

TALLINN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

School of Business and Governance

Department of Law

Saviour Ndem

**INFLUENCE OF GLOBALIZATION ON AFRICAN  
CULTURES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF IGBO: WHAT ARE  
THE IMPLICATIONS**

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Supervisor: Peeter Mürsepp, PhD

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Saviour Ndem .....

(signature, date)

Student code: A145026TASB

Student e-mail address: histogramworksni@gmail.com

Supervisor: Peeter Mürsepp:

The paper conforms to requirements in force

.....

(signature, date)

Co-supervisor:

The paper conforms to requirements in force

.....

(signature, date)

Chairman of the Defence Committee:

Permitted to the defence

.....

(name, signature, date)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	4
INTRODUCTION.....	5
1. Study Background.....	7
1.1. Statement of the Problem.....	7
1.2. Research questions.....	7
1.3. Objective of study.....	7
1.4. Significance of the Study.....	8
1.5. Research Methodology.....	8
1.5.1. Sources of Data.....	9
1.5.2 Limited to study.....	9
1.6. Definition of Key Terms.....	9
1.6.1. Globalization.....	9
1.6.2. Religion.....	9
1.6.3. Culture.....	10
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	12
2.1. Historical Background of Globalization in Africa.....	12
2.2. Forces of Globalization in the African context.....	13
2.3. The Challenges of Globalization to Igbo nation.....	15
2.4. Globalization and socio-cultural change in Africa.....	15
2.5. Globalization and the Loss of Identity.....	15
3. IMPLICATION OF GLOBALIZATION ON IGBO SOCIETY.....	16
3.1. Economic and Political Implications.....	17
3.2. Implication on Igbo Culture and Religion.....	18
3.3. Implication on Igbo Family Values.....	19
3.4. Implication on the Political Structure of Igbo Society.....	20
3.5. Implication on core Igbo cultural values.....	20
4. IGBO CULTURE, RELIGION AND THE BENEFITS OF GLOBALIZATION.....	21
4.1. Igbo Cultural Practice and tradition.....	22
4.2. Geography of Igbo-land.....	23
4.3. Igbo political and social organization.....	24
4.4. Benefits of Globalization to Igbo culture.....	25
4.4.1. Improvement in Education and Traditional African medicine.....	25
4.4.2. Technological and Economic benefits.....	25
4.4.3. Moral and Religious benefits.....	26
5. CONCLUSION.....	28
5.1. Recommendation.....	29
5.2. Contributions to Knowledge.....	31
SUMMARY.....	32
LIST OF REFERENCES.....	34

## **ABSTRACT**

Globalization denotes the process of growing economic, political, social and cultural relations across transnational frontiers due to improved speed of transport and communication; it is now easier to export not only commercial goods but also political and cultural ideas from one society to another. African cultures and worldviews have continued to be affected by the agents of globalization particularly Western education, religion, urban development and industrialization beginning from the time of slave trade through the colonial era up until now.

Using Igbo culture and religion as a case in argument, the researcher sees a dilemma in the African awareness on how to balance Igbo culture with the ever growing trends of globalization. It is certain that globalization is truly affecting the African mind-set; it poses a severe problem to the Igbo mind on how to take the worthy things of globalization and still retain the cultural distinctiveness and social identity.

A different challenge faced by the Igbo is the effects globalization has on the cultural, religious and moral values of the Igbo person. Globalization has led to cultural relapse in Igbo land. This can be seen in the area of Igbo language, bastardization and utter rejection of such cultural practices as masquerades, family sharing of folktales and its consequent moral teachings. This is evident in the deteriorating use of Igbo language and waning of traditional religion among the Igbo. The Igbo can only out run the undesirable effects of globalization by first of all appreciating what they have in terms of their culture and religious tenets. They are to examine every foreign culture, embrace what can improve their society and circumvent those that are unfavourable to their cultural values.

Keywords: Globalization, Culture, Religion.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Globalization is the process and occurrence that has brought a lot of changes and impact on the whole world. Political, cultural and socio-economic assimilations and interactions are now much easier and quicker than before. From the end of the cold war and collapse of the Berlin wall, the world has experienced increased technological development in many sectors, this creates the opportunity for development of fast communication avenues and easier transportation systems that has turn the world not only to a global village but also a local neighbourhood.

The aim of this paper is to project African response to the trend of globalization, but its specific scope is restricted to the Igbo ethnic group. The paper attempts general study of the influence of globalization on Igbo culture and religion. The Igbo people are faced with the challenges of how the process of globalization is upsetting their cultural values and developing process. The researcher as a full blooded African of Igbo extraction discerns with apprehension the misperception in the heart of young people who appear to have been cut off from their cultural heritage and stranded in the new movement of globalized culture. Many remember with clearly the short-lived but rich Igbo culture that is all but gone. There is disappointment on how present modern culture that more or less is unknown to the Igbo people is clearly insufficient in addressing Igbo societal challenges.

The researcher also believes the culture presented to this generation is insufficient in addressing the present day challenges. This paper aims to uncover a middle ground that will both preserve the good culture of the Igbo society and also unveil the Igbo mind to the contemporary world as a positive contributor in improving the quality of life. These are some of the issues that this paper set out to discourse with a view to facilitating the process by which the Igbo society and African at large find meaning and value in African religion, culture and language in the face of globalization and its challenges.

The design adopted for this research study is the fundamental comparative design. The study adopted documentary method of data collection and oral interviews. Texts, journals and periodicals were also referred as secondary sources of data.

# **1. BACKGROUND OF STUDY**

## **1.1. Statement of the Problem**

The problem of African response to the challenges of globalization is truly an overwhelming mission. Using Igbo culture and religion and language as a case study, the researcher perceives a predicament in the African mind on how to balance the Igbo culture with the ever changing trends of globalization. Globalization is really affecting the African approach; it poses a serious problem to the Igbo mind on how to take the good things of globalization and still maintain the uniqueness of his cultural identity. Another problem faced by the Igbo is the effects globalization has on the cultural, religious and ethical values of the Igbo person. The Igbo mind marvels to what degree he can still maintain his cultural identity today in the face of globalization. The Igbo mind also tries to explore what he can contribute to the global community by way of his cultural values and conviction. Lastly, it wonders what cultural values have the Igbo society lost in the process of globalization.

## **1.2. Research Questions**

1. How does globalization influence Igbo cultures and to what extent.
2. Is globalization a threat to the survival of Igbo culture and development?
3. What does Igbo culture benefit from globalization?

## **1.3. Objective Of Study**

1. To investigate how globalization influence Igbo cultures and to what extent.
2. To determine if globalization threatens survival of Igbo culture.
3. To determine how Igbo culture benefit from globalization if any.

#### **1.4. Significance of the Study**

This research work is very significant in many ways. It is an attempt to project Igbo cultural and religious values to the world. It is a response to Nkrumah's call for Africans to speak for themselves and not be quiet for the outside world to speak for them. The research also draws the attention of the Igbo people to the fact that it is not every aspect of globalization that is to be accepted. It is a call for the Igbo people to go back to their cultural root and rediscover those cultural values that promoted brotherliness and co-existence.

Another importance of the study is its attempt to unify traditional values of Igbo culture with fashions of globalization. Since it is almost impossible to repel or overlook the wave of globalization, this research tries to suggest how the Igbo people can assimilate the good values of globalization and also be able preserve its core religious and cultural values that are still useful and important to the survival of the Igbo society.

Finally, this research work attempts to project Igbo cultural values in a way that other cultures can benefit from. The realization of the fact that the Igbo has something significant to contribute to the world, gives the Igbo culture that self-confidence among other culture. It is imperative, the communal spirit of the Igbo culture along with African brotherhood becomes a great social support in the world. This then reveals the reciprocal relationship that is typical of African and Igbo man's interpersonal association with his fellow human being.

#### **1.5. Research Methodology**

The chosen method in this research work is qualitative and multi-dimensional methodology. This is because data collection, analysis and interpretation will be based on the interpretation of statements, comments and observations of the respondents and not based on quantitative variables. Since the research work is dealing with existential and experienced problems, the researcher made use of multi-dimensional approaches in the collection of data but will be phenomenological in its foundation. Library and Internet materials will be extensively used, especially in the treatment and understanding of the concept of globalization.



As stated above, the research work deals with existential and experiential human problems and so the researcher adopts two main methodological approaches; Comparative Historical Approach and the Descriptive Approach. These two are in no way the exclusive methodological approaches to be adopted. In using comparative historical approach, the researcher aims to bring out the religious and cultural impact of African Traditional Religion on the society and how such practices have sustained the society that practiced it. This is compared with how the same community is responding to global changes and major substantial changes as experienced by the same society today. According to Adejo (2003) religious occurrences cannot be detached from their sociocultural frameworks, it requires the assistance of anthropological studies to reveal the full significance of religious occurrences as found in their socio-cultural framework.

#### **1.5.1. Sources of Data**

Data for the study was drawn from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was obtained from the respondents involved in the study. The secondary data was ascertained from textbooks, articles from academic journals and other electronic materials.

#### **1.5.2. Limitation to Study**

The study was constrained by time, as it had to be completed within three months. A research work like this requires a longer period time for a more detailed work.

### **1.6. Definitions of Key Terms**

#### **1.6.1. Globalization.**

Globalization is a new economic reality that seeks to break all known national boundaries the world over in an attempt to promote trade liberalization, economic competition or free enterprises and an emergent political structure that is people oriented. It is a concept that tends to wipe out national boundaries and restriction and opens every country's boundary for free trade and free flow of information, cultural ideas and trade. Adejo (2003) agrees that globalization means increased flow of capital around the world; removal of barriers to trade; increased diffusion of technology, and the internationalization of the production process. This implies that production plant of one product can span across many countries with many countries having patent right of the different parts of a particular product. A typical example is the production of

commercial airplane like a Boeing 787. The different parts of the airplane are produced in different countries and gathered in the assembly plant. By this definition globalization is viewed almost exclusively from the economic perspective of demand and supply. Though economic powers can be said to be the main catalyst of globalization, but current reality has revealed that globalization has gone beyond economic demand of purchase and supply. It also embraces political, cultural, religious and even military realities across nations. A more comprehensive definition of globalization has been provided by Fafowora (1998) who said that globalization refers to the process of the increasing economic, political, social and cultural relations across international borders. It deals with increasing collapse of trade obstacles and the growing integration of global market.

### **1.6.2. Religion**

Religion is a concept that is highly disputed when it comes to its definition. Many scholars try to define it from the viewpoint of their field of discipline. Even in its etymology, there is disparity as to the origin of the word. While St. Augustine, following the interpretation of Lactantius traces its etymological origin to *ligare*, which means to bind, connect (Ajayi, 2003). Religion is derived from the Latin *religio*, which was originally used to mean only reverence for God or the gods (Ibanga 1999). Meanwhile Ohmae (1985) sees religion as the belief in spiritual beings. He contended, that narrowing the definition to mean the belief in a supreme deity or judgment after death or idolatry and so on, would exclude many people from the category of religious, and thus has the responsibility of identifying religion somewhat with specific developments than with the deeper purpose which inspires them. Adedimeji (2006) denotes that religion is a joined system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things.

### **1.6.3. Culture.**

Culture, though an ageless concept well known in the field of social sciences and other academic fields, is widely known for having an indefinite definitions and concept. This also includes the theories propounded about culture by scholars. Culture can be defined as the patterns of behaviour and thinking that people living in social groups learn, create, and share. Onyeneke (1993) sees culture as that way of life of a given society that is transferred from one generation to another. He went on to say that a group of people organized in their distinctive way is a

society, whereas their distinctive way of organizing themselves, learned by individuals as members of that society and transmitted from one generation to another is their culture. In other words, culture distinguishes one human group from others. It also distinguishes humans from other animals.

A more comprehensive definition offered by Adedimeji (2010) clarifies that culture is “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”. This shall be used as the working definition in this thesis as it captures the total acceptable acquired behaviour of man as a member of the society. Using the phrase “member of the society” indicates that these acquired behaviours must exhibited within the borders of a society and not in isolation for it to be a cultural pattern (Adedimeji 2010).

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Historical background of globalization in Africa**

Globalization as a world phenomenon can trace its beginning to the early civilization, as could generally be seen in trade amongst nations, wars of economic supremacy, rise and fall of empires etc. Empires rise and surmount smaller states and enforce their culture on them, like during the empires of the ancient Far East, rise and fall of the Roman Empire, Ottoman Empire, etc. All these empires exercised their authority and influence in the then known world. Globalization as an idea is not new to the world. Intellectuals believe there have been three major stages of globalization: 1870-1914. 1945-1980 and from 1980 till now (Ajayi 2003). This nevertheless, depends on how one outlines and explains globalization. With regard to Africa, international contacts and interactions are not new. Africa's history is marked by foreign nations' participation. Africa had stayed in connection with other parts of the world and also had noteworthy relations within it. Communication with the outside world mainly Europe and America started sometime in the 15th century. This has significantly altered the progression of Africa historically, culturally, politically and economically. Africa's connection with the rest of the world started with trade, including the transatlantic slave trade. This was the era when western merchants bought Africans as slave. Africa's most valuable resources are its able-bodied men, women and children. The second was the era of colonialism, when Europeans leaders at a Berlin conference in 1884 partitioned Africa, instituted overseas colonies and established a system of direct control and rule over African territories (Adedimeji 2010). This division was done without any consideration to ethnic, cultural and linguistic divide in Africa. The third phase of African interaction with the global community predominantly Europe was during the era of independence from colonial rule (Adejo 2003).

## **2.2. Forces of Globalization in the African Context**

Globalization for many African writers has had a most undesirable impact on the African culture and perspective. For numerous African writers, it has distorted and unsettled the foundation of African societies because by running down the religious and cultural interpretation of the Africans, it utterly distorted and affected every other facet of the African life in the society. This distortion can be felt in every sector including Education, African Traditional Religion, civil development and even the health sector. Globalization instruments that bring these distorting consequences on African cultural environment include Christianity, Islam, urbanization, science and technology as understood by the overwhelming influence of Information Technology. While these agents or products of globalization have significantly enhanced a lot of African societies, they have also become absolute instruments used to wage destructive wars on African consciousness, religion and customs. In this regard, Abdi (2010) argues that the results of colonization on the cultural viewpoint of Africa are a defining factor of how Africa is countering the current phenomenon of globalization. He admits it is Imperative in analyzing the two inclinations of globalization is how the former has actually directly affected the way Africans have been able to counter, or more fittingly endure the current one, which we may term latter-day globalization. To say the least, this is particularly important, for I subscribe to the inferences about the impact of colonialism on Africans and their successive realities of underdevelopment. In his opinion, the biggest aftermaths of colonial interactions have not been necessarily the direct political and economic exploitations, though these were very essential but it is the cultural domination of Europeans over African culture that stands out (Abdi 2010).

## **2.3. The Challenges of Globalization to Igbo nation**

Lechner (2002), is of the view that globalization has become a major topic of debate and concern in economic spheres since the mid-1990s. It is clear that the drift toward more integrated world markets has opened various possibilities for greater growth, and presents an unmatched opportunity for developing countries to raise their living standards. He argues that globalization is primarily result of the increase and deepening of commercial and financial links between countries, particularly over decades. Moreover, economic consideration itself has changed over time, toward the overall acceptance that outward oriented economies are more prosperous than closed ones (Dayo 2001). Therefore, more than at any time in the past, industrialized countries

all over the world are opening up their commercial and economic setup in the belief that this is definitely the best approach to growth and develop their already striving economy.

It is an historical true that the diversity of cultures and peoples indigenous to Africa were brought together without due consultation and consideration to the co-existence of these cultures (Ibanga 1999). Consequently, the word 'African' can be misinforming if it involves more than the persons who do not categorize themselves with the continent. Ibanga (1999) stressed that for more than half of the twentieth century throughout the colonial era, the understanding of Africa was subdued by different contradictions. It is not surprising however that development is to be conceptualized on the foundation of foreign history. This appears to be the position Africa found itself when it became a partaking continent in the globalization process. This conceptualization was not a theoretic construct but deliberately and intentionally intended by colonial powers.

From the Dark Continent misconception, the idea was and still is to give light or civilization to those living in darkness (Dayo 2001). With this mindset, European powers occupied Africa presumably to shine the light of civilization to it. This led to rivalry among the colonial powers to conquer lands in Africa and introduce their culture and philosophy and the Igbo nation was not an exemption. The battle for land in Africa led to what is known as the (Scramble for Africa), requiring overseas negotiations for Africa's lands and peoples and the eventual colonization. Ohmae (1985), is of the opinion that while the process of globalization for Africa began with its integration into the world capitalist system on the outside, the machination of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank indicated a major assault in the implementation of a long-term plan for transforming the African social structure. It is therefore laudable to note that in this globalization movement; African nations are among 42 the most disadvantaged, still trying to regain itself from colonial and neo-colonial effects of globalization (Dayo 2001).

#### **2.4. Globalization and socio-cultural change in Africa**

One of the most severe effects of colonization has been how the political and economic distortion of the colonies have similarly led to what occasionally appear to be an unbridgeable cultural cavity between colonial powers and the sufferers of the colonial incursion. The age of colonial loot and plunder led to the relative inaction and often retrogression of traditional cultural pursuits in the colonies. This mostly is what has led to loss of African cultural identity.

Arowolo (2010) maintains that with Africa subdued and dominated, the Western culture and European mode of civilisation began to flourish and outgrow African cultural heritage. Traditional African cultural practices paved the way for foreign way on how things are done as Africans became fully 'westernised'. Western culture now is regarded as the vanguard civilisation. African ways of doing things became primeval, out-dated and unfortunately unacceptable in the global space. Not only were certain aspects of the substantial culture in the colonies lost or ruined, colonial cultures also lost the control and sense of cultural continuity, such that it became virtually impossible to regain the ability to strive for cultural advancement on their own terms. Ohmae (1985) captured it concisely in these arguments. The social structure was completely distraught and a new culture of violence was established. Traditional African methods of conflict resolution were abolished and, without any replacement. The democratic process though it was fundamental, but with great potential as supplemented with every human tradition, was displaced and substituted by the despotism of colonialism. A new crop of elites was created, fostered, and weaned. While colonialism fortified with the structures of the modern state in order to continue to carry out the art and act of suppression of the mass of the people in the service of colonialism.

## **2.5. Globalization and the loss National Identity**

One of the overriding effects of globalization to the Igbo consciousness is the loss of identity caused by inferiority complex. Achebe (1960) uses the character of Obi (in his novel *No Longer at Ease*) to depict the identity crisis faced by the Igbo man in his encounter with the agents of globalization and his struggle at conventionality. Two main forces shape Obi's identity: The Western culture and values and Igbo culture and values. Though Obi embraces Western values as evidenced from his education and his ostensible observance to Christianity, we can see how this choice isolates him from his traditional Igbo culture. For Obi to identify with Western culture means that he rejects a number of cultural traditions including polygamy, paying a bride-price, which was largely mistaken by the British as buying a wife, honouring a man because of his titles earned through battles, conscientious adherence to the Igbo tradition, etc.

The Acknowledgment of Western culture means acceptance the many positive and adverse things that came with the industrialization and other crucial moments of Western civilization.

Achebe (1960) used the character of Obi Okonkwo to depict the predicament of a typical Igbo mind in conflict with the burdens of his tradition and his contact with the impacts of globalization. Obi Okonkwo fascinated by Western model of marriage, judging that it will be acceptable for him to marry whomever he wants and whenever, because it only affects him alone. But when he falls in love with a woman of an unattainable class, and his family and friends are not ready for a rebellion in marriage traditions, Obi realizes that he is reluctant to be a forerunner of this kind of marriage if it means rejection and segregation. Eventually, he surrenders to the demands of his friends and family but this compliance left him a distressed man at heart. The Igbo mind was made to think that nothing worthy comes from him, anything Igbo made is of little or no significance and that even his Igbo sense is disparagingly applied to him. This has caused many people of Igbo extraction to contradict their identity, disinclined to anything correlated with Igbo, including even their names. While aligning to things that are imported even when they are of inferior quality to Igbo.



### **3. IMPLICATION OF GLOBALIZATION ON IGBO SOCIETY**

#### **3.1. Economic and political implications**

One of the primary virtues of a traditional Igbo person is hard work and honour. The Igbo people were predominantly farmers, artisans and traders. A man's honour hangs on his ability to fulfil his social and economic obligations. This he does by working hard in his farm, being very committed in his business and handiwork. Laziness has no place in a traditional Igbo society and a man without any means of livelihood is regarded as an *ofeke*, (a lazy fool). Today because of the effects of globalization, many Igbo people have abandoned farming and their craftsmanship in search of white-collar job. Some have gone to the extent of engaging in get rich quick schemes. These days among many Igbo people, wealth with no known source is being exalted as people fight to meet up with the challenges of a globalized economy. The few people who are holding resolutely to their crafts are not able to keep afloat in business, as they cannot compete favourably with the big corporations and international conglomerates.

The Igbo political structure, which forms the fundamental bases for the execution of moral principles, is based on the *Umunna* system in a hierarchical order. Here everybody knows everybody and good name is valued more than treasure. With the opening doors of opportunity in the cities, there is a great urban exodus and this weakens the manpower needed at home to efficiently operate the *Umunna* system. One of the obvious effects of globalization on Igbo morality is the diminishing of the *Umunna* structure in most Igbo communities. The reduced number of people living continuously in the village weakens village institutions and makes the implementation of village norms and values futile. This is attested to by Nze Fred Chukwe of Egbelu Amaimo Autonomous community in Ikeduru, who said that with the emigration of able bodied young men and women, urging community norms turn out to be difficult and increasingly died off. According to him, when he was younger, the community had a distinctive way of handling those who stole in such a way as to serve as both penalty and a warning to others.

Traditionally, the Igbo society is built on an ethical system that encourages hard work, honesty, trust, and collaboration. The community rewards people who perform their communities' duties and uphold the moral and ethical ideals of the community. They are usually bestowed chieftaincy titles that do not principally lead to material benefits but rather respect and veneration. Chiefs symbolize role models for the youth, and they are considered individuals of exemplary character. As a consequence of globalization and modernization of the Igbo society, the institution of chieftaincy has misplaced most of its original moral and ethical significance.

Due to the worsening economic conditions in local communities, the inclination is to award the title of chief to those who contribute money to the community notwithstanding the source of the money. As a result, well-known criminals now obtain chieftaincy titles from their communities a practice that has conceded the high moral and ethical values of the Igbo. This has amplified the battle in the Igbo community, particularly with respect to land disputes, which were customarily resolved by the elders and chiefs. Most of these disputes are now resolved by the courts, rather than by the elders and the chiefs of the community who are no longer reliable to be neutral (Adejo, 2003).

### **3.2. Implication on Igbo Culture and Religion**

It has been established in chapter three that the Igbo people like most African societies are very religious and having a common viewpoint of reality, the Igbo religiously consecrate every aspect of their lives. There is no contradiction between the sacred and the profane and their daily life is structured around their religious belief and viewpoint. This clarifies why Kanu (2010) argues that the customary Igbo cosmology is fundamentally a religious one. Religion offers the basic and unifying apparatus through which all is perceived. It is not shocking that the traditional value system and the attitude of the Igbo are generally religious. This is so because religion is what brings the social and personal life of Igbo communities together, this made the Igbo people communal oriented and made them to place higher value to life; hence their perspective to life is said to be anthropocentric in many ways (Kanu 2010).

Some agents of globalization like Christianity, Islam and Western Education have helped to really downgrade and sometimes outrightly obliterate indigenous Igbo culture (Mahfouz 2006).

These cultural heritages that helped to knit the socio-political composition of the community was not interchanged with a culture or religion that fulfilled the basic cultural desire of the people. This has led to a massive setback of the socio-moral system in Igbo villages. African Traditional Religion as practiced by the Igbo people merged their world and there is no difference between the life in the room and the life in the marketplace, their religion require them always to act justly and conscientiously and their whole affairs are filled with taboos. Globalization abolished these taboos and most Igbo communities do not detect these taboos that held the communities unruffled for such a long time in history.

### **3.3. Implication on Igbo Family Values**

The Igbo people set premium value on the family, which is viewed as the basis of the society. The family is hierarchically organized with the head of the family being the father. Mother is there to provide support to the father in the raising of the children who are trained in the custom of respect for parents and elders. This explains why marriage is a very serious subject among the Igbo people. Children are not permitted to call elders by their names without using an appellation, as this is considered impolite. This is mostly true of people from around Imo, Abia and Anambra states. Children are compelled to greet elders when seeing them for the first time in the day as a sign of reverence. Children usually add the Igbo appellation Mazi or Dede before an elder's name when addressing them (Mahfouz 2006).

The offensive of globalization has almost cleaned out all these primeval Igbo cultural values. And the complementing extended family system has crumpled. The resultant effect is that as child raising has been left to the nuclear family alone, and many parents now occupied in one form of work or the other to make a living, the child is almost basically left to decide his or her own way. Therefore the society is producing many morally aberrant children with immoral minds. The filial bond between parents and children is disappearing and while parents are out there fighting to provide for the material needs of the children, the children are getting more and more exasperated because they are not receiving the family love they crave from their parents. Hence they take to diverse delinquent behaviors to fill the vacuum. Igbo societies detest pre-marital pregnancy and have social tools to discourage it (Kanu 2010). In most villages, in the past, if a girl turn out to be pregnant, at night, young boys and girls, in groups, would carry rubbish and sing explicit, satirical songs, to the accompaniment of faltering rhythm, to the

pregnant girl's home and dump the rubbish there. Such a dance of shame is taken as a social stigma among the Igbo. No family would like their daughter to be so stigmatized, hence huge effort is made to safeguard and prepare the young girl to marry with self-respect. But in spite of the hue and call about the pre-marital pregnancy, when the child is born, people still celebrate to welcome the new baby to the family.

### **3.4. Implication on the Political Structure**

The introduction of a new system administration unfamiliar to the Igbo political system gave birth to a new socio-political structure, which fashioned a new middle class with corrupt propensities. This is so since this new middle class that is the creation of colonial government were strengthened by the manipulative tactics the colonial regime that had very little or no respect for traditional institution. Given the fact that many of these conscripted civil servants do not work in their communities, they have little or no worries exploiting the host communities, since they know their misdeeds will certainly not be questioned.

Another very broad cultural conflict and outcome of globalization is in the area of political volatility among traditional Igbo communities. With the annihilation of the old political structure among the Igbo communities and the imposition of warrant chiefs who have now converted into paramount chiefs or Eze, it should be noted that this system was not application in others regions of the country as the Nigerian state was divided in two albeit the northern and southern protectorate. The old system was discarded and the so-called paramount rulers were appointed to replace the traditional system of Okpara. According to Adesoji (2005) frequently, Warrant Chiefs were appointed subjectively. In some cases, personalities were installed who were actually local leaders before, but more often than not it was an unintended issue. Sometimes, the communities recommended people of little standing in the community to the British, occasionally even persons of foreign origin were installed and this in many ways changed the dynamics of the progression of Igbo political structure (Ejizu 1986).

The entire cultural values of the Igbo society disintegrated beneath the influence of globalization eroding with it the sense of the sacrosanct, respect for human life and dignity of the person well safeguarded by the traditional system. The ensuing consequence politically is that vicious political reform and change as seen in many western countries have penetrated the Igbo political

system. The value of truth and uprightness has been replaced by might financial influence. There is a popular saying *Okwu baa n'ego ogbenye esere onu ya*, (once a discussion requires financial commitment, the poor man closes his mouth). This suggests that the cultural change in Igbo society did not take the natural process of cultural evolution and integration brought about by powerful imposition of military might to the condemnation of the indigenous cultural values. With these cultural and military defeats, there was no fight left for the Igbo people to flight and defend their culture and land but only succumb to superior military and ideological force (Mahfouz 2006).

### **3.5. The Implications on Core Igbo Cultural Values.**

The debates so far have tried to present what globalization involves and its far stretching effects on African societies in general and Igbo society particularly. In this paper, attempts are made to draw out the implications of these effects on the socio-cultural and religious compositions of the Igbo people. It has been asserted that globalization is turning the world to a global village, let it also be pointed out that whereas globalization is bringing people all over the globe together through all kinds of developed Information Technology (IT) gadgets and platforms like internet and its attendant social media networks like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp etc, it is also opening a wide gap between neighbors and even families.

It is now public knowledge that some families are torn apart and become strange partners because of one or both couples and even their offspring becoming obsessed to social networks while overlooking the existence of the other in the same household. Sharing her experience, Mrs Ogbo, a marriage counselor told the story of how a couple's marital watersheds started when both the husband and wife got severely involved in the social network, one on Facebook the other on Whatsapp. It happened that at night both lie on the same bed and each is busy chatting away in their separate networks and unmindful of the presence of the other. Each looked forward to coming home from work, rush the meal and get busy with their separate Facebook and WhatsApp friends and resent it when the other tries to disturb him or her in the name of seeking attention. The situation deteriorated to the level that they could not stand the attention of each other again. The same goes to young men and women who are better at making friends online while putting little effort to socialize with their schoolmates.

## **4. IGBO CULTURE, RELIGION AND THE BENEFITS OF GLOBALIZATION**

### **4.1. Igbo Cultural Practices and tradition**

Africa is split into a countless number of ethnic cultures. The continent's cultural renewal has also been a central feature of post-independence nation building on the continent, with identification of the need to harness the cultural means of Africa to augment the process of education, requiring the creation of an enabling environment in so many of ways. In contemporary times, the call for a much dipper emphasis on the cultural dimension in all aspects of development has become progressively vocal. Africa has a rich tradition of arts and crafts. African arts and crafts find countenance in ways woodcarvings, brass and leather art works. African arts and crafts also involve sculpture, paintings, pottery, ceremonial and religious headgear and dress. In African art, the object was not as important as the message behind the creation of the object. This is because in Africa all art is socially purposeful. Every art work has a meaning and performs the dual function of delivering a message and also playing aesthetic role. In the words of Ajayi (2003) “African art, like various other art traditions of the world, is carefully linked with religion”. This resonates the words of Isichei (1976) who aforesaid that most African sculpture seems to have been connected to religion, which encompasses most facets of African life. The religious genres include supplicatory figures, which adorn shrines, repository figures, charms, and figures used for initiations to the cults, the contraption for divination, dance staffs, musical instruments, and an assortment of other ritual baggage.

Peculiar to African societies is the cultural exercise of the Rite of passage. As said above, man is described with reference to his position in the diverse groups to which he belongs, as he grows biologically and matures, his presumed responsibility in the community evolves. Most African societies mark this transition from one phase to the other with sets or rituals called rites of passage. Rites of passage include birth rites, naming ceremony, initiation (into age grade) rites,

title taking, marriage rites, and burial ceremonies. The celebration of these rites may differ from culture to culture, but it is found in most African societies (Ohmae 1985).

Folktales play an important part in African educational system. Stories reflect a group cultural uniqueness and preserving the stories of Africa will help preserve an entire culture. Storytelling upholds pride and identity in a culture. Folktales are also seen as a tool for instruction and entertainment. They provide a way for children to appreciate the material and social environment. Every story has a moral lesson people; such as good will prevail over evil. For entertainment, stories are set in eccentric, non-human worlds. Often, the main character of the story would be a talking animal or something strange would happen to human character. Even though folktales are for entertainment, they bring a sense of fitting and pride to communities in Africa. Certain tools were used in African folktales. For instance, idiophones, such as drums, were used to make the sounds of different animals. Repetitions in the form of prose or poem were also used to get the audience entangled in the stories.

## **4.2 Geography of Igbo land**

The Igbo people territorially inhabit the Southern part of Nigeria, consisting of the southeast and southsouth including part of the western bank of the River Niger. They represent one of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria today. Igboland is located between the parallels of 60 and 81 /2 0 Longitudes and 41 /4 0 and 70 North Longitude (Isichei 1976). Presently, they occupy Imo, Anambra, Enugu, Abia, and Ebonyi States and parts of Rivers State, Edo State and Delta State, although they are existent in every parts of the country because of their commercial inclination and pursuit for prosperity. In the framework of this paper, the term Igbo is used as a dual signifier. In one part it denotes to one of the three main ethnic groups in Nigeria. On the other hand, it is used to term the language of the Igbo people. The Igbo language is categorized within the Sudanic linguistic group of the Kwa division (Mahfouz 2006). The Igbo ethnic group in general occupies the majority of Southern Nigeria. Often referred to as Igbo, are other minor ethnic groups in the south because of their close cultural ties. I.e. Efik, ebibio, Ijaw. It is widely believed that while the other two major ethnic groups in Nigeria (the Hausa and the Yoruba) also settled in other parts of Africa, the Igbo are establish as an indigenous population in no other country in the world than their present Nigerian location. Igbo elders have upheld that the Igbo are indigenous to their present geographical location in Nigeria and had not migrated from

elsewhere unlike the case of other ethnic groups in Nigeria. The Igbo share a common border with the Igala and the Idoma on the Northern part of Nigeria, the Ijaw and Ogoni on the Southern side, the Yako and Ibibio on the Eastern border and the Bini and Warri on the Western divide. The main rivers are Niger, Imo, Anambra, and the Uiasi River. The River Niger divides the Igbo into two unequal parts. The bulk of the population lives east of the Niger, with heavy concentration at Okigwe, Orlu, Owerri, Onitsha, and Awka. Igboland has a tropical climate; there are two distinct seasons of the year among the Igbo. These include the dry season and the rainy season, the former starts in October and ends in April, the latter begins in April and ends in October with a break in August (Dike 1985). Throughout the nineteenth century and before it, the great majority of the Igbo claimed Nri town in Awka region as their ancestral home, and it has been proposed that area around Nri town is to be considered the center of the Igbo nationality. Nri has been described by Ejizu (1986) as a holy city where slaves were set free and where the Osu system (outcaste) predominant in many parts of Igbo land is nonexistent.

### **4.3. Igbo Political and Social Organization**

Politically and socially, the conventional Igbo society has no central form of government. Political alignments are centered on the agnate group or *Umunna* (Dike 1985). Traditional Igbo political association was based on a quasi-democratic republican system of government. In closely knitted communities, this system ensured its citizens equality, as opposed to a feudalist system with a king ruling over subjects. The Igbo people are very egalitarian in nature; with the exception of a few notable Igbo towns such as Onitsha which had kings called Obi, and places like the Nri Kingdom and kingdom Aro Chukwu, which had priest-kings (Dike 1985). Igbo communities were completely ruled solely by a republican consultative assembly of the common people (Mahfouz 2006). Communities were usually overseen and administered by a council of elders. Although titleholders were esteemed because of their accomplishments and means, they were never revered as kings, but often performed special tasks given to them by the assemblies.

*Umunna* are a form of male lineage maintained by the Igbo. Law starts with the *Umunna*, which is a male line of descent from a founding antecedent who the family lineage is sometimes, named after, with groups of compounds containing closely related families headed by the eldest male member. The *Umunna* can be regarded as the most important pillar of Igbo society. It is general



adage among the Igbo people that *Igbo enwe eze* (the Igbo have no king, or recognize no king). However, some scholars like Ohmae (1985) argue differently, in Igbo land a king is acknowledged by subjects as their spiritual leader and chief custodian of tradition (Ohmae 1985). With this definition of what a king and its functionality, it turns out to be rather clear that most Igbo communities do not invest these two functions in an absolute monarchy.

The democratic constituent in the arrangement of this *Umunna* system is replicated in the village assembly, a gathering of all the male members of the community young and old where issues of critical importance are discussed and conclusions are reached on the basis of popular consensus. The basic unit of socio-political organization in a classic Igbo communal setting was the compound (*ezi na uno*), which is a household with at least a male figure, a woman and their unmarried children. Next was a cluster of compounds, which were closely related, known as *Umunna*. A study by Ibanga (1999) defines *Umunna* as a “territorially kin-based unit, which subdivides into compounds (*ezi, obi*)”. *Umunna* was usually under the guidance of a grandfather or great grandfather as the case may be. In the indigenous calendar of the *Umunna*, a week had four days; a month contained seven weeks and thirteen months made a year. In the last month, an extra day was added (Ibanga 1999). This calendar is still used in indigenous Igbo villages and towns to establish market days (Abdi 2009). The Igbo New Year, starting with the month *Ọnwá M̀bú* (First Moon) appears on the third week of February, (Onwuejeogwu 1981). The Igbo had a traditional ideographic set of symbols called *Nsibidi*, which originated from the neighboring Ejagham people (Ohmae 1985). This took the form of pictograms. In the words of Isichei (1976), the experience of colonial rule deflected the Igbo and their neighbors from their own patterns of development, it seems likely that, as in other societies, a knowledge of literacy would have become even more spread in society as a whole, and like Chinese, the script would have gained more characters, becoming a richer and more flexible vehicle of literary expression.

#### **4.4. Benefits of Globalization to Igbo culture**

There is no doubt that globalization has certainly improved some aspect of Igbo culture. The first positive impact is the broadening of the perspective of the Igbo both in thought and behaviour and has allowed Igbo people the opportunity to experience other cultures and learn from them. Below are some of the noticeable ways Igbo culture have benefited from globalization:

#### **4.4.1. Improvement in Education and Traditional African medicine**

Globalization has improved the learning method of Igbo society that was formally based on trade, agriculture and creative art, in modern times Igbo people have ventured into every field of knowledge and are doing well. Traditional African medicines have improved greatly since the advent of globalization. Traditional medicine which is nature based have evolve and now even rival orthodox medicine. Education has enhanced relations around the globe where Igbo are learning from other cultures and dreaming of other goals other than agriculture trade and craftsmanship. The traditional educational system of Igbo society though still active in many parts Igbo land have appeared to be very insufficient in equipping a person to face the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Ejizu, 1986).

#### **4.4.2. Technological and Economic Benefits**

Igbo people have through their interaction with the globalized world, learn and advance on their technical knowledge. This has also enhanced quality health care delivery and other important social services. Transportation has been greatly upgraded and there is great effort by communities in Igbo land to join others around the world to enjoy quality social services like electricity, portable water and good roads. Technology has allowed the construction of high profile infrastructure like power stations, dams etc. which Igbo have benefited from greatly.

Economically, globalization has created greater prospect for Igbo artisans and business people, thus improving the quality of life and economic prosperities of the people. Globalization has improved international trade and commerce, eased foreign investment and the flow of capital to Igbo communities.

#### **4.4.3. Moral and Religious Benefits**

Globalization has helped the Igbo to discard some detestable ethical and cultural practices. Such practices as treating women as mere possessions, early marriages for girls are no longer invoked and women are granted greater contributory role in daily matters of the community. Polygamy with its consequent social and moral complications is on the decline, unfortunately, it seems it is being substituted by an even greater marital and social problem of divorce.

Religiously, globalization has helped the Igbo mind to abandon superstitious belief that cannot stand the test of reason and logic. Such superstitious practices as killing of twins and human sacrifices have ended. This has also freed the Igbo man from the captivity of groundless fear caused by these superstitions (Ohmae 1985).

## 5. CONCLUSION

The challenges globalization pose to Igbo people are challenges that should make them embrace developmental policies that are deep-rooted in their cultural value systems. They are challenges that can make Africans and Igbo people in particular develop their own model of African global realities. These are challenges that should make them take earnestly the development of policies that would eradicate poverty and stagnation in the continent, recover traditional moral values and encourage African brotherhood. These are challenges that should make Igbo globalize their cultures in the face of globalized Western cultures. If these challenges were taken seriously it would decrease the level of dependence of African countries on Western countries, give them a sense of dignity.

It will also expedite and improve interdependence among nations. This would make Africa and indeed Igbo people competitive in the global space. It is discussed in this paper how Christianity and Islam enormously impacted on African Traditional Religion, but also the African mentality. These religions conveyed with them Western and Arabian cultures which were enforced on African cultures. Their missionaries began the idea of African culture being inferior to western culture and this became the early agents of globalization. There is need consequently for African and Igbo followers of Christianity and Islam to filter Western and Arabic culture from the core precepts of these religions. A typical example is the call in the Catholic Church in Nigeria for a blend between traditional marriage and Christian marriage. This is so because Igbo people place more importance to Traditional marriage where the parents of the couple give their blessings than the taking of oath on the church altar.

Therefore the need for a cultural resurgence is a consequence of the present cultural evolution provoked by the cultural interactions of Africans with the West in historical moments of colonialism and globalization. This interaction has brought some good things and others things that are not desirable for Igbo people. More so, it has been observed that a lost culture is a lost civilization as well as an inevitable knowledge lost.

In this regards certain recommendations are made that will stem the tide of cultural degeneration in the face of global cultural challenges among Igbo people. The need to have the right cultural inclination that will help every African and Igbo to choose the right culture that conduce to their purpose as a people, the practice of cultural adaptation and alignment is one of the strategies that will help put forward the Igbo culture.

Finally, this paper has established that globalization is an unstoppable culture that is sweeping frailer cultures away and establishing a more faceless globalized culture. Igbo culture having experienced from this cultural offensive, must therefore try to adapt, take what is good for it, sternly reject what suppresses its cultural development, and contribute its own positive moral and communal values to a globalized world bereft of affection but opulent in technological innovations.

## **5.1. Recommendations**

It is a search for value, a search for identity and for renewal of the Igbo culture. It is a pursuit that should lead to the roots of Africa's development. This would help Africans not just to be observers on matters affecting their social, political and cultural wellbeing and also make important input towards reshaping of their future in the global space. The Igbo people need to rise and cull the inequality inherent in the global space. Clearly, Igbo people cannot reject the chance to be an active participant in this globalization, but they can restore their cultural and national image, and maintain on their own cultural preferences and terms in this globalized partnership. This will only be possible through a sincere and resilient commitment towards the repositioning that is truly Igbo and African in nature.

It is obligatory on parents to demand on sound African moral values for their children. Parents must create time to stay with their children and educate them about the conventional African perspective. It is vital to instil African values, such as commonality, hospitality and respect for life. As earlier highlighted in this research, one of the most important tools for African resurgence is language. Regardless of where parents find themselves with their children they should strive to teach them their native language. Language conveys the culture and perspective of the African people. There is urgent need to revive Igbo language with its proverbs and idioms. There is also a need to document Igbo language for preservation and transfer to the younger

generation. Language documentation in recording, writing and audio-visual recording of grammar, vocabulary, and oral traditions of Igbo language should become a priority going forward. This entails producing grammars in collection of texts and dictionaries of Igbo languages, and the establishment of a safe archive where such material can be stored and easily accessed by future generations.

Educational institutions also have a big role to play in this course. It is mostly through education that Igbo values can be reinstated in the mind of Igbo youths. Also equipping the academic curricula to include but not limited to Igbo language, culture, history and ideal for the way forward.

Igbo people can also, advance their culture by way cultural adaptation and alignment. Rather than copying a foreign culture completely. The Greeks and Romans grew into a political and economic power because they aligned whatever foreign ideas found its way into their culture without distorting their own culture. The Americans for instance did not inertly adopt the knowledge that was brought from Europe or did they follow the European footsteps in everything they did, rather they introduced the philosophy of pragmatism whereby, every knowledge had to demonstrate its worth in practice and this helped them to position them self as the leader of global advancement.

Another Important measure to take is to document Igbo traditional practice on all platforms that aid globalization i.e. radio, television and Internet etc. More so, this should be exposed to the people on regular basis. Programmes in mass media should constitute about 70% of the local environments. This will help your Igbo minds to already adopt an Igbo perspective at an early age.

It is true that Igbo people like most African tribes are humble in terms of developments in science and technology, but before the arrival of the West, they had developed their own system of technology to meet their basic needs. Also it is not a bad idea borrowing technology and adjusting it to suit the needs of the Igbo people and certainly Africa as a whole. It is imperative that Igbo people take the technology that is borrowed in a good way without allowing it to erode its traditional values. A clue can be taken from the Asian countries that embraced Western technology but also kept their traditional heritage. Igbo people and indeed Africans must evaluate themselves and identify their strongholds. One could be in the area of African fashion

and the development of tourism, which are sectors with growing international demand. And African certainly has an abundant of places with a cultural heritage. These sectors can be advanced and resources employed for the development of the continent as a whole.

The international media is also another way to exploit the boom of technology and showcase Igbo cultural heritage. In this regards, communities should be encouraged to give their new yam festival international publicity. The annual *Ofala* festival deserves more international coverage. Efforts have already been made in the area of entertainment in terms of showcasing Igbo culture to the world, particularly through Nollywood, which has the third largest movie producer in the world. If properly managed through sponsorship from the government and private institutions, Nollywood has the capacity to become an international revenue generator.

Finally, the perception of globalization is the assurance to economic capitalism and liberal democracy. Africans and indeed Igbo should not take naive dispositions toward the economic, political and cultural ideology of the West in the pretext of globalization. Igbo intellectuals, stakeholders and political leaders can reassess the fundamentals of traditional African communal economy and politics in an effort to incorporate these fundamentals with what is attainable in today's Africa.

## **5.2. Contributions to Knowledge**

In the course of this research, it was discovered not a lot of research work has been done on this subject matter, while the issues discussed in this paper is very important to Igbo cultural and religious development, this research will expand the knowledge in this subject matter and also encourage more research in this field in the future. This research has succeeded in bringing out many impacts of globalization to Igbo culture, particularly this research highlighted the implications of the forces of globalization on the cultural life of the Igbo people and have also highlighted the positive contribution of Globalization to Igbo people. With this research more people can now understand the perspective of Igbo person and society in the area of Globalization, Culture and tradition.

## **SUMMARY**

In the course of this research, the following findings were revealed. Before the exposure to the forces of globalization, the Igbo people of South-eastern Nigeria had a system of life and belief that took care of its sedentary life style. Globalization has no regard for geographical or cultural boundary. Globalization brought universal doctrines and change to Igbo land, with globalization, many cultural, religious, political and economic alterations took place in Igbo land with its resultant effects.

The aim of this paper is to uncover a middle ground that will both preserve the good culture of the Igbo society and also unveil the Igbo mind to the contemporary world as a positive contributor by facilitating the process by which the Igbo society and African at large find meaning and value in African religion, culture and language in the face of globalization and its challenges.

The research findings indicated that globalization has led to cultural weakness among the Igbo people and has left Igbo young minds shocked and confused. There is a gradual and continual loss of cultural identity among the Igbo people. Their belief system is being windswept and replaced by foreign belief system that does not address their core ontological therefore desires leading to religious syncretism. The moral and values of the Igbo people has been greatly destabilized by the forces of globalization leaving the Igbo society debilitated to the point that the forces that bind them together like religious ritual, system of education and respect for elders are being battered. Especially the Igbo justice system that addressed the urgent needs of the society and strengthened moral uprightness has given way to Western judicial system that lacks the capability to enforce moral probity in Igbo society. This Igbo justice system is supported and strengthened by the religious belief system in deities that strike offenders, particularly of serious violation of moral laws. The Western judicial system is based on logic and witnesses and



overseen by judges that may not even understand the cultural implication of the offence or cultural belief of the people in the first place.

The research findings also reveal that it is not all despair from globalization, globalization also brought in a lot of positive effects. It brought about quality health delivery system, exposed the Igbo people to the unknown world of science and technology. Globalization helped to eliminate unbearable cultural practices among Igbo societies and helped advanced the economic base to cater for the needs of the population.

Furthermore, this research affirms that if there is a conscious renaissance of Igbo culture and tradition, the good effects of globalization can be appreciated by the Igbo while the negative implications be alleviated. Again going back to origins, the Igbo people have a lot of values to contribute to the global community and the main idea behind this paper as revealed by the findings through testimonies and other research materials is to find the balance that allow Igbo culture to strive even in the face of globalization.

Finally the thesis offered recommendations on the way forward. This is to say that the researcher did not just highlighted the negative consequences of globalization which some other authors had at different times pointed out but the research offers tangible recommendation on how the Igbo people and indeed Africans in general can appreciate the benefits of globalization, contribute its rich culture and tradition to the world and lessen the negative consequences of globalization on the cultural values, political, social and religious views of the Igbo people.

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