with the marital relationship had invested in 'relational communication' that enabled both partners to strengthen the relationship. Spouses who viewed their union as more than a mere contract involving role obligations engaged in open, non-task-based communication. On the other hand, for some other women, most communication revolved around practical issues and needs that is absent of 'relational communication'. As one of them said:

> We never spoke to each other, especially in the first few years of our marriage. Because babies came immediately (in quick successions) to prove my sexual adequacy. So where is the question of talking? (Secondary school teacher)

c) Gender roles in sexuality and sexual behaviour within the marriage: rights to sexual expression, sexual freedom and sexual autonomy

Some of the respondents reported non-consensual sexual relation with their husband. In the words of a primary school teacher:

> In the past so many years, there has never been any real discussion between us. He only wants one thing and that is sex. Both of us do our job by him wanting sex and I providing it.

A large share of the women are constrained in exercising agency over these domains. Such experiences heightened marital dissatisfaction. While the productive and reproductive functions of marriage were fulfilled, neither intimacies nor the marital bond were strengthened. Most of these women viewed such interactions as only satisfying the husband's lust and reported the absence of the desire for sex or sexual pleasure. In the words of another woman, a university lecturer:

> My heart never fluttered for him. I know he comes near me only to satisfy his lust. I never felt like talking, sharing or going close to him.

This implies that there is absence of any behaviours of intimacy among such couples. Such women succumbed to non-consensual forced sex for fear of the consequences if they resisted or refused sex. As reported by another university lecturer, she said:

> Any time I say no, he will slap, tear my clothes and cover my mouth with his hand in order to bring me in control…..

Sex with her husband has always been non-consensual and forced, with the use of physical violence and verbal abuse to gain sexual access, in spite of her level of education or status. This contradicts previous findings that improved socio-economic status is a direct correlate of increased ability to exercise sexual rights (Ogunjuyigbe and Adeyemi, 2005; Wusu and Isiugo-

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Abanihe, 2008). The unfortunate thing is that most of these women are silent about these atrocities; consequently people do not believe it is happening. Another woman said:

> My husband has never kissed me on my cheeks not to talk of lips. He never touched my hair lovingly. I don't know what a man's loving touch is like. Whenever he wants to do it, it is done as if he is stealing something. He tears my clothes and it is over quickly (with his pant partially removed). Always doing a 'quickie' with me (Medical Doctor).

Yet another said:

> If I say no just for today, he will rain abusive words like, have you found another lover? Why have I married you if you can't do this much? He will end up forcing it on me, and because of my children, I don't resist too much, because I am afraid for them. (Civil servant).

These experiences highlight the interplay between gender and sexuality. Gendered messages about being a male dictate social processes of living up to that image. Beliefs and images about masculinity and femininity result in the man feeling that they must initiate sex, and dominate and conquer their wives without being sensitive to their emotional needs. For these men, sex was a male right and marriage ensured unquestioned, unlimited access to the wife's body. This confirms why a female trader in one of the FGD sessions reported that: *"I have had cause to give in to my husband's sexual request even when I was having my period. Though it was messy, but how for do? He wants it and I must give him".* Meanwhile, there is supposed to be some circumstances under which women in southwest Nigeria may and are indeed expected to refuse sexual intercourse with their partners, which includes the period before marriage, during menstruation, during the postpartum period (when breast feeding), on becoming a grandmother and on reaching menopause (Akinsete, 1997; Page & Lesthaeghe, 1981). The above act has contravened this cultural law completely. The existence of prescribed periods of sexual abstinence reveal that culturally women have sexual rights, which they are in fact expected and encouraged to exercise.

Several other women like this banker, talked about not being physically and psychologically prepared for engaging in sex on some occasions or responding to their husbands' demands by saying:

> When he forces himself, I am dry and it hurts a lot. If he cared for me and my feelings, he will wait till I am ready. But he never bothers, he his interested only in getting what he wants.

Meanwhile, coercive sex carries an inherent threat of tissue damage due to the absence of lubrication, and poses the risk of STIs and HIV. Husbands indulging in coercive sex used threat of taking a second wife or extra-marital affair to get their wives comply with their wishes. The threat of physical force and coercive sex is effectively used by husbands to ensure a woman's submission to their sexual demands. Social norms and institutions- both formal and informal – perpetuates such violence through norms and expectations that reinforce inequality and place women's decision-making about their bodies outside their realm of control. Meanwhile, the ability to choose when to have sex and on what terms is a critical indicator of agency.

However, the startling fact is that some women help to propagate this illicit act by explaining it away and saying that men are being controlled by their impulses and possessing beastly qualities, which corroborates previous findings by Ajuwon et al., 2001. In the words of one of the respondents:

> Some husbands have uncontrolled and unsatisfied sexual desires. They always want sex, and if you don't give it to them, they will beat you or deprive you of other benefits (Secondary school teacher).
>
> If a husband cannot have sex with his wife at all times, whom should he have it with then? Sex is the major reason a man and a woman will get married to each other (Trader).
>
> What kind of husband is one who does not want to have sex with his wife at all times? "He asks for it because he likes me. Who else should he have it with? Is it the other woman? (Business woman).

To this group of women, sexual rights for women are designed to undermine culture, tradition and dignity. Refusing sex with your husband is prompting him to involve in extramarital affair. So it is believed that even when negotiation is attempted the women reported that they are usually unable to prevent a forced sexual encounter. It is therefore, believed that it is impossible for a woman to reject sexual advances from her husband.

Lastly, the general view among this group of women when asked who initiates sex among spouses is that: '*Men initiate sex because women don't reveal their desires, even when they are interested they would never initiate sexual demand….'* Members of the group also chorused that it is inappropriate and bad manners for women to initiate sex. Other ways women send out erotic messages is through preparing delicious dishes for their husbands, dressing elegantly and being extra-nice to their husbands. Older women however believed that they could reject their husbands' sexual advances if they are not willing or are not favourably disposed.

d) Rights to make responsible reproductive choices

Very few of the women had ever used or suggest condom with their husbands. For women who suspect their husbands of infidelity, suggesting condom

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use for marital sex poses multiple problems. As one of the respondents puts it: '*Her request may be interpreted as indicating that she suspects not only that her husband is cheating but that the type of extramarital sex he is having is risky and, by implication is immoral'.* Moreover, the meaning of her request may be twisted and misinterpreted by her spouse and turned against her with an accusation that it is she who is being unfaithful. In the words of a banker:

A woman asking her husband to use a condom is putting,

herself in the position of a whore. What does she need a,

condom with her man for, unless she is flirting around,

outside the married house?

In Yoruba land, it is a common practice that married women should be submissive to their husbands in fertility related matters and that they secure permission from their husbands before taking major decisions such as limiting fertility through contraceptives or other means. Among this major ethnic group, there is a popular proverbial adage which says *"Oko lo lori aya",* literally translated as "husband is the head of the wife". Westernisation and modernisation have not in any way affected this belief. Most of the of the respondents indicated that their husband would determine when to have sex while very few reported that the decision rests with women, that they play major role in the decision to use contraceptives. This role was further qualified in the focus group discussion when participants said "*we can take decision to use contraceptive but the permission of our husbands would be sought first before we can adopt contraception*". It was also revealed that men more than women had the final say concerning the number of children and when to have the children.

Findings also revealed by the respondents that Yoruba men do not like to use condoms with their wives. The main reason been that *"it just doesn't feel natural……prefer flesh to flesh……..It hinders actual contact…"* Even some of the women said they do not really the idea of using condoms. In the words of one of the respondents *"I prefer to feel him in me".* However, the logic that follows from this is the fact that men, presumably, are granted the unconditional sexual access to their wives, and could exercise power to enforce this (Sen, 1999; Jegede & Odumosu, 2003). Women generally lack sexual autonomy in many cultures of the world, thus, unwanted pregnancies as a result of powerlessness over contraception usage are the end results.

e) Implications of the study

The findings of this study show that women bear most of the health burden in marital relations. There is relativity of power between men and women in sexual intercourse among married couples no matter the level of the woman's socio-economic status. Cultural expectations, when backed by a conservative religious and political framework, largely outweigh the ability of individuals to challenge them. Underpinning women's difficulty in refusing sex is the common assumption that consenting to sex at any point in the relationship, establishes consent for the rest of the relationship, which also creates barriers to recognising marital rape. The ability to refuse sex and to ask partner to use a condom are closely related. Findings reflect attitudes that associate condom use with illicit sex and promiscuity, and to religious prohibitions.

VII. Conclusions

The foregoing shows that regular spousal communication enhances the right of a woman over her sexuality. At the moment it is replaced by force and violence, which is instigated by the social conditioning of men to be more sexually expressive than women, and therefore more likely to initiate sexual advances. There appears to be lack of full understanding of the nature and meanings of sexual rights and sexual right abuse in the area. The sexual health needs of women especially should be given adequate attention in any intervention programmes to curb the incessant menace of sexual coercion. This will empower women and increase their control over their sexual lives. At the moment, freedom to make decision on when to have sex and when not to, which is an essential domain of agency for asserting fundamental human rights and in promoting gender equality is still lacking. Social norms and laws are important drivers of agency, and this is especially true in the context of sexual and reproductive decisions. These two mediates through the household, impact agency and other gender-equality outcomes. Interventions and policies that seek to change norms around women's sexuality roles will be critical for increasing women's sexual and reproductive agency. Women's agency cannot increase in isolation from the wider community hence, the need to engage men and other gate-keepers in sexual and reproductive health issues may be promising. Although they need to be carefully designed to avoid unintended consequences like reinforcing traditional power dynamics or to produce only modest behavioural change.

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Interface Between Religion and Culture: A Critical Study of the Infiltration of Yoruba Tradition on the Practice of Title-Holding among Egba Muslims of Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract- Title-holding is an age long practice before the penetration of Islam in Egbaland, an area predominantly inhabited by the Yoruba speaking people of Ogun State, Nigeria. The acceptance of Islam by the Egbas reformed, to a large extent, the socio-religious and cultural lives of the people. The Yoruba traditional systems of marriage, naming and burial rites were, among others, influenced and reformed by Islam. However, a good number of the Egbas, like other Yoruba tribes which profess Islam, still retain some of their cultural beliefs and traditions. Consequently, there was an infiltration of Yoruba tradition and culture on certain Islamic practices and rites such as marriage, naming and funeral rites. Such infiltration can also be noticed in title-holding among the people. This paper, therefore, critically appraises the fusion of the Yoruba traditional elements to the Islamic practice of the title-holding among Egba Muslims. The paper adopts the historical approach establishing the institutionalization of titleholding in Islam. It then x-rays the practice of title-holding among the people. The paper then considers the similarities between the Muslim titles and the traditional titles patterned along the traditional set up among the four sections of the people.

Keywords: title - holding, Yoruba land, Egba Muslims, Egba land, Yoruba tradition.

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INTERFACEBETWEENRELIGIONANDCULTUREACRITICALSTUDYOFTHEINFILTRATIONOFYORUBATRADITIONONTHEPRACTICEOFTITLEHOLDINGAMONGEGBAMUSLIMSOFOGUNSTATENIGERIA

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Interface Between Religion and Culture: A Critical Study of the Infiltration of Yoruba Tradition on the Practice of Title-Holding among Egba Muslims of Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract- Title-holding is an age long practice before the penetration of Islam in Egbaland, an area predominantly inhabited by the Yoruba speaking people of Ogun State, Nigeria. The acceptance of Islam by the Egbas reformed, to a large extent, the socio-religious and cultural lives of the people. The Yoruba traditional systems of marriage, naming and burial rites were, among others, influenced and reformed by Islam. However, a good number of the Egbas, like other Yoruba tribes which profess Islam, still retain some of their cultural beliefs and traditions. Consequently, there was an infiltration of Yoruba tradition and culture on certain Islamic practices and rites such as marriage, naming and funeral rites. Such infiltration can also be noticed in title-holding among the people. This paper, therefore, critically appraises the fusion of the Yoruba traditional elements to the Islamic practice of the title-holding among Egba Muslims. The paper adopts the historical approach establishing the institutionalization of title-holding in Islam. It then x-rays the practice of title-holding among the people. The paper then considers the similarities between the Muslim titles and the traditional titles patterned along the traditional set up among the four sections of the people. Realizing the fact that title-holding has become a firmly rooted institution among the Egba Muslims, the paper offers a number of recommendations for the restructure of the institution for better administration of the people and further development of Islam in Egbaland in particular and Yorubaland in general.

Keywords: title-holding, Yoruba land, Egba Muslims, Egba land, Yoruba tradition.

I. Introduction

At the early stage of Islam, some Muslims who were convinced of the prophethood and mission of Muhammad facilitated the spread of Islam by committing the resources at their disposal to the propagation and consolidation of Islam. Prominent among them was Abu Bakr bn Abu Quhafa who stood by Prophet Muhammad (SAW) for the advancement of Islam in Arabia. He bought a number of slaves who accepted Islam with his money and set them free in addition to other financial assistance he rendered to the Prophet and his new mission. Others who did similar things were 'Umar bn al-Khattab, 'Uthman bn Affan, Ali bn Abu Talib, Khadijat bint Khuwaylid, Aishat bint Abu Bakr and a host of other male and female, young and old *sahabah* (companions) who, with their wealth and blood, championed the propagation of Islam. Due to these outstanding contributions to Islam and other remarkable achievements in the development of the Muslim *Ummah* (community), the Prophet Muhammad is reported to have personally conferred titles on some of them while others were known with different titles associated with their specific contributions after the demise of the Prophet. For instance, Prophet Muhammad, during his lifetime, honoured Abu Bakr with the title *As-Siddiq* meaning "the most truthful and sincere person in faith" for his enormous contributions to the spread of Islam and for his absolute faith in the Prophet's Ascension to Heaven (*Mi'raj*) (Masud, 1985). *Al-Faruq* (the separator of Truth from Falsehood), *Dhu-Nurain* (possessor of two lights) and *Asadullah* (the lion of Allah) were titles conferred on Umar bn al-Khattab, Uthman bn Affan and Ali bn Abu Talib respectively (Khan, n.d). Consequently, this practice of the Prophet and that of his successors established the institution of title-holding in Islam.

In emulation of the practice of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in conferring titles on the early Muslims, the Muslims in Egbaland established mini-Muslim communities within their traditional political set ups and conferred titles on the influential members of their *jama'ah* (congregation) whose activities and contributions they considered similar to those of the *sahabah* (companions of the Prophet) as patrons and patronesses of Islam. Consequently, different titles similar to those of Yoruba traditional titles were created, given religious colouration and conferred on the people. Apart from spiritual titles of *Imam*, *Naibul Imam* (deputy Imam) *Ladhani* (caller to prayer) *Alfa Taosiri (*Qur'an exegetes*) and Arowasi* (megaphone of *Alfa Taosiri* or someone who re-echoes what *Alfa Taosiri* utters) conferred on Yoruba Muslims who were found to be

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knowledgeable in Islam, honorary titles like *Baba Adinni (*Patron of the Religion, Islam*), Balogun Adinni* (Commander of the Muslim veteran warriors*), Arowosadinin,* (Muslim philanthropist) *Iya Sunna (*Mother of the faithful*), Iya Adinni* (Patroness of the Islamic Religion) to mention but few, were conferred on wealthy and influential Muslims of high social status. This was done to source funds to finance Islamic projects like building and renovation of mosques. Other titles include *Sarumi Adinni, Jagunmolu Adinni, Seriki Musulumi,* and a host of others.

However, in selecting recipients and turbaning them, the Egba Muslims adopted the Egba Traditional Chieftaincy Institutional system. Zoning system, a feature of Yoruba traditional title holding, for example was borrowed by the Egba Muslims. The titles, both the spiritual and honorific were zoned unequally to the four major sections of Egbaland namely Egba Alake, Egba Oke-Ona, Egba Gbagura and Egba Owu. The zoning formula, which has been in practice among the Egbas since 1830CE, is now causing ripples among the Egba Muslims and the system has consistently been challenged by some Muslims in Egbaland (Owoyemi, 2004). This cultural infiltration of the Egba tradition and culture on the Muslim title-holding in Egbaland is seen as a sharp departure from the teachings of Islam and the practice of the early Muslims. It is against this backdrop that this paper seeks to examine the extent of infiltration of the Yoruba tradition and culture on the Islamic institution of title-holding among the Egba Muslims with a view to identifying the grey areas in the title-holding that are incongruent with Islamic tradition and then offers recommendations to sanitize the institution in particular among the Muslims in Egbaland and in Yorubaland as a whole.

a) Scriptural Basis for Title-Holding in Islam

A meticulous study of the Glorious Qur'an on the lives and missions of some prophets of Allah will reveal what appears like conferment of titles. In this case, title holding can be viewed from two angles. The first one is the titles which Allah conferred on some of His prophets as mentioned in the Qur'an while the second angle is the use of general titles as replacement for the names of some personalities mentioned in the Qur'an. Concerning titles conferred on the chosen prophets of Allah, it is done on the account of Allah's disposition, relationship or interactions with those prophets. For instance, Prophet Ibrahim (AS), the father of monotheism was an exemplary of faith and friend of God. Hence, the titles *hanif* (One pure in faith) and *Khalilullah* (a bosom friend of Allah) are frequently used to describe him (i.e. Prophet Ibrahim). The two titles can be found in the Glorious Qur'an where Allah says:

> And who can be better in religion than one who submits his face (himself) to Allah and he is a good doer and follows the religion of Ibrahim, *Hanif* (a worshipper of none but Allah) and Allah did take Ibrahim as a *Khalil* (an intimate friend) (Suratul-Nisai, 4:125)

Kalimul-Lah (One with whom Allah spoke directly) is the title given to Prophet Musa. It was as a result of this priviledge that Prophet Musa asked Allah for the permission to see Him physically (Q4:143). The title, *Kalimul-Lah*, which was conferred on him, is culled from the Qur'an where it is stated thus:

> And Messengers We have mentioned to you before, and messengers We have not mentioned to you and to Musa Allah spoke directly (*wa kallamalLahu Musa takliiman*). (Suratul-Nisai, 4:164).

Likewise, Prophet 'Isa (Jesus Christ) is known in the Qur'an with the title, *Ruhullah* (the Spirit of God). This is due to the fact that Angel Jibril was sent to Maryam to conceive without having any sexual intimacy with any man as a result of which she gave birth to 'Isa (Jesus Christ). The title, *RuhulLah* is gotten from Allah's statement in Qur'an 4:171, which goes thus:

> …The Messiah 'Isa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary) was a Messenger of Allah and His Word which He bestowed on Maryam and a spirit from him (*Ruhun minhu*).

Going further into the Glorious Qur'an, it is discovered that Prophet Muhammad, like other prophets mentioned above, also bore some titles. Besides the titles of *An-Nabiyy* (Prophet) and *Rasul* (Messenger) which are frequently used to address Prophet Muhammad and other men of God in the Qur'an, Prophet Muhammad is also conferred specially with the title, *Khatim an-Nabiyy* (the zeal of the prophethood) (Qur'an 33:40). The title, *Ulul'Azm* (great possessors of the determination*)* is a collective title given to Prophets Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, Isa and Muhammad.

Discussing title-holding from the second perspective in the Glorious Qur'an, one will come across some titles such as *khalifah* used to refer to humankind or human being as the vicegerent of God on earth (Q2:30), *wazir* used to describe the deputizing role played by Prophet Harun (Suratul-Taha, 20:29, Suratul-Furqan, 25:35) and *makiin* (one with rank firmly established) used for Prophet Yusuf for the supervisory role he played in Egypt (Suratul Yusuf, 12:54).

b) Evolution and Proliferation of Islamic titles in Islamic History

The early period of Islam witnessed a number of titles conferred on the *sahabah* (companions of the Prophet Muhammad) and the *tabi'un* (followers of the companions of the Prophet). It was the period when title-holding became an acceptable practice and an institution in Islam. Right from the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad, the Muslim faithful who contributed immensely to the propagation of Islam were honoured with titles. The first companion of the Prophet to receive a title from him was Abu Bakr bn Abu Quhafah. He was given the title, *As-Siddiq* (the most truthful and sincere

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person. The title was conferred on Abu Bakr because he declared his firm faith in the Prophet's *Mi'raj* (Ascension to Heaven) and for believing him as a prophet of God (Haykal, 1981). It is on record that some Muslims doubted the reality of the Prophet's *Mi'raj* (ascension to heaven) except Abu Bakr. On hearing the news about the Prophet's *Miraj*, Abu Bakr is quoted as saying:

> All this is true. Your description is faithful and correct. I believe in every word you have said, for you say nothing but the truth. I testify that you are the Messenger of God and God has placed invisible forces at your disposal. As such there is nothing improbable in your ascension to the heaven (Masud, 1985:16-17).

Responding to Abu Bakr's statement, Prophet Muhammad is reported to have addressed him thus:

> Verily, Abu Bakr, you are *as-Siddiq*. You have a penetrating vision and you can discern the truth, which an ordinary man finds difficult to understand… (Masud, 1985:16-17).

'Umar bn al-Khattab was a prominent companion who received a title from the Prophet. He was conferred with the title *al-Faruq*, meaning the one who makes distinction between the right and the wrong. The title was given to 'Umar because of his boldness and courage towards the unbelievers who usually molested and persecuted the few Muslims in Makkah. Umar bn al-Khattab always led a number of Muslims to the Ka'bah where they offered their *Salat* (canonical prayer) in congregation (Khan, n.d.). 'Uthman bn Affan got the title, *Dhun-Nurayn* meaning the man with two lights because he had the priviledge of getting married to Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum, daughters of the Prophet one after the other. Ruqayyah was the first wife of 'Uthman but died after the Battle of Badr. Then, the Prophet married his next daughter, Umm Kulthum to Uthman and conferred the title *Dhun-Nurain* on Uthman bn Affan (Khan, n.d.). The title is significant in the sense that Uthman was twice married in the Prophet's family, a rare opportunity which no other companion enjoyed in the lifetimes of the Prophet (Arimiyau, 2014).

The last of *al-khulafaau ar-Rashidun* (the rightly guided caliphs), Ali bn Abu Talib was given the title, *Asadullah* (the lion of Allah) by Prophet Muhammad. According to Khan (n.d), Ali was given the title because of his bravery, audacity and shrewdness in the war of conquest. He showed a great courage in all the battles he fought and earned fame. He was counted among the great warriors of Arabia (Hitti, 1970). Arimiyah (2014) states that Ali was given the title, "the Lion of God" because of his bravery which he demonstrated on a number of occasions in support of the mission of Prophet Muhammad.

With the passing away of the era of the Prophet (632CE) and the four rightly guided caliphs (632-661CE), Islamic titles became more pronounced and proliferated especially during the periods of Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs (661-1258CE). Muawiyya ibn Abi Sufyan adopted the title, *Malik*, meaning the King. Thus, the first self-styled *Malik* (i.e. king) started from Muawiyya and all his successors bore this title (Rahim, 1981). The Umayyad dynasty, after nine decades of rule, was overthrown by Abu Abbas, the founder of the Abbasid dynasty in 750CE. After a landslide victory of Abu Abbas over the Umayyad family, he was nick-named *As-Saffah* meaning the blood thirsty, the title with which he became well known in Islamic history. Thereafter, his successor, Abu Ja'far gave himself the title *Al-Mansur* meaning he that was helped. Following *Al-Mansur's* reign, his successors were conferred with series of titles. Among the titles were *Mutaqqi*, *Al-Qahir*, and *Al-Mustakfi* which were conferred on caliphs Abu Ishaq, Abu Mansur Ahmad and Kasim Abdullahi respectively (Masudul Hassan, 2001). According to Baksh and Margoliouth (1979), Caliph al-Qaim conferred three titles, *Rais al-Ru'asa* (Chief of chiefs), *Sharf al-Wuzara* (Honour of the Wazirs) and *Jamal al-wara* (Beauty of creation) on his Wazir. In 429/1037CE, the Chief Qadi Mawardi received the title of *Aqda'i Qudat* (Highest Judge). Baksh and Margoliouth (1979) also contend that conferment of titles became so rampant during the Abbasid period to the extent that the Abbasid threw open the gates of honour and surnames that they conferred titles on a man whom their ancestors would not have made the door keeper of their lavatory.

Interestingly, it is recorded in Islamic history that women also bore titles. Khadija bint Khuwaylid, the first wife of the Prophet bore the title, *Tahirah* meaning the Purified, Aisha bint Abu Bakr, another Prophet's wife, bore the title *Umml-Mumini* meaning the Mother of the faithful. She is also called *Siddiqah* (the Truthful). Fatima, daughter of the Prophet is known with the title *Zahra* (Saeed, 1340H).

c) *Historical Antecedents of Title-Holding in Egbaland*

Egbaland is a land occupied by the *Egbas*. The term *Egba* is said to have been derived from *Egbalugbo* meaning wanderers towards the forest. The term *Egba* connotes openhandedness, generosity, accommodating and hospitable (Biobaku, 1991). Historically, the *Egbas* are the Yoruba speaking people who came to occupy *Egba* forest known as Ago-Oja in the present Oyo State, Nigeria. They were said to have lived as three independent groups of people in the *Egba* forest and migrated to Abeokuta (now capital of Ogun State) in 1830CE after the destruction of their towns by the enemies. They formed a loose federation with the *Alake* as its acknowledged paramount ruler while the *Osile* and the *Agura* were rulers of their respective sections (Biobaku, 1991). The *Owu* people later migrated to Abeokuta in 1831 and became the fourth section at Abeokuta as *Egba Owu* (Owoyemi, 2004).

Before the settlement of the *Egba* people in Abeokuta in 1830CE, there had been functional political machinery in each of the federating towns in the Egba

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forest. Political powers were vested in the hands of the titleholders such as the *Ogboni* (fraternities), the *Olorogun/Jagunjagun* (veteran warriors), the *Parakoyi* (market administrators), the *Odes* (hunters) and the *Egans* (Sotunde, 2002). The first set of the *Olorogun* chiefs in Egba history emerged in the 1770s in the era of Lisabi and the *Egbe Aro* which was organized to counter the high handedness of the agents of *Oloyo*, the paramount ruler of Yorubaland to whom the Egbas were subservient. The very first *Egba* ward lords in Abeokuta had their titles about 1833CE. It was during that period that Apati and Anoba became the first *Bashorun* and *Aaare Ona Kankanfo* respectively (Sotunde, 2002). It is important to state that the origin of each of the many *Ogboni* (fraternities) and *Olorogun* (veteran warriors) titles is still unclear because the historical records about them remain obscure.

d) An Over View of the Structure of the Yoruba Traditional Titles in Egbaland

Egbaland is a Yoruba Community which covers the present six local government areas namely Abeokuta North, Abeokuta South, Ewekoro, Ifo, Obafemi/Owode and Odeda local government areas of Ogun State, Nigeria. Egbaland is principally divided into four major sections namely Egba Alake, Egba Oke-Ona, Egba Gbagura and Egba Owu. Egba Alake is said to be larger and more populous than the remaining three sections. The numerical strength of Egba Alake is attributed to a claim that Egba Alake is the product of the merger of Egba Eku, Egba Aarin and Egba Agbeyin. According to Blair (1937), Egba Alake has forty-five (45) townships, Egba Gbagura has seventeen (17), Egba Oke-Ona has seven (17) while Egba Owu has four (4) townships. This is the basis for sharing assets among the *Egbas*.

There are traditional, Christian and Muslim titles all over Egbaland. Each of the sections, townships and districts in Egbaland also confers titles on the Egba people. Notable social clubs and religious societies similarly confer titles on their members. It is worthy of note to state that an Egba man could hold more than one title at different times. There are some influential and wealthy Egba people who are conferred titles by the central, section, district, club and religious societies in Egbaland. For instance, an Egba Muslim could be conferred *Balogun Adinni* of Ido (a township title), *Seriki of Gbagura Muslims* (a sectional title) and *Baba Adinni* of Nawair-ud-Deen Society (a societal title). This implies that an *Egba* Muslim could be conferred with more than three or four titles at different times.

The structure of the chieftaincy traditional institution in Egbaland remains the same since the *Egba* emerged as a distinct group of the Yoruba race. The structure is hierarchical with the Oba (traditional ruler) at the apex. Next to him are the general titleholders whose constituency is the whole of the Egba nation. Then, next to them are the township chiefs whose areas of jurisdiction are the individual townships. The *Baales* (village/district heads) come at the base of the hierarchy (Sotunde, 2002). The traditional mainstream titles in Egbaland comprise the *Ologboni* (the statesmen) and their titles are *Oluwo*, (king in occult), *Apena* (convener of meeting/secretary), *Baala, Baajito, Asipa* (the messenger), *Odofin, Lisa, Baase, Agbusi, Sagbua, Adila, Losi, Olori Erelu, Lika, Iyalode, Ajiroba, Ajigbeda* etc (Sotunde, 2002). The traditional titles belonging to the *Olorogun* include *Akogun, Balogun, Bashorun, Seriki, Bada* and *Sarumi* (commanders of the veteran warriors). The *Parakoyi* (council of the chamber of commerce) titles include *Babalaje, Iyalode, Iyaloja* and *Iyalaje*. The *Odes* (hunters) are those in charge of the security. Titles belonging to *Odes* are *Lerin, Aro, Lisa* and *Ajade* (Owoyemi, 2004). While explaining the prominent role occupied by the titleholders before Islam in Yorubaland, Doi (1984) describes the title of *Balogun* thus:

Balogun used to be a title of a chief warrior during the inter-tribal war and as the war chiefs first accepted Islam, then their followers like Balogun Kuku in Ijebu Ode (a prominent town in Ogun State), the same title is used for community organization after the spread of Islam (Doi, 1984:201).

e) The Emergence and Development of Honorific Titles among Muslims in Egbaland

Islam became pronounced among the *Egba* Muslims after their settlement in Abeokuta in 1830CE. When it became obvious that the number of Muslims became appreciable in size, the Muslim leaders of the period, notably, Sunmonu Adelokun, Sunmonu Onasoku, Aliu Sopeyin and Disu Oligbaje felt that there should be a place where *Jumu'ah* (Friday prayer) should be observed. They approached Sodeke, the then *Balogun* of Egbaland, to give them a piece of land to build a mosque. Sodeke yielded to the request of the Egba Muslims and a mosque was built at Iporo Kemta Kobiti, Abeokuta. Imoru, son of Salu Bale from Itoku quarters was appointed and turbaned as the first acknowledged chief Imam of Egbaland (Adegbenro, 1991).

Having appointed Imoru ('Umar) as the Imam of Egbaland, the members of the Muslim Community felt the need to have a *Balogun* (Commander of the veteran warriors) as it existed among the Egba traditionalists. Thereafter, Sunmonu Adelokun, from the Egba section, was conferred the title *Balogun*, while Sofo Oyegebi of Igbore quarters was given the title of *Noibi* (Deputy Imam), Alfa Fulani became the *Mufassir* of Egbaland, Disu Oligbaje, Abdullah Olubowale and Oseni Olusumade were appointed the first Imams of Oke-Ona, Gbagura and Owu Muslims communities respectively (Owoyemi, 2004).

In Egba Muslim Community, titles are of two categories. These are spiritual/missionary and

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honourific/socio-civic titles. The spiritual titles are those conferred on mosque functionaries or the Muslim scholars. The spiritual titles recognized among the Egba Muslims include Imam the Islamic leader), *Olori Ratibi* (Head of all quarter Imams), *Olori Omokewu* (Leader of the Muslim scholars), *Alfa Taosiri* (Chief Missionary), *Ajanasi* (lieutenant to Alfa *Taosiri*), *Arowasi* (the megaphone or someone who re-echoes what Imam says) and *Ladani* (the caller to prayer) (Owoyemi, 2004).

As earlier mentioned, honourific titles are those created and conferred on affluent and influential Muslims in order to secure their financial support in executing Islamic projects. Most of these honourific titles are replica of the traditional titles but are given religious colouration. Thus, some of the Muslim titles in Egbaland are suffixed with terms like "*Adinni", Musulumi*" and "*Sunnah*". As the Egba Muslim Community grew up, the *Otun*, *Osi* and *Ekerin* titles of the *Balogun* (i.e. the second, third and fourth in rank to the *Balogun* respectively) were created and conferred on influential Muslims. In order to assist the Imam in his missionary work, titles such as *Noibi* (Deputy Imam), Alfa *Taosir* (*Mufassir* -Qur'an exegesis), *Ajanasi, Arowasi* and *Ladani* (*Mu'adhdhin* (caller to prayer) were also conferred on the knowledgeable Egba Muslims. Titles such as *Oba Imale* (King of Muslims) later became *Baba Adinni* (Father or patron of Islam), *Seriki* (Officer next in rank to *Otun Balogun*), *Bada, Sarunmi* (ranks below *Seriki*) were borrowed from the traditional setting in order to honour some influential Egba Muslims and secure their support for the community development and Islamic propagation in particular (Owoyemi, 2004).

The honorific titles are many and their number is in exhaustive. Owoyemi (2004) identifies sixty-one honourific Muslim titles in Egbaland. Most of these titles are only held ceremoniously with no specific roles or functions to perform for the better practice of Islam or the betterment/welfare of the Muslims by their holders. However, it is noted that not all the honourific titles are borrowed from Egba traditional set-up. A fact worthy of mentioning is that some Muslim honourific titles depict the socio-economic status of the holders. Such titles include *Irawo Adinni, Osupa Adinni, Olowolagba Adinni, Okanlomo Adinni* and *Borokini Adinni* (Owoyemi, 2004). In Egba Muslim Community, the spiritual/missionary and honorific/socio-civic titles earlier enumerated are grouped into Council of Imams and Alfas and Council of the *Ologuns* respectively.

There are eight (8) recognized spiritual titles in Egba Muslim Community, four titles namely Chief Imam *Jami'u, Olori Ratibi, Olori Omokewu* and *Baba Adinni* are zoned to Egba Alake, one (1) title i.e. *Alfa Taosiri* (*Mufassir*) is zoned to Egba Oke-Ona, two (2) titles, *Ajanosi* and *Ladani* (*Mu'adhin*) zoned to Egba Gbagura while the fourth section, Egba Owu is given the remaining one title, that is *Arowasi* (the Megaphone). It is important to note that the *Baba Adinni* title which is considered an honorific title is also recognized as a member of the Council of Imams and Alfas because of the popular belief that the title, *Baba Adinni* had replaced the title of *Oba Imale* (King of the Muslims) which had once existed in Egbaland, and that is the reason why *Baba Adinni* of Egbaland is seen as an intermediary between the spiritual and honourary titleholders.

f) Aspects of Yoruba Traditional Influence on Title-Holding among the Egba Muslims

From the current practice, there are three ways by which the conferment of Islamic titles on Egba Muslims is greatly influenced by the Yoruba culture and tradition. First are the titles being conferred on the Egba Muslims. Second is the process of the selection of the titleholders and the third one is the *Iwuye* (turban) ceremony that accompanies the conferment. As Arimiyah (2014) contends some of the Muslim titles in Yorubaland are of Yoruba cultural origin and are quite different from those conferred on the prophets of God and the early Muslims by Prophet Muhammad (SAW). This observation is particularly true about the Egba Muslims if one considers titles such as *Khalilullah, Kalimullah, Ruhullah, as-Siddiq, al-Faruq, Asadullahi*, conferred on the prophets of God and the early Muslims against those conferred on Egba Muslims. The Egba Muslims have departed from the early practice as they now confer titles like *Balogun, Sarumi, Bada, Sagbua, Asipa, Ajiroba, Lukotun, Seriki, Otun, Osi, Ekerin, Basorun, Apagun* etc with the suffix *Adinni or Musulumi or Sunnah* purposely to give them Islamic colouration and outlook in place of those conferred on the early Muslims. These aforementioned titles are adopted and adapted from the Egba traditional setting. According to Sotunde (2002), titles like *Asipa, Sagbua* and *Ajiroba* are *Ogboni* titles in Yoruba traditional set-up and they are for those who enact laws, judge cases, elect and advise the *Oba* (King) in all matters affecting their traditional community.

The Yoruba traditional infiltration is also noticed in the process of appointing the titleholders among the Egba Muslims in Ogun State. According to Owoyemi (2004), Muslim titles are distributed and zoned permanently to the four major sections of Egbaland. The zoning system of distributing the titles, both honourary and the spiritual titles, is patterned along the traditional set up and it is on the basis of the strength of the size, early settlement and influence of each of the four Egba sections. It is argued that Egba Alake takes more than half of the most powerful titles while the other three sections of the Egba share the remaining half (as it is being done in the traditional/cultural set-up) because of the fact that Egba Alake is bigger than the other three sections and that Egba Alake people were the first settlers in their present home, Abeokuta (Owoyemi, 2004).

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According to Owoyemi (2004), more than thirty of the sixty-one Muslim titles recognized in Egba Muslim Community are permanently zoned to Egba Alake, while the remaining half (i.e. thirty-one) are zoned to the other three zones with Egba Oke-Ona taking 11titles, both the Egba Gbagura and Egba Owu having ten (10) titles each. Furthermore, the title, *Imam Jami'u* of Egbaland was permanently zoned to Egba Alake. Leading titles such as *Baba Adinni, Balogun Adinni, Seriki Adinni* and *Aare Adinni* are permanently zoned to Egba Alake section. The zoning method adopted by the Egba Muslim Community is in line with the zoning system of the Egba Traditional Chieftaincy titles. For instance, *Balogun, Seriki, Basorun, Ogboye, and Akogun* are the traditional titles zoned to Egba Alake while the lesser titles are zoned to the other three Egbas. Thus, the distribution of the Muslim titles is patterned on the Egba traditional political administration which recognizes and makes Egba Alake the head of all the Egba sections. The zoning system has been causing ripples among the Egba Muslims. It is due to this permanent zoning system of titles that made Egba Owu Muslims reject titles zoned to them and consequently seceded from the Egba Muslim Community in 2001 though efforts are on to reconcile them with the other sections of Egba Muslims.

The turbaning/installation ceremony, popularly called *Iwuye* among the Yoruba, which accompanies title-holding among the Egba Muslims is another Yoruba traditional effect on the Muslim practice of title-holding in Egbaland. The ceremony is often characterized by merry making, wining and dining among the people. During such occasion, popular musicians are invited to supply music. The Yoruba people, before Islam, were noted for their love for celebration in their socio-religious engagements. According to Fadipe (1970), every occasion calls for celebration including the death of their aged ones. It is this practice of winning and dining that is introduced into the institution of title-holding among the Egba Muslims.

g) *Influence of Yoruba Tradition on Title-Holding among Egba Muslims: A Critique*

It is worthy of note to state that the process of appointing or selecting the Yoruba king and other traditional chiefs involves some ritual practices that contradict Islamic belief. Hence, adopting such titles for the Muslims gives an impression that those honoured with the titles have the same roles to play in Islam and for the Egba Muslims. It is a common belief among the Yoruba people that the *Ogboni* titleholders use charms, amulets and talisman. Therefore, Muslims holding such *Ogboni* titles pre-suffixed with *Adinni, Muslumi* or *Sunnah* may be rightly or wrongly said to be using those things for Islam.

It is pertinent to state that the practice of the Egba Muslims in conferring titles with traditional origin and outlook can be said to be contrary to the practice of the Prophet who conferred titles that associated recipients with Allah or the Islamic faith. The Egba Muslims ought to have emulated the Prophet in the practice of conferring titles on affluent Yoruba Muslims in Egbaland. Describing the Prophet as a role model to be followed, the Glorious Qur'an says:

> Indeed in the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad), you have a good example to follow for him who hopes for (the meeting) with Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah much (Suratul-Ahzab 33:21).

In another place, the Qur'an says:

> He who obeys the Messenger (Muhammad), has indeed obeyed Allah…. (Suratul-Nisai, 4:80).

Meanwhile, the Egba Muslims may be accused of being traditionalists and the titles they confer as being traditional ones due to the fact that they pattern their practice of title-holding along the traditional set-up. Arimiyah (2014) argues that the attitude of the Yoruba Muslims in conferring titles of traditional origin on the influential Muslims could be justifiable because Islam does not condemn people's cultures as long as those cultures do not contravene any of its teachings. Arimiyah's argument may be tenable if one considers the fact that the creation of human beings into tribes and nations (Yoruba nation inclusive), each having its own distinct culture, is the divine design of Allah as Qur'an posits:

> O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable of you with Allah is that who has *at-Taqwa*, Verily Allah is All-knowing, All-Aware (Suratul-Hujurat, 49:13)

The Qur'an, in another place, says:

> And Among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the difference of your languages and colour, Verily, in that are indeed signs for men of sound knowledge (Suratul-Rum, 30:22).

From the above Quranic passages, it is understood that it is the will of God that there should be diversity in various communities and tribes of humankind. Hence, there should be no superiority of one nation, tribe or language over another. Therefore, adoption of titles of Yoruba origin will be justifiable as this will only imply that the significance of those titles is depicted in the language, experience and orientation of the people. In the opinion of Arimiyah (2014), what *Asadullah* (the lion of God) will depict to an Arab is what *Balogun Adinni, Jagunmolu Adinni, Akinlagun Adinni* and *Akinrogun Adinni* will depict to the Yoruba Muslims. All these titles, which are given to the Yoruba warriors, are inferred from the title, *Asadullah* conferred on Ali bn Abu Talib who was noted as a great warrior in the battles fought against the unbelievers during the lifetimes of the Prophet. On Islam's recognition of the culture of a people, Al-Qaradawi (2003:8) quotes Ibn Taymiyyah saying:

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> '*Urf* (Local custom) or '*Adah* (tradition or practice) is permissible and even admissible as part of Islamic law as long as it does not conflict with the principles of teaching of the Qur'an and Sunnah

One can also see the Yoruba cultural influence in the zoning system of titles among the Egba Muslims. The reasons that were given for the supremacy of the Egba Alake over and above other sections in terms of sharing of titles are not tenable or justifiable and such zoning system is incompatible with the principle of justice in Islam. Islam only recognizes superiority of a person (tribe or a group of people) on the basis of piety (Q49:14). One of the several implications of the zoning system of titles among the Egba Muslims is deprivation of better candidates to hold some key titles which are not zoned or distributed to their sections. For instance, titles such as Imam, *Baba Adinni, Iya Adinni, Olori Omokewu* and *Olori Ratibi* are zoned permanently to Egba Alake. By implication, no Egba Muslim from Egba Oke-Ona can be conferred any of those titles irrespective of his qualifications or qualities. This does not augur well for a Muslim community. Titles should not only be zoned equally but also the most qualified candidate should be allowed to hold titles apart from the ones zoned to his section. Therefore, the practice of zoning Muslim titles to a particular section of the town is against the principle of unity and justice in Islam. The Qur'an says: "Indeed, this Community of yours is but one." Though the zoning system was adopted from the traditional set up and has been in vogue from time immemorial, it should be discontinued in the spirit of the Glorious Qur'an which says:

> When they commit a *Fahisha* (evil deed), they say: We found our fathers doing it and Allah has commanded it on us. Say Nay, Allah never commands evil deed. Do you say of Allah what you know not? (Suratul Al-Araf, 7:28).

Elsewhere in the Qur'an, it is read thus:

> And when it is said to them: Come to what Allah has revealed unto the Messenger (Muhammad),They say: Enough for us is that which we found our fathers following even though their fathers had no knowledge whatsoever nor guidance (Suratul Maidah, 5:104).

While, it is permissible to eat and drink at *Iwuye* ceremony, one should be mindful of Islamic law that regulates what Muslims eat or drink. The Qur'an, for instance, prohibits dead meat, blood, flesh of swine, animals not killed in Allah's name as well as consumption of intoxicants (Q5:4, 5:93). A situation whereby people drink alcohol at such an occasion because *Iwuye* (installation) ceremony of titleholders among the Egba Muslims often gives room for intermingling of sexes whereby both men and women freely mix and dance competitively to the admiration of musicians and the guests. This practice, no doubt, has serious implications for the practice of title-holding among the Egba Muslims. It could make the practice condemnable if unguided. It is no where found in the Islamic history where such practice occurred when the early Muslims were conferred with titles by the Prophet. Unlawful wining and drinking as well as intermingling of sexes at *Iwuye* ceremony are not only unIslamic but also extravagant. Allah warns in the Qur'an thus:

> ….And Eat and drink and waste not by extravagance, certainly, He (Allah) likes not those who waste by extravagance (Suratul-Al-Araf, 7:31).

II. Conclusion

An attempt has been made in this study to examine the infiltration of Yoruba tradition on title-holding among Yoruba Muslims in Egbaland, Nigeria. The practice of title-holding, which is traceable to the Glorious Qur'an and the practice among early Muslims, has been in existence among the adherents of Islam since its spread to the area in the 18^{th} century. However, the influence of the traditional culture in the titles Muslims created and adopted is so great that it is almost rubbing the practice of its sanctity and sacredness. Hence, the criticism of those aspects that are not in conformity with the Islamic practice. The position of the paper is that if Yoruba traditional elements are separated from the practice of conferring Muslim titles on Egba Muslims, the sacredness of the institution will be maintained as it was practiced by the early Muslims. It is in the light of this that this paper recommends that there is the need to sanitize the practice of title-holding from being dominated by the Yoruba traditional influence in Egbaland. Consequently, some titles which wear traditional outlook such as *Ogboye Adini, Oluwo Adinni, Abese Adinni, Leragun Adini* to mention but few which carry ritualistic roles ought to have been phased out from the list of the Egba Muslim titles. The continuous existence and recognition of those and similar titles may give room for *Takhli*t (syncretism) among the Egba Muslims.

It is also recommended that the age long practice of zoning system of the Muslim titles, an infiltration of the Yoruba tradition and culture should be discontinued in the interest of peace, unity and harmony in Egba Muslim Community. All the Egba sections should be treated equally in sharing of the titles. Alternatively, the zoning system should be replaced by a rotational system. For instance, the titles of *Imam Jami'u* (Chief Imam) of Egbaland can be rotated among the four sections of Egba Alake, Egba Oke-Ona, Egba Gbagura and Egba Owu.

The paper also recommends that the *Iwuye* (installation) ceremony of the Muslim titleholders which is always accompanied with pomp and pageantry among the Egba Muslims should be organized in such a way and manner that gathering of Muslims in such an occasion is in conformity with Islamic gathering. Only things that are permissible to be eaten and drunk in

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Islam should be served on such occasions. The Egba Muslim Community may sanction any Muslim titleholder who serves alcohol or engages in unIslamic practice at his or her installation ceremony. Instead of being extravagant and spendthrift on the occasion of the installation ceremony, the Egba Muslim titleholders should focus their attention on the welfare of the Muslims in Egbaland; the indigent but brilliant students could be given scholarship to further their education. In addition, the sick and the inmates of the prison yards could be assisted financially while the needy Muslims could be empowered economically. Finally, specific roles should be assigned to each of titles that Muslims in Egbaland will confer on those found worthy of holding them for the better practice of Islam among the people as well as improved welfare of the Muslims in the area.

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Emotional Intelligence under Stress: Valuable or Overrated?

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Abstract- Stress has created a vigorous discourse among researchers of various fields and considered as one of the most vital issue that has not yet been solved. A growing interest has been developed on the influence of emotional intelligence in reducing stress level among students. This study examined emotional intelligence as four interrelated processes which were postulated from the four-branch emotional intelligence theory of Salovey and Mayer. A self-reported measure of the Assessing Emotions Scale (AES) and the Perceived Stress Scale was used respectively to measure emotional intelligence and stress level of the participants involved. PLS-SEM was employed to assess the measurement construct and structural model of this study. The findings indicated a significant negative relationship between the ability to perceive emotion, the ability to manage one's own emotion, and the ability to manage others emotion with stress. However, no significant association were identified between the ability to utilize emotion and stress among the participants involved. Results also confirmed that the ability to perceive and assess emotion accurately as the most prominent emotional intelligence dimension in predicting stress. The applied utilities of emotional intelligence are discussed and the potential value of integrating emotional intelligence in formal tertiary education systems is also highlighted.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, perceived stress, partial least squares, path modeling.

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EMOTIONALINTELLIGENCEUNDERSTRESSVALUABLEOROVERRATED?

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Emotional Intelligence under Stress: Valuable or Overrated?

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I. Introduction

According to the national health and morbidity survey, young Malaysian at the age group of 16 to 24 had the highest prevalence of acute and chronic suicidal ideation, 10 percent and 26 percent respectively, compared to other age group. The pressure of excellent academic achievement was one of the most reported stressors that have created a very stressful atmosphere which can take a toll on the physiological and mental well-being (Cohen et al., 1983; Lazarus, 1990). Experiencing stress is common among students throughout their formal education life which may come in various forms of stressors such as poor time management, expectation of academic achievement, personal relationship issue and pressure from parents and peers (Ibrahim & Bohari, 2012). Crandall et al (1992) listed 88 stressors that significantly have a negative impact on undergraduate students, which consist of social, family and academic-related factors.

According to a study conducted by Muhamad Saiful and colleagues (2013), examination, large amount of learning content, and limited reviewing time of what have been learnt were the prominent stressors among undergraduate students. Numerous studies have uncovered that academic performance can be debilitated by stress, anxiety and depression (Muhamad Saiful et al., 2013; Parker et al., 2004). However, those who are facing similar stressor are not necessarily experiencing the same level of stress. A highly resilient individual is less likely to be affected by strain. Personality variances, coping strategy and demographic factors contribute to the different magnitude of stress experienced by an individual. Females were reported to have higher levels of stress and depression compared to males, while the older age group of students was identified to experience more stress compared to the younger group of students (Shamsuddin et al., 2013). The finding is plausible since academic workload increase is parallel with years of study and age. However, the gendered result of stress is questionable due to the inconsistent results from the previous researches.

The term of emotional intelligence was first introduced by Salovey and Mayer in 1990 and recognized as the subject of social intelligence by Gardner (1983). They defined it as the ability to recognize, manage and utilize own and other's emotions. It combines the cognitive and affective sphere which can increase the effectiveness of individual's socializing ability. Socializing is one of the most common issues that caused strain among undergraduate students. The transformation from a well-structured secondary education to independent learning environment in tertiary education often overwhelm students. Working in groups is inevitable and need ample interpersonal skills which not only require the ability to assess verbal and non-verbal cues, but the emotion of others too. The ability to understand and manage others' emotion would give an advantage to create a more harmonious relationship and avoid strain caused by poor interaction with another individual.

This study is conducted to investigate the association between emotional intelligence and stress among students. It is also intended to determine the

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most prominent EI dimension in influencing stress among students. Another reason that motivated this study is to add to the body of literature by providing empirical evidence on the influence of emotional intelligence on stress. Previous researches were more focused on nursing and medical students, while little attention had been given to those who are studying in different disciplines. To aid in the interpretability of research findings, the present study focused on full-time students from business, finance and science disciplines. This study examined a relatively broad range of emotional intelligence, using a model of emotional intelligence developed by Salovey and Mayer (1990) that consists of four dimensions: perception of emotion, managing own emotion, managing others' emotion, and the ability to utilize emotion.

II. Literature Review

According to Lazarus (1966), stress occurs when individual believed they are not able to satisfactorily fulfil demands or when dealing with anything that may impair their well-being. Stress is unavoidable, especially throughout a formal academic life where most students are struggling to juggle assignments, test and their personal lives. High stress level can lead to sleeplessness (Shamsuddinet al., 2013), development of negative behaviors such as substance abuse, smoking and relapses (Reeve et al., 2013). Stress elevates heart beat rates and blood pressure, which consequently leads to insomnia, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, as well as depression (Greenberg, 2011). However, the effect of stress will only arise when the situation is demanding or threatening and when the resources needed to cope with the situation is scarce or unavailable (Cohen et al., 1983).

Stress is part of another broad and richer aspect of life which is emotion (Lazarus, 1990). Salovey and Mayer (1990) defined emotion as "an organized response, crossing boundaries of psychological, cognitive, motivational, and experimental system, which arise to an event, either internal or external". Emotional reactions reflect how individuals cope with threats, challenges, benefits, and how they view their life and the world in general (Lazarus, 1990). The concept of emotion reveals the way individuals relate to the environment, physically and socially, and intense enough to disrupt the rational thinking process. Therefore, it is crucial to keep emotion in check to ensure physical, mental and social process is not interrupted which concomitantly can disrupt one's well-being. Emotional intelligence is part of social intelligence which consists of the ability to appraise one's own and others' emotions, express and regulate them, and utilize them to guide thoughts and actions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). The underlying idea of emotional intelligence is to imperative the force of emotions and serves to comprehend emotional outcomes as well as remain adaptable in the changing situation whenever necessary (Koubova & Buchko, 2013). Such awareness will often lead to the effectiveness of the regulation of affect within themselves and others, and so contribute to well-being (Goleman, 1995; Mayer & Salovey, 1993).

Emotional intelligence cover four important scope of interrelated emotional-ability process consist of (a) understanding verbal and nonverbal cues and expression of emotions, (b) managing emotion of oneself, (c) managing emotion of others, and (d) utilizing emotion for various purposes in life events. Those with higher emotional intelligence have a better intrapersonal functioning, greater optimism, and excellent social relationship with others (Schutte et al., 2007). Emotionally intelligent individuals are able to constructively understand, express and communicate their emotions through proper channel regardless of positive or negative effect (Koubova & Buchko, 2013). Hence, stressful events will have different effect to a highly emotional intelligent individual compared to those with lower emotional intelligence.

A study conducted by Forushani and Besharat (2011) indicated that emotional intelligence explains 58 percent of variance in perceived stress for 150 female students. The individual with high emotional intelligence were more aware with emotions, experienced lower stress-related emotions and reported higher well-being (Forushani, & Besharat, 2011; Gohm et al., 2005). Despite the justifications for anticipating higher emotional intelligence would be identified with better mental well-being, emotional intelligence may have maladaptive results in different circumstances. Petrides and Furnham (2003) found that individuals with higher emotional intelligence are more emphatic and sensitive to mood induction event, whether positive or negative actuation. For some individuals, sensitivity to mood-related stimuli under adverse circumstances may create greater distress if not manage well (Schuttee et al., 2007).

III. Methodology

The sample consisted of 153 full-time students (46 male and 107 female) attending University Malaysia Sabah, Labuan International Campus. Participants were recruited from Faculty of International Finance and Faculty of Computing and Informatics. 39.2 percent of the respondents were Malays, 36.6 percent were Chinese, 13.7 percent were Indian and 10.5 percent comprised the indigenous ethnic group of Borneo. A total of 60 respondents (39.2%) were in their second semester, 5 respondents (3.3%) in third semester, 69 (45%) in their fourth semester and 19 (12.4%) of them were in their final semester.

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Participants voluntarily completed an online survey in May, one week before the final examination started. The survey comprised a set of 33 questions to assess emotional intelligence, 10 questions to examine perceived stress and 3 questions on the demographic background (gender, ethnicity and the semester they are currently in).

a) Measure

Trait emotional intelligence was measured using the Assessing Emotions Scale (AES) by Schutte et al. (1998). The Assessing Emotion Scale consists of 33 items which cover four dimensions of emotional intelligence: perception of emotion, managing own emotion, managing others' emotion and the utilization of emotion. Examples of items used were "I am aware of my emotions as I experience them" (Perception of emotion), "When I experienced positive emotions, I know how to make it last" (Managing own emotion), "When another person tells me about an important event in his or her life, I almost feel as though I have experienced this event myself" (Managing others' emotion); and "When my mood changes, I see new possibilities" (Utilization of emotion).

Stress was measured using the Perceived Stress Scale adapted from Cohen et al. (1983). The scale consists of 10 items which reflect how the respondent perceived their lives as unpredictable, uncontrollable and overload. Some of the items used in this study are : "How often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?", "How often have you felt nervous and stressed?" and "How often have you been able to control irritations in your life?" The items were assessed using a five-point scale ranging from "never" to "very often".

b) Statistical Analysis

The Smart PLS 2.0 was employed to assess the measurement construct and structural model of this study. Construct validity and reliability was determined by the significance of the path coefficient and bootstrapping option. Collinearity issue was also examined using IBM SPSS statistic software version 21. Measurement constructs of this study are operationalized formatively which high correlations are not expected between items. In the context of PLS-SEM, a tolerance value of 0.20 or lower and a VIF value of 5 or higher indicate a potential collinearity problem (Hair et al., 2014). Coefficient of determination, R2 value was identified to measure the model's predictive accuracy and the effect size (f 2) enables to analyze the relevance of construct in explaining the endogenous latent construct (Hair et al., 2014).

Figure 1 illustrates the path model under consideration, the path coefficients' value and the R2 value of the endogenous latent variable (stress). The exogenous latent variable (i.e. emotional intelligence) which consists of perception of emotion, managing own emotion, managing other's emotion, and utilization of emotion are operationalized formatively. Stress, which is the endogenous latent variable in this study is also operationalized formatively.

IV. Findings

The multi-collinearity issue in this study is relatively low and does not pose a problem, with the highest variance inflation factor (VIF) of 2.027, and the lowest tolerance value of 0.493. The weight score of the exogenous latent variable obtained from the bootstrapping procedure indicated that nearly all indicators were significant at $p < 0.10$, two-sided test. This study retained indicators with non-significant outer weight, although it was advisable by Albers (2010) to eliminate them. It was due to the prior research and theory that supported the relevance of those indicators for capturing the emotional intelligence and stress dimensions. Based on table 1.0, the structural model indicates no collinearity issue among the exogenous latent variables.

Table 1.0 : Collinearity Assessment for Structural Model

EI dimension	VIF	Tolerance level	Collinearity
Perception of emotion (PE)	1.812	0.552	No
Managing own emotion (MOE)	1.415	0.707	No
Managing others' emotion (MOsE)	1.772	0.567	No
Utilization of emotion (UE)	1.484	0.674	No

Mean scores on the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) for the complete samples were 29.34. The mean PSS score for females were 29 and 30.15 for males. The finding indicates that there was no large difference in stress level experienced by male and female in this study. Respondents experienced a relatively high level of stress due to the study was conducted a week before final examinations began. Based on the path coefficient model in figure 1.0, the ability to perceive own and other's emotions exert the strongest negative influence on perceived stress (path coefficient = - 0.464), followed by the ability to manage other's emotion and own emotion with path coefficient -0.302 and -0.216 respectively. The results of the bootstrapping analysis show that the relationship for the structural model with the ability to manage own emotion significant at

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$p < 0.05$; while, perception of emotion and ability to manage others' emotion are significant at $p<0.01$. However, the relationship between the ability to utilize emotion and stress is not significant at any level.

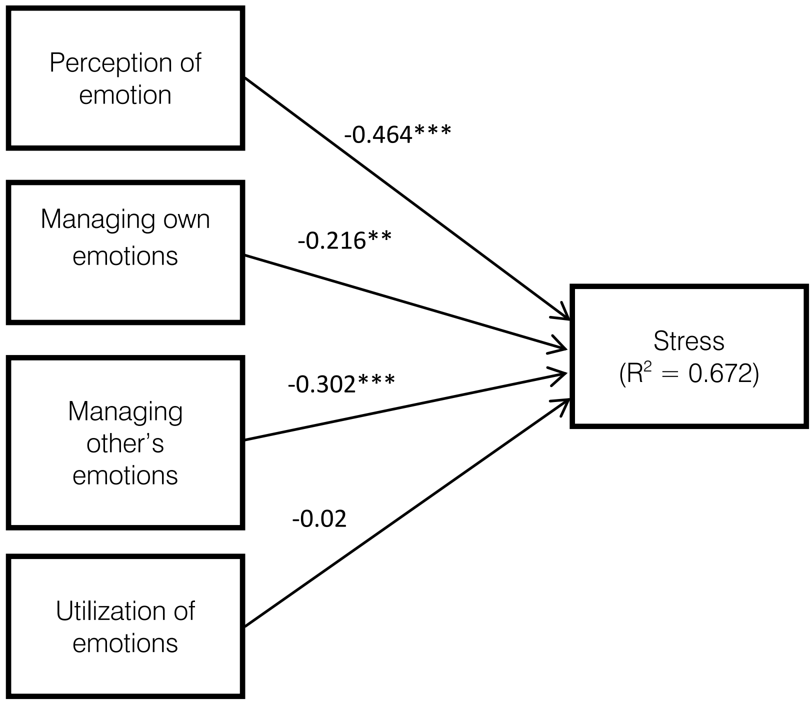

Figure 1.0 : Path Coefficient Model

The central criterion for the assessment of the structural model is the coefficient of determination R^2. With the R^2 value of 0.672, the endogenous latent variable 'stress' lies at a moderate level. The R2excluded value for the ability to perceive emotion is 0.584, the R2excluded value for managing own emotion is 0.644, the R2 excluded for managing others' emotion is 0.620 and the R2 excluded for utilization of emotion is 0.672. Consequently, the exogenous constructs perception of emotion (PE), managing own emotion (MOE), managing others' emotion (MOsE) and utilization of emotion (UE) for explaining the stress level among students have f2 effect sizes of 0.268, 0.085, 0.159 and 0, respectively. Therefore, the effect size of perception of emotion on stress is medium, the effect size of managing own emotion of stress is small, managing others' emotion has a medium effect on stress, and utilization of emotion has no effect on stress.

V. Conclusion

Predicting stress from emotional intelligence variables can have different results based on how each variable involved is operationalized. This study found that emotional intelligence has a medium influence on stress with three (ability to perceive emotion, managing own emotion, and managing other's emotions) out of four EI dimensions were significantly correlated with the exogenous variable. The finding is align with previous studies that have found a significant negative relationship between emotional intelligence and stress (Forushani and Besharat, 2011; Matthews et al., 2006). It is also stated that those with higher emotional intelligence can deal with environmental demands better that those with lower emotional intelligence. The current study identified the ability to perceive emotions as the most prominent EI dimension in reducing stress. Those with a competency to accurately assess emotion of own or others will experience less stress due to their ability to predict emotional state and future behavior (Salovey and Mayer, 1990; 1993). Emotional forecast is only possible when individuals are well-aware of their own affects as well as how others feel which enable the manipulation or adjustment of reaction so it will fit the current situation.

The ability to manage other's emotion is the second most influential EI dimension in this study. Those who are able to manage other's emotion reported lower stress level compared to those with lower emotional intelligence. The ability to regulate other's emotion can enhance mood and emotions, motivate others towards a constructive behavior, avoid unnecessary conflict that can put strain on a relationship which consequently will create stress. The importance of intrapersonal relationship among undergraduate students is noted as part of the common stressors among undergraduate students (Votta et al., 2010; Yen-Yee and Yusoff, 2013). This study also indicates there is

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a significant negative relationship between an ability to manage own emotion and stress. Mathew et al. (2006) stated that high EI individuals tend to use social support by expressing their emotion clearly to others. Social support is only possible with an ability to regulate and express emotions properly so other people are able to comprehend the current emotional state and respond with appropriate attitude. Social support is crucial to lessen psychological and emotional burden that often generates stress if not expressed properly.

Although three dimensions of EI relate to reduced stress, there is no significant relationship identified between the ability to utilize emotion and stress. Utilization of emotions require individuals to fully capitalize the changes of their own and other's affect in the problem solving process which involve creative thinking, flexible planning, and ability to redirect attention (Gignac et al., 2005). The participants involved in this study range from 21 to 24 years old. They are able to perceive, decipher and manage emotions well; but, there is a possibility that their ability to harness emotion to facilitate various cognitive activities is not well-developed. It may be caused by lack of exposure to divergent life events that can be acquired through socialization with individuals from various characteristic and backgrounds. However, there is no known study examining emotional intelligence as a separate dimension using AES that can be compared with the current study. Therefore, more study should be conducted to examine EI dimensions separately rather than just assessing them as a global measure for better understanding of the impact of each dimension of stress.

This study had several limitations. It is a cross-sectional study, which has been conducted with students from one local university. Therefore, the findings do not represent the whole undergraduate students in Malaysia. It is suggested that longitudinal study to be conducted for better understanding on the influence of emotional intelligence from different level of stress. Future studies should also include undergraduate students from private institutions to apprehend the environmental factors at play. In conclusion, this study has addressed the research gap on examining emotional intelligence as a separate dimension on different group of students instead of just emphasizing on students from medical and health disciplines.

The prevalence of an ability to perceive, express, and managing (own and others) emotions are found to be influential in reducing stress. This highlights the needs to incorporate emotional intelligence elements in the higher educational syllabus to enhance students' competencies in integrating affect for current and future cognitive activities. By integrating emotional intelligence as part of the syllabus in the formal education system can help accelerate the development of EI rather than waiting for students to figure it out on their own. It will improve their ability to comprehend the essence of EI and utilize it more effectively in their lives. Emotional intelligence unites the field of emotion and intelligence by viewing emotions as subsidiary sources of information that avail one to make sense of and navigate the environment (Salovey & Grewal, 2005). It is worth noting that the capability of positive emotion in altering memory organization for better integration of diverse and abstract reasoning into something coherent. Emotions can assist individual to prioritize life demands on their attention and allocate it accordingly for better physiological and emotional well-being.

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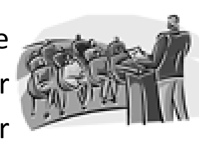

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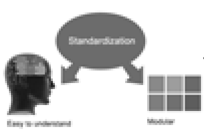

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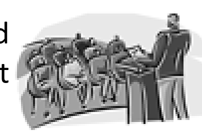

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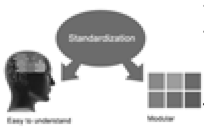

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"

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3. Submission of Manuscripts,

4. Manuscript’s Category,

5. Structure and Format of Manuscript,

6. After Acceptance.

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Key points to remember:

- Submit all work in its final form.
- Write your paper in the form, which is presented in the guidelines using the template.
- Please note the criterion for grading the final paper by peer-reviewers.

Final Points:

A purpose of organizing a research paper is to let people to interpret your effort selectively. The journal requires the following sections, submitted in the order listed, each section to start on a new page.

The introduction will be compiled from reference matter and will reflect the design processes or outline of basis that direct you to make study. As you will carry out the process of study, the method and process section will be constructed as like that. The result segment will show related statistics in nearly sequential order and will direct the reviewers next to the similar intellectual paths throughout the data that you took to carry out your study. The discussion section will provide understanding of the data and projections as to the implication of the results. The use of good quality references all through the paper will give the effort trustworthiness by representing an alertness of prior workings.

Writing a research paper is not an easy job no matter how trouble-free the actual research or concept. Practice, excellent preparation, and controlled record keeping are the only means to make straightforward the progression.

General style:

Specific editorial column necessities for compliance of a manuscript will always take over from directions in these general guidelines.

To make a paper clear

· Adhere to recommended page limits

Mistakes to evade

- Insertion a title at the foot of a page with the subsequent text on the next page
- Separating a table/chart or figure - impound each figure/table to a single page
- Submitting a manuscript with pages out of sequence

In every sections of your document

· Use standard writing style including articles ("a", "the," etc.)

· Keep on paying attention on the research topic of the paper

· Use paragraphs to split each significant point (excluding for the abstract)

· Align the primary line of each section

· Present your points in sound order

· Use present tense to report well accepted

· Use past tense to describe specific results

· Shun familiar wording, don't address the reviewer directly, and don't use slang, slang language, or superlatives

· Shun use of extra pictures - include only those figures essential to presenting results

Title Page:

Choose a revealing title. It should be short. It should not have non-standard acronyms or abbreviations. It should not exceed two printed lines. It should include the name(s) and address (es) of all authors.

Abstract:

The summary should be two hundred words or less. It should briefly and clearly explain the key findings reported in the manuscript--must have precise statistics. It should not have abnormal acronyms or abbreviations. It should be logical in itself. Shun citing references at this point.

An abstract is a brief distinct paragraph summary of finished work or work in development. In a minute or less a reviewer can be taught the foundation behind the study, common approach to the problem, relevant results, and significant conclusions or new questions.

Write your summary when your paper is completed because how can you write the summary of anything which is not yet written? Wealth of terminology is very essential in abstract. Yet, use comprehensive sentences and do not let go readability for briefness. You can maintain it succinct by phrasing sentences so that they provide more than lone rationale. The author can at this moment go straight to shortening the outcome. Sum up the study, with the subsequent elements in any summary. Try to maintain the initial two items to no more than one ruling each.

- Reason of the study - theory, overall issue, purpose
- Fundamental goal
- To the point depiction of the research
- Consequences, including <u>definite statistics</u> - if the consequences are quantitative in nature, account quantitative data; results of any numerical analysis should be reported
- Significant conclusions or questions that track from the research(es)

Approach:

- Single section, and succinct
- As a outline of job done, it is always written in past tense
- A conceptual should situate on its own, and not submit to any other part of the paper such as a form or table
- Center on shortening results - bound background information to a verdict or two, if completely necessary
- What you account in an conceptual must be regular with what you reported in the manuscript
- Exact spelling, clearness of sentences and phrases, and appropriate reporting of quantities (proper units, important statistics) are just as significant in an abstract as they are anywhere else

Introduction:

The **Introduction** should "introduce" the manuscript. The reviewer should be presented with sufficient background information to be capable to comprehend and calculate the purpose of your study without having to submit to other works. The basis for the study should be offered. Give most important references but shun difficult to make a comprehensive appraisal of the topic. In the introduction, describe the problem visibly. If the problem is not acknowledged in a logical, reasonable way, the reviewer will have no attention in your result. Speak in common terms about techniques used to explain the problem, if needed, but do not present any particulars about the protocols here. Following approach can create a valuable beginning:

- Explain the value (significance) of the study
- Shield the model - why did you employ this particular system or method? What is its compensation? You strength remark on its appropriateness from a abstract point of vision as well as point out sensible reasons for using it.
- Present a justification. Status your particular theory (es) or aim(s), and describe the logic that led you to choose them.
- Very for a short time explain the tentative propose and how it skilled the declared objectives.

Approach:

- Use past tense except for when referring to recognized facts. After all, the manuscript will be submitted after the entire job is done.
- Sort out your thoughts; manufacture one key point with every section. If you make the four points listed above, you will need a least of four paragraphs.

- Present surroundings information only as desirable in order hold up a situation. The reviewer does not desire to read the whole thing you know about a topic.
- Shape the theory/purpose specifically - do not take a broad view.
- As always, give awareness to spelling, simplicity and correctness of sentences and phrases.

Procedures (Methods and Materials):

This part is supposed to be the easiest to carve if you have good skills. A sound written Procedures segment allows a capable scientist to replacement your results. Present precise information about your supplies. The suppliers and clarity of reagents can be helpful bits of information. Present methods in sequential order but linked methodologies can be grouped as a segment. Be concise when relating the protocols. Attempt for the least amount of information that would permit another capable scientist to spare your outcome but be cautious that vital information is integrated. The use of subheadings is suggested and ought to be synchronized with the results section. When a technique is used that has been well described in another object, mention the specific item describing a way but draw the basic principle while stating the situation. The purpose is to text all particular resources and broad procedures, so that another person may use some or all of the methods in one more study or referee the scientific value of your work. It is not to be a step by step report of the whole thing you did, nor is a methods section a set of orders.

Materials:

- Explain materials individually only if the study is so complex that it saves liberty this way.
- Embrace particular materials, and any tools or provisions that are not frequently found in laboratories.
- Do not take in frequently found.
- If use of a definite type of tools.
- Materials may be reported in a part section or else they may be recognized along with your measures.

Methods:

- Report the method (not particulars of each process that engaged the same methodology)
- Describe the method entirely
- To be succinct, present methods under headings dedicated to specific dealings or groups of measures
- Simplify - details how procedures were completed not how they were exclusively performed on a particular day.
- If well known procedures were used, account the procedure by name, possibly with reference, and that's all.

Approach:

- It is embarrassed or not possible to use vigorous voice when documenting methods with no using first person, which would focus the reviewer's interest on the researcher rather than the job. As a result when script up the methods most authors use third person passive voice.
- Use standard style in this and in every other part of the paper - avoid familiar lists, and use full sentences.

What to keep away from

- Resources and methods are not a set of information.
- Skip all descriptive information and surroundings - save it for the argument.
- Leave out information that is immaterial to a third party.

Results:

The principle of a results segment is to present and demonstrate your conclusion. Create this part a entirely objective details of the outcome, and save all understanding for the discussion.

The page length of this segment is set by the sum and types of data to be reported. Carry on to be to the point, by means of statistics and tables, if suitable, to present consequences most efficiently.You must obviously differentiate material that would usually be incorporated in a study editorial from any unprocessed data or additional appendix matter that would not be available. In fact, such matter should not be submitted at all except requested by the instructor.

Content

- Sum up your conclusion in text and demonstrate them, if suitable, with figures and tables.
- In manuscript, explain each of your consequences, point the reader to remarks that are most appropriate.
- Present a background, such as by describing the question that was addressed by creation an exacting study.
- Explain results of control experiments and comprise remarks that are not accessible in a prescribed figure or table, if appropriate.
- Examine your data, then prepare the analyzed (transformed) data in the form of a figure (graph), table, or in manuscript form.

What to stay away from

- Do not discuss or infer your outcome, report surroundings information, or try to explain anything.
- Not at all, take in raw data or intermediate calculations in a research manuscript.
- Do not present the similar data more than once.
- Manuscript should complement any figures or tables, not duplicate the identical information.
- Never confuse figures with tables - there is a difference.

Approach

- As forever, use past tense when you submit to your results, and put the whole thing in a reasonable order.
- Put figures and tables, appropriately numbered, in order at the end of the report
- If you desire, you may place your figures and tables properly within the text of your results part.

Figures and tables

- If you put figures and tables at the end of the details, make certain that they are visibly distinguished from any attach appendix materials, such as raw facts
- Despite of position, each figure must be numbered one after the other and complete with subtitle
- In spite of position, each table must be titled, numbered one after the other and complete with heading
- All figure and table must be adequately complete that it could situate on its own, divide from text

Discussion:

The Discussion is expected the trickiest segment to write and describe. A lot of papers submitted for journal are discarded based on problems with the Discussion. There is no head of state for how long a argument should be. Position your understanding of the outcome visibly to lead the reviewer through your conclusions, and then finish the paper with a summing up of the implication of the study. The purpose here is to offer an understanding of your results and hold up for all of your conclusions, using facts from your research and generally accepted information, if suitable. The implication of result should be visibly described. Infer your data in the conversation in suitable depth. This means that when you clarify an observable fact you must explain mechanisms that may account for the observation. If your results vary from your prospect, make clear why that may have happened. If your results agree, then explain the theory that the proof supported. It is never suitable to just state that the data approved with prospect, and let it drop at that.

- Make a decision if each premise is supported, discarded, or if you cannot make a conclusion with assurance. Do not just dismiss a study or part of a study as "uncertain."
- Research papers are not acknowledged if the work is imperfect. Draw what conclusions you can based upon the results that you have, and take care of the study as a finished work
- You may propose future guidelines, such as how the experiment might be personalized to accomplish a new idea.
- Give details all of your remarks as much as possible, focus on mechanisms.
- Make a decision if the tentative design sufficiently addressed the theory, and whether or not it was correctly restricted.
- Try to present substitute explanations if sensible alternatives be present.
- One research will not counter an overall question, so maintain the large picture in mind, where do you go next? The best studies unlock new avenues of study. What questions remain?
- Recommendations for detailed papers will offer supplementary suggestions.

Approach:

- When you refer to information, differentiate data generated by your own studies from available information
- Submit to work done by specific persons (including you) in past tense.
- Submit to generally acknowledged facts and main beliefs in present tense.

Please carefully note down following rules and regulation before submitting your Research Paper to Global Journals Inc. (US):

Segment Draft and Final Research Paper: You have to strictly follow the template of research paper. If it is not done your paper may get rejected.

- The **major constraint** is that you must independently make all content, tables, graphs, and facts that are offered in the paper. You must write each part of the paper wholly on your own. The Peer-reviewers need to identify your own perceptive of the concepts in your own terms. NEVER extract straight from any foundation, and never rephrase someone else's analysis.
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- To guard yourself and others from possible illegal use please do not permit anyone right to use to your paper and files.

Criterion for Grading a Research Paper (Compilation)
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Topics	Grades		
	A-B	**C-D**	**E-F**
Abstract	Clear and concise with appropriate content, Correct format. 200 words or below	Unclear summary and no specific data, Incorrect form Above 200 words	No specific data with ambiguous information Above 250 words
Introduction	Containing all background details with clear goal and appropriate details, flow specification, no grammar and spelling mistake, well organized sentence and paragraph, reference cited	Unclear and confusing data, appropriate format, grammar and spelling errors with unorganized matter	Out of place depth and content, hazy format
Methods and Procedures	Clear and to the point with well arranged paragraph, precision and accuracy of facts and figures, well organized subheads	Difficult to comprehend with embarrassed text, too much explanation but completed	Incorrect and unorganized structure with hazy meaning
Result	Well organized, Clear and specific, Correct units with precision, correct data, well structuring of paragraph, no grammar and spelling mistake	Complete and embarrassed text, difficult to comprehend	Irregular format with wrong facts and figures
Discussion	Well organized, meaningful specification, sound conclusion, logical and concise explanation, highly structured paragraph reference cited	Wordy, unclear conclusion, spurious	Conclusion is not cited, unorganized, difficult to comprehend
References	Complete and correct format, well organized	Beside the point, Incomplete	Wrong format and structuring

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