IMAGE: A MAP OF THE STARS OF THE ORION CONSTELLATION

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Campus Media Narrating of Pro-Palestine Protest Movements: Case Study of *The Columbia Daily Spectator*

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ABSTRACT

Since the outbreak of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict there have been sporadic protests on American campuses calling for a ceasefire and supporting Palestine. The recent protest at Columbia University sparked a wave of similar actions across the nation. On April 17, a pro-Palestinian protest erupted at Columbia University, where students set up tents on campus to call for the university to divest from companies linked to Israel. The Columbia Daily Spectator, the student-run newspaper of Columbia University, stands as a prominent voice within the campus community, providing coverage and commentary on a wide range of social and political issues.

This paper investigates the coverage of pro-Palestinian protests at Columbia University by The Columbia Daily Spectator from April 17 to May 17, 2024. The paper analyzes 143 reports, focusing on the language, narratives, and perspectives presented to understand how the campus media narrates the protest movement and shapes public discourse. Employing narrative analysis method, the findings reveal that the newspaper primarily adopts a chronological reporting style, vividly depicting the students' commitment and urgency.

Keywords: campus media; narrative analysis method; pro-palestine protest movements; the columbia daily spectator.

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Since the outbreak of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict there have been sporadic protests on American campuses calling for a ceasefire and supporting Palestine. The recent protest at Columbia University sparked a wave of similar actions across the nation. On April 17, a pro-Palestinian protest erupted at Columbia University, where students set up tents on campus to call for the university to divest from companies linked to Israel. The Columbia Daily Spectator, the student-run newspaper of Columbia University, stands as a prominent voice within the campus community, providing coverage and commentary on a wide range of social and political issues.

This paper investigates the coverage of pro-Palestinian protests at Columbia University by The Columbia Daily Spectator from April 17 to May 17, 2024. The paper analyzes 143 reports, focusing on the language, narratives and perspectives presented to understand how the campus media narrates the protest movement and shapes public discourse. Employing narrative analysis method, the findings reveal that the newspaper primarily adopts a chronological reporting style, vividly depicting the students' commitment and urgency. Various voices are included, offering a balanced perspective on the motivations of all parties involved. However, the coverage reflects an implicit bias, often portraying the students as instigators of conflict while portraying the university's responses- often involving suppression and police intervention- as necessary measures for safety concerns. The protests embody an anti-establishment sentiment, challenging prevailing political taboos, particularly regarding the US-Israel relationship. Notably, the absence of middle-ground voices in the coverage may lead to a one-sided interpretation of events, emphasizing the voices of influential groups while sidelining neutral or alternative viewpoints. In general, it becomes clear that the student newspaper constructs a story of committed and principled student activists standing up against a rigid and controlling administration.

Keywords: campus media; narrative analysis method; pro-palestine protest movements; the columbia daily spectator.

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I. INTRODUCTION

On October 7, 2023, Hamas launched an unprecedented attack on Israel, prompting a two-month retaliatory operation by Israel in the Gaza Strip. This conflict not only caused significant turmoil and tension in the Middle East but also ignited fierce debates in American university campuses and public opinion. Israel's military actions against Hamas in Gaza resulted in numerous civilian casualties, leading to growing dissatisfaction with Israel and the Jewish community among Americans. Protesters have called for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza and for the US to halt its military aid to Israel.

Although there have been sporadic protests on American campuses calling for a ceasefire and supporting Palestine since the outbreak of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the recent protest at Columbia University sparked a wave of similar actions across the nation. On April 17, a pro-Palestinian protest erupted at Columbia University, where students set up tents on campus

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to call for the university to divest from companies linked to Israel. The protest was jointly initiated by the Columbia University Apartheid Divest (CUAD), Students for Justice in Palestine and Jewish Voice for Peace. Subsequently, the university administration chose to involve the police, citing the violation of regulations prohibiting unauthorized demonstrations. When the police arrived, they demanded that the students disperse. Upon their refusal, the police proceeded to arrest them. Columbia University President Minouche Shafik authorized the Police Department to dismantle the protesters' tents. However, this move backfired, prompting more protesters to gather on campus and inspiring similar protests at other universities across the country. To quell the situation, Shafik announced on April 22 that in-person classes would be suspended and moved online until the protests subside. According to several American media outlets, about 80 protest tents remained on Columbia's campus as of April 24. On that day, U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson appeared at Columbia University, condemning the protest as "mob rule" and stating that the National Guard would be deployed if necessary. He also decried the "virus" of the protest on American campuses and expressed support for Jewish students, stating that Israeli and Jewish students on campus will not be left isolated.

Students at other prestigious American universities have also been staging large-scale pro-Palestinian gatherings, setting up camps on campus and displaying a stance of long-term resistance. On numerous campuses, pro-Palestinian students and faculty members have openly expressed dissatisfaction with the U.S. government's favoritism towards Israel. Yale University students protested, demanding Yale cease investments in Israel and end various academic partnerships. The number of participating universities is growing, with the movement even spilling over into other countries. Outside the US, at least 20 universities in Australia, Germany, France and the UK have launched anti-war demonstrations in solidarity with American students.

Columbia University is the origin and epicenter of this wave of protests. The demands of the pro-Palestinian students include the university condemning Israel's attacks on Gaza, severing financial ties with Israel, such as divesting from companies that sell weapons to Israel, disclosing investments in companies that support Israel's military actions in Gaza, and recognizing their right to protest without repercussions and punishment. Protestors have also called for academic boycotts of Israel, such as ending partnerships with Israeli universities and establishing new programs for Palestinian studies.

Many of the protests are driven by opposition to Israeli government policies and actions in Gaza, rather than an inherent opposition to Jewish people. Protesters often emphasize human rights and solidarity with Palestinian civilians. It is crucial to differentiate between anti-Zionism (opposition to the political ideology supporting a Jewish national state in Palestine) and anti-Semitism (hostility or prejudice against Jewish people). Conflating the two can obscure legitimate criticisms of Israeli policies.

However, the wave of pro-Palestinian movements sweeping American universities has evolved into an "antisemitism movement" that has made headlines worldwide. Many American politicians continue to label these protests as "antisemitism" and claim that there are "external agitators" behind the activities, threatening to punish students and organizers severely. It seems that some politicians and media outlets intentionally use the highly politically charged term "antisemitism" to describe this movement, equating opposition to U.S. support for Israel with opposition to Jewish people. This appears to be a case of conceptual slippery, exacerbating tensions and potentially delegitimizing the movement.

Media report plays a significant role in shaping public perception. By using the term "antisemitism," media outlets can frame the protests in a way that emphasizes hostility toward Jewish people rather than focusing on the political and humanitarian issues raised by the protesters. Equating criticism of Israel with antisemitism can stifle legitimate discourse and

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critique of state actions. This can mobilize public opinion against the protesters and shift the narrative away from the issues they aim to highlight.

The Columbia Daily Spectator, the student-run newspaper of Columbia University, stands as a prominent voice within the campus community, providing coverage and commentary on a wide range of social and political issues. It serves as a lens through which campus events and movements are interpreted and disseminated to a diverse readership. *The Spectator*, with its extensive coverage of campus events and issues, provides a unique vantage point for examining the portrayal of protest movements within the Columbia University community. This paper would like to choose *the Spectator* as the research subject.

This paper aims to explore how *The Spectator* reports this particular movement by analyzing articles, opinion pieces, and editorials related from April 17, 2024, to May 17, 2024, including the language used, the narratives constructed, and the perspectives presented, and tries to find out whether there are differences in coverage focus, narratives, and discourses during this period. By examining these, this study aims to shed light on the role of campus media in shaping public discourse and perceptions of the protest.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This part aims to explore the existing research on the campus media reporting of protest movements, with a particular focus on *The Columbia Daily Spectator*.

2.1 Research on the Protest Movements

Different scholars analyze protest movements from various perspectives. Political analysts and scholars typically focus on the political motives and impacts behind the protests. Studies have shown that media coverage may be influenced by political stances, thus exhibiting specific biases or tendencies in their reporting (Smith, 2015; Johnson, 2017). Social and cultural researchers tend to explore how protest movements reflect and shape social and cultural identities. Protests are not only political expressions but also manifestations of cultural and identity recognition (Al-Haj, 2018; Said, 2019). Economic factors in protest movements are also significant. Some studies indicate that economic inequality and unequal distribution of resources are key factors driving protests (Fischer, 2016; Harvey, 2014).

Since the spread of protest activities across campuses in the U.S., there has been intense discussion about how higher education institutions balance freedom of speech with the safety and order of students and campuses. Oren Root, a lawyer who served as senior editor of the student newspaper *The Spectator* during the anti-Vietnam War protests at Columbia University in 1968, commented in *The New York Times* that Shafik's decision to involve the police was an "extraordinary misjudgment." He stated, "President Shafik and her advisors clearly did not learn from history; calling in the police was obviously a mistake and the situation was not resolved as a result" (Root, 2023).

In the view of American progressives, Shafik's decision to bring the police onto campus provoked public outrage, making it seem that university campuses could no longer serve as "buffers" for diverse viewpoints. Zach Greenberg, a senior officer at the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE), told CNN that arrests are "drastic measures" that should only be used to address "the most immediate and severe threats." He said, "This action might weaken the trust between the administration and students, who might witness their peers, or even their professors, being arrested by police in riot gear" (Greenberg, 2023).

Some believe that Shafik's congressional summons indicate that some American politicians are actively crafting and utilizing misleading rhetoric to frame campus protests as "anti-Semitic" by leveraging isolated incidents of anti-Semitism against Jewish students. Lauren Rassabee Shepherd, a lecturer at the University of New Orleans School of Education, wrote that bipartisan politicians are relentlessly portraying anyone opposing Israeli military actions as "anti-Semites." These actions are akin to how

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conservative forces in the U.S. during the Cold War linked civil rights activists with communism (Shepherd, 2023).

There are also moderate voices who do not support the Gaza Solidarity Camp protests but believe that characterizing peaceful protests as anti-Semitic is an exaggeration.

2.2 Research on Campus Media Report

From Bogotá to Berlin, Tehran to Paris, scenes of protests and arrests of protesters have made headlines around the world. Mainstream media reports may focus more on the broader impact and national-level reactions to these events. Researchers have analyzed the frameworks and narrative strategies used by mainstream media when reporting similar events (Entman, 1993; Tuchman, 1978). Protests, ranging from small sit-ins and large marches to the current student-led camps, have similar components. For mainstream media, some elements have more news value than others, with confrontation and spectacle often taking precedence. As a result, these elements are reported more frequently than others. For example, in analyzing the protests following George Floyd's murder in 2020, mainstream media such as the Associated Press and cable news headlines focused more on the destruction and chaos rather than police violence or protesters' demands (Klein, 2015).

This is also true for the coverage of the current protest movement. In reports about campus camps, the confrontation between protesters and police has become the core of news coverage (Brown, 2024), rather than focusing on protesters' grievances and demands. Media shapes the way most people understand these events. However, as the coverage of university protests has shown, the focus is often on the spectacle rather than the substantive content. Mainstream media such as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* often emphasize the conflict and consequences of Pro-Palestine protests (Klein, 2015).

In contrast, non-mainstream media usually adopt more diverse and critical perspectives when reporting on Pro-Palestine protests. For instance, Abdel-Fattah (2018) studied how independent media covered Pro-Palestine protests and found that these media outlets often focused more on the legitimacy of protesters' demands and actions, rather than merely presenting the conflict (Abdel-Fattah, 2018).

Campus media, such as student-run newspapers, play a crucial role in shaping campus discourse. They provide a platform for diverse voices, foster a culture of debate and critical thinking, and influence student perceptions on various social and political issues. Studies by Harp, Loke, and Bachmann (2010) and Armstrong and Hamilton (2013) emphasize the importance of campus media in reflecting and shaping student activism and opinion. Campus media operates within a unique context. It is both a reflection of the student body and a shaper of campus culture.

The Columbia Daily Spectator, founded in 1877, is one of the oldest continuously published and prominent student newspapers in the U.S. *The Spectator* provides an ideal case for examining how campus media report the protest. By selecting which stories to cover and how to report them, the newspaper can influence readers' perceptions and understanding of these issues. As a campus newspaper, *the Columbia Daily Spectator* may have different reporting methods compared to mainstream media. Studies suggest that non-mainstream media may pay more attention to local issues, community perspectives, and specific group voices (Gitlin, 2003; Atton, 2002). Although specific research on *the Columbia Daily Spectator* is limited, similar studies, such as Dorman's (2020) analysis of other campus newspapers, indicate that these media typically prioritize students' voices and viewpoints over those of the administration (Dorman, 2020).

In general, non-mainstream media tend to focus more on the demands and backgrounds of protesters, while mainstream media are more inclined to focus on the order and potential risks of events. Non-mainstream media often take on the role of expressing marginalized voices and providing alternative perspectives (Gitlin, 1980).

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This difference reflects the distinct media frameworks and reporting objectives.

2.3 Research on Current Media Analysis Framework and Coverage Focus

Current research frameworks for media coverage mainly include Construction theory, framing analysis, and agenda-setting theory. Construction theory emphasizes how media construct social reality through reporting, influencing public understanding of events (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Agenda-setting theory explores the role of media in determining the importance of issues (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Framing analysis focuses on how media selectively report and emphasize certain aspects to shape public perceptions and attitudes (Goffman, 1974). Framing is important when an issue can be presented in multiple ways which may potentially influence how people think about an issue (Popkin, 1991; Gamson and Modigliani, 1987). These theoretical frameworks provide powerful tools for understanding media coverage and offer valuable insights for this research. Additionally, mainstream media often employ framing theory and agenda-setting theory to analyze how selective reporting influence public opinion and social perception (Entman, 1993; McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

And existing studies show that media coverage usually revolves around several core focus points, such as the causes, processes and impacts of events. Additionally, the media may focus on the identities, motives, and strategies of protesters (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989).

2.4 Research on Antisemitism

Antisemitism, the prejudice against or hostility towards Jewish people, has a long and troubling history. Wistrich (1991) and Lipstadt (2019) have documented the persistence of antisemitism through various historical periods, from medieval times to contemporary society. Modern antisemitism often manifests in different forms, including stereotyping, conspiracy theories and Holocaust denial. Antisemitism is the irrational, psychologically pathological version of an ethnocentric and religiocentric anti-Judaism that achieved its evil apogee in the Holocaust (Beller, 2015).

One of the most contentious debates in recent years is the distinction between antisemitism and anti-Zionism. Anti-Zionism refers to opposition to the political movement supporting the establishment and maintenance of the state of Israel. Scholars like Judith Butler (2012) and Noam Chomsky (1999) contend that it is crucial to distinguish legitimate political critique from hatred towards Jews, warning against conflating the two to stifle political discourse.

Antisemitism on college campuses is a significant concern (Marcus, 2015; Feldman, 2018). They argue that universities, traditionally seen as bastions of free thought and inclusivity, are not immune to antisemitic incidents. The rise of anti-Israel sentiment, particularly in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, sometimes blurs the line between legitimate political criticism and antisemitism, leading to contentious debates within academic circles. For example, labeling pro-Palestinian movements as antisemitic without clear evidence of anti-Jewish prejudice can delegitimize these movements and distract from their political and humanitarian concerns.

2.5 Research Gap

Although studies have explored the characteristics of mainstream media coverage, research on the reporting methods and impacts of non-mainstream media like *the Columbia Daily Spectator* is relatively scarce. This indicates a significant research gap that needs further exploration. Also, studies have examined media narrating social movements, but they often focus on mainstream media, with less attention given to how student-run campus media portrays controversial social issues, including whether student-run media incorporates diverse voices, reflects students' demands, and how its coverage differs from that of mainstream media outlets when reporting on related events. And the existing studies often fail to fully explore the unique perspectives and methods of non-mainstream media in reporting Pro-Palestine

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protests. Given the influence and special status of campus newspapers among student groups, researching their reporting methods and content has important academic value and practical significance. Moreover, compared to other historical events, the current Pro-Palestine protests have unique research potential in the context of global political and social backgrounds, deserving further in-depth exploration. Although there is some research on related protests, as of May 17, there is limited research available because of the ongoing protests. And research focusing on the narrating of protests in campus media, especially in the Spectator is limited.

This research aims to fill this gap by deeply analyzing *the Columbia Daily Spectator*'s coverage to reveal the unique perspectives and strategies of non-mainstream media in reporting the Palestine protest movements.

III. RESEARCH METHOD AND STRUCTURE

This research delves into the qualitative realm due to its focus on understanding the nuanced reporting of protest movements by campus media, particularly *The Columbia Daily Spectator*. Qualitative research is apt for this investigation as it allows for an in-depth exploration of the socio-cultural context, language nuances, and subjective interpretations present in media coverage.

The mass media play an important role in shaping the narratives in news. The media modifies the discourse system of society, shapes how social issues are discussed in the public sphere and may diverge the public attention from some problems and even change the public attitudes towards certain issues or people. Nowadays news goes far beyond an "objective reporting of fact" and has become "a form of storytelling", which shapes objective events into stories for the definition of the world and reflection of the "audiences' notion of reality" (Bird & Dardenne, 2009).

This paper will choose the narrative analysis method to examine how the protest movements are portrayed and narrated in *The Columbia Daily Spectator*.

The narrative analysis method is a qualitative research method that studies the connotations of stories by looking into the text and the elements of the story that convey meaning, which are usually culturally or socially significant themes (Bamberg, 2012). Narrative analysis plays an important role in understanding social issues because self-and collective narratives help to construct individual and community identities and enable social action by allowing an individual to identify with an imagined community that is homogenous in class, gender, race, ethnicity, and nation (Jacobs, 1996). Rather than focusing on individual articles, narrative analysis aims to read across texts to "weave together" storylines and their sub-plots from the topics mentioned (Bergman, 2017; Hampton, 2004). Narrative analysis prioritizes identifying how texts act as social meaning makers rather than as simple conveyers of facts and, therefore, focuses not just on content but also the tone and emphasis of the storytelling (Paschen & Ison, 2014). According to Labov and Bell, there are three analytical stages: organizing interviewees' interpretation (abstract, background, complication, evaluation, result, coda), then researchers' interpretation (hidden meanings, minor process, patterns- from basic to organized themes), and finally integration (from organized to grand themes). This paper will follow these three steps to analyze newspaper reports in *The Columbia Daily Spectator* to explore how the media narrates the protest movement and refer to relevant literature to ensure the robustness and depth of the analysis.

The second stage will resort to Bal's (2009) narrative elements to form the researcher's interpretation.

3.1 Plot

It refers to the sequence of events and actions that make up a story and includes the beginning, rising action, climax and end (falling action, resolution). It establishes the context, introduces conflicts, and shows how these conflicts are resolved, creating a coherent and engaging narrative flow, which guides readers through the story's development.

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What is the main event described in the report? What are the main issues or topics addressed in the report?

3.2 Characters

It refers to the individuals, entities and stakeholders involved in the narrative. Characters can be protagonists, antagonists or supporting roles. Characters drive the narrative forward through their actions, decisions and interactions. They embody the themes and moral values of the story, making it relatable and engaging for the audience.

Who are the main actors or groups involved in the report? How are they portrayed?

3.3 Setting

Setting includes the time and place in which the main plot occurs. The setting provides the backdrop for the narrative, influencing the characters and plot. Time includes the chronological sequence of events, like flashbacks and flash-forwards.

Where and when does the event take place? How is the sequence of events presented? Is it chronological, or does it use flashbacks/flash-forwards?

3.4 Tones and Emotions

Tones and emotions may impact readers' recognition and views towards issues described in the report.

What emotions or attitudes are conveyed in the report? Is the tone neutral, sympathetic, critical, etc.? From whose perspective is the story told? Is there a dominant voice or multiple perspectives?

3.5 Language Usage

It refers to the specific words, phrases, and style of writing used to tell the narrative, including diction, tone, rhetorical devices, etc. Language shapes the voice and tone of the narrative, influencing how the story is perceived and interpreted.

What specific words or grammatical structures are used? Are there any recurring metaphors or symbols that convey deeper meanings? How do these usages impact the narrative?

IV. DATA COLLECTION

This paper will choose news reports related to the Pro-Palestine protest in *The Columbia Daily Spectator* as the research subjects.

On the official website of The Spectator, there are different modules such as News, The Eye, Spectrum, etc. Before conducting the research, a preliminary collection of relevant materials was necessary. Given the large number of keywords related to the protest activities, relying solely on keyword search methods might result in missing some relevant reports. Therefore, this paper chooses to review all news articles published in each module of the website within the time frame from October 7, 2023, to May 17, 2024. In addition to reports directly related to the protest activities and the Israel-Palestine conflict, any article containing keywords such as "Israel, Palestine, encampment, etc." throughout the entire content will be included. After the preliminary collection, the basic information of the news report, including date, module, title, writer, and site, was summarized. (Detailed information can be found in Excel: Appendix-data.) And a total of 311 reports were identified, covering three modules: Opinion (Op-Eds; Letters to the Editor; Race and Place; Love, Actualized; Staff Editorials), The Eye, and News (Student Life; Administration; Academics). Below is the summary of the number of reports for each module.

Module	Dimensions	Number
Opinion	Op-Eds	51
	Letters to the editor	5
	Race and place	1
	Love, actualized	1
	Staff editorials	7
The Eye	The Eye	1
News	Student life	114
	Administration	109
	Academics	22

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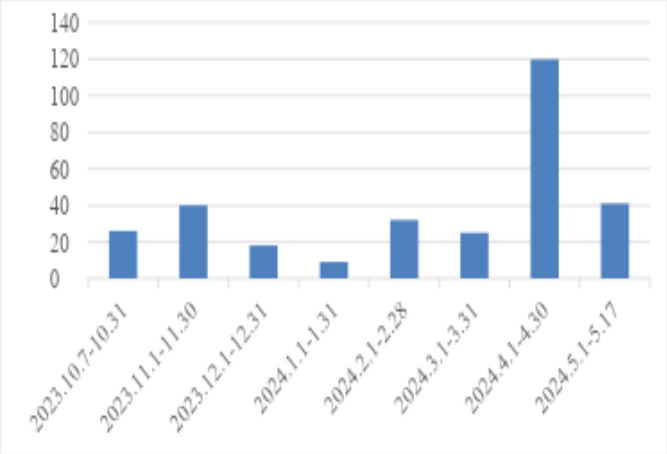
This paper also counts the number of stories published each month.

Period	Number
2023.10.7-10.31	26
2023.11.1-11.30	40
2023.12.1-12.31	18
2024.1.1-1.31	9
2024.2.1-2.28	32
2024.3.1-3.31	25
2024.4.1-4.30	120
2024.5.1-5.17	41



From the chart, it can be seen that since October 7, 2023, there has been continuous coverage of the Israel-Palestine conflict and campus protest activities. However, since the new wave of campus protests began on April 17, 2024, the number of related reports has increased dramatically. The substantial number of reports in the past two months provides abundant material for this paper's research. To ensure the specificity and richness of the research materials, this paper aims to explore how the Spectator frames and describes the new wave of protests from April 17, 2024, to May 17, 2024. And this new wave of campus protests can be outlined as several key events. (Detailed information can be found in the Appendix.)

Based on the research questions and focus, a secondary selection from the 311 reports was conducted. The secondary collection is based on the following three criteria: (1) The report is about the protest activities, including the events, the university's response and the reactions of students or other organizations, etc. (2) The report must primarily discuss the protest activities and related events, meaning that these should occupy the majority of the report's content. (3) The report must have been published between April 17, 2024 and May 17, 2024. After the secondary selection, a total of 143 reports were identified from April 17 to May 17. Below is the summary of the number of reports for each module.

Module	Dimensions	Number
Opinion	Op-Eds	12
	Letters to the editor	1
	Love, actualized	1
	Staff editorials	3
The Eye	The Eye	1
News	Student life	53
	Administration	63
	Academics	9

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By reading through the 143 reports, the basic content information was further summarized and organized, including Date, Module, Title, Writer, Main Plot, Characters, Setting (Time & Space), Themes, and Others. Through summarizing some key information from the 53 reports in the "News: Student Life" module, several themes were identified, including Protest, NYPD arrest, Counterprotest movement, University countermeasures: oppression & appeasement (University suspension, University prohibition, University threatening measures, University appeasement), Views from different sides, and Others. These themes are derived from the perspectives of different actors involved in the protest activities. Below is a further explanation of these themes.

4.1 Protest

This includes the initial protest activities, campus encampment, subsequent escalated and sustained protests such as the Hamilton Hall occupation, actions against the University President (e.g., graduates choosing not to shake Barnard President Laura's hand), and protests supporting arrested students (e.g., by faculty, some student groups, admitted students, and even some Jewish students). These all belong to the extension and expansion of the protest movement.

4.2 NYPD Arrest

This includes the NYPD arrests of protesters following Shafik's authorization, such as police arresting 108 students, and the police force inside Hamilton using stun grenades and tactical gear.

4.3 Counterprotest Movement

This includes opposition to the April 17 protest activities, such as pro-Israel counterprotesters, protests protecting Jewish students, EndJewHatred, pro-Palestine students being verbally and physically harassed, and boycotting Columbia events following student arrests.

4.4 University Countermeasures: Oppression & Appeasement

From reading this news, it is found that the university's response to the protest roughly includes two aspects: oppression and appeasement. On one hand, the university uses some oppressive and threatening measures to stop the protest activities; on the other hand, it adopts some so-called appeasement measures to temporarily calm the intense emotions of protesting students.

University oppression measures include University suspension, University prohibition, and University threatening measures.

- University suspension: Suspended Columbia students cannot enter any of Columbia's campuses or "common spaces" in their residence halls, but they are permitted to remain in their individual rooms. The students also cannot participate in any academic courses or extracurricular activities.
- University prohibition: The University outdoor space policy states that "camping tents and/or smaller coverings meant for individual use and not suitable for events/ ceremonies are strictly prohibited."
- University threatening measures: This includes the cancellation of significant events for students such as commencement ceremonies and "Days on Campus" programming, expressing the university's dissatisfaction with the protest activities.

University appeasement measures refer to some policies adopted by the university administration to temporarily soothe protesters' emotions, aiming at resolving conflicts, improving relationships, or maintaining peace and stability within the university environment. For example, three Barnard Student Admissions representatives resigned from their posts. Barnard reaches a resolution with 'nearly all' suspended students so that they can return to campus life. And Columbia College has passed a divestment referendum by a large margin.

4.5 Views from Different Sides

This includes reports specifically covering the voices of students, faculty, alumni, etc., on campus. For example, The Columbia Daily Spectator and New York Magazine created a

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report by leveraging its people to tell the story from the inside.

4.6 Others

This category includes reports that cannot be fully classified under protest or other categories. For example, the General Studies Student Council voted against holding a referendum about the University's divestment from Israel. A CUAD member issued an apology for a January video in which they said, "Zionists don't deserve to live."

By organizing and summarizing these themes, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the different dimensions and perspectives of the protest activities as covered by *The Spectator*.

V. ANALYSIS

After summarizing and identifying themes from the 53 reports in the "News: Student Life" module, this paper is going to conduct a pilot analysis of a report to provide a reference and framework for the future analysis of all the selected reports.

Among these themes, "Protest" is the focal point in news coverage, also appearing most frequently. Therefore, this part will choose a news report under the "Protest" theme as pilot material. Also, the initial report on this new wave of Pro-Palestine protest may influence the stance, choice of words, and descriptive methods of subsequent reports. Therefore, this part selects the first report under the "News: student life" module regarding the protest as the pilot analysis material. This report is titled "Hundreds of protesters occupy South Lawn, call for divestment from Israel during Shafik testimony", published on April 17, 2024.

This part will analyze how this piece of news narrates this protest according to Labov and Bell's three stages and Bal's narrative elements. Firstly, this paper conducted a first-stage analysis and formed interviewees' interpretation, with a total of 8 Events. Then, the researchers' interpretation was formed through the second-stage analysis, as follows.

Narrative Elements:

Plot:

- Beginning: Hundreds of students began setting up tents on South Lawn around 4 a.m., pledging to occupy the space until the university divests from companies tied to Israel.
- Climax: The protest coincided with President Shafik's testimony before Congress. NYPD arrested 108 protesters after Shafik authorized police intervention.
- End: Despite arrests and university warnings, protesters voted to continue their occupation, demonstrating their resolve and solidarity.

Characters:

- Protesters: Students and supporters demanding divestment from Israel.
- Minouche Shafik: University President testifying before Congress.
- NYPD: Police officers who arrested the protesters.
- University Administration: Issued warnings and disciplinary notices to protesters.
- Counterprotesters: Voiced opposition to the protest, chanting pro-Israel slogans.

Setting:

- Primary Location: Columbia University's South Lawn, which was occupied by tents and protesters, creating a significant visual and physical presence on campus.
- Time: The protest began early Wednesday morning and continued over two days. And the article was published on April 17, 2024, providing a timely account of the events.

Tones and Emotions:

- Protesters: Demonstrated strong solidarity, determination, and defiance against university policies.
- University: Expressed concerns about safety and policy violations.
- Counterprotesters: Showed opposition and hostility towards the main protest.
- *The Spectator:* Neutral, detailing the progress of the protests and the university's response.

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Language Usage:

The language used in the report is crucial in shaping readers' perceptions. Terms like "occupation, resistance, and solidarity" evoke a sense of struggle and justice. However, the university's actions are described with words like "safety concern, violation of policies, disciplinary consequences," framing them as rigid and impersonal.

VI. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the thorough analysis, some findings can be identified. This part will have a further discussion on it.

The report narrated the protest event basically in a chronological order and began with a vivid depiction of the protesters setting up tents early in the morning, establishing an immediate sense of urgency and commitment from the students. It first explained the main events in the first several paragraphs, from students occupying South Lawn, the president attending a hearing, the president appointing police to suppress the protest, and the eventual arrest of 108 students. As a result, the scale and scope of the protest expanded. This creates a dramatic opening, engaging readers with a sense of immediacy and action.

Then, the report described the progress. It detailed specific events such as the four warnings issued by various university bodies (University administration, University Senate, University spokesperson, Bernard administration), interspersed with responses and actions from the protesting students, and included a review of previous protests in March, as well as descriptions of counter-protest activities. However, the description of these specific events was somewhat disorganized and primarily structured around the four warnings, interspersed with student responses. The narrative was not entirely chronological, leading to some confusion.

In this news, different voices and perspectives are included, which provide a balanced view of the events, allowing readers to understand the motivations and actions of all parties involved. The report extensively used direct quotes to express the views of the university, protesting students, and counter-protesting students, avoiding presenting its own stance and opinion. The report primarily presents the perspective of the protesters, highlighting their resistance and actions. The university's perspective is also included, providing context for their response and policies. Counterprotesters' views are briefly mentioned, emphasizing the polarization of opinions on the issue. For example, *"Around 12:15 p.m., a counterprotester carrying an Israeli flag approached the South Lawn from the Sundial and began speaking through a megaphone, drawing boos and chants of "Shame on you" from the crowd as they gathered around the counter-protester. The counterprotester chanted, "Terrorists go home, terrorists go home" and asked the protesters "Do you condemn Hamas?""* The inclusion of a counterprotester with an Israeli flag introduces a contrasting perspective, albeit briefly. This individual's presence and the crowd's reaction to him highlight the polarized nature of the issue and add complexity to the narrative. However, the focus remains predominantly on the protesters and their viewpoint, with the counterprotester's perspective serving as a momentary interruption rather than a significant counter-narrative.

The article highlights the tension and confrontational nature of the protest activity by describing the actions of the protesters and the responses from the university. It portrays a firm stance from both the university, law enforcement and protesters. Interspersed throughout are approximately 11 paragraphs featuring statements from the university spokesperson regarding their views on the protest activity and the university's stance. Additionally, there are about 9 paragraphs presenting the thoughts of the protesting students. The news extensively uses direct quotations to depict the attitudes, positions, and viewpoints of both sides, avoiding the presentation of the campus newspaper's own stance.

However, there are differences in the direct quotes selected from different stakeholders. The direct quotes from the university mainly focus on warnings, violations of regulations, punishments,

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and consequences, while the direct quotes from the protesting students are mostly about opposition and slogans. The students' demands are rarely addressed, and most quotes are emotional expressions. Apart from mentioning at the beginning that the students hope the university divests from companies connected with Israel, the later descriptions, whether in direct quotes or reported statements, do not mention the students' demands and purpose. This narrative approach can easily lead readers to misunderstand that the students are deliberately violating regulations and disrupting the normal teaching and living order of the university, putting students at a disadvantage in public opinion.

6.1 The Contradiction Between Regulations and Students' Freedom of Expression

Freedom of speech and thought are individual rights that protect individuals from being accused of expressing their own thoughts (Taskin, 2014). Although society promotes this idea, laws enshrine it and classrooms respect students' right to express themselves, is this really the case?

Schools and students occupy unequal positions within the power hierarchy. Schools are at the upper level of this hierarchy, while students are at the lower level. Power is not only exercised through suppression and restriction but also through shaping and managing individuals (Foucault, 1974; Baumgarten & Ullrich, 2016). Power influences and shapes individuals and groups through various institutions, rules, and norms, and this influence is often implicit and pervasive. In the school environment, there are many rules and standards, and schools can use regulations to dictate students' behaviors. These rules and standards are mandated by school authorities, determining what behavior is acceptable and what is not. In this process, power is pervasive and implicit. Students cannot refute and their behavior is continually shaped and confined by this environment. When students act against these regulations, they face punishment from the upper authority. Over time, students gradually adapt to and internalize these rules, becoming shaped and tamed in the process.

Moreover, the disadvantaged position of students means that they are not on an equal footing with schools and cannot equally communicate their demands. When students' demands are not taken seriously or addressed, and when there is a significant discrepancy in positions between schools and students, students may resort to actions that schools do not permit, such as protest movements, to voice their concerns. However, when protests occur, the first response from schools is often suppression, fearing that protests might negatively impact the school's image. This response seems to forget the legitimacy of students as important subjects expressing their voices and demands, as well as the potential irrationalities in school decisions and whether they effectively respond to students' concerns.

The university newspaper's coverage of these protests, although devoid of explicit stance-taking and directional words, and lacking commentary, primarily reports events through direct quotes or paraphrasing. However, when reporting on protesting students, the focus is mostly on what the students said. These statements are often either against the school's suppression and punitive measures or protest slogans, seemingly overlooking the initial demands of the students. For example, a protester said, "The more they try to silence us, the louder we will be." "Say it loud, say it clear, we don't want no Zionists here."

It appears as if the students are the instigators of the conflict, while the school, considering safety and regulations, resorted to suppression after several warnings were ignored, even authorizing police intervention. It seems that the students' actions caused the conflict and confrontation, but in reality, it is the school's inaction and disregard for students' demands and voices that led to the protests. However, the school newspaper may not realize this, as some perspectives have been completely internalized.

This protest movement has a distinctly anti-establishment tone, with the student groups behind it trying to challenge the "taboo" areas of American politics, including the special relationship between the US and Israel. The biggest impact of this protest movement, when

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young Americans express a different voice from their elders, is to prompt American society to reflect on the current crisis in Gaza.

Another very important point is the absence of middle-ground voices in the report—those who neither support the protesting students nor the counter-protesting students. This omission might be because this was the first report following the new wave of protests and the newspaper did not have time to include all possible perspectives, focusing instead on the most influential groups. This biased reporting could lead to a one-sided understanding of the event, overlooking the positions and views of those who hold neutral or alternative opinions.

In general, through the analysis, it becomes clear that the student newspaper constructs a story of committed and principled student activists standing up against a rigid and controlling administration. To a certain extent, the narrative strategies, and word usage contribute to a narrative that sympathizes with the protesters and portrays their actions as part of a larger struggle for justice.

Following the pilot analysis, a comprehensive examination of the remaining 142 reports was conducted, applying the same narrative analysis method. The findings revealed several consistent themes and patterns in *The Columbia Daily Spectator*'s coverage of the pro-Palestine protests.

- Chronological Reporting Style: The majority of the reports followed a chronological framework, detailing the sequence of events in a linear fashion. This approach provided readers with a clear understanding of the progression of the protests, from the initial encampment to the eventual confrontations with the police and university administration.
- Inclusion of Diverse Voices: While the initial pilot analysis highlighted the inclusion of various perspectives, the broader analysis confirmed that *The Spectator* made a concerted effort to represent a range of voices, including students, faculty, administrators, and even counter-protesters. However, the analysis also revealed a subtle bias towards the protesters' narratives, which were often more emotionally charged and therefore more compelling to readers.
- Implicit Bias and Framing: The analysis identified an implicit bias in the coverage, with the protesters often portrayed as instigators of conflict, while the university's responses were framed as necessary measures for safety. This framing sometimes overshadowed the underlying issues that motivated the protests, such as the students' demands for divestment and recognition of their right to protest.
- Absence of Middle-Ground Voices: Consistent with the pilot analysis, the comprehensive analysis found a notable absence of moderate or neutral perspectives in the coverage. This omission may have contributed to a one-sided portrayal of the events, which could potentially influence readers' perceptions by emphasizing the voices of the most vocal groups.
- Anti-Establishment Sentiment: The protests were characterized by a strong anti-establishment sentiment, with students challenging both the university administration and broader political norms. The coverage reflected this sentiment, often positioning the students as principled activists fighting against a rigid and controlling establishment.
- Narrative Strategies and Word Usage: The analysis of language usage revealed that *The Spectator* employed narrative strategies that sympathized with the protesters, portraying their actions as part of a larger struggle for justice. Words like "resistance," "solidarity," and "oppression" were frequently used, which can evoke strong emotional responses and contribute to the overall narrative.

VII. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, *The Columbia Daily Spectator*'s coverage of the pro-Palestine protests at Columbia University from April 17 to May 17, 2024, was characterized by a chronological reporting style that included diverse voices but also reflected an implicit bias towards the protesters' narrative. The coverage often framed the students as instigators of conflict, overshadowing their

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underlying demands and the administration's failure to engage with their concerns. The absence of middle-ground voices and the emphasis on anti-establishment sentiment contributed to a narrative that sympathized with the protesters and portrayed their actions as part of a broader struggle for justice.

This study has shed light on the role of campus media in shaping public discourse and perceptions of protest movements. It has also highlighted the importance of considering narrative strategies and word usage in media coverage, as these can significantly influence how readers understand and interpret events. Moving forward, it is crucial for campus media, and media in general, to strive for balanced reporting that acknowledges and represents the complexities of social and political issues, rather than perpetuating biases or oversimplifying narratives. As the Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues to evolve, and protests on campus and beyond persist, the role of media in narrating these events will remain a critical area of study.

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APPENDIX

Key events during this new wave of protest from April 17, 2024 to May 17, 2024

Date	Event
Day 1- 4.17 Wednesday	Hundreds of protesters occupy South Lawn, calling for Columbia's divestment from companies with ties to Israel. University President Minouche Shafik testifies before Congress on Columbia's handling of antisemitism on campus.
Day 2- April 18 Thursday	Three Barnard students suspended for the "unauthorized" encampment on South Lawn, before Shafik authorizes the New York Police Department to sweep the "Gaza Solidarity Encampment". Officers in riot gear arrest 108 students. Students begin to enter the west side of South Lawn as Public Safety dismantles the "unauthorized encampment."
Day 3- April 19 Friday	"Gaza Solidarity Encampment" enters its third day following mass arrests. Columbia begins formally notifying students of suspension for participation in Wednesday's encampment.
Day 6- April 22 Monday	Business School assistant professor Shai Davidai is denied access to Morningside campus ahead of planned entry into encampment. Separately, over 100 faculty members protest in "Rally to Support our Students and Reclaim our University." Congressional Democrats visit Kraft Center for Jewish Student Life and condemn antisemitism at Columbia. The Columbia College Student Council overwhelmingly passes a divestment referendum voted by the general student body.
Day 7- April 23 Tuesday	Barnard suspends and evicts at least 53 students, outlines steps for "amnesty." Over 1,400 academics around the world commit to boycotting Columbia events following student arrests. Shafik announces a midnight deadline for ongoing encampment negotiations before consideration of "alternative options." The "Gaza Solidarity Encampment" approaches the one-week mark on South Lawn.
Day 10- April 26 Friday	Barnard reaches resolution with "nearly all" suspended students, a college spokesperson tells Spectator. Columbia does not plan to call the NYPD to campus "at this time," according to a community email.
Day 14- April 30 Tuesday	Dozens of protestors occupy Hamilton Hall in the early hours of Tuesday morning. The "Gaza Solidarity Encampment" spreads to the Lewisohn Lawn at around midnight on Tuesday. Protesters also move a set of tents to the area outside of Hartley Hall. Columbia locks Morningside campus following Hamilton occupation, Barnard restricted to college affiliates. Protestors occupying Hamilton will face expulsion, University spokesperson tells Spectator. Hundreds of NYPD officers swarmed campus on Tuesday evening, arresting dozens of

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	protesters both inside and outside of Hamilton. Personnel disassembles the "Gaza Solidarity Encampment" at around 11:40 p.m. on Tuesday following the NYPD's sweep of the occupied Hamilton. The NYPD confirms the arrest of 109 individuals following the sweep of Hamilton and "Gaza Solidarity Encampment" at a press conference on Wednesday.
Day 20 -May 6 Monday	The Universitywide Commencement ceremonies, initially scheduled for May 15, have been canceled. The decision to move Class Days and cancel the Commencement ceremonies follows several University communications that stressed the urgency of dismantling the encampment in order to allow Commencement to occur on campus.

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Balancing Faith and Work: Reexamining the Prosperity Gospel in Contemporary Ghanaian Christianity for Poverty Reduction and Combating Religious Laziness

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ABSTRACT

Despite the exercise of faith, positive confessions and donations towards prosperity as featured in the "prosperity gospel" teaching, some contemporary Ghanaian-African Christians have socio-economic challenges. The prevalence of "anti-work" perspective coupled with the rise of poverty among some contemporary Ghanaian Christians raises the question: "What will be the socioeconomic impact of balancing faith and work and its relation to achieving prosperity among contemporary Ghanaian Christians?" Using a qualitative approach with secondary and empirical data, this paper contextually reexamined the "prosperity gospel" in contemporary Ghanaian Christianity for poverty reduction and combating religious laziness through balancing faith and work. First, data were sourced from historical-critical exegesis of the biblical texts of Philippians 4:6-7 and 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13 for empirical theological basis.

Keywords: faith and work, prosperity gospel, cost of discipleship, poverty reduction, religious laziness, Ghanaian Christianity, Christian discipleship, socio-economic development, positive confession, akan culture.

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ABSTRACT

Despite the exercise of faith, positive confessions and donations towards prosperity as featured in the "prosperity gospel" teaching, some contemporary Ghanaian-African Christians have socio-economic challenges. The prevalence of "anti-work" perspective coupled with the rise of poverty among some contemporary Ghanaian Christians raises the question: "What will be the socioeconomic impact of balancing faith and work and its relation to achieving prosperity among contemporary Ghanaian Christians?" Using a qualitative approach with secondary and empirical data, this paper contextually reexamined the "prosperity gospel" in contemporary Ghanaian Christianity for poverty reduction and combating religious laziness through balancing faith and work. First, data were sourced from historical-critical exegesis of the biblical texts of Philippians 4:6-7 and 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13 for empirical theological basis. Next, it adds document analysis of the writings and theological perspectives of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's The Cost of Discipleship, 1979 edition and John R.W. Stott's Men With A Message, regarding Christian discipleship, discipline and suffering towards glorification (prosperity). Also, from case study readings, this paper makes references to some Akan-Ghanaian proverbs and dynamic notions such as "Sika yɛ mogya – money is blood," adopted by Akan Christians concerning work, wealth and poverty and its contextual relevance for reexamining the "prosperity gospel" in contemporary Ghanaian Christianity. Strengthening the proposition for a balance between faith and work, this paper considered and analyzed the theological concepts of the "cost of discipleship" in Mark's Gospel (Mark 8:34-38) and "Christian suffering and discipline" in the Petrine Epistles. Last, using structured interviews with purposive sampling, the study engaged the contemporary perspectives of thirty-one Ghanaian Christians from the Orthodox, Protestant, Pentecostal/ Charismatic and African Independent Churches and Traditional Religio-Cultural leaders. These participants were ethically considered on the assurance of the confidentiality and usage of their responses for academic research, and nondisclosure of their identities. All findings resonate a necessary balance between faith and work towards genuine prosperity. The paper contributes to scholarship in prosperity theology, Biblical theology of work, African Christian Theology of development, Christianity and human development; liberation, reconstruction, poverty-reduction and mother-tongue theologies, and financial freedom among Christians through building balance between faith and work.

Keywords: faith and work, prosperity gospel, cost of discipleship, poverty reduction, religious laziness, Ghanaian Christianity, Christian discipleship, socio-economic development, positive confession, akan culture.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Arguably, the roots of the "prosperity gospel" could be traced to the American Neo-Pentecostalism in the 19th-20th centuries.[1] Young indicates that Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, Creflo Dollar, Robert Tilton, Joel Osteen are mentioned among others as chief proponents of the "prosperity gospel".[2] In addition to other proponents, Soboyejo acknowledges the above-stated names as proponents of the phenomenon.[3] In explaining the elements of the "prosperity gospel," Wilson indicates that, unlike poverty, proponents advocate that wealth is a blessing from God and it is obtained through positive confessions, visualization and donations.[4] One could understand that its basic elements include positive words, imagining oneself in a state of wealth, and giving, in faith. Moses Asamoah observed that the "prosperity gospel" encourages believers and adherents to prioritize acts of faith by positively confessing the promises of God and expecting God's response to their confession.[5] Brown indicates that these positive statements, known as positive confessions, are made in anticipation for miraculous changes in some aspects of the lives of adherents if spoken with faith.[6]

Cited in the work of Joshua Barron, Ernst Conradie has remarked that the prosperity gospel "is undoubtedly the fastest growing form of religion on the African continent."[7] Ebenezer Obadare has explored the milieu in the African context and concluded based on findings that the "prosperity gospel" as a form of neoliberalism, "offers no realistic path out of the African economic crisis."[8] Thus, he argues that Africans may become susceptible to the woes and realities of poverty which devastate the African economy if people subscribe to the message and promises of the "prosperity gospel" which does not regard work, savings and judicious consumption.

The intersection of faith, prosperity, and the impact of the prosperity gospel in contemporary Ghana is raising research concerns. While its historic origin in Ghana is not very clear in scholarship, the "prosperity gospel," from its American origin, emerged in Ghana through both western and African preachers whose ministries were significant to Ghana's religious revival in the 20th century. While dynamic and impactful preachers like Rev. Francis Akwasi Amoako of "Resurrection Power and Living Bread" are known for a religious revival in Ghana in the 1980s that saw soul-reviving liberation in many Ghanaians[9], the "prosperity gospel" in Ghana is mostly associated with Archbishop Benson Idahosa of

[1] Constantine Mwikamba and Stephen Akaranga Ifedha, "Blessed Are the Rich and Prosperous For Theirs Is the Kingdom of the World: The Kenyan Challenge," *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences* 5, no. 14 (2015): 138. See also: Kate Bowler, *Blessed: A History of the American Prosperity Gospel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

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[6] Candy Gunther Brown, *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 88.

[7] Ernst M. Conradie, "Climate change as a multi-layered crisis for humanity," chapter 14 in *African Perspectives on Religion and Climate Change*, edited by Ezra Chitando, Ernst M. Conradie, and Susan M. Kilonzo, 215–234, Routledge Studies on Religion in Africa and the Diaspora (London: Routledge, 2022), 225. Available at: https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003147909-15; See Joshua Robert Barron, "The Prosperity Gospel in African Christianity," *African Christian Theology* 2, no. 1 (2025): 64.

[8] Ebenezer Obadare, "Raising righteous billionaires: The prosperity gospel reconsidered," *HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies* 72, no. 4 (2016): 1. Available at: https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v72i4.3571.

[9] Francis Akwasi Amoako, https://www.google.com/search?q=Rev+Amoako+of+Resurrection+power+and+living+bread&oq=Rev+Amoako+of+Resurrection+power+and+living+bread&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAEEUYOTIHCAEQIRigATIHCAIQIRigATIHCAMQIRigATIHCAQQIRiPAjIHCAUQIRiPAtIBCTIxMjcxajBqN6gCALACAA&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:a538add8,vid:EP06aRsPhqY,st:0.

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Benin City in Nigeria,[10] Bishop David O. Oyedepo, "The Pastorpreneur"[11] of Nigeria's Winners Chapel, and from Ghana, Archbishop Nicolas Duncan-Williams of Action Chapel International. In contemporary Ghanaian Christianity, other preachers include Archbishop Salifu of the Jesus Is Alive Evangelistic Ministry, Archbishop Charles Agyin Asare of the Perez Chapel International, Dr. Mensah Otabil of the International Central Gospel Church (ICGC)[12] and some leaders of the Neo-Prophetic and Neo-Pentecostal churches in Ghana, especially those who have English-speaking congregations. Some studies reveal that these preachers seem to share similar sermonic ideas with their American counterparts.[13] Some of the factors that have contributed to the thriving of the "prosperity gospel" in Ghana include: economic, emotional, spiritual and health reasons.[14]

Despite the relevance of the "prosperity gospel" in promoting the elements of faith and positive confessions for Christian development, the concept of relating the Christian faith and wealth is seemingly out of balance for many Christians in Ghana. It fosters an unbalanced view.[15] While the Bible emphasizes the crucial role of "work" in the material and financial success of believers, the "prosperity gospel" ignores real work. Cited in the work of James Kwarteng-Yeboah[16], Asamoah-Gyadu iterates the inclusion of "hard work" as a necessary factor for prosperity.[17]

The advent of the "prosperity gospel" from the American Neo-Pentecostals[18] into the Ghanaian-African terrain has not done better in relating faith and prosperity. It is as if "prosperity" is all about faith, as though, the Akan-Ghanaian religio-cultural maxim that: "*Sika yɛ mogya* – money is blood,"[19] is not compatible with biblical evidence. In that, whereas the disciples of Jesus are not exempted from the cost of following the Lord Jesus Christ in their quest to please him as well as seeking financial/material freedom, the contemporary Ghanaian Christian, on the other hand, often subscribe to the popular "I claim it, I receive it" kind of positive confession as a sure way to prosperity. Therefore, instead of balancing faith and work, like in Nigeria and other African countries, some able young Ghanaian Christians pray almost all hours, being idle in churches, and at some prayer camps.[20] Some women leave their "capital-invested" shops for prayer camps, whereas some preachers craftily exploit ignorant members in the name of "special

[10] Benson ldahosa, *I Choose to Change: The Scriptural Way to Success and Prosperity* (Crowborough: Highland Books, 1987).

[11] Dominic Umoh, "Superstition and Syncretism: Setbacks to Authentic Christian Practice in Africa," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention* 2, no. 7 (2013): 38.

[12] Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 58.

[13] Isaac Boaheng, Clement Amoako and Samuel Boahen, "A Critique of Prosperity Theology in the Context of Ghanaian Christianity," *E-Journal of Humanities Arts and Social Sciences* 4, no. 11 (2023): 1357. Available at: https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.20234114

[14] Boaheng, Amoako and Boahen, "A Critique of Prosperity Theology in the Context of Ghanaian Christianity," 1360-1362.

[15] Justice Anquandah Arthur, "The Gospel of Prosperity and its Concept of Development: A Ghanaian Pentecostal-Charismatic experience," *Religion* (August 2020): 2. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/0048721X.2020.1792050.

[16] James Kwateng-Yeboah, *A Re-appraisal of the Prosperity Gospel in African Neo-Pentecostalism: The Potency of "Multiple Modernities" Paradigm* (Master's Essay, submitted to the School of Religion, Queen's University, 2017), 6.

[17] Johnson K. Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Pentecostalism in Ghana* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 202. See: L. Togarasei, "The Pentecostal Gospel of Prosperity in African Contexts of Poverty: An Appraisal," Exchange 40 (2011): 340. (336-350).

[18] Cornelius Johannes Petrus Niemandt, "The Prosperity Gospel, the Decolonisation of Theology, and the Abduction of Missionary Imagination," *Missionalia* 45 (2017). Available at:https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322611191_The_Prosperity_Gospel_the_decolonisation_of_Theology_and_the_abduction_of_missionary_imagination.

[19] Emmanuel K. Anim, "The Prosperity Gospel in Ghana and the Primal Imagination," *Pentvars Business Journal* 4, no. 2 (2010): 67.

[20] Adewale J. Adelakun and Oluseye E. Ajadi, "No Work No Food: An Interpretive Analysis of Paul's Admonition in 2 Thessalonians 3: 6-13 in the Context of the Discourse on Religion and Poverty," *European Scientific Journal* 16, no. 23 (2020): 128.

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programmes and seed-sowing."[21] However, in his investigation about the effects of the "prosperity gospel" in Africa, Glyn Williams found that the "prosperity gospel" poses a problem as it has had very little, if any, positive effect in Africa, with more and more people being deceived and poverty increasing.[22]

With reference to the contemporary socio-economic challenges facing some Ghanaian-African Christians despite the exercise of faith, positive confessions and donations towards prosperity as featured in the "prosperity gospel" teaching, several scholarly concerns are ongoing regarding the impact of the "prosperity gospel" and the need for its contextual reexamination. The incidence of "anti-work" perspective coupled with the rise of poverty among some contemporary Ghanaian Christians raises the question: "What will be the socioeconomic impact of balancing faith and work and its relation to achieving prosperity among contemporary Ghanaian Christians?"

With Christianity having the major religious representation in Ghana[23], coupled with the impact of religion on the socioeconomic development of Ghanaian Christians, this paper is a reexamination of the "prosperity gospel" in contemporary Ghanaian Christianity for poverty reduction and combating religious laziness through balancing faith and work. It employs a qualitative approach. Significantly, the paper is relevant for academic literature in Biblical theology of work, African Christian Theology of development, Christianity and human development; liberation, reconstruction, poverty-reduction and mother-tongue theologies and financial freedom among Christians through building balance between faith and work. The subsequent sections of this paper follow this outline: the review of related literature for discussion, the methodology employed, findings and discussion from analyzed data in relation to the objective of the study and the study's conclusion and recommendations.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 History and Definition of the "Prosperity Gospel"

The emergence of Pentecostalism,[24] Neo-Pentecostalism and Charismatic Movements in global Christianity[25] and their influence on socioeconomic development, social welfare and politics has attracted several scholarly engagements.[26] Scholars continue to share varying concerns on the relationship between the Judeo-Christian Scriptures (JCS) and human socioeconomic lives.[27] One of the major themes in the JCS is the subject of prosperity and poverty.[28] In an attempt to inform believers about God's desire for all believers to be prosperous and

[21] Edwin Adutwum Owusu, "Religious Extortion" and Poverty among Ghanaian Christians in Bantama Sub-Metro of Ghana: Exploring a Nexus," *A Bachelor of Arts Thesis* (Department of Religious Studies, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi-Ghana, August 2024), 36.

[22] Glyn Williams, "The Prosperity Gospel's Effect in Missions: An African Perspective," *Bachelor Thesis* (South African Theological Seminary, 2017), Abstract. Available at: DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.29699.02081.

[23] Ernest Jnr Frimpong, Jonathan E.T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor, Makafui Margaret Tayviah and Michael Frimpong, "Religious Cooperation in Plural Ghana: Challenges and Ways for Improvement," *E-Journal of Religious and Theological Studies (ERATS)* 10, no. 5 (2024): 123. https://doi.org/10.38159/erats.20241051.

[24] Wolfgang Vondey, "Pentecostal Theology," *St Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology*, Edited by Brendan N. Wolfe et al. (2023). Available at: https://www.saet.ac.uk/Christianity/PentecostalTheology.

[25] Justice Arthur, "The gospel of prosperity and its concept of development: A Ghanaian Pentecostal-Charismatic experience," *Religion* 51, no. 3 (2020): 1. (1-15). DOI: 10.1080/0048721X.2020.1792050. See Francis Benyah, "Commodification of the Gospel and the Socio-Economics of Neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity in Ghana," *Legon Journal of the Humanities* 29, no. 2 (2018): 116–45. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/48816065.

[26] Anderson George Jnr, "Ghana's Neo-prophetic Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity: Future Prospects," *E-Journal of Religious and Theological Studies (ERATS)* 5 (2019): 16. (16-27). DOI: 10.32051/02211902.

[27] Clive Beed and Cara Beed, "Applying Judeo-Christian Principles to Contemporary Economic Issues," (2006): Abstract, Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228287319_Applying_Judeo-Christian_Principles_to_Contemporary_Economic_Issues#:~:text=Abstract,assessed%20in%20the%20final%20section.

[28] Isaac Boaheng, Alexander Boateng and Samuel Boahen, "Exploring Theological and Biblical Perspectives on Wealth and Poverty," *Social Sciences, Humanities and Education Journal (SHE Journal)* 5, no. 1 (2024): 82. (82-93).

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healthy in financial success, material substances and general well-being, the "prosperity gospel" became a vibrant teaching in the 20th century. This teaching was focused on creating a pathway of liberation from the challenges of poverty, diseases and failures in life.[29] In view of its teachings, proponents of the "prosperity gospel" created several synonyms, describing it as the "health and wealth gospel, the gospel of success,"[30] "'Name it and Claim it,' 'prosperity message' and 'Faith and Word movement'".[31] Confessing these promises to be true is perceived as an act of faith, which God will honor. Normally, Penteco- charismatic churches are encouraged to speak positive statements about aspects of their lives that they wish to see improved. These statements, known as positive confessions, are said to miraculously change aspects of people's lives if spoken with faith.[32] However, in his investigation about the effects of the "prosperity gospel" in Africa, Glyn Williams found that the "prosperity gospel" poses a problem as it has had very little, if any, positive effect in Africa, with more and more people being deceived and poverty increasing.[33]

2.2 Its Challenge against the Theology of Work

This teaching, however, disregards the Christian theology of work which emphasizes the "meaning and value God places on work"[34] towards the development of all humanity including Christians. It lacks a balance between financial prosperity and work. It seems to relegate the basic realities of life such as one's conscious responsibility/work towards wealth creation, health and good living. Indicated by A. Lindsley, some adherents of the "prosperity gospel" are of the view that work is a punitive consequence of the fall of man in Genesis 3: 17-19.[35] In contrast to their view, God's primary task given to Adam before the fall was "to work in the Garden of Eden and to take care of it" after which Adam had accessed to eat from the garden (Genesis 2:15, 16). Work preceded the fall. Theological evidence supports that God values work. For example, McNeal's theological perspectives about work reminds Christians about God's delight in work and the value he places on work so that all of humanity including Christians are able to manage the realities of life's challenges.[36] According to William Diehl, there is Christianity and there is a Real Life, and one needs to decide on a balance.[37] While God might have imagined "a world," he worked for six days in order to make that visualized world a reality (Genesis 1:1-31). Being in the image of God, humanity is designed for work. In his *Theology of Work*, Art Lindsley argues that "Work is not a result of the fall; we were all created to work. Work is only made harder because of the fall. The ground will yield thorns and thistles. There will be much blood, sweat and tears in the context of work. However, redemption can impact our work."[38] T. R. McNeal shares a similar theological perspective on Christianity and work.[39] Therefore, while God requires that humanity expresses faith in him, he requires that "work' would augment faith in such a way that humanity becomes more responsible and productive towards having fruitful, healthy and successful living. Though God

[29] Moses Kumi Asamoah, "Penteco/charismatic worldview of prosperity theology," *African Educational Research Journal* 1, no. 3 (2013): 198.

[30] R. G. Robins, *Pentecostalism in America* (ABC-CLIO, 2010), 81.

[31] Larry Eskride, "Prosperity Gospel is Surprising Mainstream, 2013," see Maxwell David, *African Gifts of the Spirit,* (Oxford: James Currey, 2006), 6, 11.

[32] Candy Gunther Brown, *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 88.

[33] Glyn Williams, "The Prosperity Gospel's Effect in Missions: An African Perspective," *Bachelor Thesis* (South African Theological Seminary, 2017), Abstract. Available at: DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.29699.02081.

[34] T. R. McNeal, "Work, Theology of," in Trent C. Butler, ed., Entry for 'Work, Theology of' *Holman Bible Dictionary* (1991). Available at: https://www.studylight.org/dictionaries/eng/hbd/w/work-theology-of.html.

[35] Art Lindsley, "Theology of Work," Available at: https://www.transform-world.net/newsletters/2014/TheologyOfWork.pdf.

[36] McNeal, "Work, Theology of," https://www.studylight.org/dictionaries/eng/hbd/w/work-theology-of.html.

[37] William E. Diehl, *Christianity and Real Life* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), Cited in Lindsley, "Theology of Work," https://www.transform-world.net/newsletters/2014/TheologyOfWork.pdf

[38] Lindsley, "Theology of Work," https://www.transform-world.net/newsletters/2014/TheologyOfWork.pdf

[39] T. R. McNeal, "Work, Theology of," in Trent C. Butler, ed., Entry for 'Work, Theology of' *Holman Bible Dictionary* (1991). Available at: https://www.studylight.org/dictionaries/eng/hbd/w/work-theology-of.html.

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was distant from Adam, he required from Adam a great deal of obedience, responsibility and accountability as caretaker of the garden. Lacking a companion – a helper for the work, God gave Eve to Adam to give him the exact assistance.[40]

2.3 Its Theological Mix-match against Christian Responsibility and Accountability

Worth-noting is the fact that a good Christian doctrine of God is to ensure a balance between the theological dimensions of immanence and transcendence. While the former explains the closeness of God within the world and therefore encourages a direct faith-relationship between Christians and God, the latter emphasizes the remoteness of God and therefore admonishes humanity, especially Christians, to go beyond faith alone and to include responsibility and accountability through work.[41] This duo reminds Christians to balance faith and work as emphasized in the theology of James. According to Kuwornu-Adjaottor, "James emphasizes the work of the believer in relation to faith."[42] Paul also admonishes the believers in 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13 to embrace work so that it would make them productive and responsible. He cautioned them to shun idleness that would result in poverty and hunger. This, according to Adelakun and Ajadi, "compelled Paul to advocate No-Work- No-Food rule."[43]

However, the "prosperity gospel" seemingly ignores the theological dimension of God's transcendence which emphasizes that God is beyond the created world and therefore expects human beings to be responsible and accountable in life in order to enjoy life's goodness.[44] This problem seems to create some socioeconomic challenges for some faithful Christians in Africa of which Ghana is included. In a collaborative exercise to create an evangelical awareness and stance against the gradual influence of the American Neo-Pentecostal teaching of the "prosperity gospel" in Africa Christianity and its gradual challenge to socioeconomic development among African Christians, the Lausanne Theology Working Group formed by the Lausanne Movement resolved on a definition. The Group has defined the "prosperity gospel" as "the teaching that believers have a right to the blessings of health and wealth and that they can obtain these blessings through positive confessions of faith and the 'sowing of seeds' through the faithful payments of tithes and offerings."[45] As an African evangelical movement that believes in both the spirituality and socioeconomic development of African Christians, the Group resolved to reject any prosperity teaching that ignores the place of hard work and the utilization of skills, talents and ability, education and wisdom for the betterment of human living. Also, they do not accept that "poverty, illness or untimely death" are signs of God's curse, human curse or lack of faith, as upheld by advocates of the "prosperity gospel."[46]

III. METHODOLOGY

Using a qualitative approach, this study combined secondary literature with empirical data. First, data were sourced from an examination of the biblical texts of 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13 and

[40] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Garden of Eden," ed. Melissa Petruzzello: In *Religious Beliefs* (Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.), Available at: https://www.britannica.com/topic/Garden-of-Eden Accessed on May 1, 2025.

[41] Nicholas L. Polito, "'ABD AL-KARĪM AL-JĪLĪ: Tawḥid, Transcendence and Immanence," PhD Thesis (Department of Theology and Religion, University of Birmingham, 2010). Available at: https://etheses.bham.ac.uk//id/eprint/1193/1/LoPolito10PhD.pdf.

[42] Jonathan Edward Tetteh Kuwornu-Adjaottor, *New Testament Theology for College Students and Pastors* (Accra, Ghana: Noyam Publishers, 2020), 27.

[43] Adewale J. Adelakun and Oluseye E. Ajadi, "No Work No Food: An Interpretive Analysis of Paul's Admonition in 2 Thessalonians 3: 6-13 in the Context of the Discourse on Religion and Poverty," *European Scientific Journal* 16, no. 23 (2020): 117.

[44] Stephen M. Kim, "Transcendence of God – A Comparative Study of the Old Testament and the Qur'an," *PhD Thesis* (Department of Library Services, University of Pretoria, 2009). Available at: http://hdl.handle.net/2263/28792; https://repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/28792.

[45] Lausanne Theology Working Group, "A Statement on the Prosperity Gospel," *Theology Working Group* (16 January, 2010): Available at: https://lausanne.org/content/a-statement-on-the-prosperity-gospel

[46] Lausanne Theology Working Group, "A Statement on the Prosperity Gospel," https://lausanne.org/content/a-statement-on-the-prosperity-gospel

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Philippians 4:6-7 for empirical theological basis through the tools of historical-critical exegesis and morpho-syntactic analysis. Next, it included document analysis of the writings and theological perspectives of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *The Cost of Discipleship, 1979 edition* and John R.W. Stott's *Men With A Message*, regarding Christian discipleship, discipline and suffering towards glorification (prosperity). Also, from case study readings, this paper makes references to some Akan-Ghanaian proverbs and dynamic notions adopted by Akan Christians concerning work, wealth and poverty and its contextual relevance for reexamining the "prosperity gospel" in contemporary Ghanaian Christianity. Strengthening the proposition for a balance between faith and work, this paper considered and analyzed the theological concepts of the "cost of discipleship" in Mark's Gospel (Mark 8:34-38) and "Christian suffering and discipline" in the Petrine Epistles.[47] Last, using structured interviews with purposive sampling, the study engaged the contemporary perspectives of thirty-one Ghanaian Christians from the Orthodox, Protestant, Pentecostal/ Charismatic, African Independent Churches and Traditional Religio-Cultural leaders. These participants were ethically considered on the assurance of the confidentiality and usage of their responses for academic research and nondisclosure of their identities.[48]

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Historical-Critical Exegesis of 2 Thessalonians 3: 6-13: Theology for Work and Prosperity

Despite the several arguments regarding the authorship of the second epistle to the Thessalonian believers, a majority of scholars support Paul's authorship of 2 Thessalonians. Paul is noted to have written it[49] in c. A.D. 51 or 52 in Corinth, after Silas and Timothy had delivered the first letter, 1 Thessalonians, and had returned.[50] The book comprises three chapters. Chapter three has a majority of eighteen verses which follow a thematic structure: (i) Paul's request for intercessory prayer (vv. 1-2), (ii) Paul's warning to the believers against idleness (vv.6-15), and (iii) Paul's final greetings (vv. 16-18). In this chapter, Paul is seen as a denominational leader who is discharging "injunctions." He makes a "Call to Prayer" towards the effective and fruitful spread of the Gospel and the team's deliverance from evil traps (vv.1-2).[51] He appreciates the importance of the congregation and encourages them that God loves them and Christ suffered for them (vv.3-4).[52] Encouraging them on God's intent towards earthly prosperity while waiting on the Lord's return, Paul emphasized the necessity of work. He therefore warned them against idleness in the name of "waiting for the Lord." He outlawed any believer who forsook "work for a living" and warned that if anyone would not work such a person should not eat (v. 10). Paul was compelled to rule that: "No-Work-No-Food."This outlaw was probably ruled as caution against "able Christians refusing to work but begging for food when they could equally and capably feed themselves honourably." Exegetical focus of this text is on v. 8 and v. 10. The table below provides the Greek Text from the Nestle Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th edition, Greek New Testament, and its transliteration for 2 Thessalonians 3:8, 10.

[47] D. Edmond Hiebert, "The Suffering and Triumphant Christ: An Exposition of 1 Peter 3:18-22. Selected Studies from 1 Peter, Part 2," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 139 (1982): 146-158.

[48] Jenny Fleming and Karsten E. Zegwaard, "Methodologies, Methods and Ethical Considerations for Conducting Research in Work-Integrated Learning," *International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning* 19, no. 3 (2018): 205-13.

[49] See internal evidence from 2 Thess. 1:1; 3:17.

[50] See "Introduction to 2 Thessalonians," in *The Compact NIV Study Bible with Study Notes and References, Concordance and Maps* (London, Sydney, Auckland: Hodder & Stoughton Publishers, 1987), 1792.

[51] Adewale J. Adelakun and Oluseye E. Ajadi, "No Work No Food: An Interpretive Analysis of Paul's Admonition in 2 Thessalonians 3: 6-13 in the Context of the Discourse on Religion and Poverty," *European Scientific Journal* 16, no. 23 (2020): 117.

[52] See 3 Thess. 3: 6-10.

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Greek Text	Verse	Transliteration
οὐδὲ δωρεὰν ἄρτον ἐφάγομεν παρά τινος, ἀλλ' ἐν κόπῳ καὶ μόχθῳ νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ἐργαζόμενοι πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἐπιβαρῆσαί τινα ὑμῶν	8	Oude dōrean arton ephagomen para tinos, all' en kopō kai mochthō nuktos kai hēmeras ergazomenoi pros to mē epibarēsai tina humōn
καὶ γὰρ ὅτε ἦμεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, τοῦτο παρηγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν, ὅτι εἴ τις οὐ θέλει ἐργάζεσθαι μηδὲ ἐσθιέτω.	10	Kai gar hote ēmen pros humas, touto parēngellomen humin, hoti ei tis ou thelei ergazesthai mēde esthietō.

Source: Authors' construction, 2025.

In v. 8, the conjunction *οὐδὲ* "nor" or "neither" introduces the adverb *δωρεὰν* "without payment" and the accusative singular masculine noun *ἄρτον* "bread or loaf" and the aorist active indicative first person plural verb *ἐφάγομεν* "we did eat" or "we ate" from the present active indicative *ἐσθίω* "I eat." The preposition *παρά* is relative to the genitive singular masculine indefinite pronoun τινος "anyone or someone." Therefore, *παρά* will take the genitive form "from" instead of its accusative forms: on or at. The speaker emphasizes his principle/action through the conjunction *ἀλλ'* "but." The preposition *ἐν* "in" is dative to the singular masculine nouns: *κόπῳ* "labour" and *μόχθῳ* "hard work." Their connection is introduced by the conjunction καὶ "and." He introduces the genitive singular feminine nouns: *νυκτὸς* "during night-time" and *ἡμέρας* "during day-time," connected by καὶ "and." He expands further using the nominative plural masculine present middle participle verb *ἐργαζόμενοι* which means "we ourselves have been working" or "we ourselves have been trading." The preposition *πρὸς* "to," is in reference to the accusative singular masculine indefinite pronoun *τινα* "anyone" which is related to the genitive plural person pronoun *ὑμῶν* "of you." The aorist active infinitive verb *τὸ μὴ ἐπιβαρῆσαί* "to be a burden," is preceded by *τὸ* "the" and the adverb *μὴ* "not or otherwise." Therefore, *πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἐπιβαρῆσαί τινα ὑμῶν* becomes "not to be the burden to anyone of you." With that, v. 8 shall have the translation: "Not without payment did we eat anyone's bread, but in labour and hard work during night-time and day-time we ourselves have been working [trading], not to be the burden of any of you."

In v. 10, the phrase *και γαρ ὅτε* means "and for when" or "even for when." From the present indicative *εἰμί* "I am," "I exist" or "to be", the first person plural imperfect active indicative verb *ἦμεν* means "we were." The preposition *πρὸς* shares accusative relation with the plural pronoun *ὑμᾶς* "you." Therefore, *πρὸς ὑμᾶς* means "with you" or "toward you." The word *τοῦτο* is an accusative singular neuter demonstrative pronoun which means "this." From the present indicative *παραγγέλλω* "I notify, command, charge," the first person plural imperfect active indicative verb *παρηγγέλλομεν* means "we commanded, charged." The dative plural pronoun *ὑμῖν* means "to you." This is followed by the charge: *ὅτι εἴ τις οὐ θέλει* which means "since/because/that if not will" or "since/because/that does not." From the root word *ἐργάζομαι* "I work, trade, do," the present middle indicative verb *ἐργάζεσθαι* means "work/trade for himself/herself." The negation *μηδὲ* means "not even." The speaker closes the command with a third person singular present active imperative *ἐσθείω* "I eat."

4.2 Exegetical Translation of 2 Thessalonians 3: 8 and 10

Therefore, a dynamic equivalence from the morpho-syntactic analysis of v. 8 and v. 10, the translation should be:

> Neither did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but we ourselves have been working [trading] in labour and hard work during night-time and day-time, not to become a burden for any of you.[53]

[53] A deconstructed translation for 2 Thessalonians 3:8.

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> For even when we were with you, we commanded [charged] you this: "That if anyone will not work [trade] for himself [herself], he [she] must not even eat!"[54]

It should be noted that the conjunction "even" in the phrase "not even eat" emphasizes how Paul warns that even "food," which is the most primary among the basic needs of life including clothing and shelter, should not be in the reach of a lazy believer, who does not want to work for a living. The injunction stresses the speaker's anathematization of "laziness and idleness" among believers. His response shows someone who was ostracizing lazy believers. A commentary has it this way: "A Christian must not be a loafer."[55] This command is what Adelakun and Ajadi defined as the "No-Work-No-Food" rule.[56] The imperative mood used by the speaker is one that explains his frustration about the believers' "anti- work" perception. He, perhaps, was provoked by how some "able" believers who could work and provide for themselves and their families rather preferred to stay idle, getting busy with religious activities as an excuse for begging for financial help from others. The command seems to inform the reader about Paul's theology of work. Paul is seemingly theologizing that; one's religiosity does not warrant their financial freedom but rather one must balance faith with income-generating work/trade.

He also warned against those who were not doing any business for a living but were idle, wanderers and "busybodies" that they should be well-settled and earn their daily meal. He calls the consciousness of settling down and genuinely earning a living as "doing what is right" (vv. 11-13). As one of Paul's main eschatological epistles, 2 Thessalonians was an emphasis on the *Parousia* (the Lord's return) and "to correct a misconception among the believers concerning the Lord's return (2:1-12)[57], which is identified as one of the reasons for their "anti-work" perspective. Lioy has indicated that the lack of accurate hermeneutical aptness can result in wrong interpretations and theologizing among believers.[58] Paul did not want their Christian faith to be a reason for their poverty and irresponsibility. Religion (faith) and poverty are regarded as being related. According to Beber, some religious persons intentionally deprive themselves of material gains as a result of their spiritual awareness and ascetic lives. A research conducted by Mirrell Miller revealed how the people in the poorest counties in the United States of America were engrossed in religious consciousness about heaven and hell, rapture and the coming of the anti-Christ so severe that they found consolation in their deprivation for religion. One could ask whether such religious devotees have some misunderstanding about their devotion and its requirements that makes them find such consolation. As antagonized by Marxism, religion is seen as a vehicle that impoverishes adherents through the promise of relatively better life hereafter for believers who suffer and endure the coals of economic hardship and some seclusions on earth.[59] This sense of eschatological hope could make some believers see no need to make a worthy living on earth, neither will desire to work. Some studies reveal that misunderstanding and misappropriation of religious texts and teachings could be among the reasons for religious idleness and impoverishment.[60] While scholars in favour of religion such Adams Smith and Max Weber support religion's impact on socioeconomic development, the antagonist perspective of Karl Marx describes religion as one that can be a spur for poverty among adherents if faith is not understood in the context of responsibility.[61]

[54] A deconstructed translation for 2 Thessalonians 3:10.
[55] "Study Notes to 2 Thessalonians 3:10," in *The Compact NIV Study Bible with Study Notes and References, Concordance and Maps* (London, Sydney, Auckland: Hodder & Stoughton Publishers, 1987), 1795.
[56] Adelakun and Ajadi, 117.
[57] See "Introduction to 2 Thessalonians," in *The Compact NIV Study Bible with Study Notes and References, Concordance and Maps* (London, Sydney, Auckland: Hodder & Stoughton Publishers, 1987), 1792.
[58] D. Lioy, "The Heart of the Prosperity Gospel," *Conspectus* 4 (2007): 48.
[59] Adelakun and Ajadi, "No Work No Food: An Interpretive Analysis of Paul's Admonition in 2 Thessalonians 3: 6-13 in the Context of the Discourse on Religion and Poverty," 117.
[60] Adelakun and Ajadi, 117.
[61] Adelakun and Ajadi, 117.

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Consequently, there is a possibility that misconception and misappropriation of Christian texts and teachings by adherents could result in living below the expectations and intentions of God as coded in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures. The exegetical findings of Adelakun and Ajadi revealed that "some Christians in Thessalonica misunderstood Paul's teaching about the imminence of the *parousia*, (that is, second coming of Jesus Christ). Consequently, they abandoned their work while waiting for Jesus to come."[62]

4.3 Religious Errors toward Prosperity: A Theological Mix-match

Inasmuch as religiosity requires devotion, Christian prosperity should not be confused with Christian spiritual growth. That could be a severe mix-match. One's religious devotion in prayers, fasting, attending programmes after programmes and receiving prophetic messages without due diligence, responsibility and accountability through work should not be a fitting grounds for prosperity. Health, food, peace and wealth are human responsibilities.[63] As much as Paul emphasizes faith as the element for one's spiritual justification, salvation and worthiness before God (Ephesians 2:8; Hebrews 11:6), he emphasizes also the need for the believer to embrace responsibility and diligence through work in order to enjoy the yields of prosperity (2 Thessalonians 3:6-13). In the Jewish culture, religious laziness was discouraged among devotees. In that, every Jew was supposed to be engaged in a learning, vocation, trade or manual labour. Paul highlighted this Jewish culture in his admonishment to the Jewish Christians in Thessalonica when he stated: "...we were not idle when we were with you...We worked night and day..." (2 Thessalonians 3: 7-8).[64] James theologizes a balance between "saving" faith and "fruit-producing" work. He emphasizes the work of the believer in relation to faith.[65] According to Adelakun and Ajadi, some Christians and churches organise 30-day prayer vigil. Miracle services are organised from Monday to Friday during working hours. Some able and working Christians go to Prayer Mountains on weekdays instead of going to their places of work. Also, some believers abandon their work and places of work to consult religious leaders, prophets or clerics to collect charms for prosperity.[66] Far from this religious attitude that has the potency of breeding poverty through negligence, the caution of St. Augustine of Hippo rings a necessary relevance: "religious activities are not a replacement for diligence; a mistake many religious people make these days."[67]

4.4 Self-induced Poverty among Christians: A Theological Misuse of Faith

It is interesting to realize how religious activities could be used as a guarantee for one to expect prosperity. The Thessalonian believers were devoted in religious activities just like Paul. However, in order to save them from being vulnerable to the provision of basic needs and certain daily financial responsibilities, Paul distinguished himself through "working with his hands" – a bi-vocational ministry, which was evident in his preaching and tent-making business. He was a preacher-tentmaker.[68] Instead of relying solely on the financial help from churches he served, Paul carved an enviable path in ministry for himself through trading as a tentmaker.[69] He wanted them to emulate and appropriate his work ethics and professional discipline as a model and leader "who worked with his hands" in addition to his missionary activities (vv. 6-8). It is believed through some studies that the apostle's choice of the

[62] Adelakun and Ajadi, 117.

[63] Wael K. Al-Delaimy, Veerabhadran Ramanathan and Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, eds., *Health of People, Health of Planet and Our Responsibility: Climate Change, Air Pollution and Health* (Switzerland AG: Springer Nature, 2020).

[64] Adelakun and Ajadi, 128.

[65] Kuwornu-Adjaottor, New Testament Theology for College Students and Pastors, 27.

[66] Adelakun and Ajadi, 128.

[67] *Cited* in Adelakun and Ajadi, 128.

[68] Kelvin Onongha, "Tentmaking in the Twenty-First Century: Theological and Missiological Implications for Contemporary Adventist Missions," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 53, no. 1 (2015): 187.

[69] Kelvin Onongha, "Tentmaking in the Twenty-First Century: Theological and Missiological Implications for Contemporary Adventist Missions," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 53, no. 1 (2015): 185-186.

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"tentmaking" trade was a consciously calculated strategy for missions and his survival,[70] and he wanted his followers to learn. Unfortunately, they would not listen. Their eschatological presumption had turned them into "busybodies" who were only concerned about "what to do" to get to heaven and escape hell when the Lord returns, and therefore would see working as a waste of time and a distraction.[71] They probably lacked understanding in the fact that, while waiting on the Lord's return, their families and personal development became immediate responsibilities which they had to take care of. Such responsibility is what Paul wanted them to realize by earning their livelihood through work, as the Lord tarries. Also, commentary points out that, they were interfering in other people's affairs with their religiosity, making them "busybodies"[72] at the expense of their families. Their getting themselves busy with religious activities seemingly might have become some sort of "excuse" to not work. Meanwhile, Paul worked "night and day."[73] However, Paul's ethical teachings on diligence are meant to discourage believers from substituting industriousness with indolence. Therefore, he emphasized his displeasure toward their seemingly "anti-work" attitude through his outlaw: "If anyone will not work [just as we do], he [she] shall not eat" (v. 10). The Christian must not be a loafer.[74]

It becomes a note-worthy observation in v. 9 that Paul became aware of a "beggarly" attitude of some of the believers who were busybodies about religious activities. Though they had faith in God and in the return of the Lord, they seemingly lacked behind in terms of material provisions. Paul reminds them that: "We worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden [responsibility] to any of you. We did this [working], not because we do not have the right [equal privilege] to such help [begging], but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow" (vv. 8-9). It is obvious that Paul knew the possibility of believers inducing poverty on themselves by avoiding the discipline and responsibility toward work and rather professing faith only or engaging in religious activities only. It is as though some believers do not realize that life is both spiritual and physical which requires one to meet both spiritual and physical needs. For Militz, "prosperity,"[75] like prayer and faith, is spiritual too, and that, God is the primary source. Therefore, Christians should be diligent toward it.[76] In addition to faith, work is a necessity for the prosperity of religious persons such as Christians.[77] A Christian who therefore ignores this necessary balance between faith and work is prone to the coals of poverty and could be described as religiously lazy. Solomon advices that whiles diligence makes "a leader," laziness makes "a slave (cf. Proverbs 10:24). Also, lazy hands makes one poor, but diligent hands bring wealth (cf. Proverbs 10:4)."

4.5 Morpho-Syntactic Analysis of Philippians 4:6-7 and the Concept of Prayer for Prosperity

In relation to the element of prayer as one of the basic elements of the "prosperity gospel," some responses were obtained from some interviewees in relation to why they would prioritize prayer despite the need to work hard and be diligent to their capital-invested jobs. Seemingly, the Ghanaian-African Christian has been made to believe that faith, prayers and positive confessions are enough to make one's financial needs solved.

[70] Ben Witherington III, *The Paul Quest: The Renewed Search for The Jew of Tarsus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 90.

[71] Donald Hagner, *The New Testament, a Historical and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Academic, 2012), 468.

[72] "Study Notes to 2 Thessalonians 3:11," in *The Compact NIV Study Bible with Study Notes and References, Concordance and Maps* (London, Sydney, Auckland: Hodder & Stoughton Publishers, 1987), 1795.

[73] Onongha, "Tentmaking in the Twenty-First Century," 187.

[74] See Study Notes to 2 Thessalonians 3:10 in *The Compact NIV Study Bible with Study Notes and References, Concordance and Maps* (London, Sydney, Auckland: Hodder & Stoughton Publishers, 1987), 1795.

[75] Brian Kluth, "30 Biblical Principles for Financial Peace & Freedom," *Biblical Generosity and Financial Resources and Training* (n.d.), Available at: https://www.kluth.org/church/30 Biblical Principles for Financial Peace and Freedom.pdf.

[76] Annie Rix Militz, "Prosperity through the Knowledge and Power of Mind," In *Lectures and mental Treatments* (USA, Los Angeles: The Master Mind Publishing Co. Inc., 1913), 8-10.

[77] An excerpt from an interview on April 24, 2025, at 10:53 AM in a face-to-face conversation with the respondent.

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A respondent who is a non-working believer in one of the African Independent Churches (AICs) in Kumasi, popularly known in Ghana as "One-man churches" replied confidently that: "The Bible says in Philippians 4:6-7 that we should not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, we should present our needs to God, and we shall have peace in our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. So for me, prayer is everything, and prayer can solve every problem including financial needs." However, it is somehow possible that some of these believers either overlook or are unaware of the thematic context within which the author is making the discourse. Hence, this calls for a reexamination of the text towards its contextual meaning of "prayer" in relation to prosperity and the concept of the "prosperity gospel."

The table below provides the Greek Text from the Nestle Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th edition, Greek New Testament, and its transliteration for Philippians 4:6-7.

Greek Text	Verse	Transliteration
μηδὲν μεριμνᾶτε, ἀλλ' ἐν παντὶ τῇ προσευχῇ καὶ τῇ δεήσει μετ' εὐχαριστίας τὰ αἰτήματα ὑμῶν γνωριζέσθω πρὸς τὸν θεόν·	6	*Mēden merimvate, all' en panti tē proseuchē kai tē deēsei met' eucharistias ta aitēmata humōn gnōrizesthō pros ton Theon.*
καὶ ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ ὑπερέχουσα πάντα νοῦν φρουρήσει τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν καὶ τὰ νοήματα ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.	7	*Kai ē eirēnē tou Theou ē huperechousa panta noun phrourēsei tas kardias humōn kai ta noēmata humōn en Christō Iēsou.*

Source: Authors' Construction, 2025.

The study accepted the above-tabulated Greek Text as synchronically accurate for analysis in the context of prosperity and the concept of prayer in this specific biblical *pericope*. Exegetically, Paul was making a discussion in the context of "anxiety" or "being anxious " and how its corresponding healing is related to prayer. John McArthur shares that "Just as Matthew 6 is Jesus' great statement on worry, Philippians 4 is Apostle Paul's charter on how to avoid anxiety."[78] From a Morpho-Syntatic analysis, the Greek word: *μεριμνᾶτε* (*merimvate*) is a second person plural verb in the present active imperative form, which is from the indicative *μεριμνάω* (*merimnaō*) "to be anxious, distracted, confused." Being in an active imperative mood means a direct command. Therefore, *μεριμνᾶτε* conveys the meaning "you must be anxious," "you must be distracted" or "you must be confused." This is predicated by an accusative neuter singular adjective: *μηδὲν* (*mēden*) which is from the root: *μηδείς* (*mēdeis*) "no one." Therefore, *μηδὲν* conveys the meaning "in or about nothing." Resultantly, the phrase: μηδὲν μεριμνᾶτε has the translation "You must be anxious about [in] nothing!" In a dynamic equivalence, this can better be interpreted as "You must not be anxious about [in] anything!" The author introduces a pointer, the conjunction: *ἀλλ'* (*all'*) a contrasted form of *ἀλλά* (*alla*) which means "but, except" to redirect their attention to what they should do instead. The prepositional phrase: *ἐν παντὶ* (*en panti*), comprises a dative preposition *ἐν* "in" and a dative neuter singular adjective παντὶ which means "all, every, all things." The words *τῇ προσευχῇ* (*tē proseuchē*) and *τῇ δεήσει* (*tē deēsei*) are feminine singular nouns in the dative case joined by the conjunction καὶ "and". Therefore, the former has the meaning "through prayer" and the latter means "through entreaty, supplication, pleading." The two seem to have been used intentionally by the speaker. They represent a fusion that conveys a picture of productivity (fruitfulness) in results. This fusion seems to have a lubricant from the genitive feminine singular noun: *μετ' εὐχαριστίας* (*met'*

[78] John McArthur, "Avoiding Anxiety through Prayer," in *Anxious for Nothing: God's Cure for the Cares of Your Soul* (Colorado, CO, USA: David C. Cook, 2012), Available at: http://hcf-india.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Anxious-for-Nothing-Gods-Cure-for-the-Cares-of-Your-Soul-by-John-F.-MacArthur.pdf.

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eucharistias) which means "with thanksgiving." Although the preposition *μετ'* could also have the accusative meaning "after," yet since its noun *εὐχαριστίας* is in the genitive case, it should agree in such lexis. Therefore, it takes the meaning "with" instead. The definite noun: *τὰ αἰτήματα* (*ta aitēmata*), is a nominative neuter plural which means "the requests." It is from the singular noun: *αἴτημα* (*aitēma*) which means "a request." The genitive second person plural pronoun: *ὑμῶν* (*humōn*) is from *σύ* (*su*) which means "you." As genitive pronoun, *ὑμῶν* has the translation "of you" which is dynamically interpreted as "your." Therefore, the phrase: *τὰ αἰτήματα ὑμῶν* could be "the requests of you." Syntactically, it should read as "your requests." The phrase: *γνωριζέσθω πρὸς τὸν θεόν·* carries the meaning: "to make known unto God." In relation to *τὰ αἰτήματα ὑμῶν*, the interpreted translation becomes: "make your requests known unto God" as though God is not ready to listen to you, or, God is seemingly busy but you should continue to plead his attention to listen to your need. This looks like the "context" from which the speaker is admonishing his immediate audience. Consequently, he goes on to imperatively affirm the cardio-psychological benefits that follow.

In v. 7, the expression: *καὶ ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ θεοῦ*, has the nominative feminine singular noun *ἡ εἰρήνη* "the peace " and the genitive *τοῦ θεοῦ* "of [the] God." The phrase carries the translation: "And the peace of God" or "And God's peace." It should be noted that this "peace" is definite and therefore reflects the speaker's probable pointer to some specific peace that God only gives to someone who follows the call to prayer with thanksgiving towards his or her anxious moment(s). Moreover, this, probably in the thought of the speaker, could refer to some kind of peace which only God could give. Therefore, one may call or refer to this as a comparable peace that is true and not a false peace.[79] John McArthur refers to the self-generated peace produced through alcoholism, a pill, nap, deliberate deception or pretense, as "incomplete" and "false" peace."[80] In his *2000 Easter Message from the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference* during the period of the Covid-19 pandemic, the president of the conference cited this text. He concluded that, this is the kind of peace that "will not allow us [God's children] to stay behind closed doors" with fears and despair[81] but it is a symbol of God's absolute care for and about the worries and plights of humanity and Christians especially.[82] In *ἡ ὑπερέχουσα*, the definite ἡ "the" is relative to the feminine noun ἡ εἰρήνη "the peace". Therefore, it carries the pointer "that" or "which". The present active participle third person nominative singular feminine verb *ὑπερέχουσα* means "surpasses." The noun phrase *πάντα νοῦν* means "all understanding." The future active indicative third person singular verb *φρουρήσει* means "will [shall] guard." The plural nouns *τὰς καρδίας* and *τὰ νοήματα* mean "the heart" and "the mind" respectively. The genitive plural personal pronoun *ὑμῶν* means "of you," which has the dynamic equivalent interpretation: "your." The phrase: *ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*, means "in Christ Jesus." Therefore, altogether, v. 7 produces an interpretative translation as: "And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding shall guard your heart and your mind in Christ Jesus." Concerning the ability of this God-producing "peace," John Carmichael writes on the speaker's usage of the military context of the verb "shall guard":

> In the original Greek, the word for "guard" is a military term, describing a garrison or a sentinel. This peace stands like a soldier at the gates of our hearts and minds, defending us

[79] John McArthur, "A Prayer for God's Peace," in *Anxious for Nothing: God's Cure for the Cares of Your Soul* (Colorado, CO, USA: David C. Cook, 2012), Available at: http://hcf-india.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Anxious-for-Nothing-Gods-Cure-for-the-Cares-of-Your-Soul-by-John-F.-MacArthur.pdf

[80] McArthur, "A Prayer for God's Peace," http://hcf-india.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Anxious-for-Nothing-Gods-Cure-for-the-Cares-of-Your-Soul-by-John-F.-MacArthur.pdf.

[81] Most Rev. Philip Naameh (Metropolitan Archbishop of Tamale and President, Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference), "2020 Easter Message from the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference," *Office of the President, National Catholic Secretariat* (Issued on Monday, April 06, 2020): 3. Available at: https://www.cbcgha.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/2020-EASTER-MESSAGE-FROM-THE-GHANA-CATHOLIC-BISHOPS-CONFERENCE.pdf.

[82] Naameh, "2020 Easter Message from the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference," 1.

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against the attacks of fear, doubt and despair.[83]

4.6 Exegetical Translation of Philippians 4:6-7

From the morpho-syntactic analysis above, Philippians 4:6-7 should be read as:

> You must be anxious about [in] nothing! But, in all things, through prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, make your requests known unto God. And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding shall guard your heart and your mind in Christ Jesus.

4.7 Interpretation

Beyond the immediate audience, the narrative in Philippians 4:6-7 is admonishing Christians to heal their anxieties about the cares of this world which in turn destabilizes their minds and troubles their hearts.[84] The issues concerning the heart and mind are what the paper refers to as "cardio-psychological." This healing to the heart and mind, according to Paul, is the inner-peace and sense of hope that only "a productive prayer – through supplication with thanksgiving" can bring.[85] Thanksgiving along with prayer and petition, form the "antidote to worry."[86]

Therefore, even though prayer is required as a spiritual discipline for Christian growth, its usage by Paul in this context is to be an "anxiety relief" and "peace instiller" for the troubled heart and confused mind. Paul's admonishment could be a real starter towards prosperity since the inner peace that would come through 'prayer' could settle the minds and hearts of Christians, guarding and arming them to be focused and healthier towards income-generating work so that they could provide food for themselves. It is possible that some contemporary Ghanaian Christians are unable to accurately interpret and apply the text, especially without adequate hermeneutical insight. D. Lioy emphasizes the fact that inadequate hermeneutics through ignorance towards semantics, grammar, genre and/or historical context of biblical passages, forms a leading cause for potentially inadequate interpretations and theologizing, some of which are out of context.[87] Moreover, in relation to some possible causes of "anxiety," studies reveal that poverty attracts stigma, economic hardship and psychological trauma. This relation is best comprehended in a Yoruba proverb: "*Aisi owo baba ijaya*" which means "lack of money is the father of all anxiety."[88] Therefore, it makes a contextual inference that for the African, poverty and anxiety are related. In that case, one could think that Paul probably had an idea about the anxiety that comes from lack of material provisions, including money. Therefore, probably previewed to that, he admonished believers in Philippi to first "pray" for the peace of God to stabilize their minds and hearts so that they could see and brainstorm clearly the actual root causes of their anxiety. This means that, after having received the "all-surpassing peace of God" to have their minds and hearts calmed and restored, Paul indirectly might have expected them to work on the red flags that cause such worries so that they prosper in health, emotions and possessions. So, for Paul, mental stability through "prayer" is a foundation for focus, productivity and prosperity. Annie Militz posits that, in attaining prosperity, one should first have the right attitude of mind and heart.[89] Therefore, by praying, Christians set

[83] John Carmichael, "Anxiety-Free Living: The Path to God's Peace," *evangelnorth.net*, 1-2. Available at: https://evangelnorth.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Anxiety-Free-Living-The-Path-to-Gods-Peace.pdf.

[84] Ralph P. Martin, *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians, An Introduction and Commentary* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1987). See David Guzik, "Philippians 4 – Joy and Peace in All Circumstances," Available at: https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/philippians-4/

[85] William Barclay, *The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975).

[86] See "Study Notes to Philippians 4:6," in *The Compact NIV Study Bible with Study Notes and References, Concordance and Maps* (London, Sydney, Auckland: Hodder & Stoughton Publishers, 1987), 1774.

[87] D. Lioy, "The Heart of the Prosperity Gospel," *Conspectus* 4 (2007): 48.

[88] Adewale J. Adelakun and Oluseye E. Ajadi, "No Work No Food: An Interpretive Analysis of Paul's Admonition in 2 Thessalonians 3: 6-13 in the Context of the Discourse on Religion and Poverty," *European Scientific Journal* 16, no. 23 (2020): 118.

[89] Annie Rix Militz, "Prosperity through the Knowledge and Power of Mind," In *Lectures and mental Treatments* (USA, Los Angeles: The Master Mind Publishing Co. Inc., 1913), 10, 11. Available at:

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their minds and hearts ready for activities that will produce happiness and stability. Therefore, working to earn "money" would be tangible evidence of one who has a clear cardio-psychological focus and understanding of the relevance of prosperity through earning a living. This intentional commitment and discipline to endure suffering through "work" is the missing element in the "prosperity gospel" which is creating some anxious, religiously poor Christians in Africa and Ghana. Therefore, after exercising faith followed by positive confessions and thanksgiving through prayer, one would need to be intentional about work and job searching. This is what Kiki Hayden defines as "Trusting God while Job searching." According to Hayden, one needs to be proactive and intentional about making sufficient preparations towards job application, and this includes writing a resume and putting in the application letter after praying and believing in God.[90] Peace in life could be earned through faith in God and embracing responsibility and accountability after praying. Consequently, faith and prayer should not be the end but as means to an end that is responsibly enhanced through intentional activity "work" towards prosperity.

4.8 Work and Wealth Creation toward Prosperity and Poverty Reduction

Following an interview question regarding whether positive confession and faith are enough for wealth creation and prosperity among Christians, some important responses are worth-quoting. The 15th respondent, who is a Presbyterian Minister and a Lecturer in Theology and African Studies responded this way:

> "Yes, God has given us the power to prosper, but it does not make 'wealth creation' a hundred percent (100%) responsibility of God as though humanity has no role to play in its realization. What is that power to prosper? That power includes knowledge, skills and the inherent talents and abilities He has given us so that we can use them diligently without laziness to make a better living for ourselves. After having given us all these resources, what is left is utilization. We must work by making them useful in solving human problems and in exchange we get wealth and prosperity. Yes, prayer is good, but it only shows our dependence on and faith in God. After faith and prayer, work must occur. God even hates lazy people."[91]

Notably, even though the Bible and Christianity convey that God is the one who gives the power and the might to make wealth (Deuteronomy 8:17-18; *cf.* Psalm 90:17; Genesis 13:2),[92] humanity is responsible for the utilization of that power to make a better living. This possibly comes through working. God delights in and establishes the "work of our hands."[93] Therefore, this should reorient the prosperity concept and attitude of Christians toward the creation and possession of wealth.[94] In exploring the role of Public Theology as a vehicle for churches in Ghana to promote genuine wealth creation, Opuni-Frimpong identifies the need for social responsibility towards a more holistic and sustainable approach to wealth creation.[95] In the context of prosperity, Opuni-Frimpong argues that "wealth creation" should be the product of an "activity that increases money, profits, property, goods, education, skills, and quality of attitude of the individual or country."[96] He adds that the essence of success and prosperity is embedded in the act of making a person more skillful in arts/vocations such as agriculture, weaving, carpentry, medicine and engineering among many others.[97] Simply,

[90] Kiki Hayden, "A Future and A hope: Trusting God while Job Searching," *Culture* (2024). Available at: https://www.radiantmagazine.com/2024/06/03/a-future-and-a-hope-trusting-god-while-job-searching/

[91] An excerpt from an interview on April 25, 2025, at 11:51 AM in a face-to-face conversation with the respondent.

[92] Opuni-Frimpong, "The Participation of the Church in Wealth Creation in Ghana," 291.

[93] See Psalm 90:17 in *The Compact NIV Study Bible with Study Notes and References, Concordance and Maps* (London, Sydney, Auckland: Hodder & Stoughton Publishers, 1987), 866.

[94] Opuni-Frimpong, 291.

[95] Kwabena Opuni-Frimpong, "The Participation of the Church in Wealth Creation in Ghana: A Reflection on the Role of Public Theology," *E-Journal of Religious and Theological Studies (ERATS)* 9, no. 7 (2023): 288. DOI: https://doi.org/10.38159/erats.2023974

[96] Opuni-Frimpong, 292.

[97] Opuni-Frimpong, 292.

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securing a job, art, vocation or producing an innovation are activities through which one could responsibly earn a successful wealth-filled living that overcomes poverty.

4.9 Faith, Prayers and Positive Confessions toward Tomorrow's Financial Security

In relation to reducing poverty among Christian ministers and church members in their retirement periods, interviewees were asked whether Christian clerics or church members should have financial plans toward their retirement or, faith and prayers are enough. An Independent Church Evangelist (the 11th respondent), who admitted to be struggling financially as a result of his reluctance towards having a "salary-paying" work, made this genuine response:

> I admit that I am the cause of my family's financial problems today. I had many friends and families who advised me in my early years as a young Evangelist in my 30s, but I told them I have faith that God will provide all my needs even if I do not get a salary job. Countless times I turned down job offers from friends and people who cared about my future. Little did I know that the wellness of my body affects my spiritual commitment, and that God delights in my financial wellness as much as in my spiritual wellness. I failed to discern this balance. Today, I am over 55 years old with a wife and three children. If not for my hard-working wife who understands my situation, my children and I would be in some more trouble than today. Retirement age is closer and yet I do not have anything. Even though I have faith in God, I think I have wasted my years with the excuse of just 'looking up to God' without doing nothing apart from preaching. I wish I could change the hands of time…[98]

Emphasizing the need for active and intentional preparation towards one's livelihood today and in the future, Opuni-Frimpong iterates Tenkorang's value on retirement plans. Tenkorang asserts that, "having a meaningful retirement plan is of crucial importance to everyone." Hence, in the context of prosperity, one could understand that "faith in hoping for a happy and fruitful future and retirement age" requires the confessing believer to balance his or her hopes with "active and intentional plan of wealth-generating activities." B. Credit highlights that a personal wealth-creating strategy is based on specific goals which should be realistic, time-bound, and well-planned.[99] Also, wealth-creation and its management are linked to access to the right information, planning[100] and one's ability to make wise choices about credit and debts; about what to save and what to spend.[101] Savings accounts and retirement plans are examples of wealth-creating assets.[102] The Christian could take advantage of this.

4.10 The Concept of "God said" as an Excuse for Anti-Work Attitude and Begging

Seeming unwilling to appropriate planning, preparation and work towards wealth-creation in order to realize the hope of a prosperous living, some African, Ghanaian Christians somehow refuse to work. Unfortunately, while ignoring work, some of these individuals resort to begging and/or borrowing. Eventually, some of them create societal problems for themselves as debts and financial struggles continue to burden them. When some are respectfully approached and advised to consider working, advisers are turned down with several convictions such as "God said No" or "God does not want me to work" which they hold personally. One may however regard such "convictions" as excuses. In relation to this, two interviewees who were Pentecostals/ Charismatics and overseers of newly founded churches gave some shocking responses. One (the 9th respondent) indicated:

> God does not want me to work. If I go to work, the Holy Spirit will not allow me. Besides, I do

[98] An excerpt from an interview on April 26, 2025, at 10:02 AM in a face-to-face conversation with the respondent.

[99] B. Credit, "Building Wealth: A Beginner's Guide to Securing Your Financial Future," *Federal Reserve bank of Dallas*, 4. Available at: https://www.dallasfed.org/~/media/documents/cd/wealth/BuildingWealth.pdf.

[100] Credit, "Building Wealth: A Beginner's Guide to Securing Your Financial Future," 1.

[101] Credit, "Building Wealth," 18.

[102] Credit, 2.

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> not want anyone to employ me and oppress or maltreat me. Besides, my Calling is a holy one. Working will defile my calling. I want to stay full-time. This is where my prosperity is.[103]

Another (the 10th respondent) revealed:

"I was not born to work. Mine is to pray and trust God for others to take care of me."[104]

While the 9th respondent indicated that God is the reason, the 10th respondent similarly blamed his "anti-work" attitude to "destiny and his make-up from birth" as a biological cause. However, the former seems to have an "unholy" perspective toward work, and the latter seems vulnerable to a beggarly lifestyle, an attitude that Paul would condemn.[105] One might ask whether or not the context of work is wrongly understood by these individuals and whether or not their "anti-work" attitude is fueled by some misconceived and preconceived teachings and religious experiences. For example; some ancient monks, through their religious experiences, took a strong stance against any association with society.[106] Also, some Christians regard work as somewhat evil, and as a punishment and separation from one's spiritual awareness and duty.[107] Eventually, some Christians may not consider work at all. Jeremey Posadas explored the "anti-work" perspective of some Christians by interpreting "work" from its intrinsic worth and its corrupted form. His findings revealed that some religious individuals (Christians) may have "anti-work" perspectives due to some form of oppression and unpleasant labour that they go or could go through.[108] However, he observes that "work in its intrinsic nature is good and profitable for human living. Therefore, its wrong practice by others through corrupt and oppressive means do not disqualify its original value and necessity placed on it by God. One could redeem such value by embracing the goodness that genuine work brings as well as the happiness it adds to human experience.[109] Therefore, regardless of one's spiritual experience and sense of revelation or intuition, the demands of basic needs as defined by Abraham Maslow[110] and the necessity of management by Adams Smith[111] requires that every Christian considers some form of income-generating work that is genuine. Some are ignorantly deceived to follow some kinds of "directions and rituals" as options for freedom from poverty and to have financial breakthrough, yet they are poor.[112]

4.11 Discipline, Suffering and Perseverance towards Prosperity and Success in Life

When asked whether one needs to uphold the intentional and active virtues of discipline, suffering and perseverance in his or her pursuit for prosperity, all thirty-one interviewees indicated that these virtues were necessary. Moreover, a majority of twenty-six respondents specifically emphasized that these virtues are the "makers of great people." A participant who is an Akan chief and a Christian Pentecostal made this emphasis: "Without discipline, suffering and

[103] An excerpt from an interview on April 23, 2025, at 11:06 AM in a face-to-face conversation with the respondent.

[104] An excerpt from an interview on April 23, 2025, at 2:11 PM in a face-to-face conversation with the respondent.

[105] See 2 Thessalonians 3:6-10.

[106] Christina M. Gschwandtner, "Ascetic Experience," In *Ways of Living Religion: Philosophical Investigations into Religious Experience*, pp. 14 – 55 (Cambridge University Press, 2024), 14. Available at: https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/ways-of-living-religion/ascetic-experience/7E46C05F3AE33E9A4F552F062AFEF84E Accessed on April 23, 2025.

[107] Lindsley, "Theology of Work," https://www.transform-world.net/newsletters/2014/TheologyOfWork.pdf

[108] Jeremy Posadas, "The Refusal of Work in Christian Ethics and Theology: Interpreting Work from an Anti-work Perspective," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 45, no. 2 (2017): 330, 331. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/26455684.

[109] Posadas, "The Refusal of Work in Christian Ethics and Theology: Interpreting Work from an Anti-work Perspective," 332.

[110] Azizi Hj. Yahaya, *Abraham Maslow: The Needs Hierarchy* (Faculty of Education, Universiti Teknologi, Malaysia), 1-13. Available at: https://eprints.utm.my/6091/1/aziziyahbrahamMaslow.pdf See: Saul McLeod, "Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs," *Preprint* (April 2007): 1-30. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.15240896. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/383241976.

[111] Philip C. Koenig and Robert C. Waters, "Adam Smith on Management," *Business and Society Review* 107, no. 2 (2002): 241-253. Available at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/1467-8594.00135

[112] Adelakun and Ajadi, 128.

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perseverance in life, there is no way a person can develop or prosper in this life, unless they want a cheap way. Cheap way is the way of death, and only lazy people choose a cheap life. Poverty is an inevitable result if anyone seeks prosperity without committing to a life of discipline, embracing the pains of suffering and staying resolutely persevering. Those who are genuinely rich and prosperous in this life have a painful story filled with sacrifices and determination. Indeed, *Sika yɛ mogya*. Money or wealth is bloody, and it only comes to those who pay the price of sacrifice, hard work and determination despite their religiosity. Apply these right principles of life and you will certainly be prosperous."

V. DISCIPLESHIP, SUFFERING AND PROSPERITY: THEOLOGICAL DISCOURSES

5.1 The Conceptualization of the Prosperity Gospel in Ghana

In an interview conducted by Moses Asamoah on some seven (7) charismatic clergy in Accra-Ghana, a respondent shared his perspective on Christianity and prosperity in these wording:

> It is biblical for the believer to live a prosperous life because prosperous life gives glory to God and so the church members should not live a life of mediocrity but live the life of abundance and be thinking big all the time.[113]

However, cited in the work of Emmanuel Larbi, a more clarifying view is shared by Pentsil, a foremost Pentecostal cleric and Bible teacher. Although it is God's will to prosper His children (Philippians 4:19; Cf. 3 John 2), Pentsil emphasizes the significant role of hard work (2 Thessalonians 3: 10-12) as a necessary factor that should complement one's faithful tithing (Malachi 3:8-10), prayer life (Philippians 4:6-7), giving (Luke 6:38; Cf. Acts 20:35) and obedience to God (Deuteronomy 38:1-2).[114] Therefore, despite the fact that the Bible teaches believers to pray in all situations (Phil. 4:6-7), give and they shall be given (Luke 6:38), tithe faithfully (Mal. 3:8-10), and to have faith in God that whatever they ask they shall receive, God expects believers to appropriate the *right knowledge* and *wisdom* that balances these acts of faith with work that will produce and sustain the flow of financial substances. Hosea 4:6 warns God's children to seek knowledge for their liberation since "ignorance" is a destruction. Some studies have seen a relationship between the inadequacy of, or absence of knowledge (*i.e.* ignorance) and poverty. In his investigation, S. Mabitsela identified some four key variables that are responsible for South Africa's economic crisis. Two among them are ignorance and poverty, and these have a direct relationship.[115] As God empowers Christians with inherent ability to make wealth and prosper (cf. Deut. 18:18), it is necessarily incumbent on individuals to access such "power." Knowledge, proven by research, is "power."[116] Therefore, one could advise that, in addition to his or her faith in God, the Christian needs "financial knowledge" which will serve as evidence of their inherent power to make wealth. To this necessity, a collaborative study led by A. Lusardi indicated that "financial knowledge is a key determinant of wealth."[117] Explaining how individuals who lack financial knowledge end up becoming "consumers" who always spend and consume to make the financial intellects rich, Lusardi and Mitchell explained that: "many

[113] Asamoah, 201.

[114] Emmanuel Kingsley Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity* (Accra: Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, 2001).

[115] Seane Mabitsela, "Relationship between Ignorance, Poverty, Greed, and Corruption in South Africa, 1999-2019," *African Renaissance* 21, no. 2 (2024): 419. Available at: https://doi.org/10.31920/2516-5305/2024/21n2a21.

[116] Laura Fogg-Rogers, Jacquie L. Bay, Hannah Burgess and Suzanne C. Purdy, ""Knowledge Is Power": A Mixed-Methods Study Exploring Adult Audience Preferences for Engagement and Learning Formats Over 3 Years of a Health Science Festival," *Science Communication* (May 2015): 1. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/1075547015585006.

[117] Annamaria Lusardi, Pierre-Carl Michaud and Olivia S. Mitchell, "Optimal Financial Knowledge and Wealth Inequality," *Journal of Political Economy* 125, no. 2 (2017): 431. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1086/690950

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consumers lack knowledge about key aspects of financial markets" and research indicate that a large proportion of the population is not financially literate.[118] One could understand that, regardless of a person's faith, prayer and positive confessions, if he or she lacks the right financial knowledge, such could end in poverty. Even in the face of abundant resources, without any financial management, such resources could be misused and exhausted into poverty. Another study added that, to advance in human capital investment toward financial development, investing in financial knowledge is key.[119]

Therefore, when able young people are being idle in church or in their homes, praying for hours and making positive confessions, naming and claiming prosperity without having or acquiring the right financial knowledge to balance their words and hopes with real-life work, they mostly become distressed. They blame God for not honouring his words to them. In an interview with a Charismatic pastor, a Senior Pastor of an Assemblies of God church in Kumasi (the 4th respondent), who believes in prosperity of the believer, he cautioned that:

> Even though I believe in prosperity, having faith alone is not enough. In fact, there is a lack of proper theology on the part of some believing members and some pastors on this prosperity teaching. There should be a balance with work.[120]

Table 4.1 below shows the responses of the thirty-one (31) interviewees when asked whether God does not want Christians to work because of them serving Him. A majority of 23 interviewees representing 74.19% indicated "Strongly Disagree." While four interviewees, representing 12.9%, were "neutral," the remaining four interviewees representing 12.9% indicated "Strongly Agree." Therefore, one could agree that God delights in the prosperity of Christians and does not delight in any assumption that Christians should not work. This majority of 74.19% resonates with McNeal's theological position that: "God places value on work"[121] and that, it is not as if God never created mankind to work as some individuals consider work as God's punitive response to mankind's sin.[122] Prior to the punishment, God had created mankind, Adam, to "work the garden and cultivate it."[123] The punishment only increased the "drudgery" that accompanied.[124] However, God honours a person who is skillful in his or her occupation, and promotes him or her before great people,[125] and he blesses the work of the diligent who fears him.[126] In Ancient Israel, those who were diligent and skillful in their works were craftsmen and artisans who were considered as wise people (Proverbs 8:30; Exodus 35:30-35).[127] These individuals were acknowledged as special individuals and were employed to serve before Kings – example: Joseph, as administrator (Genesis 41:46); David, a musician (1 Samuel 16:21-23); and Huram, a worker in bronze (1 Kings 7:14).

[118] Lusardi Annamaria and Mitchell S. Olivia, "The Economic Importance of Financial Literacy: Theory and Evidence," *Journal of Economic Literature* 52, no. 1 (2014): 5-44. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1257/jel.52.1.5

[119] Delavande Adeline, Rohwedder Susanne and Willis Robert, "Preparation for Retirement, Financial Knowledge and Cognitive Resources," *Working Paper* no. 190 (Ann Arbor, MI: Michigan Retirement Research Center, 2008).

[120] An excerpt from an interview on April 23, 2025, at 8:53 AM through a Phone conversation.

[121] T. R. McNeal, "Work, Theology of," in Trent C. Butler, ed., Entry for 'Work, Theology of' Holman Bible Dictionary (1991). Available at: https://www.studylight.org/dictionaries/eng/hbd/w/work-theology-of.html.

[122] Art Lindsley, "Theology of Work," Available at: https://www.transform-world.net/newsletters/2014/TheologyOfWork.pdf

[123] Cf. Genesis 2: 15, 7-15.

[124] Cf. Genesis 3:17-19.

[125] Cf. Proverbs 22:29.

[126] Cf. Psalm 128:1-6.

[127] See "Study Notes to Proverbs 22:29" in *The Compact NIV Study Bible with Study Notes and References, Concordance and Maps* (London, Sydney, Auckland: Hodder & Stoughton Publishers, 1987), 960.

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Table 4.1: God's dislike for Christians to work

Responses	Frequency	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	4	12.9
Agree	0	0.00
Neutral	4	12.9
Disagree	0	0.00
Strongly Disagree	23	74.19
Total	31	100

Source: Authors' Construction from Survey, 2025

The findings above provide some significant possibility that other-human related factors or attitude may be the direct reasons for the "anti-work" perspective among some Ghanaian Christians and Christians in general. In response to that, Table 4.2 shows a distribution of some causes/reasons: misunderstanding and misappropriation of faith (4), misinterpretation of God's concept about prosperity (*i.e.*, a wrong theological concept and aptitude) (5), laziness (7), preconceived dislike toward work (2), misconceived parallelism between spirituality and material wealth (3), excuse for "Full-Time ministry" (2), hiding under "Full-Time ministry" to cover personal laziness (2), wrong identification of their calling as either "Full-Time" or "Bi-vocation" (2), spiritual attacks against people's prosperity (2), and the love for sheep exploitation/church merchandise as opportunity for wealth-making (2), and many others.

Table 4.2: Reasons for "anti-work" attitude among some Ghanaians Christians

Reasons	Frequency	Percent (%)
Misunderstanding and misappropriation of faith	4	12.9
Misinterpretation of God's concept about prosperity (*i.e.*, a wrong theological concept and aptitude)	5	16.13
Laziness	7	22.58
Preconceived dislike toward work	2	6.45
Misconceived parallelism between spirituality and material wealth	3	9.67
Excuse for "Full-Time ministry"	2	6.45
Hiding under "Full-Time ministry" to cover personal laziness	2	6.45
Wrong identification of their calling as either "Full-Time" or "Bi-vocation"	2	6.45
Spiritual attacks against people's prosperity	2	6.45
The love for sheep exploitation/church merchandise as opportunity for wealth-making	2	6.45
Total	31	100

Source: Authors' Construction from Survey, 2025

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From the findings above, regardless of the many reasons that could represent why some Christians may frown at work, the study discusses that, "regardless of one's spiritual experience and sense of revelation or intuition, the demands of basic needs as defined by Abraham Maslow[128] and the necessity of management by Adams Smith[129] requires that every Christian considers some form of income-generating work that is genuine. In this case, if a "Full-Time ministry" is genuinely subscribed to and does not render the "minister" as vulnerable and as beggarly as someone who solely depends on the congregation, church confers and gifts/donations from others, then such a ministerial subscription is a "worthy path." Nonetheless, if aside from all, a minister could live above support from others, his or her family could earn a respectable living. Living a life that depends solely on offerings and gifts can be even more unsettling.[130] The findings of J. Maina revealed that some churches fail to professionalize its human resources including full-time pastors, and this can threaten pastor's welfare (which may include salary) and that of his family's stability.[131] Therefore, while he or she may be a "Full-Time minister" with some busy schedules, he or she could create other income- generating investments and venture-capital businesses and delegate his or her "management right" by hiring some responsible persons to manage them. There is possibly an inevitable fact that some of the church members could seek financial help from the minister, coupled with his or her financial responsibilities at home. This puts loads of financial stress on pastors, according to a recent research in Ghana.[132] Therefore, an intentional financial plan towards expanding income base for present and future[133] through genuine ventures, vocations and/or trades is recommendable, just as planning the financial management strategies of the church is important.[134]

5.1 The Ghanaian Context: Objections against the Proponents

Elly Kansiime worries about some negative attitude of some faith-professing Christians toward work and workplace in the 21st century.[135] Since prosperity is a necessary good, there needs to be a balance between positive confessions (faith) and its realization such that the pivotal role of "work" becomes a genuine means through which one's faith in prosperity could justifiably be realized. Unfortunately, some Christians are only concerned about positive confessions and the element of intentional commitment to "work". Faith must have works (Ps. 90:17; cf. Jas. 2:17-20). Indeed, faith should have an integration with work in such a way that one's faith and positive confessions could influence their attitudes toward work (duty and time), workplace and wealth-making positively. Neubert and Dougherty worry about how Christians sometimes see faith and work as totally two different fields, namely: spiritual and secular respectively. Their

[128] Azizi Hj. Yahaya, *Abraham Maslow: The Needs Hierarchy* (Faculty of Education, Universiti Teknologi, Malaysia), 1-13. Available at: https://eprints.utm.my/6091/1/aziziyahbraham Maslow.pdf See: Saul McLeod, "Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs," *Preprint* (April 2007): 1-30. DOI: 10.5281/ zenodo.15240896. Available at: https://www.researchgate. net/publication/383241976

[129] Philip C. Koenig and Robert C. Waters, "Adam Smith on Management," *Business and Society Review* 107, no. 2 (2002): 241-253. Available at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley. com/doi/pdf/10.1111/1467-8594.00135

[130] Dag Heward-Mills, "Is a Salary from the Church Stolen Money?" in Rules of Full-Time Ministry, 2nd ed. (Parchment House, 2019), Chapter 4. Available at: https://dagbooks.org/ wp-content/uploads/2024/10/44.-RULES-OF-FULL-TIME-MINISTRY-2ND-ED2019.pdf

[131] Jaccobed Maina, Zipporah Kaaria and Gregory Kivanguli, "Effect of Pastor's Church Ministry on their FamilyStability in Nairobi County, Kenya," *European Scientific Journal* 14, no. 29 (2018): 36.

[132] Stephen Doh Fia, Charles Fosu-Ayarkwah and Bismarck Kusi, "Impact of Stress and Burnout on Quality of Life of Pastors," *Universal Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 2, no. 3 (2022): 160.

[133] Jessie Hyman Jackson, "Strategies Church Financial Leaders Use for Financial Sustainability during Economic Crises," *Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies* (Walden University, 2018): 17. Available at: https://scholarworks. waldenu.edu/dissertations. See also: N. F. Melao, Maria S. Guia and M. Amorim, "Quality Management and Excellence in the Third Sector: Examining European Quality in Social Services (EQUASS) in Non-Profit Social Services,"*Total Quality Management & Business Excellence* 28 (2017): 840-857. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/14783363. 2015.1132160.

[134] Jackson, "Strategies Church Financial Leaders Use for Financial Sustainability During Economic Crises," Abstract.

[135] Elly K. Kansiime, *Integrating Faith with Work: A Ministry Transformational Model* (Geneva: Globethics.net, 2015), 1.

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findings reveal that recent studies indicate that if a "faith-work" integration is emphasized in congregations, members experience work more positively and contribute to their workplace.[136] Even though proponents of the "prosperity gospel" are convinced that their messages and activities are biblical and relevant to the socio-economic and politico-cultural emancipation of the Ghanaian, not all Ghanaian Christians agree with that. The problem of improper hermeneutics, according to Asamoah-Gyadu, has led to a top-sided gospel that marginalizes the poor and the underprivileged in the Charismatic churches/ Ministries (CM's) prosperity gospel.[137] Critically, Koduah objects to this gospel, referring to it as "truncated gospel", adulterated gospel, a gospel of Christian consumerism and problem-free life alien to true biblical teaching. In his view, the "prosperity gospel" stands to deny or refuse suffering as part of Christian life.[138]

5.2 Suffering and Prosperity

Asking about whether or not suffering is part of Christian discipleship and practice, a respondent who is both a pastor and a staff for a public Building and Construction Institute in Kumasi gave this response:

> Christianity is not a 'come-and-die' bid. Despite the realities of persecutions, biblical teachings uphold God's delight in the prosperity of believers. However, any teaching that rejects the suffering aspect of the Christian calling into discipleship and obedience is not a sound teaching and should be discouraged. Christ is our highest model. Any teaching that lacks a balance between faith through positive confessions and the reality of work does not regard God's value and purpose for work. Also, any believer that shuns the realities of life and ignores hard work, dedication and suffering through perseverance does not understand the way to the genuine and lasting prosperity which God intends. Such a believer is only speaking and hoping in 'words' which have no 'seeds and roots" to materialize them. A person's work is the evidence of his or her faith in God and the assurance of his or her expectation.[139]

Another Ghanaian Christian woman who lives in the UK was interviewed via WhatsApp Call. She shared her sufferings that led to her financial breakthrough and traveling success. She indicated:

> I was prophesied to by a pastor in Kumasi that I would travel to the UK. That was in 2014 then. I would always pray, fast, and make all kinds of positive declarations without any practical and meaningful actions towards it. One day, I had gone into the church auditorium to pray alone when an associate pastor who had also come there to pray asked me: 'Young lady, what are you doing about your traveling which the Senior Pastor told you about? Do you have a passport? Do you have any specific country of your dreams, where you would love to go? What do you do currently? Are you working?' All my answers were in the negative. I had no birth certificate, no passport, no country in mind, and no job. He said to me, 'It's going to be impossible if you do not work on these. Yes, God has told you. He only told you His plans for you. You are to figure out how you want that plan to materialize in your life. You've got to wake up, and work at it. But I would say, get a job first so that you can handle your financial needs including getting a birth certificate and a passport. Meanwhile take this money – GhC 100.' I thanked him, and left in sober. After being employed for a year, I secured my passport and all the necessary documents. In 2018 I traveled as God intended. I learnt that God did not tell me the date, which country and how I was supposed to get there. I had to

[136] Mitchell J. Neubert and Kevin D. Dougherty, *Integrating Faith and Work* (Baylor University: Institute for Faith and Learning, 2015), 67.

[137] Johnson Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *Paper delivered at the "Awaken to the Word VIII: Challenging the Church for Meaningful Missionary Work."* (Seminar held at the Bethany Methodist Church, Dzorwulu, Accra, Ghana. March 26, 2009).

[138] Alfred Koduah, *Who is Disturbing the Nature?* (Accra: advocate publishing Limited, 2008), 121-54.

[139] An excerpt from an interview on April 23, 2025, at 10:05 AM through an Audio call on the Phone. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Theology.

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balance my faith with taking the pain to search for a job for six months, sacrificing my appetites by enduring one meal a day in order to save enough money for my passport and traveling expenses. So, Ernest, Christians are to bear the pains and sufferings through hard work to prove their faith in God and their readiness to have a prosperous life of good health and sufficient wealth. Faith alone is not enough. Work is a necessary need.[140]

5.3 The Akans of Ghana

The Akans of Ghana are Africans, from West Africa. Among Africa's four distinct native language families, namely: *Afroasiatic, Nilo-Saharan, Niger-Congo and Khoisan, the Akans belong to* the "Niger-Congo," which is considered as Africa's largest language family geographically, and the world's largest language family with about 1,554 numerous distinct languages, listed by *ethnologue*.[141] Among its key branches – Kru, Grebo, Kwa, Bantu, Benue-Congo, the Akans belong to the "Kwa" branch. Following the *Kwa* root, most Ghanaian-Akan male names have *kwa*, namely: *Akwasi* (a male born on Sunday), *Kwadwo* (a male born on Monday), *Kwabena* (a male born on Tuesday), *Kwaku* (a male born on Wednesday), *Kwofi/Kofi* (a male born on Friday) and *Kwame* (a male born on Saturday), except a male born on Thursday, Yaw, probably named after the Mother Earth in Akan parlance *Asaase Yaa*, to denote the Akan reverence for Thursday as a hallowed day for the Earth.[142] The Akans form the largest ethnic group in Ghana. The widely spoken language in Ghana – *Twi*, is their language. It is both a mother-tongue and an easily learnable language. Due to varying tonal and autographic variations, the Twi has dialects such as Asante Twi, Akuapem Twi, Bono Twi, Akwamu Twi, Kwahu Twi among others. The Asante Twi is the most popular Akan dialect.[143]

5.4 The Concept of "Work" in the Akan Religio-Cultural Context

Historically, the religio-cultural Akans are "communal" people who value hard work and its corresponding virtues of diligence, honesty and responsibility.[144] The true Akan knows the pains of work, yet he or she would rather toil than to be called a lazy person or a poor person. They uphold Mbiti's concept of communal life of the African in his popular classic phrase: I am because we are; and since we are therefore I am.[145] Akans practice communal development towards national growth. They believe in unity in diversity.[146] This communalism is seen in some popular Akan sayings: "*Wonsom wonsom ne nipa* (literally means, unity and collaboration for development comes through people; or to build, we need everyone). Echoing the findings of Sarpong[147] and Gyekye[148] about the generosity of Akans, Appiah-Sekyere concludes that Akans are very welcoming. They entertain strangers with good meals and hospitality.[149]

From youth, the Akan is trained to be diligent in work. The common pleasantry among working Akans is the one which the passive worker greets: "*Adwuma, adwuma*" (Work, work) after which the one active worker responds: "*Adwuma ye*" (work is good). Akans upholds that hard work

[140] An excerpt from an interview on April 24, 2025, at 10:53 PM through a WhatsApp Call on the Phone. She is currently studying in the UK.

[141] David M. Eberhard, Gary F. Simons and Charles D. Fennig (eds.), *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, Twenty-eighth edition (Dallas, Texas: SIL International, 2025). Available at: https://www.ethnologue.com/subgroup/47/.

[142] These are observable empirical findings from respondents about the realities concerning the Akans and their naming customs and traditions.

[143] Seth Kissi and Ernest van Eck, "Reading Hebrews through Akan Ethnicity and Social Identity," *HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies* 73, no. 3 (2017): 1-10.

[144] Paul Appiah-Sekyere, "Traditional Akan Ethics and Humanist Ethics: A comparative Study," *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal* 3, no. 6 (2016): 110.

[145] John S. Mbiti, *African religions and philosophy,* 2nd rev. ed. (Oxford: Heinemann Educational Publishers, 1989).

[146] Kwwame Gyekye, *An essay on African philosophical thought: The Akan conceptual scheme, (rev.ed.)* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995).

[147] Peter Sarpong, *Ghana in Retrospect: Some Aspects of Ghanaian Culture, (reprint 2006)* (Accra: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1974).

[148] Kwame Gyekye, *African Cultural Values: An Introduction* (Accra: Sankofa Publishing Company, 1996).

[149] Paul Appiah-Sekyere, "Traditional Akan Ethics and Humanist Ethics: A comparative Study," *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal* 3, no. 6 (2016): 113. 110-120.

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propels the wheels of success, and that laziness is highly abhorred.[150] So, to the religio-cultural Akan, the value and ontology of "work" can better be defined, explained and illustrated in relation to the consequences of not working such as poverty, whether by laziness or anti-work attitude.

5.5 Poverty and Prosperity in the Akan Religio-Cultural Context

In the Akan-Ghanaian ontology and culture, poverty is regarded as a curse and a disgrace (*ohia yɛ animguaseɛ*)" so severe that one would prefer to die instead.[151] Moreover, to the Akans, prosperity includes good health, fertility and wealth. Also, long before the emergence of the "prosperity gospel," Akan-Ghanaians knew that "*Sika yɛ mogya,*" literally meaning "money is blood."[152] Thus, money is a fruit, not a gift. It is a harvest from the seed of blood. This Akan cultural proverb conveys the relevance of hard work through sacrifice of one's life (blood) and comfort zone. That is, the virtues of commitment and diligence toward physical, mechanical or intellectual labour, constitute the source of genuine wealth. This is in contrast to the "prosperity gospel" which upholds that adherents should only exercise "faith in God" without any balance with work. This necessitated a reexamination that considers the Ghanaian context. Therefore, it is necessary to contextualize the "prosperity gospel" by building a balance between 'faith' and 'work' toward true prosperity.

5.6 Dynamics of Contemporary Notions of Prosperity from the Ghanaian-Akan Context

In examining the various concepts (notions) of prosperity in the Ghanaian tradition, this paper engages the Akan context. It is thus essential that one understands the Akan worldview and some of the underlying religious beliefs and value systems upheld by the people, which govern the Akan culture.[153]

The importance of a traditional cosmology or worldview in understanding contemporary religious phenomena has been noted by theologians, missiologists and anthropologists.[154] Anim indicates that, according to John Pobee, an eminent Ghanaian theologian, prosperity [well-being] in the Akan society includes; *Nkwa* "good health, longevity, vitality, life;" *adom* "God's gifts of food, favour, life, peace of self (body and spirit);" the family; creativity/fertility; good eyesight and perception; good hearing power; rainfall and general increase the family. Therefore, to him, prosperity in Akan epistemology can consequently be said to embrace three main components: wealth, health and fertility or procreation.[155] Moreover, in Akan ontology, poverty is regarded as a curse and a disgrace – *ohia yɛ animguase*. The extent to which the Akan perceives the seriousness of poverty is expressed in the proverb: *Obi bɔ wo dua sɛ, "ma onwu!" a, ɛnyɛyaw sɛ ɔse "ma ohia nka no*!" which is translated as "If someone curses you saying, 'Let this person die!' he is not doing you as much harm as he would if he were to say: 'Let poverty hold on this person!'"[156]. Given, Because of this worldview of Akans and Ghanaians, "people would do all they could to escape poverty of any kind or form". Sadly, the wrong prosperity gospel might have influenced the indigenes. Thus, instead of the virtues of hard work, faithfulness and correct moral and Christian values like integrity, time management, financial management; young men resorted to talisman and magic while able-and-trading women left their stores for prayer retreats and camps. Also, positive confessions and incantations became rituals towards prosperity and material wealth. Thus, Akan-Ghanaian Christianity needs a holistic prosperity gospel that installs in the people ethical and social values of work,

[150] Appiah-Sekyere, "Traditional Akan Ethics and Humanist Ethics: A Comparative Study," 112.

[151] Emmanuel K. Anim, "The Prosperity Gospel in Ghana and the Primal Imagination," *Pentvars Business Journal* 4, no. 2 (2010): 69, 70. http://pentvarsjournal.com/articles/july-sept-2010/prosperity-gospel.pdf. http://pentvarsjournal.com/articles/july-sept-2010/prosperity-gospel.pdf

[152] Anim, "The Prosperity Gospel in Ghana and the Primal Imagination," 67.

[153] Anim, "The Prosperity Gospel in Ghana and the Primal Imagination," 68.

[154] Anim, 68.

[155] Anim, "The Prosperity Gospel in Ghana and the Primal Imagination," 69, 70.

[156] Anim, "The Prosperity Gospel in Ghana and the Primal Imagination," 69, 70.

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faithfulness and commitment to God and not the current form of laziness spreading in the name of 'I claim it' as though God is a magician. The challenge is that African Christianity fails to draw the line which balances 'Faith' and 'Wealth making'. If genuinely it is faith, then the obedience that comes with faith should somehow cause believers to act, and not go to sleep or remain idle. Some Christians experience poverty. One may relate such a crisis with the intuition received from "prosperity gospel" which often leaves some adherents of the Christian faith refusing to bear the sufferings of committing their time and energy towards work. One may think that such adherents fail to embrace the phenomena of discipleship and discipline, especially as narrated in the Petrine epistles and Markan literature.

In the Ghanaian context, prosperity gospel is seen in the Akan adage "There is no one who does not like to eat salt," in other words, everybody wants to prosper."[157] However, this good desire toward prosperity cannot be partially skewed towards comfortable expectation without the inclusion or expectation of discomforts sometimes. Theologically, Mark and Peter's messages conclude that prosperity comes with suffering and sacrifices. There is a price to pay, a cost to bear, and a hope of glory.

5.7 Markan Gospel and the theme of Discipleship in the light of Prosperity Gospel

Mark's purpose in writing the gospel is not to draw moral lessons of life, but lessons about God – the weakness of the disciples shows the strength of Christ; their self-importance is contrasted with his humility.[158] The Gospel of Mark is a prosperity gospel in the context of discipleship. The theme of discipleship in Mark is linked to bearing the cross – taking up the cross and following Jesus. Mark's theological perspective questions a theology of success and proclaims that the life of discipleship is lived with the reality of the cross.[159]

Mark's theology and Christology are closely connected to following Jesus and living the life of discipleship – suffering discipleship.[160] Generally, Mark's gospel spreads on a two-in-one theme; the *faithlessness of the disciples* toward Jesus and the *faithfulness of Jesus* to the disciples.

VI. RELATIONSHIP WITH CONTEMPORARY GHANAIAN CHRISTIANITY

6.1 A Dialogue with Dietrich Bonhoeffer's The Cost of Discipleship

According to Bonhoeffer, "Discipleship means adherence to Christ." The true mark of a disciple is obedience, not a mere confession. Bonhoeffer iterates, "The response of the disciples is an act of obedience, not a confession of faith in Jesus."[161] Moreover, Bonhoeffer asserts that, "When we are called to follow Christ, we are summoned to an experience of his person."[162] Relating this to Mark's writing in (8.31-38), Bonhoeffer explains further what Christian followership means. Thus, he writes, "The call to follow is closely connected with Jesus' prediction of his passion. Jesus Christ must suffer and be rejected."[163] Thus, following Christ means *passio passiva,* suffering because we must suffer. The disciple is not above his master. This then agrees that the believer's call is simply not all butter and sugar; instead, the call requires specific experiences with Jesus. Therefore, suffering/persecution should not be alien to the believer. Then also, it should be understood clearly that the prosperity of Christians is not exempted from the sufferings that come along. Here, both Mark and Bonhoeffer agree to Peter's assertion, "Christ suffered for you; follow the same" and "If we share Christ's suffering (cost), we shall certainly share Christ's glory

[157] Anim, 68.

[158] Ernst Best, *The New Century Bible Commentary. 1 Peter* (WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Marshall, Morgan & Scott. Publishing Ltd. London, 1986), 123.

[159] Marvin Meyer, "Taking Up the Cross and Following Jesus: Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark," *CTJ* 37 (2002): 231

[160] Meyer, "Taking Up the Cross and Following Jesus," 233.

[161] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship: Revised and Unabridged Edition Containing Material Not Previously Translated* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc. Twenty-first Printing, 1979), 61.

[162] Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship,* 63.

[163] Bonhoeffer, 95.

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(prosperity)". Thus, the prosperity gospel in the light of Christian discipleship means that there is a cost element if we seek to prosper. This is because Christ is and has given Christians an *example* – himself. Because of that, contemporary Ghanaian Christianity should not be a one-sided gospel as if "positive confessions and simple faith in Jesus" is all that is needed. It is as if "obedience, work, faithfulness, financial discipline and time management" have no bearing on prosperity.

6.2 Argument against Bonhoeffer

However, preaching the cost of discipleship and the cross of Christ without balancing with the prosperity and glory of the cross does not form a holistic gospel. Peter reminds that "if [indeed] we share Christ's suffering; we shall certainly share Christ's glory" (1 Peter 2.21). Moreover, it is not as if following Christ is an eternal "come and die" bidden.[164] Since there is suffering, after a while, there is victory – *restoration, empowerment, establishment and settlement* (1 Peter 5:10). Following Jesus does not mean death forever; discipleship rewards joy. Therefore, in contemporary Ghanaian Christianity, though believers are to understand the inclusion of sufferings in their walk with Christ, they suffer a great disservice if they are not also told that Christ wants them to prosper and for that matter it is good for a Christian to be materially wealthy. It becomes necessary for the African church and contemporary Ghanaian Christianity to include in sermons and activities, appropriate training and education on how members could *make, manage* and *multiply* money sincerely and still be Christians, so that they, being wealthy, could support the church, the families, their communities and others as the Lord Jesus Christ would have done.

6.3 Peter's Theme of Christian Suffering and Living Hope, and the Prosperity Gospel

The two letters, named after the Apostle Peter, are endowed manuals for both Christian doctrine and practice. Theologically, these letters have Christological and eschatological essences. The two major themes (issues) discussed in these letters are (i) Suffering and Persecution, (ii) Christian behaviour and Living hope. Christologically, Jesus is the central persona presented as the *ultimate* example of suffering and rejection. Also, "Peter describes Jesus Christ as divine – God and Saviour."[165] Eschatologically, Discipleship and fellowship are encouraged on the part of Christians to emulate how Jesus behaved towards and handled persecution. Moreover, the future hope of glory is assured to the Christians at the end of suffering and persecution just as tribulations will not last forever. Also, in his second epistle, Peter reveals that heaven and earth will be destroyed by fire and the elements will melt (3:10, 12).[166]

Contextually, these two themes relate to the prosperity gospel preached by Jesus. As the disciples suffer and bear cost in following Jesus, they reap rewards in the form of both spiritual increase through faith, patience, perseverance and hope and material blessings.

This in contemporary Ghanaian Christianity means that instead of Christians seeing suffering and persecutions as aliens to Christianity, it should clearly be understood that if Jesus, the model for Christians according to 1 Peter 2:21, suffered persecution with unfailing endurance till he triumphed gloriously, Christians (disciples) should follow same.

6.4 A Dialogue with John R.W. Stott's "Men with a Message"

For much of the past two centuries, critical scholarship has engaged in a long and arduous debate over the nature of persecution in 1 Peter.[167] Christian Persecution began and intensified under the Roman Empire which led to the scattering of Asia Minor. It is believed that Rome imposed an

[164] Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, 95-104.

[165] Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: James, Epistles of John, Peter and Jude* (Baker Academic. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 1996), 226.

[166] Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: James, Epistles of John, Peter and Jude,* 226.

[167] Travis B. Williams, "Suffering from a Critical Oversight: The Persecutions of 1 Peter within Modern Scholarship," *United Kingdom Currents in Biblical Research* 10, no.2 (2012): 230-238.

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imperial cult.[168] By necessity, Peter was confronted with hard core questions about how Christians should behave in such unfavorable circumstances, Christian's attitude to undeserving suffering and how Christians cope with alienation from society around them.

From 1 Peter, John R.W. Stott shares five (5) pragmatic ways Peter instructed the persecuted Christians to follow.[169] These imperatively sum up the *themes* in Peter's two letters.

- *The Example of Jesus* – Peter mentions a Role model to Christians. Stott outlines three attitudinal changes in Peter – *no retaliation to insults, no threats, but instead he endured and entrusted himself to Jesus, the just judge* (cf. 1 Pet. 2: 23). He summarizes: "As Christ suffered for you; follow the same (cf. 1 Pet. 2:21)". Contextually, contemporary Ghanaian Christians should understand that in their quest for prosperity, Jesus should be their focus in times of suffering instead of running away and resorting to shortcuts – magic, sorcery.
- *Knowing the reason for Jesus' suffering* – According to Stott, Peter instructed the suffering believers to know that God had an ultimate purpose behind Christ's suffering. Mainly, the mission of Christ's death was that of "reconciliation" – bringing humanity back to God, toward righteousness (2:24). Contextually, Stott reminds all believers, including contemporary Ghanaian Christians, to prioritize their desire to live unto God in their quest for prosperity and that they should use righteous and honest means to make wealth, hence redefining their prosperity concept.
- *Being God's people* – As God's people, Peter admonishes Christians to practice love (1:22), peace (3:8), hospitality, service and faithfulness (4:8-10) toward one another during suffering times. Osborne supports this attitude amid suffering.[170] Contextually, according to Stott, prosperity gospel in contemporary Ghanaian Christianity can be related via the same instruction: "Ghanaian Christians should learn to love and welcome one another in times of need.
- *Living in hope* – Stott asserts that the Christian is assured of glorification and therefore, should have a living hope because "sharing in Christ's suffering means sharing in his glorification (cf. 1 Pet. 4:13." Stott writes, "Present weakness merely points to future strength and our sufferings are purifying our faith as fire purifies gold." Simon K. Kistemaker argues for the certainty of the *parousia*, the return of Jesus, regardless of mockery at Christians.[171] Pertaining to the "prosperity gospel," Stott assures contemporary Ghanaian Christians that "after suffering a little while, prosperity will come because the Lord himself shall restore, strengthen, establish and settle his people (1 Pet 5:10)". According to Calvin, Jesus Christ will return to fulfill the hope of his people.[172]
- *The Necessity for holy living in times of suffering* – Stott amplifies Peter's admonishment to believers to pursue the eternal virtues of goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, goodliness, concern, purity and love (cf. 1 Pet. 4:7). Emphasizing holy living, Stott writes on the necessity of Christians to desist from scepticism, sexual pleasure and teachings that reject the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. On this critical need for holy living, E. M. Sidebottom asserts that "become partakers of the divine nature" is the strikingly original note in 2 Peter.[173] Notwithstanding, as the Christian looks to the

[168] Williams, "Suffering from a Critical Oversight: The Persecutions of 1 Peter within Modern Scholarship," 230-238.

[169] John R. W. Stott, *Men with A Message: Peter's Message* (Longmans. 4s, 1954). See also: John R. W. Stott, *Men with a Message: An Introduction to the New Testament and its writers* (London: Candle Books, 1997). https://archive.org/details/menwithmessageinoooostot_m5s1

[170] T. P. Osborne, "Guidelines for Christian Suffering: A source-critical and Theological study on 1 Peter 2, 21-25," *Biblica* 64 (1983): 381-408.

[171] Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: James, Epistles of John, Peter and Jude,* 226.

[172] John Calvin, *The second Epistle of Peter*, 384.

[173] E. M. Sidebottom, *James, Jude and 2 Peter: Based on the Revised Standard Version* (W.B. Eerdmans, Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1982). https://openlibrary.org/books/OL3487839M/James_Jude_and_2_Peter

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parousia, he or she should be mindful of his or her financial responsibilities toward physical and material needs, which require balancing faith and work.

6.5 Contextualization

Working Christians will suffer in their diligence to prosper. However, through the integrity of their hearts, guided by the example of Jesus, the gospel narrative of Mark and the epistolary admonishment from Paul and Peter, their hard work and genuine responsibility constitute a proof of their faith and hope. Ernst Best admonishes contemporary Christians to rather depend on the grace of God to stand and sail through as citizens (1 Pet. 2:13-17) and servants (1 Pet. 2:18-25).[174] Onyinah writes on this grace and argues that God's grace helps the believer in the form of healing or hope during suffering.[175] Bonhoeffer calls this life-changing grace "costly grace." This is because any gospel that advocates prosperity without cost and sacrifices is not a true gospel, and it lacks its holistic authenticity.

6.6 Some Extended Interview Findings

When asked to share their overall examination and perspectives about the concept of prosperity and the "prosperity gospel" as absorbed into the contemporary Ghanaian Christianity, a Christian cleric, an evangelical protestant and scholar in New Testament Studies and Mother-Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics, concluded that:

> Yes, I am a Ghanaian and a Christian. Yes, God desires that we become prosperous in life. However, the idea of prosperity is not limited to financial gains. It depends on how you define prosperity; the Hebrew idea of prosperity is broad and includes financial success. The Bible gives evidence of a woman who became prosperous by her faith when she obeyed the Word of God through Elijah – 1 Kings 17:15-16. Yes, faith alone can transform life but not necessarily make someone materially rich or put money into our pockets. Faith alone is not enough and that it will require hard work for one to be prosperous in relation to riches. The Bible emphasizes the relevance of work in the book of Proverbs that sluggishness leads to poverty – Prov. 14:23; 24:33. Poverty is associated with work, however, there are some people who are diligent in their work but are still poor – Ps. 127:1-2. God wants us to work with our hands; it depends on the call of God on your life. The apostle Paul worked with his hands and was able to do the ministry God assigned him. God approves bi-vocational ministry. We should balance faith with work; Paul warns against idleness in 2 Thess. 3 that those who are idle should work to support themselves.[176]

By citing 2 Thessalonians 3 as a biblical emphasis on the relevance of work against idleness, the respondent shares some similarities with the study's exegetical focus. Therefore, it stands to suggest that the study's selection of 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13 presents a verified theological basis for the necessity of work and its balance with faith towards a "God-intended" prosperity that streamlines the disciplines of sacrifice, suffering, faithfulness and integrity with the harvest of rewards, fruits and wealth.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study reexamined the prosperity gospel in contemporary Ghanaian Christianity for poverty reduction and combating religious laziness through balancing faith and work. Faith needs work. God values work. He created work as means for man to be responsible toward the garden and his daily living (Genesis 2: 7-15). The new believer is saved and called into an eternal life of discipleship, though costly yet rewarding. This reward is the evidence of work. While Mark calls this "the cost of discipleship", Peter describes it as "the suffering of the Christian and how he should behave or respond." Also, the Akan religio-cultural notion defines that, "*Sika yɛ mogya* –

[174] Ernst Best, *The New Century Bible Commentary. 1 Peter* (WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO. Grand Rapids, Michigan. Marshall, Morgan & Scott. Publishing Ltd. London, 1986).

[175] Opoku Onyinah, "God's Grace, Healing and Suffering," *International Review Mission* 95, no. 3761377 (2006).

[176] An excerpt from an interview on April 27, 2025, at 10:22 AM in a face-to-face conversation with the respondent.

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money is blood." This means that wealth-making is expensive. By this belief and practice toward prosperity, it underlines that "prosperity is a fruit (harvest) from labour/effort, and not a gift". That is, one gets rich (prosperous) only if he or she sacrifices (sweats) – their time, energy and comfort; to do some money-yielding jobs. Theologically, Bonhoeffer and Mark emphasize that there is no free-zone, but the disciple of Jesus Christ should bear the costs of obedience, followership and suffering. John Stott and Peter admonish Christians to embrace obedience, obedience and suffering towards prosperity as Jesus suffered for glorification. Prayer, positive confession and giving without any income-generating work will lead to a disappointed hope in the face of physical and material needs. In curtailing religious laziness and unrealistic wealth, Paul gives an outlaw: if anyone would not work such a person should not eat. Therefore, the "prosperity gospel" in contemporary Ghanaian Christianity requires Christians to balance faith that saves and the work that yields the income. The absence of the latter encourages socio-religious laziness, fruitlessness and poverty. The study contributes to scholarship in prosperity theology, Biblical theology of work, African Christian Theology of development, Christianity and human development; liberation, reconstruction, poverty-reduction and mother-tongue theologies, and financial freedom among Christians through building balance between faith and work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This research was limited to the context of Christianity and the Akan religio-cultural ontology in Ghana in relating the place of work and discipline toward faith and prosperity. Further research could explore other religious contexts. Also, a mixed methods approach that considers a large sample size with quantitative and qualitative data could add extra significance. The findings provide that Christianity embraces the place of work and its relevance for faith. Therefore, in relation to prosperity, the exegetical findings, Akan religio-cultural notions, interviews findings and theological perspectives in this study propose that the concept of the "prosperity gospel" in contemporary Ghanaian Christianity should be reviewed and redefined. In that, it should reform and produce diligent, responsible and faith-oriented Ghanaian Christians who balance their faith, prayers and positive confessions with genuine income-generating work towards a holistic prosperity theology. Even if a person's faith and positive confessions win material gifts from others, he or she should understand that those who give such kindness sacrifice a lot through hard work to reap such benefits. Good health, wealth and success are costly. Christians should know better. Work is from God, the Creator, and he expects his children to work and keep the garden and their homes, and even to support their pastoral callings and daily living.

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Rehema Ally Shekuwe & Juma Almasi Mhina

ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of street children remains a persistent social crisis in Tanzania, particularly in urban areas like Arusha City, where poverty, family breakdown, and rapid urbanization have contributed to the rising number of children living and working on the streets. Despite various government and NGO interventions, many reintegration efforts fail due to institutional mistrust and socio-cultural disconnects. This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of street children in Arusha City, examine the challenges of institutional reintegration, and analyze the socio-cultural dynamics that influence their return to street life. A cross-sectional research design was employed, focusing on Kati Ward, a central and socio- economically diverse area within Arusha. The study population included street children, community members, and key informants such as local leaders and child welfare officers. A sample size of 100 respondents was determined using Yamane's formula and data were collected through structured questionnaires for street children and community members and unstructured interviews for key informants. Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), with results presented through descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages. Key findings revealed that 77% of street children were aged 10–14, 82% were male and 68% had only reached primary education.

Keywords: street children, reintegration, urban poverty, socio-cultural dynamics, arusha city.

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of street children remains a persistent social crisis in Tanzania, particularly in urban areas like Arusha City, where poverty, family breakdown, and rapid urbanization have contributed to the rising number of children living and working on the streets. Despite various government and NGO interventions, many reintegration efforts fail due to institutional mistrust and socio-cultural disconnects. This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of street children in Arusha City, examine the challenges of institutional reintegration and analyze the socio-cultural dynamics that influence their return to street life. A cross-sectional research design was employed, focusing on Kati Ward, a central and socio-economically diverse area within Arusha. The study population included street children, community members, and key informants such as local leaders and Social welfare officers. A sample size of 100 respondents was determined using Yamane's formula, and data were collected through structured questionnaires for street children and community members and unstructured interviews for key informants. Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), with results presented through descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages. Key findings revealed that 77% of street children were aged 10–14, 82% were male, and 68% had only reached primary education. Rehabilitation centres and education initiatives were the most cited interventions, yet many children return to the streets due to emotional disconnection and systemic gaps. The study concludes that sustainable reintegration requires a holistic, community-based approach that addresses root causes and incorporates the voices and needs of street children themselves.

Keywords: street children, reintegration, urban poverty, socio-cultural dynamics, arusha city.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of street children is a persistent global crisis, affecting both developed and developing nations. Rooted in poverty, rapid urbanization, and social disintegration, millions of children worldwide are forced to survive under harsh street conditions (World Health Organization [WHO], 2018; UNICEF, 2018). In countries such as the Philippines, despite significant involvement from government and civil society, reintegration efforts often fail. Many children reject institutional care or revert to street life, citing emotional disconnect, institutional mistrust, or the familiarity of street survival strategies (Mvungi, 2012; Reyes, 2021). Several non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including ChildHope Philippines, Bahay Tuluyan, and the Virlanie Foundation, work to address these gaps by offering shelters, psychosocial rehabilitation and education. (ChildHope Philippines, 2022; Virlanie Foundation, 2020). Government initiatives through the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), such as the Haven for Children program, provide therapeutic care for children affected by trauma and substance abuse. However these efforts face persistent challenges in reaching and retaining the most vulnerable children (DSWD, 2021; Reyes & Cruz, 2019).

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In Africa, the issue is compounded by historical, structural and socioeconomic dynamics, including rapid population growth, wealth inequality and the lingering impacts of colonial legacies and structural adjustment programs (Raffaelli & Koller, 2016; Omondi & Ochieng, 2020). Street children, commonly referred to as Watoto wa Mitaani in Tanzania, Chokoraa in Kenya, and Moineaux in the Democratic Republic of Congo, embody a visible yet neglected population (UNICEF, 2018). These children are frequently mischaracterized as delinquents rather than victims of systemic failure, thereby influencing public attitudes and policy interventions (Mvungi et al., 2012; Ouma, 2021).

In Tanzania, the growing number of street children is driven largely by poverty, the breakdown of family structures and economic fragility. The loss of caregivers and the inability of extended families to absorb orphaned children has created a pathway to street life (Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children [MoHCDGEC], 2016). Although the government has established rehabilitation centers through the Ministry, many children either evade these institutions or escape shortly after entry. According to Global Giving (2023), Tanzania is estimated to have approximately 437,000 street children, though earlier figures were as high as 849,054 (UNICEF, 2016). Irregular reporting and fragmented data systems obscure the true scale of the crisis, complicating intervention efforts (Kweka, 2020).

Arusha City Council mirrors these national trends. Urban migration, economic stagnation and the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS-related deaths have resulted in increased numbers of orphaned and abandoned children. These children often turn to the streets due to the inability of families to meet their basic needs (MoHCDGEC, 2016). A survey cited by Tanzania Daily News in 2012 placed the number of vulnerable children in the country at 849,054. More recent data from Global Giving (2023) lowered this estimate to 437,500. Despite these figures, inconsistencies in data make it difficult to assess trends reliably. A 2011 local census indicated a temporary decline in Arusha, with 520 street children reported, while numbers in nearby Moshi increased (UNICEF, 2016).

A study by the Mkombozi Centre for Street Children (2015) found that 22% of street children in Arusha ended up on the streets due to school exclusion and inability to pay school fees. Government initiatives aimed at linking these children with care institutions have shown limited success. Many children eventually return to the streets, driven by institutional mistrust, a sense of autonomy or peer networks. Over time, they become embedded in risky survival strategies such as begging, drug trafficking, pickpocketing, and child prostitution (Onyango, 2018; Kweka, 2020). These children often originate from homes plagued by extreme poverty, abuse or orphanhood conditions that are insufficiently addressed by current policy frameworks.

Although the problem is arguably less severe in Arusha compared to some urban centers, it remains urgent and solvable. Khamala (2015) notes that during Tanzania's independence era, the issue of street children was unforeseen. The few juvenile institutions inherited from the colonial period were deemed sufficient, but as the number of street children has grown, these mechanisms have become inadequate. The increase in children on the streets, particularly in rapidly urbanizing regions like Arusha, signals a breakdown in both preventive and responsive systems of care. As emphasized by Madihi et al. (2019), effective interventions must move beyond institutional responses to include community-based approaches, education reintegration and family strengthening services.

While numerous studies have explored the drivers of child homelessness and the limitations of institutional interventions, there is a notable lack of context-specific, up-to-date empirical research on the effectiveness and sustainability of reintegration programs for street children in Arusha City. Most existing literature either aggregates national data or relies on outdated statistics, which limits policy responsiveness. Furthermore, little attention has been given to understanding the perspectives of the street children themselves regarding what constitutes a

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successful reintegration pathway. This study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by exploring the lived experiences of street children in Arusha, the challenges of institutional reintegration and the socio-cultural dynamics that influence their return to street life.

II. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Study Area

Kati Ward is an ideal study area for exploring the lived experiences and reintegration challenges of street children in Arusha from a socio-cultural perspective due to its central location, socio-economic dynamics and high human traffic. As the heart of Arusha City, Kati hosts the Central and Samunge markets, which are major economic hubs that attract large populations, including vulnerable groups such as street children who rely on such public spaces for survival through begging, vending, or scavenging. The ward's concentration of financial institutions, commercial activities and key landmarks makes it a magnet for informal livelihoods, increasing the visibility and interaction of street children with diverse community actors (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022).

Additionally, Kati Ward is surrounded by key administrative and residential areas, creating a socio-cultural mix that influences the behavior, survival strategies and social stigmas street children face. Its mix of public institutions, religious sites like the Arusha Ijumaa Mosque, and historical schools makes it a culturally significant space where various community norms and values intersect. These elements offer rich ground for examining the cultural perceptions, institutional support systems and reintegration efforts targeting street children. Thus, the ward provides both the environmental and social context necessary for understanding how urban dynamics shape street children's lived experiences and the challenges they encounter when attempting reintegration into society.

2.2 Research Design

In this study, researchers employed a cross-sectional research design because it allowed them to involve different groups of people who varied in the variable of interest while sharing common characteristics such as socioeconomic status, educational background, and ethnicity.

2.3 Target Population

The population of this study comprised individuals relevant to the lived experiences and reintegration challenges of street children within the socio-cultural context of Kati Ward, Arusha. This included street children themselves, community members, local leaders, market vendors and representatives from institutions involved in child welfare and social support. These groups were selected based on their proximity, interaction, or influence on street children's daily lives and reintegration processes. According to the 2022 Population and Housing Census, Kati Ward had a total population of 7,829 residents (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022), providing a diverse and socially dynamic environment suitable for capturing varied perspectives and experiences related to the study topic.

2.4 Sample Size

The study specifically targeted street children residing within Kati Ward. However, due to the lack of an official registry or comprehensive data on the number of street children in the area, the total ward population of 7,829 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022) was used as a statistical proxy to estimate a representative sample size. This approach allowed the researchers to derive a reasonable estimate despite data limitations. To determine the appropriate sample size, Yamane's formula was applied using a 10% margin of error.

Where n = sample size

N = total population (7,829)

e = margin of error (0.1)

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Whereby n is the sample size, N is the population size, and e is the margin of error.

So,

$$n = \frac{7,829}{1+7,829\times(0.1)^2} = \frac{7,829}{78.29} = 100$$

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2.5 Sampling procedure

In this study, researchers employed simple random sampling to ensure that every individual within the target population had an equal chance of being included in the sample. This method was particularly appropriate for selecting street children and community members, as it minimized selection bias and enhanced the representativeness of the sample. Given the diversity of the population and the need for balanced perspectives, simple random sampling allowed for a fair distribution of respondents, ensuring that all eligible individuals had an equal opportunity to participate in the study.

Additionally, purposive sampling was used to select key informants such as the Ward Executive Officer (WEO) and Village Executive Officer (VEO). This non-probability sampling technique was suitable for identifying participants with specific knowledge and expertise relevant to the study's objectives. Including these officials helped the researchers gain in-depth insights into the reintegration mechanisms, administrative challenges, and institutional roles related to street children. Therefore, purposive sampling complemented the random sampling approach by securing reliable and context-rich information essential for addressing the research questions effectively.

2.6 Data Collection Methods

In this study, questionnaires were used to collect data from street children and community members. These questionnaires consisted of structured, closed-ended questions designed to be easy for respondents to complete, while also allowing the researchers to efficiently quantify and analyze the responses. This method was appropriate for gathering general perceptions, experiences, and attitudes related to the lived experiences and reintegration challenges of street children within the community.

In addition, interviews were used to collect data from key informants such as the Ward Executive Officer (WEO), Village Executive Officer (VEO), and other relevant stakeholders. The researchers employed unstructured interview techniques, which allowed for open-ended, flexible questioning. This approach enabled the interviewers to explore complex issues in greater depth and gain rich, detailed insights into institutional roles, reintegration efforts and socio-cultural dynamics influencing the lives of street children in Kati Ward.

2.7 Data Analysis

In this study, data analysis was facilitated using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The collected data were first coded and then processed to generate descriptive statistics, including percentages and frequency distributions. The results were systematically presented using tables for clarity and ease of interpretation.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents the demographic profile of the respondents, including their age, sex and education level.

3.2 Age of Respondents

Table 1: Age Distribution of Respondents (n=100)

Age Group (Years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
5–9	17	17.0%
10–14	77	77.0%
15–19	6	6.0%
Total	100	100.0

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The findings in Table 1 reveal that the majority of respondents (77.0%) were aged between 10 and 14 years, followed by 17.0% who were aged between 5 and 9 years. Only 6.0% of respondents fell within the 15 to 19-year age group. These results suggest that children aged 10 to 14 constitute the largest segment of street children in Arusha City. This age group is generally more independent, mobile and actively involved in street-based activities such as begging and informal labor, making them more visible in urban public spaces.

3.3 Sex of Respondents

Table 2: Sex Profile of Respondents (n=100)

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	82	82.0%
Female	18	18.0%
Total	100	100.0

The findings in Table 2. Indicates that male street children make up the majority (82.0%) compared to their female counterparts (18.0%). This disparity may be attributed to the fact that female street children are more likely to benefit from early interventions or protective measures. They are often taken into shelters or reintegrated with families more quickly than male children, which may explain their lower visibility and representation on the streets.

3.4 Education Level of Respondents

Table 3: Education Level of Respondents (n=100)

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Primary Education	68	68.0%
Secondary Education	32	32.0%
Total	100	100.0

The findings reveal that the majority of street children (68.0%) have completed only primary education, while 32.0% have attained secondary education. This indicates that many street children likely dropped out of school due to underlying factors such as poverty, loss of parental care, domestic violence and limited access to basic necessities. These barriers not only hinder their educational advancement but also increase their vulnerability to life on the streets, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to address these root causes.

3.5 Interventions Adopted by the Government and NGOs in Addressing Street Children

The findings presented in Table 4 show that rehabilitation centres were the most frequently cited intervention (42.0%), followed by education initiatives (33.0%). Other strategies, such as outreach programs (12.0%), awareness campaigns (8.0%) and legal protection (5.0%), were mentioned less often. This suggests that stakeholder efforts are primarily concentrated on shelter provision and educational access for street children. While these interventions are critical, the overreliance on institutional responses may overlook the complex socio-cultural and legal challenges that hinder long-term reintegration. A more comprehensive and sustainable approach is needed, one that incorporates legal reforms, community-based outreach and family-strengthening strategies to address the root causes of street life.

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These findings support Wainaina (2017), who noted that despite the existence of government-run rehabilitation programs, many street children eventually return to the streets. This recurring pattern highlights the limitations of current institutional models and underscores the importance of child-centered, context-specific interventions that foster trust, emotional connection and lasting reintegration into society.

Table 4: Interventions Adopted by Government and NGOs (n=100)

Intervention Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Rehabilitation Centres	42	42.0%
Education Initiatives	33	33.0%
Outreach Programs	12	12.0%
Awareness Campaigns	8	8.0%
Legal Protection	5	5.0%
Total	100	100.0

3.6 Views on how to Minimize the Influx of Street Children

The results are in Table 5. Indicates that half of the respondents (50.0%) emphasized the importance of improved family care, highlighting the critical role a stable and supportive home environment plays in preventing children from resorting to street life. Additionally, 30.0% pointed to increased access to education, while 20.0% advocated for greater awareness and use of family planning as key preventive measures. These responses suggest that the majority of street children likely come from dysfunctional, impoverished or overburdened households. As such, there is a pressing need to strengthen social protection systems that address family instability, economic hardship, and barriers to education.

Although the prevalence of street children in Arusha City may be lower than in some larger urban centers, the findings indicate that the issue remains significant and solvable. With a strategic combination of policy commitment, community engagement, and evidence-based interventions focused on prevention and family support, the city can reduce the number of children resorting to street life. The results underscore the importance of shifting from reactive, institutional responses to proactive, family - and community-centered approaches that tackle the root causes of vulnerability.

Table 5: Suggested Solutions to Reduce Street Children in Urban Areas (n=100)

Suggested Solution	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Provision of Education	30	30.0%
Family Planning Awareness	20	20.0%
Ensuring Good Family Care	50	50.0%
Total	100	100.0

Interviews with key informants revealed that;

> *".....most street children in Arusha originate from families facing extreme poverty, neglect, or abuse, leading to a breakdown in parental care. Respondents also stressed that poor parenting skills and a lack of awareness about child development contribute significantly to children leaving home. Additionally, several informants emphasized that reintegration efforts often fail because they overlook the emotional and social needs of these children, focusing instead on temporary institutional solutions."*

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These qualitative insights strongly reinforce the quantitative findings, where 50.0% of respondents identified improved family care as the most effective strategy to minimize the influx of street children. Both data sets point to the home environment as a critical factor, suggesting that without addressing family dysfunction and poverty, other interventions may fall short. Moreover, the emphasis on education (30.0%) and family planning (20.0%) in the quantitative results is echoed in the interviews, where informants cited lack of educational access and overburdened households as underlying drivers of child homelessness. Together, the qualitative and quantitative findings highlight the urgent need for a holistic, community-based approach that prioritizes family strengthening, education access, and preventive social services over institutional containment.

When interviews were conducted with one among the Key Informants, once said:

> *".....Street children were involved in drug abuse, sexual abuse, and other deviant behaviors; even if they are misused by law enforcement agencies, police and other adults. In this regard, existing rules and laws may be implemented like the prohibition of drugs like glue, heroin and cocaine. Awareness training may be arranged for police and other law enforcement agencies to save street children's lives." (Key informant revealed)"*

The quote from the key informant highlights the multifaceted vulnerability of street children, who are not only victims of drug and sexual abuse but also suffer exploitation at the hands of law enforcement and other adults. This situation reflects a deep systemic failure where children in need of protection are instead subjected to further harm. The informant's call for the implementation of existing laws, especially those prohibiting harmful substances like glue, heroin, and cocaine, underscores the urgent need for legal and institutional accountability. Moreover, the recommendation for awareness training for police and law enforcement agents is crucial, as it emphasizes the importance of shifting their role from enforcers to protectors. Such training would sensitize them to the unique circumstances of street children and promote humane, child-centered approaches that prioritize rehabilitation and safety over punishment and exploitation. The implication of this is that without urgent reforms and deliberate intervention, street children will continue to suffer abuse, fall deeper into cycles of addiction and criminalization, and remain excluded from support systems meant to protect their rights and dignity. This not only jeopardizes their futures but also perpetuates broader societal challenges related to crime, poverty and public health.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study set out to explore the lived experiences of street children in Arusha City, the challenges they face in institutional reintegration and the socio-cultural factors influencing their return to street life. The findings revealed that the majority of street children are between the ages of 10 and 14, predominantly male and most have only attained primary education. These demographic trends reflect broader systemic issues, including poverty, broken family structures, and inadequate access to education and social services. Although various interventions such as rehabilitation centres, education initiatives and outreach programs have been implemented by both the government and NGOs, their effectiveness remains limited. Many children continue to reject institutional care due to mistrust, emotional disconnection and a sense of autonomy built around street life.

Moreover, the study highlights that sustainable reintegration cannot be achieved through institutional efforts alone. Respondents emphasized the importance of strengthening family care systems, increasing access to education and promoting family planning as key strategies for preventing children from ending up on the streets. The socio-cultural environment in areas like Kati Ward significantly shapes how street children experience and respond to reintegration efforts. Therefore, a more holistic, community-based approach rooted in local realities and inclusive of children's voices is essential for designing effective interventions.

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Future policies should prioritize not only rescue and rehabilitation but also prevention, long-term psychosocial support and the reinforcement of family and community structures.

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ABSTRACT

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Keywords: conceptual understanding, female students, misconceptions, sdg 5.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The beginning teaching and learning chemistry at the SHS level is to assist first-year students in understanding and appreciating the concept of atomic orbitals and hybridisation of molecules (Ministry of Education [MOE], 2010). Besides, understanding these concepts help students to describe the kind of hybridisation of elements in molecules and their shapes. This, also, enables students account for the bonding scheme in molecules because the third Section in the chemistry curriculum has the general objectives, which aid first-year students in understanding that atoms combine to form molecules, sharing valence electrons to form covalent or metallic bonds, exchanging electrons to form ionic bond, and recognising the role of modelling, evidence and theory in explaining and understanding the structure, chemical bonding, and properties of ionic and molecular compounds (MOE, 2010, p. 7). All these chemistry concepts are in relation to atomic orbitals and hybridisation, making the selected area of study important to chemistry education. The specific objectives outlined for students' learning hybridisation in the chemistry curriculum in the Ghanaian SHS are for students to explain the term hybridisation; describe how sp^3, sp^2 and sp hybrid orbitals are formed; describe how sigma and pi-bonds are formed; and illustrate the shapes of given molecular compounds (MOE, 2010, p. 10).

To this important chemistry, research over the years show that concepts of atomic orbitals and hybridisation are difficult for students to understand (Abukari et al., 2022; Marifa et al., 2023a; Salaha & Dumon, 2011; Salamea et al.,

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2022). Understanding the concept of hybridisation requires students to appreciate the connection of different abstract concepts such as atomic orbitals, chemical bonding, and molecular compounds. Atomic orbitals basically involve the study of how electrons in atoms are distributed within the available orbitals under the various energy levels. This indicates that understanding such chemistry concepts would help students understand the basic concepts, facilitating their conceptualisation of many important chemistry concepts like chemical bonding. However, Ghanaian students exhibit conceptual difficulties when answering questions about concepts in hybridisation and atomic orbitals in their final school year examinations (WAEC, 2017; 2018; 2019; 2020), and elsewhere, students interchange meanings of atomic orbitals when explaining concepts in hybridisation (Gillespie, 2004; Stefani & Tsaparlis, 2009; Taber, 2001; Zoller, 1990).

The concept of hybridisation was proposed by Linus Pauling in 1931 to explain how different atomic orbitals of different energies and shapes of a particular atom combine to produce more stable orbitals with the same energy. Hybrid orbitals are formed by blending atomic orbitals in an atom, usually the central one, to enable the sharing of valence electrons for chemical bonding (Chang, 2010; Gillespie, 2004; Petrucci et al., 2016). This concept of hybridisation is an extension of the valence bond (VB) theory and the valence shell electron pair repulsion model (VSEPR) theory. VB theory explains covalent bond formation, focusing on the overlap of atomic orbitals. It considers interactions between a partially filled, or in some cases, a filled orbital from one atom and an empty orbital from another. The theory maintains that core electrons and unpaired valence electrons stay in their original orbitals. It highlights that bonding electrons are densely packed within the overlapping regions of the orbitals (Petrucci et al., 2016).

According to Chang (2010), VB theory offers a more comprehensive understanding of chemical bond formation than the Lewis theory. VB theory posits that a stable molecule forms when the interacting atoms lower the system's potential energy. In contrast, the Lewis theory does not consider the energy alterations during chemical bond formation. VB theory considers the variations in potential energy as the distance between the reacting atoms changes. This diversity in orbitals involved helps to comprehend why there are differences in bond enthalpies and lengths among molecules like H_2, F_2, and HF. Unlike Lewis theory, which treats all covalent bonds uniformly, VB theory does not explain their differences (Chang, 2010). To describe bonding in polyatomic molecules, hybridisation was added to VB theory (Chang, 2010; Ebbing & Gammon, 2005; Petrucci et al., 2016).

The relationship between hybridisation and the VSEPR models defines hybridisation describing bonding scheme only in molecules when the electron pair arrangement has been identified by using VSEPR theory. If the VSEPR theory predicts the electron arrangement of the molecule to be tetrahedral, then there is an assumption of the molecule, specifically the central atom to form four sp^3 hybrid orbitals, being a mixture of one s and three p orbitals. There are other types of hybrid orbitals, sp and sp^2, that depict the linear and trigonal planar shapes, respectively, of the VSEPR model (Chang, 2010; Ebbing & Gammon, 2005; Petrucci et al., 2016). In this, carbon as a unique atom forms all these three types of hybrid orbitals (sp, sp^2, and sp^3) in its compounds (Lamoureux & Ogilvie, 2019a; 2019b), leading to hybridisation being used often very well in organic chemistry (Petrucci et al., 2016).

As mentioned earlier, for bonding in molecules, the central atom must undergo hybridisation. The number of bonding sites and hybrid orbitals formed equals the orbitals involved in hybridisation. The symbols indicate the number and type of orbitals involved. Hybrid orbitals contain both bonding electrons and lone pairs. For instance, in the methane (CH_4) molecule, carbon in its ground state can form only two bonds as it has two unpaired electrons in the $2p$ orbitals to form the molecule CH_2, which is highly unstable, hence carbon would gain energy in order to create space for the four bonds to be formed with hydrogen (Atkins & Jones, 1997;

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Bettelheim et al., 2004; Chang, 2010; Gillespie, 2004; Petrucci et al., 2016).

A comprehension of atomic orbitals, their designations (s, p, d, and f), and their directional orientations are crucial for a scientific understanding of hybrid orbitals and hybridisation (Chang, 2010). For instance, for students to explain hybridisation as not only involving s and p atomic orbitals, but also, elements in period three account for hybridisation using their d atomic orbitals, is crucial. Additionally, understanding why it is sp^3 in H_2O, CH_4, PF_3, sp^2 in BCl_3, AlI_3, sp in BeF_2, sp^3d in PCl_5, and sp^3d^2 in SF_6 is also crucial (Chang, 2010; Ebbing & Gammon, 2005; Petrucci et al., 2016). This scientific understanding is fundamental for comprehending other critical and complex concepts in chemistry, such as covalent bonding, molecular structure, organic chemistry, and the nature of matter (Chang, 2010; Petrucci et al., 2016). Nakiboglu (2003) indicated that students who perceive atomic structure in terms of electron shells face challenges when attempting to learn and understand the atomic orbital concept. Moreover, as students delve much deeper into the finer details of orbital shapes and designations, it hinders their ability to think about molecular structure in relation to molecular orbitals (Nakiboglu, 2003). Students with difficulties in understanding atomic orbitals could likely exhibit similar difficulties in grasping concepts of structural formulae and shapes of molecules in organic chemistry.

Furthermore, understanding concepts such as hybridisation of atoms of elements in molecules in organic chemistry and resonance structures, and how these molecules are shaped is really important for truly understanding organic chemistry (Oyakhirome, 2020). However, the way hybridisation is often explained in textbooks and by teachers can be too simplistic. That is, teachers (Hashweh, 2005) and textbook writers usually just focus on figuring out certain numbers and pairs, which does not help students deeply understand the idea (Salamea et al., 2022). This leads students to memorise the concepts instead of learning to scientifically understand the underlying principles. Again, when it comes to scientific understanding the very concepts of hybridisation and hybrid orbitals, it gets even trickier for students because these things are hard to picture in your mind (Salamea et al., 2022).

More so, students mistakenly equate the term orbitals with shells or orbits, using these three terms interchangeably (Hanson et al., 2012; Taber, 2001). That is, students most often confuse molecular orbitals with atomic orbitals, incorrectly assuming that bonding electrons in molecules occupy orbitals denoted as s or p, or conflating sets of rehybridised molecular orbitals (like sp^3 hybrids) with molecular orbitals. The formation of hybrid orbitals, which are physically present, occurs spontaneously (Stefani & Tsaparlis, 2009). Students' difficulties in comprehending the concept of hybridisation are due to lack of foundational knowledge in atomic orbital concept and the correlation between orbital designations (s, p, d, and f) and their directional characteristics (Nakiboglu, 2003; Stefani & Tsaparlis, 2009; Zoller, 1990). These further affect students' scientific understanding of other relevant concepts in chemistry as earlier mentioned.

Research in education and learning of scientific concepts focusing on gender have shown that female students have been underrepresented (Crossdale et al., 2022; Klinger & Findenig, 2014) as most of this research have focused on male students. A report by UNESCO (2017) indicated that education is undeniably a fundamental human right that should be accessible to all, regardless of gender. Nevertheless, a clear gender disparity persists, with girls consistently having fewer opportunities compared to their male counterparts in science-related subjects or courses. This inequality is most evident at the upper primary and secondary education levels, due to various contributing factors like deeply entrenched social and cultural norms that favour boys' education, inadequate sanitation facilities within educational institutions, classrooms marked by violence and unequal treatment, and a shortage of female educators and role models to

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inspire and guide female students (UNESCO, 2017).

Also, a report by UNICEF (2022), made in their Global Annual Results Report 2021 on Gender Equality, revealed that the importance of investing in girls' education. Educated girls have more opportunities for healthy, productive lives, earn higher incomes, and play an active role in decisions affecting their lives. Girls' education also contributes to stronger economies and reduced inequalities, benefiting society as a whole; a contributing factor to the attainment of the fifth sustainable development goal (SDG 5). However, it is not just about access to school; it is about creating safe and supportive environments for girls to pursue their interests and careers. Despite the evidence highlighting the significance of girls' education, gender disparities persist, with millions of girls globally out of school, especially in conflict-affected areas. Globally, 129 million girls are not attending school, with 32 million in primary school, 30 million in lower-secondary school, and 67 million in upper-secondary school age. In conflict-affected countries, girls face more than double the likelihood of being out of school compared to their counterparts in non-affected nations (UNICEF, 2022).

Research shows that male students outperform female students (Crossdale et al., 2022). For instance, a study conducted by Oladejo et al. (2023) in Nigeria showed that female students do not perform well in chemistry and are underrepresented in science and science-related courses. Male students perform better in science-based subjects, such as chemistry and physics than their female counterparts (Oladejo et al., 2023). Female students' performance in science subjects, such as chemistry, has persistently been poor as they move up the academic ladder (Oladejo et al., 2023). Male students perform better in chemistry than females at the upper secondary level. However, it is noteworthy that students' success in learning chemistry amounts to their success in science.

More recent research revealed that male students outperform their female counterparts in science courses, such as chemistry and physics (Wrigley-Asante et al., 2023). This could be because of female students perceiving these science courses to be male-oriented subjects with its effects influencing their attitude towards, interest, and performance in these courses (Wrigley-Asante et al., 2023). Hence, there was a need to examine the level of conceptual understanding of female chemistry students and what accounts for their conceptual difficulties in chemistry concepts, such as atomic orbitals and hybridisation. This research answered the research question.

What is the conceptual understanding of female chemistry students, in single-and mixed-sex schools, in atomic orbitals and hybridisation?

The significance of this research lies in enhancing chemistry education through understanding female students' conceptual mastery of atomic orbitals and hybridisation. Findings could help educators identify student misconceptions and develop effective instructional strategies. Teachers can use these instructional strategies to address misunderstandings and improve learning in senior high school. Additionally, any differences in understanding between students from single-sex and mixed-sex schools can guide school managers in supporting female students learning chemistry.

1.1 Factors Affecting Female Students' Understanding

Moreover, empirical works have shown that there are a number of factors that account for the poor performance of students in learning science-related subjects (Adu-Gyamfi & Anim-Eduful, 2022; Adu-Gyamfi & Asaki, 2022), such as school type (Adu-Gyamfi & Anim-Eduful, 2022; Van de Gaer et al., 2004; Yalcinkaya & Ulu, 2012) and gender (Adu-Gyamfi & Anim-Eduful, 2022; Oladejo et al., 2023). Regarding school classification, the construct has been identified as either single-sex or mixed-sex schools, as well as well-endowed, endowed and less-endowed schools. Yalcinkaya and Ulu (2012) revealed that in terms of academic achievement, there was little difference found between females in single-sex schools and those in mixed-sex schools. However, students in single-sex schools were seen to

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perform better in academic orientation and had a greater interest in their homework than those in the mixed-sex schools, while students in the mixed-sex schools performed better in social skills and real-life situations.

Similarly, Campbell and Wahl (1998) identified that females in single-sex schools did better in science with them getting least amount of harassment from teachers and much interaction with teachers than the females in the mixed-sex schools who had greater amount of harassment from teachers and less interaction with their teachers. Sax et al. (2009) analysed the differences between female students in single-sex and mixed-sex schools in relation to their academic engagement, their interest in graduate schools, academic self-confidence, and their predisposition towards co-curricular engagement. Sax et al. reported that female graduates of single-sex school demonstrated high academic engagement than their counterparts in mixed-sex schools based on the time they spent doing their homework, tutoring and learning with their peers and interacting with their teachers. The single-sex graduates had greater interest in attending graduate schools than those in mixed-sex schools and in terms of academic self-confidence, and their predisposition towards co-curricular engagement, female graduates in the single-sex schools did better than those in the mixed-sex schools (Sax et al., 2009). Adu-Gyamfi and Anim-Eduful (2022) investigated the interaction effect of gender and school-type on students' development of experimental reasoning on organic qualitative analysis and found that there was no interaction effect of gender across the three school-types (less-endowed, endowed, and well-endowed school) on students' development of experimental reasoning on organic qualitative analysis.

Although research works have been done on students' scientific understanding in hybridisation (Abukari et al., 2022; Çalış, 2018; Klinger & Findenig, 2014; Marifa et al., 2023b; Oladejo et al., 2023; Salaha & Dumon, 2011; Salamea et al., 2022) and accompanied misconceptions in learning hybridisation (Hanson et al., 2012; Nakiboglu, 2003; Zoller, 1990) these studies in atomic orbitals and hybridisation have focused on examining students' scientific understanding without considering whether their conceptual difficulties are influenced by gender or whether the school type influences the conceptual understanding of the female student.

1.2 Misconceptions in Learning Hybridisation

In terms of hybridisation, misconceptions also persist. Students often perceive hybrid orbitals as physical entities rather than theoretical constructs (Salamea et al., 2022). This misconception is exacerbated by the way hybridisation is commonly taught (as a set of memorisation rules linking specific hybridisation types, such as sp^3 or sp^2 to molecular geometries). Hybridisation is a mathematical model used to explain observed molecular shapes and bond angles, yet it is often presented as a rigid rule rather than a dynamic concept influenced by the molecular environment (Hanson et al., 2012). This leads to another misconception that, hybridisation is a universal property of atoms, particularly carbon atoms, causing students to incorrectly assume that all carbon atoms are sp^3 hybridised regardless of the molecular context (Stefani & Tsaparlis, 2009). This misconception overlooks the fact that hybridisation adapts to different bonding environments, impacting molecular properties such as bond angles, polarity, and reactivity (Hanson et al., 2012; Nakiboglu, 2003). Rather than understanding how hybridisation influences these properties, students often memorise hybridisation types without mastering the reasoning behind them, limiting their ability to apply these concepts to novel situations (Talanquer, 2006).

To overcome these misconceptions, educators must adopt a more comprehensive approach to teaching atomic orbitals and hybridisation (Çalış, 2018). Incorporating quantum mechanical principles and emphasising the probabilistic nature of orbitals can help students develop a more accurate conceptual understanding (Orchin et al., 2005). Visual aids, such as molecular modelling software and $3D$ representations, are essential tools in bridging the gap between abstract concepts and tangible visualisations

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(Boachie et al., 2023). Encouraging active learning through problem-solving exercises and interactive simulations can challenge misconceptions and allow students to apply theoretical principles to real-world scenarios (Boachie et al., 2023). That is, hybridisation should be taught as a flexible model adaptable to various molecular contexts, not as rigid rules. This approach helps students better understand atomic orbitals and hybridisation, overcoming misconceptions and improving their mastery of molecular bonding and chemical behaviours (Bain & Towns, 2021; Dulmen et al., 2022).

Also, some students have alternating conceptions because of introducing misconceptions in an attempt to explain concepts simply (Talanquer, 2006). Talanquer classified these misconceptions students have as commonsense reasoning. This common reasoning can be seen to be association misconceptions, reduction misconceptions, fixation misconceptions, and linear sequencing misconceptions. Association heuristics involve making inferences based on observed associations between phenomena (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2015). Students often apply these heuristics when trying to understand cause-and-effect relationships in chemistry (Talanquer, 2006). For instance, many molecules with π bonds (double/triple bonds) involve sp^2 or sp hybridisation (as ethene (C_2H_4) is sp^2, ethyne (C_2H_2) is sp). A student might conclude that all molecules with π bonds must be sp^2 or sp hybridised. However, some molecules can have π bonds without being sp^2 or sp hybridised (Chang, 2010; Petrucci et al., 2016).

Reduction heuristics occur when students oversimplify complex concepts by focusing on a single defining feature while ignoring other relevant factors. This can lead to misconceptions when learning about hybridisation and atomic orbitals (Talanquer, 2006). For instance, students often learn that the type of hybridisation depends on the number of bonding pairs around an atom (as four bonding pairs, sp^3; three bonding pairs, sp^2; and two bonding pairs, sp). They assume only bonding pairs influence hybridisation, ignoring lone pairs. However, lone pairs also contribute to hybridisation (Chang, 2010; Petrucci et al., 2016).

Fixation heuristics happen when students rigidly use prior knowledge, hindering adaptation to new information (Talanquer, 2006). They might rely on rote rules rather than critically evaluating new concepts. Linear sequencing heuristics occur when students assume chemical processes follow a strict, step-by-step sequence, ignoring parallel interactions or alternative paths. This can lead to oversimplified understandings of atomic orbitals, hybridisation and molecular bonding. For instance, students are taught that electrons fill atomic orbitals according to the Aufbau principle ($1s \rightarrow 2s \rightarrow 2p \rightarrow 3s$, etc.). They assume electrons must fill one subshell before moving to the next, following a strict sequence. In actual atoms, overlapping energy levels cause deviations from strict filling order, $3d$ orbitals in transition metals; sometimes fill after $4s$ orbitals, leading to unexpected electron configurations (for instance, Cr: $[Ar]\,4s^1\,3d^5$ instead of $[Ar]\,4s^2\,3d^4$) (Chang, 2010; Ebbing & Gammon, 2005; Petrucci et al., 2016).

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This research used both quantitative and qualitative methods to study female chemistry students' understanding of atomic orbitals and hybridisation in senior high school. Postpositivist assumptions focused on objectivity and measurement, while constructivist assumptions emphasized subjective meaning through student explanations of these concepts.

2.1 Research Design

To examine the conceptual understanding of atomic orbitals and hybridisation, the researchers employed embedded mixed methods design. In this embedded mixed methods design, the one-phase approach was employed, where the qualitative approaches played a minor role to the quantitative approaches, using a two-tier diagnostic test. Philosophically, the researchers wanted to find the level of female students' conceptual understanding of atomic orbitals and hybridisation through quantitative approaches with a diagnostic test. However, we needed to construct female students' conceptual understanding by embedding qualitative

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approaches, hence, the use of a two-tier diagnostic test on atomic orbitals and hybridisation. Consequently, our qualitative data provided depth to the level of conceptual understanding of female chemistry students in atomic orbitals and hybridisation.

The quantitative dataset, primarily consisting of test scores, was analysed using means, standard deviations, frequencies, and the Mann-Whitney U test. The qualitative data from the reason-tier of the two-tier diagnostic test were analysed through inductive thematic analysis. The results of the qualitative analysis were embedded within the quantitative findings to provide detailed insights into the conceptual understanding of female chemistry students regarding atomic orbitals and hybridisation.

2.2 Sampling Procedures

The Cape Coast Metropolitan was one of the 261 Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) in Ghana and formed part of the 22 MMDAs in Central Region. The Metropolis covered an area of 122 square kilometres and is the smallest metropolis in the country. It was located at longitude 1° 15'W and latitude 5°06'N. It occupied an area of approximately 122 square kilometres. With its administrative capital as Cape Coast, it is one of the oldest MMDAs in Ghana. Cape Coast Metropolitan community was bounded on the south by the Gulf of Guinea, west by Komenda Edina Eguafo Abrem Municipal, east by the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District, and north by the Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District. The population of the metropolis according to the 2021 population and housing census stood at 189,925, where 48.9% were males and 51.1% were females **(**Ghana Statistical Service, 2024**).**

Cape Coast Metropolis was predominantly inhabited by the Fante people, along with Ewe, Gas, and other Akan groups. The main languages spoken were Fante, Twi, and English. The city was a major educational hub, hosting Ghana's oldest primary and high schools, as well as a traditional university, technical university, nursing and midwifery colleges, and teacher training institutions. This attracted students from across the country, contributing to its youthful population. Notably, Cape Coast also hosted two renowned single-sex female high schools that are well-known in Ghana. The reason the researcher studied female chemistry students' conceptual understanding of atomic orbitals and hybridisation in this metropolis.

There were 11 public senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis, with 10 offering elective chemistry. Among them, five were mixed-sex schools, three were male-only, and two were female-only. This research focused on female SHS students learning chemistry, targeting those in the two female-only schools and the five mixed-sex schools. It was estimated that there were 1218, 840, and 1120 female students offering chemistry at each level (first, second, and third years) respectively, leading to a sum of 3178 female students offering chemistry in the seven schools in Cape Coast Metropolis in the 2023/2024 academic year. The research focused on 840 second year female chemistry students in the Cape Coast Metropolis for the 2023/2024 academic year. These students had learned atomic orbitals and hybridisation in their first year, as per the chemistry curriculum (MOE, 2010), and their experiences were significant to the research.

A multistage sampling technique selected female students for the research. Purposive sampling was used to choose the Metropolis and seven of 11 schools that had female students learning elective chemistry, as their experiences were vital to the research. Second year female chemistry students in these schools were also purposively sampled. There were approximately 840 such students in the 2023/2024 academic year: 545 from two single-sex schools and 295 from five mixed-sex schools. Proportionate stratified random sampling selected 265 female students: 64.9% from single-sex schools and 35.1% from mixed-sex schools. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a sample of 265 represented a population of 850. Thus, selecting 304 from a population of 840 was reasonable. Specifically, 178 were chosen from two single-sex schools and 126 from five mixed-sex schools.

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2.3 Data Collection Instruments

2.3.1 Atomic Orbitals and Hybridisation Diagnostic Test (AOHDT)

Researchers constructed AOHDT, which had two sections: Section A covered student demographics like school type and age, while Section B included 12 items (3-14) focused on female students' understanding of atomic orbitals, molecular shapes, and hybridisation (Appendix A). Female students responded to six multiple-choice items, justifying their selections to reveal their conceptual mastery. Four items centred on atomic orbitals, while two addressed molecular shapes. Literature showed that concepts like hybrid orbitals, pure orbitals, chemical bonding, orbital designation (Hanson et al., 2012; Taber, 2001), and molecular shapes (Abukari et al., 2022; Nakiboglu, 2003) often pose challenges for students. Six text items were open-ended questions. Of the six items, one item comprised the concept of atomic orbitals, two items constituted the concept of shapes of molecules, and other three test items on hybridisation. According to the table of specifications, atomic orbitals accounted for 45.4% (five items) of AOHDT, shapes of molecules constituted 27.3% (three items) and hybridisation represented 27.3% (three items).

AOHDT was designed by the researchers according to the chemistry curriculum (MOE, 2010) and WAEC examination standards, ensuring content validity. A chemistry educator reviewed it for clarity, face, and content validity, which refined the items further. The test was pilot-tested with 20 second year female chemistry students from both single-sex and mixed-sex schools in Accra. Item analysis and difficulty indices were used to determine the Kuder-Richardson (KR-20) reliability coefficient. The test's reliability coefficient was .98, indicating high reliability.

2.4 Data Processing and Analysis Plan

On the AOHDT, each item received 2 scores to convert data into a numeric dataset, following Necor's (2018) rubric. Students earned 2 points for correct responses with correct explanations (Full Understanding), 1 point for correct responses with incorrect explanations or incorrect responses with correct explanations (Partial Understanding), and 0 points for blank or incorrect responses with incorrect explanations (No Understanding). Thus, a mean of 1.5 to 2.0 represented female chemistry students having full understanding of atomic orbitals and hybridisation, a mean from .5 but below 1.4 indicated that female chemistry students had partial understanding of atomic orbitals and hybridisation, and a mean between the range of .0 to.4 indicated that students had no understanding of atomic orbitals and hybridisation.

The research question was answered with percentages, frequencies, means, standard deviation, and Mann-Whitney U test as the most appropriate statistics. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare differences in conceptual understanding between female chemistry students in single-sex and mixed-sex schools. This data analysed were used to establish female students' conceptual understanding in single-and-mixed-sex schools.

The qualitative data were analysed using inductive thematic analysis. We read the dataset several times to get understanding of the ideas given by students. The data were then broken down into segments and each segment was given a code. After that, each code was then reviewed and given a theme. Themes that were overlapping were integrated into one. Narrations from the AOHDT were used to further give a better understanding of female students' conceptual understanding of atomic orbitals and hybridisation.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Female Students' Conceptual Understanding in Atomic Orbitals and Hybridisation

This research question examined the conceptual understanding of female students, in single-sex and mixed-sex schools, in learning atomic orbitals and hybridisation. To achieve this, the diagnostic test, AOHDT, was given to 304 female chemistry students to respond, and Table 1 shows the mean scores of female students' conceptual understanding in atomic orbitals and hybridisation.

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Table 1: Mean Scores of Female Students' Conceptual Understanding in Atomic Orbitals and Hybridisation (N =304)

Item	NU		PU		FU		M	Std.
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
3	56	18.4	148	48.7	100	32.9	1.1	.702
4	204	67.1	70	23.0	30	9.9	0.4	.666
5	27	8.9	222	73.0	55	18.1	1.1	.512
6	21	6.9	191	62.8	92	30.3	1.2	.564
7a	95	31.3	137	45.1	72	23.7	0.9	.739
7b	97	31.9	159	52.3	48	15.8	0.8	.673
7c	222	73.0	44	14.5	38	12.5	0.4	.700
7d	189	62.2	91	29.9	24	7.9	0.5	.638
8	177	58.2	122	40.1	5	1.6	0.4	.528
9	249	81.9	50	16.4	5	1.6	0.2	.440
10	203	66.8	70	23.0	31	10.2	0.4	.677
11	293	96.4	6	2.0	5	1.6	0.1	.293
12	242	79.6	41	13.5	21	6.9	0.3	.589
13	273	89.8	27	8.9	4	1.3	0.1	.358
14a	292	96.1	12	3.9	0	0	0.0	.202
14b	295	97.0	9	3.0	0	0	0.0	.170
14c	299	98.4	4	1.3	1	0.3	0.0	.161
14d	291	95.7	10	3.3	3	1.0	0.1	.264

Average Mean = .5, Average of Standard Deviation = .493

NU = No Understanding, PU = Partial Understanding,

FU = Full Understanding; M = Mean; Std. = Standard Deviation

From Table 1, the result shows that female students have partial understanding of concepts on atomic orbitals and hybridisation as evident by the overall mean of .5 (Std. = .493). However, there was variability in the mean scores of students' conceptual understanding of atomic orbital and hybridisation from item to item due to the high value of the standard deviation. That is, there were instances students demonstrated no understanding on items, whereas in others, students demonstrated partial understanding. For instance, on Items 3, 5, 6, 7a, 7b, and 7d, female students demonstrated partial understanding of concepts on atomic orbitals and hybridisation. For Item 3, where students were to demonstrate their conceptual understanding of the shape of the *s* -orbital of sodium atom, of 304 students, 48.7% at a mean of 1.1 (Std.=.702) demonstrated partial understanding of this concept, with 32.9% of the students demonstrating full understanding that the *s*-orbital is a spherical shape. In several cases, students were able to select the right response, however, they could not give the right explanations for their selections. For example, a student who selected the option spherical gave the reason,

> *this is because the valence electron enters the s-orbital* (Student 9).

This demonstrates a partial understanding and misconception of what the shape of the *s*-orbital in sodium atom is. Additionally, a student also gave the reason,

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because its bond formed is a linear type, and when two linear bonds overlap, it forms a partial shape (Student 42).

This is a demonstration of a misconception of the concept of atomic orbitals and chemical bonding.

For Item 4, 67.1% of the female students with a mean of .4 (std.=.666) demonstrated no understanding of the concept of principal quantum number, a crucial concept in atomic orbitals and hybridisation. This means that only 23.0% and 9.9% demonstrated a partial and full understanding of the concept respectively. This is very alarming. Some excerpts of the reasons students gave that demonstrated no understanding are:

5, this is because d-orbital can take up to five electrons (Student 137).

3, because if it is half filled, the principal quantum number is known by (n-1) (Student 169).

5, the d-orbital can have 5 sub-energy levels (Student 164).

Some excerpts of students having partial understanding of the concept of principal quantum number are:

4, because it has four orbitals (Student 060).

4, it shows the energy of the orbital (Student 162).

4, it is in the fourth orbital (Student 241).

The above results showed that female students could not conceptualise the difference between principal quantum number and orbitals. They often confuse the concept of orbitals with energy levels. Most students misinterpreted the concept of the principal quantum number of 4*d* in contrary to the 4 representing the energy level or shell and the *d* representing the orbital type.

Item 5 examined students' understanding of the type of orbitals that exists, and from Table 1, the results revealed that out of 305 students, 222 (73.0%) demonstrated partial understanding with a mean of 1.1 (Std.=.511). This means that 27 (8.9%) of the students demonstrated no understanding, while 55 (18.1%) demonstrated full understanding of the concept of atomic orbitals and hybridisation. Proof of students demonstrating partial understanding are:

2d, because every atom has an orbital it falls under and since 1s, 2s, 2p, 3s, 3d. 2d doesn't exist (Student 042).

2d, this is because the d atomic orbitals have a maximum of 3-orbitals (Student 009)

2d, does not exist because in the electronic configuration of atomic orbitals, 2d does not form part of the series (Student 296).

From the above on Item 5, students were able to identify the types of orbitals in an atom, however, they were not able to explain the nature of the orbitals at the second energy level. In this case, students were unable to explained that 2*d* atomic orbital does not exist in any atom. That is, there exists only two sub-atomic orbitals at energy level 2 as 2*s* and 2*p*, where the 2*s* can accommodate two electrons and the 2*p* can accommodate six electrons, summing up to eight electrons.

From the answers above on Item 6, students were asked to select the correct electronic configuration for aluminium metal. Results from Table 1 revealed that majority of students (62.8%) had partial understanding of the concept (M = 1.2, Std. = .563). This further revealed that 30.3% of the students had full understanding of the concept while 6.9% of the students demonstrated no understanding of the correct electron of configuration of aluminium, $1s^2\,2s^2\,2p^6\,3s^2\,3p^1$. Most students were able to select the right response; however, they could not provide the right explanation for their choice. Some excerpts are:

The answer is $1s^2\,2s^2\,2p^6\,3s^2\,3p^1$, *because aluminium has the atomic number 13 and has 3 shells* (Student 174).

The answer is $1s^2\,2s^2\,2p^6\,3s^2\,3p^1$, *because the degenerate orbitals must be fully filled before others are filled* (Student 200).

The answer is $1s^2\,2s^2\,2p^6\,3s^2\,3p^1$, *because s-orbitals take a maximum of 2 electrons in each*

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s-orbital while p-orbitals take a maximum of 6 electrons: 2 in each sub-orbital (Student 213).

The answer is $1s^2\ 2s^2\ 2p^6\ 3s^2\ 3p^1$, *because aluminium has 13 electrons* (Student 292).

In the above on Item 6, though students described the electron of an atom, they were unable to explain how electronic configurations are written with the help of the Aufbau rule, Hund's rule, and Pauli's exclusion rule. These rules guide how electrons are arranged in orbitals of an atom.

The concept of atomic orbital diagrams was measured on Items 7a-d. For Items 7a and 7b, results from Table 1 shows that of 304 students, 45.1% and 52.3% of the students demonstrated partial understanding with misconceptions of atomic orbital diagrams at a mean of .9 (Std. = .739) and .8 (Std. = .673) respectively. This explains that 95 and 97 students had no understanding of atomic orbitals diagrams while 23.7% and 15.8% students demonstrated full understanding. Some students were unable to demonstrate how orbital diagrams are drawn while others also could not give the right explanations of how electrons are arranged in the orbitals. For instance, Student-271 and Student-279 were able to write the electronic configuration of atoms, however, was unable to draw the right orbital diagram.

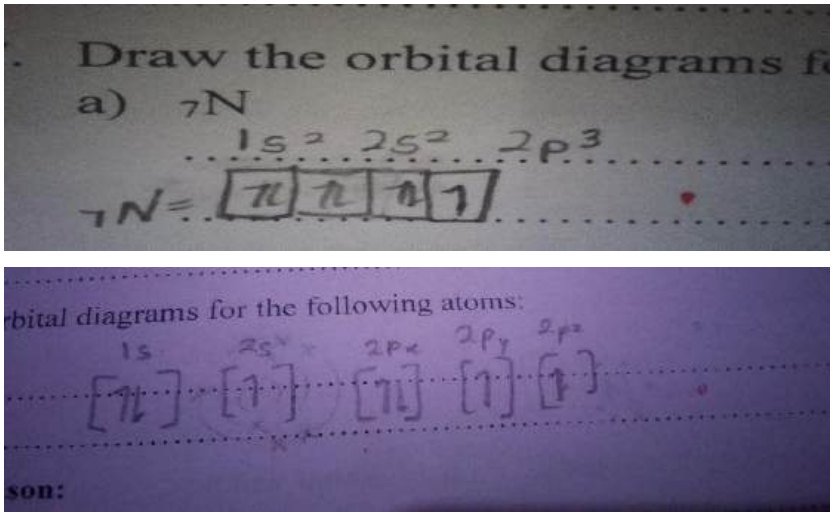

Figure 1: Sample orbital diagram for nitrogen in the ground state from two students

Some students were also able to draw the orbital diagrams for the atoms but were unable to explain the reason for the orbital diagrams drawn. Some reasons provided were;

> *2p has a higher energy than that of 2s and 2s has a higher energy than 1s* (Student 152).
>
> *Shells have to be partially filled before they are filled with opposite spin of equivalent energy* (Student 159).
>
> *First spins are to be filled first throughout the orbital before opposite spins* (Student 268).

Furthermore, female students demonstrated no understanding on Items 4, 7c, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 14 (a-d). This implies that majority of the female students were unable to select a right response and explain the reason for their selection. For instance, for Item 4, 67.1% of the 304 female students at a mean of .4 (Std. = .666) were unable to select the right response and explain the reason for their selection of the principal quantum number for a 4*d* orbital as 4 being the fourth energy level in the said atom. This means that only 9.9% of the female students were able to respond correctly and explain the reason for their selection and 23.0% of the female students selected the right responses but were unable to explain the reason for their selection. Some of the conceptual difficulties demonstrated by the female chemistry students on the identification of principal quantum from a given notation or electronic configuration of an atom are demonstrated below:

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5, this is because d-orbital can take up to five electrons (Student 137).

3, because if it is half filled, the principal quantum number is known by (n-1) (Student 169).

5, the d-orbital can have 5 sub-energy levels (Student 164).

4, *it is in the fourth orbital* (Student 241).

For Item 7c, out of 304 students, 73.0% of them at a low mean of .4 (Std.=.700) demonstrated no understanding on drawing the orbitals diagram for the element, *Cr*. Thus, 14.5 and 12.5 of the female students demonstrated partial understanding and full understanding of the concept. This implies that female students demonstrated weak procedural and conceptual knowledge of the electronic configuration of chromium using the orbital diagram. This was most evident when applying the rules to fill partially full atomic orbitals. For instance, Student-157 was able to write the electronic configuration, however, she was unable to draw the orbital diagram. Alternatively, Student-179 was unable to demonstrate the exception of partially filled orbitals where chromium has only one orbital in the 4*s* orbital with 5 electrons in the 3*d* orbitals. This is evidenced in Figure 2.

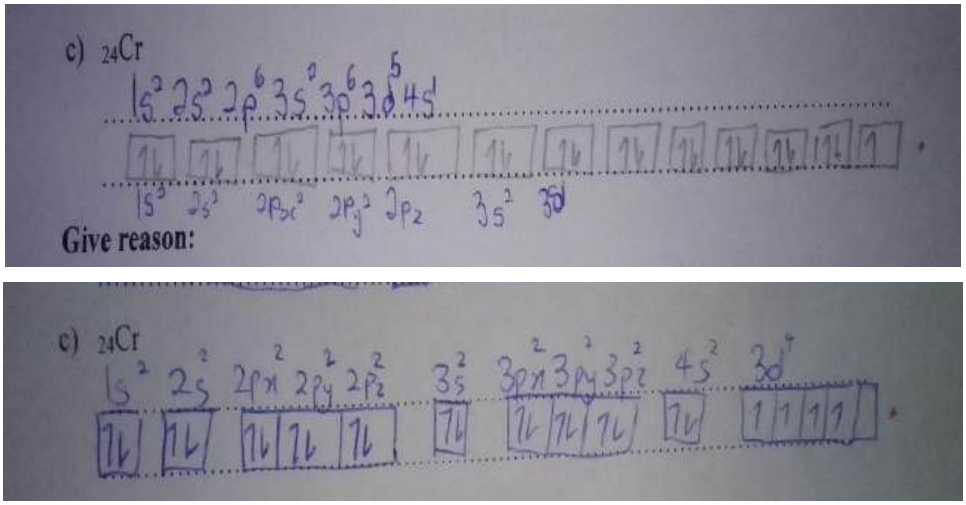

Figure 2: Sample orbital diagram for chromium in the ground state from two students

For Item 9, 81.9% of the female students at a very low mean of .2 (Std. = .440) demonstrated no understanding on the concept that the shape of SO_2 is bent. Most female students identified the shape to be linear shape, implying that most female students predicted the shape based on the subscript on oxygen without drawing the Lewis structure to identify the electron groups around sulphur, the central atom. This emphasises that teachers are to explain to learners the need for drawing the Lewis structure of molecules to guide students in predicting the shapes of molecules. For instance, Student-150 explained that

... The shape of SO_2 was linear because the central atom was sp hybridised. On the contrary, one of the female students selected the right option, however, she had misconceptions on the central atom of the compound. She explained that

Oxygen has two lone pairs which repel the S atom when it forms a bond, giving it a bent shape (Student 131).

This is a clear indication of the misconception female students have regarding the central atom of molecules aiding in determining the geometry of a molecule.

For Items 14 a-d, more than 90% of the female students demonstrated no understanding of predicting the type of hybridisation that occurs in the central atoms of NH_3, CO_2, C_2H_2, and BeH_2 molecules. Most of the female students only stated the kind of hybridisation that occurs in the molecules without indicating the processes

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involved in predicting the type of hybridisation that occurs. Students were unable to scientifically conceptualise how to predict the hybridisation of the molecules by stating the ground state and where there is a gain of energy with an electron(s) moving from the *s* orbital to the *p* or *d* orbital. After this, the orbitals are mixed depending on the number of bonding sites needed by the central atom to form the molecules. This is evidenced in Figure 3.

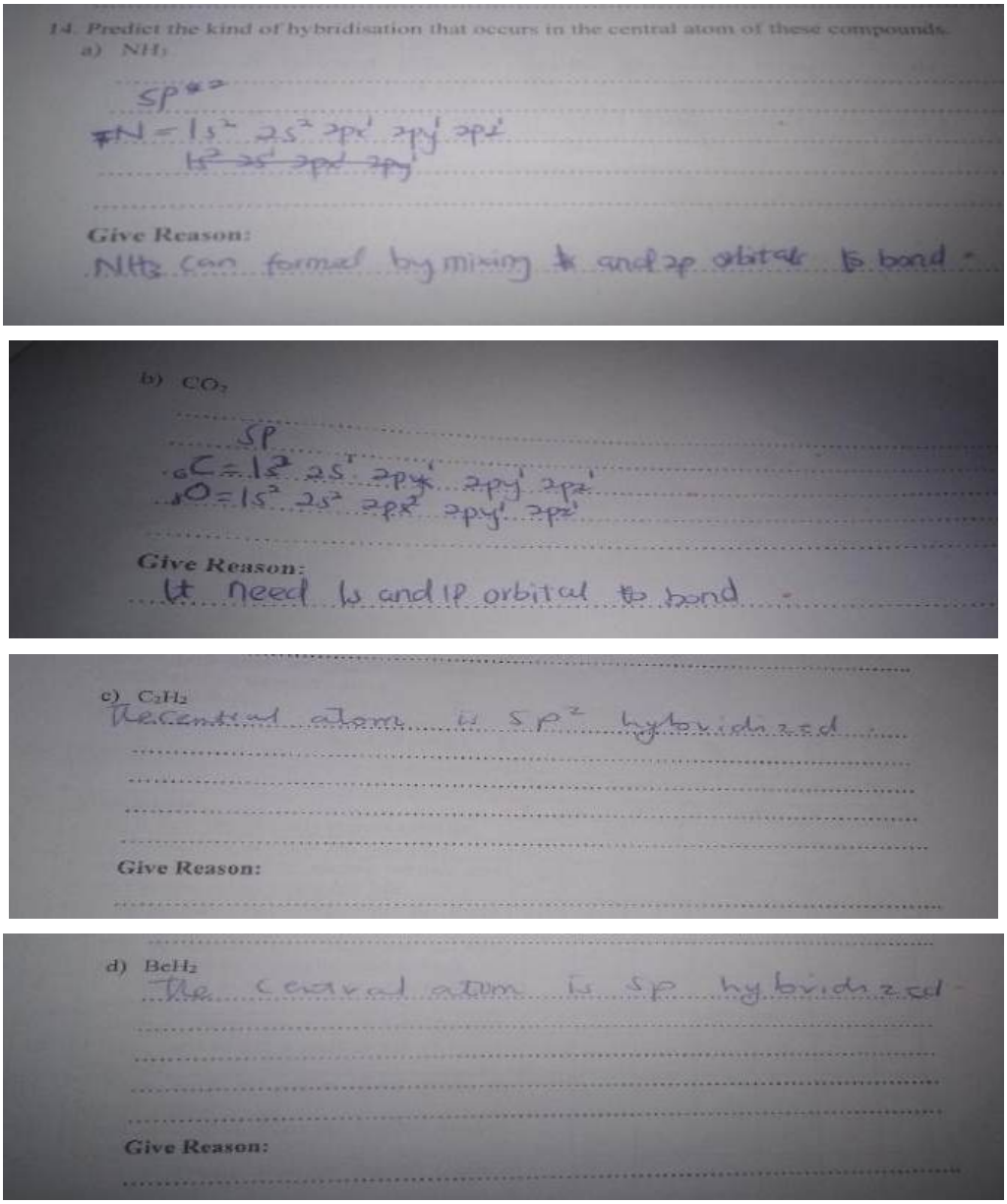

Figure 3: Sample predictions of the hybridisation of molecules from students

This indicated that most female students memorise the type of hybridisation that occurs in molecules without considering the processes involved in the hybridisation of atomic orbitals. This finding confirms the findings of Danipog and Ferido (2011) and Meydan (2021) that regardless of every lesson aiming to enhance conceptual understanding, rote learning (memorisation) superseded learning chemistry concepts.

To some extent, female students selected the right answers but gave unscientific reasons for the options. These reasons were analysed under Talanquer (2006) four categories of misconceptions (Association, Reduction, Fixation, and Linear Sequencing). Female students' misconceptions were categorised under association, reduction and fixation misconceptions, however, none of their

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misconceptions were found to be under linear sequencing misconception. The results on the presence of the forms of misconceptions are represented diagrammatically in Figure 4.

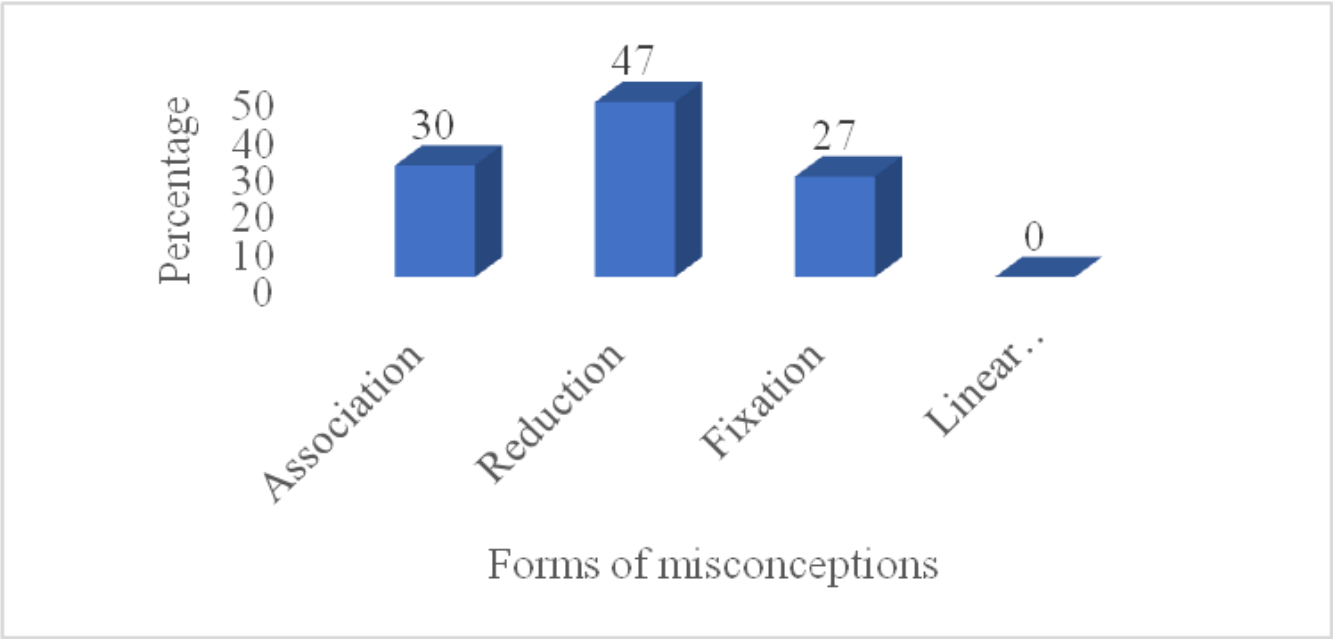

Figure 4: Forms of misconceptions of female students on learning atomic orbitals and hybridisation.

Association misconceptions: This deals with students using past experiences to conclude chemical phenomena, often incorrectly linking unrelated concepts. About 30% of 130 identified female chemistry students associated scientific concepts simplistic in an attempt to explain them. Some excerpts are:

> *The 4d-orbital has 5 degenerate orbitals, hence, n = 5* (Student-56).
> *CO_2 is sp hybridised because it forms two double bonds with 2 oxygen atoms* (Student-256).

The above excerpts demonstrate that female students in an attempt to explain the principal quantum number of a 4*d* atomic orbital being 4 showed association misconception for conceptualising that the d-orbital has five degenerate orbitals, hence, a principal quantum number of 5 instead of 4 for a 4*d* atomic obital.

Reduction Misconceptions: This deals with students over-simplifying complex chemical phenomena by focusing on limited factors, which leads to misunderstandings of how substances interact. On reduction misconceptions, 47% of the female chemistry students simply explained geometry of molecules by merely observing the number of surrounding atoms around the central atom without taking into consideration the Lewis structure of the molecules and any presence of lone pairs in the molecule. Some excerpts are:

> *SO_2 is linear formed from s and p orbitals. The sp hybrid orbitals are linear in shape and the bond angle is* 180° (Student-78).
> *N in NH_3 is sp^2 hybridised because it creates 3 hybrid orbitals for bonding* (Student-166).

Fixation Misconceptions: This refers to the tendency to rigidly apply learned rules or patterns to new situations without considering context, perpetuating misconceptions. Concerning fixation misconceptions, 27% of the female chemistry students were unable to explain why concepts such as atomic orbitals and hybridisation were expressed. Female chemistry students merely relied on information given by their teachers and textbooks without necessarily understanding them scientifically. Some excerpts are:

> *2d does not exist because I have not seen any 2d in my chemistry textbook or my chemistry*

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teacher never talked about 2d in atomic orbitals (Student-98).

CO_2 is sp hybridised because it creates two atomic orbitals for bonding (Student-159).

Having established that female chemistry students demonstrate partial understanding with misconceptions in learning atomic orbitals and hybridisation, there was a need to further examine the conceptual understanding of female students in single-sex schools and those in mixed-sex schools, comparing the conceptual understanding of the two student groups. That is, the school type, being the independent variable, was at two levels (single-sex and mixed-sex) and students' conceptual understanding, being the dependent variable, was continuous variable. To achieve the comparison of the means of the two school types, the dataset was first examined using a boxplot. The results from the boxplot are presented in Figure 5. The results from Figure 5 indicated that female chemistry students in the single-sex schools had a higher conceptual understanding as compared to their counterparts in the mixed-sex schools. Although the presence of outliers as observed in Figure 5 could have influenced this difference.

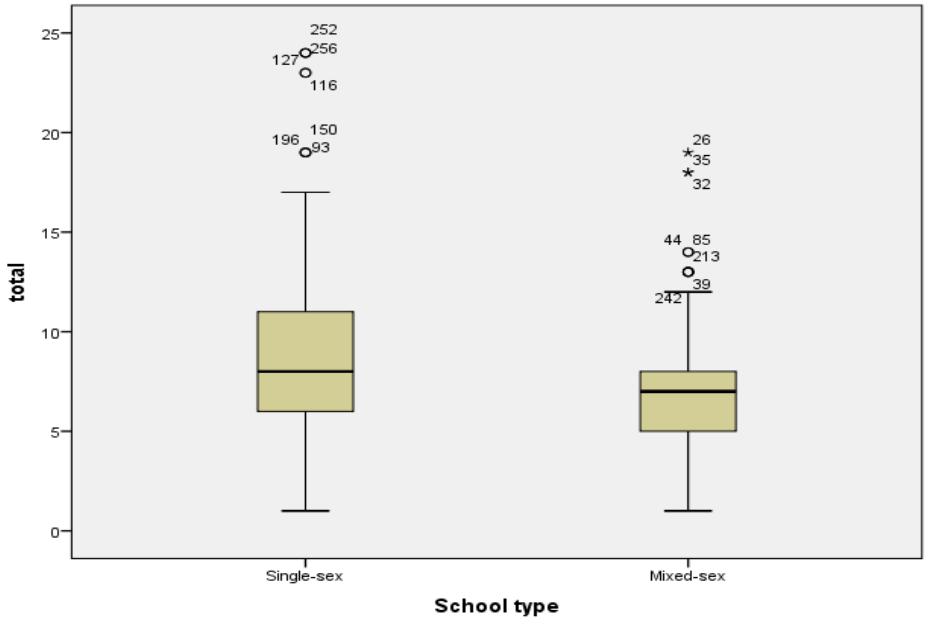

Figure 5: Boxplot comparing female students' conceptual understanding of atomic orbitals and hybridisation across school-type

To confirm the results of the conceptual understanding of female students in the single-sex schools and those in the mixed-sex schools as observed from the boxplot, the researchers compared the partial understanding of the two student groups, first, with the help of independent-samples t-test. Hence, there was the need for the normality of the data to be checked to determine whether the independent-samples t-test was the most appropriate for the analysis. However, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test value was found to be significant for both students in the single-sex and mixed-sex schools ($\rho = .000$). This indicated that the normality test was violated (Bennett et al., 2023). Consequently, a non-parametric test (Mann-Whitney U Test) for independent-samples t-test was deemed appropriate to examine further the conceptual understanding of female chemistry students in the single-sex and mixed-sex schools. Table 2 presents the results of the Mann-Whitney U test.

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Table 2: Mann-Whitney U Test Results on Female Students' Conceptual Understanding of Atomic Orbitals and Hybridisation

School type	N	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	ρ (2-tailed)
Single-sex	178	168.05	8446.500	16447.500	-3.680	.000
Mixed-sex	126	130.54				

From Table 2, the results showed that there was a statistical difference in the conceptual understanding of students from single-sex and mixed-sex schools on learning atomic orbitals and hybridisation in the SHS. This is because the Mann-Whitney U test revealed that female students in single-sex schools (Mean Rank = 168.05, N= 178) demonstrated statistical significantly higher conceptual understanding than their female counterparts in mixed-sex schools (Mean Rank = 130.54, N = 126). The test yielded a U value of 8446.500, z = -3.680 (adjusted for ties), and p = .000 (two-tailed) with an effect size of .21 which can be described as a small effect (Cohen, 1988). This result implies that female students in single-sex schools perform 21% better than their counterparts in mixed-sex schools.

The finding that Ghanaian SHS female chemistry students are at the partial conceptual understanding level in atomic orbitals and hybridisation may not be new to only this current research when it comes to SHS chemistry students' conceptual understanding of chemistry concepts. That is, some empirical studies in Ghana, such as that of Anim-Eduful and Adu-Gyamfi (2022) have reported on students' partial scientific understanding in many areas of organic qualitative analysis. It is worthy to note that this female chemistry students' partial understanding of atomic orbitals and hybridisation could be attributed to their conceptual difficulties (Abukari et al., 2022; Hanson et al., 2012) and misconceptions (Adu- Gyamfi et al., 2015; Anim-Eduful & Adu-Gyamfi, 2022) in learning atomic orbitals and hybridisation. As crucial as misconceptions could be in preventing scientific understanding of chemistry concepts, this study only unearthed association, reduction and fixation misconceptions, implying that female chemistry students learning chemistry concepts in the SHS have no linear sequencing misconceptions as reported by Talanquer (2006). Notwithstanding female chemistry students are still using commonsense reasoning in learning chemistry concepts in the SHS. This calls for chemistry educators and research to design and develop instructional strategies that could restrict students' application of commonsense reasoning in learning chemistry.

This finding on statistical difference in the conceptual understanding of female chemistry students from single-sex and mixed-sex schools aligns closely with the study of Yalcinkaya and Ulu (2012) that there is little difference in the academic achievement between females in single-sex schools and those in mixed-sex schools. Similarly, the finding agrees with the study of Chansa (2023) and Razak et al. (2018) in that, there is a significant difference between the performance of female students in single-sex and the performance of female students in mixed-sex schools in learning science, however, it contrasts with Clavel and Flannery (2022), on a statistical significance difference in the performance of female students in single-sex schools and those in mixed-sex schools.

Furthermore, the level of conceptual understanding observed among female students in single-sex schools may be linked to several advantages often associated with these educational environments. In that this finding of the current study aligns with Rojas-Oviedo et al. (2018) and Sikora (2013) that single-sex schools can enhance student engagement and boost confidence, particularly in academic areas where gender stereotypes might otherwise discourage

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participation, such as mathematics and science. Also, it could be that in the single-sex female schools, certain social distractions may be eliminated, reducing the influence of gender-related biases (Cherny & Campbell, 2011), fostering an environment more supportive of focused learning and active engagement evidence of the finding of the current study can be a contributing factor to the difference in the conceptual understanding of female chemistry students by school-type.

In another development, mixed-sex schools may present challenges stemming from social dynamics and gender-based interactions (Jackson, 2010) as evidence of the low performance of female students in the mixed-sex schools of the current study. Hence, this current study went further to investigate the probable factors. It should be noted that the interplay of gender roles and expectations in coeducational settings can influence academic behaviour and outcomes. These dynamics can sometimes divert attention away from academic activities, potentially contributing to the comparatively lower performance of female students in mixed-sex environments. These findings point to the need for further exploration into how school environments shape academic experiences and outcomes for female students.

IV. CONCLUSION

In this research, female chemistry students from both single-and mixed-sex schools' conceptual understanding of atomic orbitals and hybridisation were investigated through embedded mixed methods approach. That is, both quantitative and qualitative datasets were collected from 304 female chemistry students in examining their conceptual understanding. Through this research, it has been revealed that female chemistry students demonstrated partial understanding of atomic orbitals and hybridisation. This partial understanding of atomic orbitals and hybridisation was due the presence of misconceptions in female chemistry students' learning of the concepts in the senior high school level. These misconceptions in atomic orbitals and hybridisation were observed as association misconceptions, reduction misconceptions, and fixation misconceptions (Talanquer, 2006), based on commonsense reasoning among female chemistry students in learning atomic orbitals and hybridisation. Thus, this research has added to the literature that not only are female chemistry students at partial conceptual understanding level in atomic orbitals and hybridisation (another chemistry concept), but they also use commonsense reasoning, which they do not rigidly apply a step-by-step approach in their reasoning. That is, female chemistry students demonstrated no linear sequencing misconceptions in learning atomic orbitals and hybridisation. In furtherance, this partial conceptual understanding with the addend misconceptions statistically differed among female chemistry students, with those from the single-sex schools outperforming others from the mixed-sex schools.

V. IMPLICATIONS

Female chemistry students from single-sex schools show better conceptual understanding of atomic orbitals and hybridisation than their peers in mixed-sex schools. Therefore, the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service should provide support services for female students in mixed-sex schools to enhance their learning of chemistry concepts.

Also, to address female chemistry students' misconceptions about atomic orbitals and hybridisation, educators should implement targeted interventions to correct association, fixation, and reduction errors in learning.

Additionally, female chemistry students from single-sex schools showed better conceptual understanding than those in mixed-sex schools. Educators should develop gender-sensitive strategies to enhance female students' learning in mixed-sex environments.

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APPENDIX A

Atomic Orbitals and Hybridisation Diagnostic Test

This diagnostic test seeks female students' conceptual understanding of atomic orbitals and hybridisation. Your participation will provide valuable insights into how well these concepts are understood in developing current teaching methods and identifying areas for improvement in chemistry education.

Please DO NOT write your name and the name of your school, as your responses will be confidential and used for research purposes only. You will be given 60 minutes to complete this test.

Your contributions are greatly appreciated

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHICS

1. School Type: Single-sex [ ] Mixed-sex [ ]
2. Age: 10 – 15 years [ ] 16 – 20 years [ ] Above 20 years [ ]

SECTION B

Instruction: For each of the items below, kindly circle the *best* response and indicate your reason for your selection in the space provided.

3. The shape of the s-orbital in Sodium atom is _____.

   a. daisy-like
   b. dumbbell
   c. spherical
   d. tetrahedral

Give reason:

.....
.....

4. The principal quantum number (n) for a 4d orbital will be _____.

   a. 3
   b. 4
   c. 5
   d. 6

Give reason:

.....
.....

5. Which of the following orbitals does NOT exist in atoms?

   a. 2d
   b. 2p
   c. 3d

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d. 3p

Give reason:

.....
.....

6. Which of the following is the CORRECT electronic configuration of Aluminium ($_{13}$Al)?

a. $1s^2\ 2s^2\ 2p^3\ 3s^2\ 3p^4$
b. $1s^2\ 2s^2\ 2p^4\ 3s^2\ 3p^3$
c. $1s^2\ 2s^2\ 2p^5\ 3s^2\ p^1 3p^2$
d. $1s^2\ 2s^2\ 2p^6\ 3s^2\ 3$

Give reason:

.....
.....

7. Draw the orbital diagrams for the following atoms:

a. $_7$N

.....
.....

Give reason:

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.....

b. $_{15}$P

.....
.....

Give reason:

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.....
.....

c. $_{24}$Cr

.....
.....

Give reason:

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d. $_{26}$Fe

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Give reason:

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.....

8. The molecular geometry of the compound $CHCl_3$ is _____.

a. linear
b. square planar
c. tetrahedral
d. trigonal planar

Give reason:

.....
.....

9. The shape of SO_2 molecule is _____.

a. bent
b. linear
c. tetrahedral
d. trigonal planar

Give reason:

.....
.....

10. Account for the differences in shape of NH_3 *and* H_2O molecules.

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11. Describe the geometries of each of the carbon atoms in the molecule CH_3COOH.

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12. Using CH_4 as an example, distinguish between atomic orbitals and hybrid orbitals.

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.....

13. Sketch the sigma and pi bonds that exist in $C_2H_2Cl_2$.

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Give reason:

.....
.....
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14. Predict the kind of hybridisation that occurs in the central atom of these compounds.

a. NH_3

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.....

Give Reason:

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.....

b. CO_2

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Give Reason:

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c. C_2H_2

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Give Reason:

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d. BeH_2

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Give Reason:

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Mentors before Mentor: Eurocentrism, Erasure of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Gender in Recent Interpretations of Homer, the Odyssey and the Iliad

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ABSTRACT

This essay examines the origins of the universal human practice of mentoring. It assembles information from various sources and employs content analysis and socio-linguistic and historical approaches to interrogate and evaluate the material from an Afrocentric perspective. The major focus is upon the concept of mentoring in the widest context of the history of humanity, but with particular attention to intersecting narratives of Kemet (ancient Egypt), Homeric Greece, and the impact of Eurocentrism. The results invalidate popular ideas about the origins of mentoring and confirm that this universal human practice is to be found in all human societies, including the oldest ones, a large number of which predated the Greeks. They demonstrate the practice to be widespread and indeed institutionalized in Kemet, which exerted a tremendous influence upon most subsequent societies, including Greece.

Keywords: mentoring, Homer, Afrika, Kemet, socialization, gender, Eurocentrism.

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Mentors before Mentor: Eurocentrism, Erasure of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Gender in Recent Interpretations of Homer, the Odyssey and the Iliad

Kimani Nehusi

ABSTRACT

This essay examines the origins of the universal human practice of mentoring. It assembles information from various sources and employs content analysis and socio-linguistic and historical approaches to interrogate and evaluate the material from an Afrocentric perspective. The major focus is upon the concept of mentoring in the widest context of the history of humanity, but with particular attention to intersecting narratives of Kemet (ancient Egypt), Homeric Greece and the impact of Eurocentrism. The results invalidate popular ideas about the origins of mentoring and confirm that this universal human practice is to be found in all human societies, including the oldest ones, a large number of which predated the Greeks. They demonstrate the practice to be widespread and indeed institutionalized in Kemet, which exerted a tremendous influence upon most subsequent societies, including Greece.

Keywords: mentoring, Homer, Afrika, Kemet, socialization, gender, Eurocentrism.

Author: He currently teaches in the Department of Afrikology at Temple University.

I. INTRODUCTION

Western civilization clamorously declares itself to have sprung from the Greeks, asserting Homer's *Iliad* and *Odessey* to be the quintessential classic texts. However, Homer exhibits a profound reverence for these Nubians, called Aithiopians (burnt-skin peoples) by the Greeks; and who are deemed to be the most beautiful and most holy human beings on the face of the planet.[1]

A distinguishing feature of all humanity is a compulsion and developed capacity to transmit information across generations, usually in such forms as values, knowledge, skills, techniques, experiences, insights, expectations and their corresponding attitudes and patterned behaviours. Every human group demonstrates this characteristic, irrespective of its level of organization and development. The alternative is an unrecognizable humanity, one bereft of memory and a capacity for improvement, with each generation inheriting nothing from its predecessors. In such a condition there will be no stories, no recollections of challenges and struggles, strategies, tactics, and solutions; no social memory and store of strategic information, skills, or values upon which to deploy creativity and help to build and sustain society and its progress. Each generation will be perpetually paralyzed at the inception of what has become the human journey into greater humanity. Every generation will be condemned to restarting itself exactly where the first humans began on the road to development, which is always about improving people and their lives. Then development itself will forever be impossible, as every generation will be limited in the same way and face the identical challenges as its progenitors. In a world without intergenerational transmission and a corresponding assimilation of knowledge, humanity will hardly, if ever, become human. We shall forever be arrested by an absence of intellectual heritage, paralyzed in our earliest

[1] Ian Isidore Smart, *What is Ukraine to Me?* (Washington, DC: Original World Press, 2022), 49.

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embryonic condition, and doomed to an endless circle of primitive stagnation, never becoming anything more than our primordial selves.

It is in Afrika that humanity first became human, in all aspects of that condition: spiritually, biologically, socially, culturally, psychologically. The archetypes of the human being and human culture are therefore Afrikan.[2] The implications of this realization for the intergenerational transmission of information seem obvious. It is the specifics of that transmission that are not as obvious at first glance, particularly with the realization that the process and its participants are always subject to variations and even differentiations, that are dictated principally by space, time, and culture.

Even an elementary outline of the pedagogical history of humanity instructs us that there are two inescapable facts about the process of intergenerational transmission. From the beginning it flowed generally from the older and or more experienced and or knowledgeable to the younger and less experienced, but always the less knowledgeable or skilled. In addition, it was innate to humanity from our first societies. Yet, the dominant narrative of such transmission is today framed by an epistemology that centres Mentor, an eponymous Greek male character from the tales and time of Homer, which are millennia after the birth of humanity. Further, Mentor was not, and could not have been, the first person to perform mentoring. Simply, there are many millennia of humanity before him, so it is impossible for him to have been the archetype of this defining characteristic of humanity.

In the discourse on mentoring, there is therefore an unacknowledged and unexplained gap between the known beginnings of humanity and so of mentoring, and the location of Homer's Mentor in time and space within the history of humanity.

[2] Molefi Kete Asante and Nah Dove, *Being Human Being: Transforming the Race Discourse*. (New York: Universal Write Publications, 2021), 6-7, etc.; Edward Bruce Bynum, *Our African Unconscious: The Black Origins of Mysticism and Psychology*. (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 2021); Charles F. Finch, *Echoes of the Old Darkland: Themes from the African Eden*. (Atlanta: Khenti Inc., 1991).

This essay addresses itself to this very significant deficiency, as well as to attendant issues, in this aspect of the intellectual history of humanity.

II. BECOMING MENTOR: THE INTELLECTUAL TRADITION OF WESTERN EUROPE

In the last quarter of the last century, western European scholarship became marked by a significant and growing academic literature about mentoring. This trend announced a growth area in the knowledge industry in this part of the world and its dependencies. Increased interest in mentoring is visible in the academy as well as in other forms of the workplace. Lectures, seminars, and new ways of developing personnel are among the interventions prompted by this new focus. Attention has been centered on a range of issues that intersect with this concept and its practice,[3] including various demographics, professions and levels in the education system. However, amidst this profusion of writing about mentoring, there is, generally, a paucity of references to the origins of this concept and its practices.[4] Furthermore, there appears to be no study dedicated to these vital aspects of the subject. In fact, this dearth in the investigation of its origins has its corollary in the almost universal and uncritical acceptance of the assertion, sometimes implicit but usually very explicit, that mentoring was first performed by Homer's[5] eponymous male character in the

[3] Godfrey E. Henry, "Mentoring and Black People in Further Education Management." Unpublished PhD Thesis, (School of Education, The University of Birmingham, 2008).

[4] A refreshing exception is Nick Dukakis, Efthymios Valkanos and Ioanna Papavassiliou, "Reconstructing the Homeric Model of Mentoring: A Review of Mentoring Relationships in Prehistoric and Ancient World History of Human Development." *Journal of Human Resource Management*; 10(2): 56-65 (2022). http://www.sciencepublishinggroup.com/j/jhrm. [Last accessed 11/30/2022].

[5] Examples include Jeremiah A. Barondess, "A Brief History of Mentoring." *Transactions of the American Clinical and Climatological Association*. Vol. 106 (1995), 3-6; Barondess, "On Mentoring." *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*. Vol. 90 (June 1997), 347; Helen Colley, *Mentoring for Social Inclusion: A critical approach to nurturing mentor relationships*. (Routledge Palmer, 2003), 1; Andy Roberts, "Homer's Mentor: Duties Fulfilled or Misconstrued?" *History of Education Journal*. (1999). https://www.researchgate.net/publication. [Last accessed 11/30/2022].

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Odyssey, a long poem in the classical literature of western Europe, in which the main character bears the Greek name Odysseus, (Ulysses in Latin).

Andy Roberts has shown (even with his gaze that is restricted to Homer), that the above-mentioned construction of the origins of mentoring is empirically unsound, as it overstates the impact of Mentor and ignores the more effective mentoring role of the goddess Athene, for Mentor's mentoring is severely diminished without her impersonation of him. In Roberts' reading, it has been left to the genius of the Frenchman, Francois de Salignac de La Mothe-Fenelon (1651-1715), to gather the roles and attributes of mentoring that are represented in the *Odyssey* and infuse them into his character of the same name. The result was first published in his novel, *Les Adventures de Telemaque* (1699). It is this work that is the immediate intellectual basis of the current connotations of the term mentor.[6] Perhaps it is significant that its publication occurred right at the rise of Eurocentrism. Even though there are other critiques in the literature, these do not invalidate the central misrepresentation of Mentor as the original mentor and hardly contest the sexist and racist connotations of this Eurocentric construct.

In describing the goddess' Athene's methodology, Telemachus himself offers some testimony to its format: 'like a father... to his son'[7] and, like 'a guest who has become a friend.'[8] These two similes, especially the father/son formulation and its suggestion of close personalized exchange, in addition to Mentor's age and experience, Telemachus' relative youth and inexperience, and the objective of enhanced vocational competence, are of the greatest significance as descriptors of the concept and roles of mentoring in the history of humanity. These are the elementary person specifications for mentor and mentee and the specified aim of the process. They confirm the ancient outline provided in the introduction. The terminology of family is enlightening. It points to the origins and nature of mentoring, and much more.

Ultimately though, Athene's effectiveness in these roles is demonstrated in the changed behaviour of the young man. We are told that after a session of what has become known as mentoring, 'she left Telemachus full of spirit and daring' and very focused upon achieving his objective, which she had worked out with him and motivated him to attain.[9]

Therefore, to judge from the intellectual authorship by performance of these roles, it is the goddess Athene, a woman, who is the original mentor in the specific context of this story, though this is not what has been made of it in the western world. Her aims are clear: "I myself will go ... to instill a little more spirit into [Telemachus] and to embolden him... It is possible that... the effort will redound to his credit."[10] She is disguised as Mentes and provides useful suggestions, as well as a pep talk, to Telemachus. He in turn pondered upon these suggestions.[11]

It is only after then that Mentor enters the story, first as himself,[12] then as impersonated by Athene.[13] She is far more effective as an advisor and enabler, that is, a mentor, to Telemachus.[14] Furthermore, she expands the scope of this role and advises his father, Odysseus,[15] his mother Penelope,[16] and generally intervenes at various points in the narrative to help the family through one difficulty or the other.

Hence, though in recent times a very powerful myth has been spun around Homer's character, significant gaps exist between Mentor and his achievement, or lack of it, in the original tale. There is therefore a gap between Mentor's performance and the roles and achievements

[6] Roberts 1999.
[7] Homer, *The Odyssey*. Translated by E. V. Rieu. (Penguin Classics, 1974), 33. See also 38, 43, 245, etc. for verbal images of father. All references to Homer are from this translation, unless otherwise stated.
[8] Homer 1974, 33.
[9] Ibid., 33.
[10] Ibid., 27.
[11] Ibid., 27-36, *passim*.
[12] Ibid., 37-38.
[13] Ibid., 333-35.
[14] Ibid, 43-48, *passim*, 50, 52, 56, 60, 230-231.
[15] Ibid., 249, 268, 277, 304-305, etc.
[16] Ibid., 316.

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universally attributed to this character in modern western discourse.

But there is a far more fundamental gap which exists within the current interpretation of Mentor as the first mentor and the origins and practice of this concept in the social history of humanity. In truth, it is not even to Fenelon that one must turn when seeking the origins of the roles performed by his Mentor. The construction and critique of mentoring in western scholarship have so far been confined to the Eurocentric interpretation of the experience of the European world, usually beginning from Greek times, and to a Eurocentric imagination that has been both fed and restricted by patriarchy and colonialism. This scholarship has therefore left unaddressed and unanswered very important questions of whether there were cultures and societies, and so concepts, practices, and practitioners, which may today be termed mentors and mentoring, that existed before the Greeks of the Homeric age, or indeed before Greeks of any age. The simple fact is that there were many of each of the foregoing representations of humanity. At present the scholarship on the origins of mentoring is therefore usually both empirically unsound and conceptually flawed.

A sober contemplation of the evolution of human society will show that Mentor could not have been the first person to practice the roles with which he has become associated and now symbolizes. The eponym Mentor could have been based on another name of another person, from a civilization far older than the Greeks, who symbolized the person specifications and performed the distinctive collection of roles that are now widely associated with a particular semi-historical Greek man named Mentor. It is quite possible that such a precursor of Mentor would be culturally distinguished from Mentor in ways that influenced the shape of the service they delivered, but it is certain that these roles would be recognizable as those covered by the widely used terms of today. This is demonstrated below in the example of Kemet, Ancient Egypt (Part V). However, the distinction of the character Mentor does not lie in the mere fact that he performed those roles; uncountable numbers of persons did them in numerous societies before him and his time.

There have been uncounted mentors before Mentor, and many of them were women. Even though Athene was more effective in this role, it is Mentor who has been chosen and promoted in western discourse and so has become distinctive as symbolic of this role. This distinction has been conferred upon him because he is popularly known as an early, perhaps the earliest known male European example of this figure who nevertheless has populated human history from its very beginning. It seems certain that he became popular among Europeans as the foremost representative of those roles in their experience because he is a man. In addition, in a Eurocentric reading of the *Odyssey*, he is located in this way in this foremost text of the classical literature of western Europe. The basis of his distinctiveness in the dominant view among western Europeans is therefore a narrow focus upon male versions of themselves and the diminution and or exclusion and misrepresentation of women, even among western Europeans, as well as of all other peoples and cultures of humanity.

The final reason why Mentor has become Mentor, and thereby popularly accepted as archetypal in a world dominated by western Europeans, is because of a feature of Eurocentrism that has been pointed out by Afrocentric, anti-racist, anti-colonial, and anti-patriarchal scholars. In the last six hundred years, western Europeans have actively sought to impose themselves and their values, standards and perspectives upon other peoples of the world while negatively distorting and destroying the Indigenous Knowledge Systems of the people they oppressed.[17] Mentor

[17] Samir Amin, *Eurocentrism*. (Monthly Review Press, 1989); M. K. Asante, *The Egyptian Philosophers: Ancient African Voices from Imhotep to Akhenaten*. (Chicago: African American Images, 2000), 7-24; Kimani Nehusi, "Forty-Seven Years After: Understanding and Updating Walter Rodney." In Biko Agozino ed. How Europe Underdeveloped Africa: A Tribute to Walter Rodney. *Africa Update*. Vol. XXVI, Issue 3 (2019). www2.ccsu.edu; Nah Dove, *Afrikan Mothers: Bearers of Culture, Makers of Social Change*. (SUNY Press, 1998); Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions*

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could have been a woman or another man with a different name from any of the other cultures who developed and practiced mentoring long before Europeans did. But western European patriarchy, enslavement, colonization, imperialism, and other atrocities have never been only spiritual, or military, or economic, political, or social. Western European domination and oppression is intellectual also. Intellectual violence has been an accomplice in all other kinds of violence unleashed by the dominant sections of western Europeans in their colonial and imperial depredations around the world.[18] The minds, visions and imagination of western Europeans and the people they subjugated were mostly forcibly confined to the western European intellectual universe. This is substantially a hegemonic space in which the dominant male sections of western Europeans have inculcated themselves as superior and all other varieties of humanity as inferior, a space to which 'the others' were not admitted as themselves, with their own philosophies, social histories, and other credentials of their humanity intact. Hence it is Mentor who has become associated, with these personal attributes and roles allegedly accorded him by Homer, in the popular mind of Europe and, in turn, in the minds of peoples dominated by Europe.

The significance of Mentor therefore lies not so much in the concept he practiced, but in the fact that he is the first European man known to have done so, and consequently and falsely, the person selected and promoted as the first in the world to have done so. Mentor has been made necessary, and so possible, by the necessity to defend six centuries of western European crimes against humanity: enslavement, colonialism and imperialism.

III. MENTORS BEFORE MENTOR

In pursuing the origin and meaning of the term mentor, various dictionaries in western European languages supply an allusion to Homer's male character as the starting point of this concept.[19] These official guardians of major European languages uphold, institutionalize, and perpetuate the Eurocentric worldview outlined above. Hence, at this advanced scientific and academic level, the etymology and meaning of the term mentor in modern western European languages, and so in those parts of the world dominated by the modern western European meta narrative, are rooted in the false construction of Homer's male character as the first person in the world to perform those roles which have come to be associated with and are epitomized by this character.

Yet, there is no record of Homer himself ever saying that his character was the first person in the world to perform such tasks. The patriarchal, ethnocentric, and racist notions that became dominant features in European thought, European action, and European scholarship, did not appear to mark and mar Homer's view of the world. Writing at about 740 BCE,[20] Homer had different preoccupations.[21] As shall be seen below (Section IV), Eurocentrism did not prejudice his view of humanity in general, nor of Afrika in particular. In fact, the scourge of Eurocentrism began after the age of Homer. The very least that may be said of the currently prevailing notion of Mentor as the first mentor, in western and western dominated societies, is that it is ultimately based either upon ignorance of the history of humanity before Homer or upon a deliberate attempt to ignore and distort that history and so the history of humanity in general.

of the Orient. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978) and many others.

[18] Nehusi 2019; Nehusi, "Introduction: The Strategic Intellectual Importance of Kemet." In Karen Exell. Ed. *Egypt in its African Context: Proceedings of the Conference held at The Manchester Museum, University of Manchester, 2-4 October 2009*. BAR International Series 2204. (Oxford, UK: Archaeopress, 2011), 11-20.

[19] *The Compact Oxford English Dictionary*. [COED] 1993. Second Edition. (BCA and Oxford University Press, 1993); *El Dictionario de la lengua Espanola* [DLE]. Vigesima Segunda Edicion. (La Real Academia de España, 2001); *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles. [SOED]. Third Edition. Vol. II*. (*Clarendon Press,* 1973).

[20] Albert Cook, "Visual Aspects of the Homeric Simile in Indo-European Context" in A. Cook. Trans. and Ed. *The Odyssey: A Verse Translation, Backgrounds, Criticism*. 2nd Edition. (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1993), 348.

[21] Example, T. W. Adorno, "Odysseus, or Mythos and Enlightenment" in A. Cook, *The Odyssey: A Verse Translation,* 307-313.

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In any event, a narrative that begins the history of mentoring with Mentor is clearly based upon a misrepresentation of Homer and misrepresentation of the social history of humanity.

An objective assessment of the origins and development in human society of the functionary and associated roles that have come to be known in the west as mentor and mentoring, necessitates the expansion of our horizons from Europe-bound parameters of being and existence to time/space conjunctions that existed well before the Greeks and well beyond Europe, and to ways of knowing, to knowledge and to systems of producing, organizing and transmitting knowledge, that are also different from those of the western Europeans.

Such civilizations as those of the Ancient Egyptians (in a conservative estimate of from about 3100 BCE), Kushites, Mesopotamians, people of India (from about 2500 BCE) and the Chinese, (Shang Dynasty from at least about 1766 BCE) all arose before anything remotely comparable did in Europe. In contrast, the Greeks are said to have achieved this status much later, and Homer wrote at about 740 BCE, on the eve of this rise of his native land to civilization.

The very fact that many of these civilizations endured for multi-generational time spans argues the inter-generational transmission of information as well as implicates mentoring as a vehicle of transmission. The continuous nature of the transmission, and the great length of time it endured, also argue organization and systemization and their consequences in institutional structures, functions, functionaries, and processes and therefore, indeed, the certainty of many or all aspects of organizational practice. Intergenerational transmission is always an enabling context for the roles that are today termed mentoring, and functionaries that are called mentors.

IV. THROUGH HOMERIC EYES

It is significant that Homer was a people's bard whose repertoire was composed of popularly held tales that were already traditional in Greece when he wrote them down.[22] It is therefore entirely likely that he replicated the popular view of Kemet and of Afrika that was alive in the Greek mind of his era[23] and before then. That vision is certainly very consistent throughout both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. In the *Odyssey* it is obvious that Egypt is personified and presented as the eponymous 'Aegyptius, an old lord bent with years and rich in wisdom' who is, quite significantly for Afrikan ethical tradition, accorded the right to speak first in the assembly, though in Homer's explanation that right has nothing to do with age.[24] Yet Homer associates the two, which is consistent with the association of age, experience and the expectation of wisdom in Afrikan culture. This notion of immense wisdom and the knowledge upon which such wisdom must have been founded is clearly and further articulated by Homer in relation to Egypt, this time specifically concerning one aspect of the ancient knowledge industry. He alludes to many useful drugs from Egypt,[25] then asserts that 'in medical knowledge the Egyptian leaves the rest of the world behind.'[26]

Current knowledge about ancient Egypt substantiates both the allusion to the drugs produced there, which was part of a large and sophisticated herbal pharmaceutical industry,[27] and the related fact of the medical knowledge and skill of its doctors, which were considered immense by contemporary authorities as well as

[22] E. V. Rieu, "Introduction' in Homer, *The Odyssey*, (1974), 10-11.
[23] Rieu, Ibid., 11
[24] Homer, *The Odyssey*. Translated by E. V. Rieu. (London: Allen Lane. Penguin Books, 1973), Book II, 37.
[25] Homer, 1974, 54.
[26] Ibid., 55.
[27] Lise Manniche, *An Ancient Egyptian Herbal*. (London: The British Museum Press, 1989); E. A. Wallis Budge, *Herb Doctors and Physicians in the Ancient World: The Divine Origin of the Craft of the Herbalist*. (Chicago: Ares Publishers, Inc., 1978).

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those of later ages, including today.[28] It should be emphasized that the outstanding medical knowledge and skills of the people of Kemet were acknowledged by much of the contemporary world, that is, by other people with first-hand experience of those achievements. For example, in this regard, Kitchen mentions the Greeks themselves, other Europeans, the Hittites and their vassal states, as well as the people in other 'Near Eastern' states.[29] Harris mentions Greeks (including Homer's reference), Persians, Syrians, and other peoples of the contemporary Eurasian world.[30] The thrust of Eurocentrism is therefore to doubt, diminish and even delete the evidence of historical eyewitnesses, some of whom were themselves Europeans.

The superlative image of the people of Kemet transcended medicine and was consistent with the general image of Afrika in the eyes of ancient Europeans, and indeed in the eyes of the ancient world. For example, it has been established that many Greek scholars attained their higher education in Kemet. These include Thyles, Anaximander, Anaximenes of Miletus, Heraclitus of Ephesus, Isocrates of Ionia, Pythagoras, Solon, Plato, Eudoxus, Xenophanes, Parmenides, Zeno, Melissus, Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Democritus, and many others.[31] Further, Blyden records that 'Homer and Herodotus have written immortal eulogies to [Afrikans]', the former terming them 'blameless Ethiopians' who were the only humans the Greek gods felt themselves fit to dwell among, spending twelve days on holiday with them each year. This latter is a reference to a passage in the *Iliad*.[32] This exalted view of Afrikans is upheld in the *Odyssey*, where Homer has the Greek god Poseidon visit them to participate in two of the most important rituals: a sacrifice and a feast.[33] Lucian held similar views. In addition, Blyden observes that 'the ancient philosophers of Greece and Rome' travelled to Kemet 'to gaze upon its wonders and gather inspiration from its arts and sciences.'[34] In the context of currently dominant Eurocentric representation of Greece as having no influence from Kemet, Bertrand Russell's observation that "[i]n all history, nothing is so surprising or so difficult to account for as the sudden rise of civilization in Greece"[35] does not therefore appear unfounded, especially as it is well established that Kemet contributed tremendously to the civilization of Greece.[36] This is a fact that is upheld by many ancient Greek scholars, including Hecataeus[37] and Herodotus.[38] However, the extent to which this may have been common knowledge in Homeric Greece has not been clearly delineated in the scholarship on this and related issues. Nevertheless, Blyden's conclusion on this matter is of unerring accuracy. "It shows," he says, "the estimate in which the ancients [of Europe] held the Africans, that they

[28] Cyril P. Bryan, Trans. *Ancient Egyptian Medicine: The Papyrus Ebers*. (Chicago: Ares Publishers, 1974); E. A. Wallis Budge, *Herb Doctors and Physicians in the Ancient World: The Divine Origin of the Craft of the Herbalist*. (Chicago: Ares Publishers, 1978); Charles F. Finch, "The African Background of Medical Science" in Ivan Van Sertima ed. *Blacks in Science: Ancient and Modern*. (Trenton, NJ: Transaction Books, 1983), 140-156; J. R. Harris, "Medicine." In J. R. Harris ed. *The Legacy of Egypt*. (Oxford University Press, 1988), 112-137; Chauncey D. Leake, 1994. *The Old Egyptian Medical Papyri*. (Chicago: Ares Publishers, 1994); Frederick Newsome, "Black Contributions to the Early History of Western Medicine" in Ivan Van Sertima, *Blacks in Science*,127-139; Carole Reeves, *Egyptian Medicine*. (Princes Risborough, UK: Shire Publications, 1992).

[29] K. A. Kitchen, *Pharaoh Triumphant: The Life and Times of Ramesses II, King of Egypt*. (Warminster, UK: Aris & Phillips, 1982), 91-92, 95.

[30] Harris 1988, 112-137.

[31] Asante 2000, viii, 79-80; Asante, *The Painful Demise of Eurocentrism* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1999), 57; Harris 1988, 112; George G. M. James, *Stolen Legacy*. (San Francisco: Julian Richardson Associates, 1985), 9-19, 42-45.

[32] Homer, *The Iliad*. Translated by E. V. Rieu. (Penguin Classics, 1966), 34.

[33] Homer 1974, 25.

[34] Edward W. Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*. (Baltimore, MD: Black Classic Press, 1994), 133-135, 175.

[35] Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy and its connection with Political and Social Circumstances from Earliest Times to the Present Day*. (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1961), 25.

[36] Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*. Vols. I&II. (London: Free Association Books, 1987, 1991); Cheikh Anta Diop, *The Cultural Unity of Black Africa: The Domains of Matriarchy and of Patriarchy in Classical Antiquity*. (London: Karnak House, 1989), 66-74, 181-190; James 1985.

[37] Jan Assmann, *The Mind of Egypt: History and Meaning in the Time of the Pharaohs*. Trans. Andrew Jenkins. (Harvard University Press, 1996), 423-426.

[38] Herodotus, *The Histories*. Book Two. Trans A. de Sélincourt. (Penguin Classics, 1972), especially 151-160.

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selected them as the only fit associates for their gods."[39]

The influence of Kemet upon Homer may not be explicitly stated in every instance. Cheikh Anta Diop notes that the stratagem of sneaking five hundred soldiers inside jars into the rebel town of Joppa by General Thuty, under Pharaoh Thutmose III, 'served as a pristine model' for Homer's Trojan horse in the capture of Troy in the *Iliad*, as well as for the storyteller in *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*.[40] These parallels are widely acknowledged in Egyptology.[41] Yet, it is left to Diop to arrive at the obvious conclusion that "Homer, far from creating *ex nihilo*, relied heavily on models, particularly Egyptian ones."[42] This is a restatement of the tremendous anteriority of Kemet and its multi-faceted, though not always immediately obvious, impact upon Greece.

Internal evidence from both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, as well as the dominant image of Afrika in the mind of early Europe, thus strongly suggest that Homer did not share a worldview that is Eurocentric, patriarchal, ethnocentric, or white supremacist. Homer may therefore have quite significant differences from many of his current interpreters on this matter of the supposed anteriority of Mentor as mentor in the social history of humanity and the related issue of the image of Afrika, and by extension also that of other non-European societies, in the gaze of the currently dominant sections of western Europe.

The cumulative image of Afrika in the eyes of Homeric Greece as a land old in age, advanced in learning and fit for the holiday of the gods, reflects the Greek experience of Afrika and the Greek representation of that experience before the rise of western European colonialism. It was the consequent need of colonialism to justify itself that led western Europeans to invent false narratives that attempt to lessen and demean Afrikans, Asians, Indigenous Americans, and other non-western peoples as a way of trying to justify western European barbarism and crimes against humanity, particularly in black and brown skin.

Homer's references to ancient Egypt (Kemet) ought to lead us in this direction in our search for ancient models, in fact, for the archetypes of his Mentor, who has been since popularized and even institutionalized as mentor, the first and foremost representative of this distinctive collection of related roles in the history of humanity. For it is in ancient Egypt with its immensely long history that Afrikans, the first people in the world, became the first people in the world to achieve that status scholars term civilized. However, Kemet did not develop in isolation from the rest of Afrika.[43] Its roots lie in earlier Afrikan societies further up the Hapi [Nile] and other river valleys, south of Kemet itself, in the heart of the continent. In addition, Homer's deployment of the terms 'father' and 'son' to communicate a mentoring relationship indicates unmistakable conceptual proximities to Afrikan thought, Afrikan epistemology and Afrikan practice that preceded Homer and the Greeks by many millennia.

For all these reasons, it is entirely logical that it is to Afrikan civilization that we must now turn to ascertain whether there were models of the mentor more ancient than the character after which this functionary and its associated roles have come to be known in the western and western dominated world.

[39] Blyden 1994, 134.

[40] C. A. Diop, *Civilization or Barbarism: An Authentic Anthropology*. Trans. Yaa-Lengi Meetma Ngemi. (New York: Lawrence Hill Books, 1991), 95.

[41] James H. Breasted, *A History of Egypt: from the Earliest Times to the Persian Conquest*. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1909), 312, 454; G. Posener, "Literature." In J. R. Harris 1988, 242; W. K. Simpson, ed. *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions and Poetry*. New Edition. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 81, etc.

[42] Diop, 1991, 153.

[43] S. K. Damani Agyekum, 2012. *Distorted Truths: The Bastardization of Afrikan Cosmology*. (New York: Afrikan World InfoSystems, 2012); Ayi Kwei Armah, *Wat nt Shemsw: Myth, History, Philosophy and Literature: The African Record*. (Popenguine, Senegal: Per Ankh, 2018); Diop, *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality*. (New York: Lawrence Hill Books, 1974); Nehusi 2011; Théophile Obenga, *African Philosophy. The Pharaonic Period: 2780-330 BC*. Translated from French by Ayi Kwei Armah. (Popenguine, Senegal: Per Ankh. 2004), 15-17, 20, 69-70, etc.

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V. KEMET: A MENTORING SOCIETY

It is important to recall here the operational definition of mentoring that has been achieved from the identification of the roles of Homer's Mentor and Telemachus, his mentee, and especially the goddess Athene, who mentored the entire family of Odysseus. This is useful for comparison with a far older Afrikan tradition as expressed in Kemet, where, as in any society, the culturally determined context of the transmission is characterized by common social values that are transmitted as behavioural ideals in an ethical system which usually imposes mutually binding rights, expectations and therefore behaviours upon both parties (or sides) in the mentoring process.

There was great investment in the value of humanity. A person was composed of nine different aspects that included a physical body and spiritual, social and moral aspects[44] and she or he was defined by their relationship to other persons: 'I am because we are and since we are, therefore I am.'[45] *Ma'at*, or universal cosmic order, was accessible through truth, justice, righteousness, order, balance, reciprocity and harmony.[46] Successful persons were expected to give back to their community.[47] Age was valued, as is indicated by the value accorded elders and ancestors. Each of these was critical in the process of intergenerational transmission.[48]

These social values had a significant impact upon the fact of mentoring as well as its high incidence in the society. In Afrikan society, anyone older than a person is that person's elder and mentoring was a function and an expectation of being elder. This fact alone accords significant status to the chronologically older person, the mentor. That status, the value it accorded and the influence it exerted were very highly regarded in the relationship and therefore became a significant factor in mentoring. In modern terminology this resulting bond between mentor and mentee is known as the Therapeutic Alliance.[49] The system of Age Grades[50] organized the inculcation of the great value of age and socialization into appropriate ethical behaviours from an early age. Further, the social value of great respect for significant experience, knowledge, skills, and the wisdom that was predicated upon these, translated into respect for persons who embodied them and so of additional respect for mentors. It is the same in apprenticeship and the historically later innovation now known as teaching, as well as in almost all other functionaries, sites, and processes of knowledge transmission. Age plus knowledge and wisdom amounted to social capital of considerable weight.

It was not only these vessels of knowledge that were highly valued. The people of Kemet possessed a great regard for knowledge itself. Their vocabulary contained such terms as *rekh-khet*, literally 'a male knower of things', hence a wise man or sage.[51] The Late Period writing of this

[44] Nehusi "The Construction of the Person and Personality in Africa." In Mammo Muchie, Vusi Gumede, Samuel Oloruntoba and Nicasius A. Check Eds. *Regenerating Africa to bring African Solutions to African Problems*. (Pretoria: African Institute of South Africa, 2016), 61-76.

[45] John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*. (London: Heinemann, 1988), 117, 108-109.

[46] Maulana Karenga, *Maat: The Moral Ideal in Ancient Egypt. A Study in Classical African Ethics*. (Los Angeles: The University of Sankore Press, 2006).

[47] Helmutt Brunner, 1981. "*L'éducation en ancienne Egypt*." In Gaston Mialaret and Jean Vial eds. *Historia Mondiale de L'éducation: des origines* à1515" Vol.1. (Presses Universitaries de France, 1981), 68; Christian Jacq, ed. 2006. *The Wisdom of Ptah-Hotep: Spiritual Treasures from the Age of the Pyramids*. Trans. M. de Brito. (London: Constable, 2006), xxv, 16, 82–84.

[48] Nehusi, *Libation: An Afrikan Ritual of Heritage in the Circle of Life*. (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2016), 97-19.

[49] For nursing see L. Dinç and C. Gastmans 2012 Sept. "Trust and trustworthiness in nursing: an argument-based literature review." *Nurs Inq*.19, 3 (September 2012):223-37. Doi: 10.1111/j.1440-1800.2011.00582. x. Epub 2011 Nov 3. PMID: 22050646; D. S. Tarlier, "Beyond caring: the moral and ethical bases of responsive nurse-patient relationships." *Nurs Philos*. 5,3 (October 2004), 230-41. Doi: 10.1111/j.1466-769X.2004.00182. x. PMID: 15385033.

[50] Susan Bailey, "Circumcision and Male Initiation" in Theodore Celenko ed. *Egypt in Africa*. (Indianapolis Museum of Art and Indiana University Press, 1996), 89.

[51] Budge, An *Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary*. Vol. I. (New York: Dover Publications, 1978), 430; A. Erman and H. Grapow, *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache*. Vol. II. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag,1982), 443; A. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*. 3rd Edition. (Oxford: Griffith Institute, Ashmoleun Museum, 1988), 52.

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term,[52] indicates a remarkably stable concept throughout the history of this state, well over five thousand years. The feminine counterpart of the knowing man was 'the knowing woman' who was also a divining woman.[53] There was also *sia* = a wise man, a term that is, significantly, rooted in the word for skill.[54] These terms register the great significance of knowledge and skills to the people of Kemet. The association of wisdom with age and the capacity to mentor and indeed the expectation of so doing, are registered in the *Sebayat* or written teachings or instructions. This concept amounts to an indigenous institutionalization of both the practice of giving back and the value of age, experience, and knowledge. Each of these terms proclaims a role or roles that would amount to mentoring in today's terminology.

In the evolution of human society, the first persons to play the roles of mentoring were parents, who, along with nature which they observed closely, were the first teachers, models, and mentors. Direct transmission through demonstration was the first methodology and observation and imitation the first learning strategies. Apprenticeship, mentoring, teaching, and other knowledge transmission methodologies followed in time. The family/clan was the first location of transmission and specialized institutions such as societies of secrets and schools followed later. Children were the first learners, as apprentices and mentees, for apprenticeships were sites of mentoring. For millennia training was based on the family or clan, with fathers, uncles and other close male relatives tending to train boys in their professions, while mothers and other close female relations trained girls in theirs.[55] Obenga is certain that the knowledge was "dispensed by a master to a student, by a wise expert to someone younger, by an experienced veteran to a neophyte."[56] Hilliard concurs: "Usually the initiate would be assigned to a master as an apprentice."[57] The xry-a: apprentice or assistant,[58] in later times the student, was inserted into the living conditions of the role, trade, or profession to develop the requisite skills, knowledge, values and attitudes. The term for master is neb.f ,[59] literally 'his male owner'. It is a term which highlights the presence of morality and ethical behaviour as intimate aspects of this tradition of knowledge and skills acquisition, for the master or mentor was expected to be an authority, one who consistently lived and so modelled the professional and ethical behaviours expected of his or her mentee.

In Afrikan culture, the designation of parent includes grandparents as well as 'social' parents; every adult was expected to be involved in parenting once a need arose and a person was available. It is quite possible that the closeness afforded by such personal proximity of parent and child was carried over to other interactions, became decisive in other relations of intergenerational transmission and exerted a tremendous influence upon instructor and apprentice, teacher and student, mentor and mentee. This is the likely explanation of the psychological closeness that Obenga identified as pervasive in the society.[60] It is the very context and ethos of caring and mentoring.

[52] Leonard H. Lesko and Barbara S. Lesko. ed. *A Dictionary of Late Egyptian*. Vol. I. Second Edition. (Providence, RI: B. C. Scribe Publications, 2002), 275.

[53] B. Lesko, "Rank, Roles, and Rights" In Leonard H. Lesko (ed.) *Pharaoh's Workers: The Villagers of Deir el Medina*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 26.

[54] R. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*. (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1991), 208; Lesko and Lesko, *Dictionary of Late Egyptian* Vol. II. ((Providence, RI: B. C. Scribe Publications, 2004), 11,14.

[55] P. Ghalioungui, *Magic and Medical Science in Ancient Egypt*. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1963), 107; Nehusi, *The System of Education in Kemet (Ancient Egypt): An Overview*. (Lagos: Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization 2010), 34.

[56] Obenga 2004, 201.

[57] Asa Hilliard, *The Maroon Within Us: Selected Essays on African American Community Socialization*. (Baltimore, MD: Black Classic Press, 1995), 99.

[58] Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*. Modernized by Boris Jegorović (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 2017), 251; Lesko and Lesko, Vol. 1, 387.

[59] Gardiner, "The House of Life." *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*. No. 24 (1938), 159.

[60] Obenga, "*La parenté égyptienne: considérations sociologiques" Ankh: Reveu D'Égyptologie et des civilisations africaines* Nos. 4/5 (1996), 141.

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The dominant characteristics of mentoring in Kemet: the psychological closeness identified by Obenga, as well as the low ratio of those who imparted to those who learnt and the personalized nature of the relationship of transmission, are maintained in many learning and teaching locations in the society. This accounts for the terminology of affection that characterizes the language and challenged many Eurocentric scholars. For example, lovers, wives and husbands referred to each other as 'brother' and 'sister.'[61]

The father/son metaphor witnessed in the *Odyssey* is therefore neither alien nor misplaced in this loving and caring context of Kemet. In fact, long before Homer, the metaphor was extended in the *Sebayat* and other instruments and sites of intergenerational transmission, some of which are mentioned above. In the quote above, Obenga is precise in identifying specific roles and statuses within the two categories of participants in the mentoring process: 'a master,' 'a student,' and 'a wise expert' and 'someone younger,' 'an experienced veteran' and 'a neophyte.'[62] It is significant that Obenga is role specific, but neither sex nor gender bound. The emphasis is upon social roles. It is not upon biology. Here, each of those roles was a focus on an aspect of what is known as mentoring today. In effect, the conditions and roles that define mentoring and co-mentoring were reproduced and maintained at all sites of knowledge transmission and skills development throughout the society of Kemet.

The influence of the family upon the social institutions is also attested by both the high incidence of familial terms that describe roles in the wider society and the relatively few terms employed to convey them.

It is of further significance that the vocabulary of existence in Kemet reflected this predominance of quality social relationships over biological ones. The people of Kemet distinguished sA n xt.f , literally 'son of his body,' a biological son, from sA n ib.f, literally 'son of his heart,' a social son.[63] This is reflected in the language as well as social practice. The father/son format in which the *Sebayat* is articulated is but one example.

The roles of father and mother as mentors were extended from the family into other social institutions. The supreme statement of father as mentor resided in the post of *It Neter*, literally 'Father of the God [i.e. the Pharaoh].' Here he was the mentor and chief advisor of the Pharaoh. The title of *Mut Neter* or 'Mother of the God' was not an empty designation; one devoid of power, influence, and function. She was the female mentor of the pharaoh. There were also chief mentors to other important royals. Here mentoring is clearly specialized, institutionalized and elevated to the topmost rungs of the society.[64] The vocabulary of its articulation clearly indicates its origin in the model transmitted from the bosom of the family/clan.

Each person and every institution defined a collection of roles that usually included and indeed valued and validated roles that operationally defined the concept of mentor. In fact, so pervasive was this specific role that it was not usually separated as a stand-alone aspect of intergenerational transmission, and so it was not thought necessary to define it by a particular term in the language. Mentoring was a major factor in defining numerous social relationships. It was a tool possessed and experienced by all and was deployed in the processes of personal, professional and national development. This is one of the significant cultural differences between

[61] Benedict G. Davies, 1994. *Egyptian Historical Records of the later Eighteenth Dynasty: Fascicle V*. (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1994), 74; Lichtheim Vol. II 1976, 181–193, *passim*; Obenga 1996, 143.

[62] Obenga 2004, 201.

[63] Armah 2018, 88; Saphanaz-Amal Naguib, "'*Fille de dieu', 'Espouse de dieu', 'Mère de dieu' ou la métaphore féminine*" in G. Luft Ed. *The Intellectual Heritage of Egypt. Studies presented to Laszlo Kakosy on the occasion of his 60th birthday. Studia Aegyptiaca XIV*. (Budapest : La Chaire d'Egyptologie, 1992), 443.

[64] Nehusi, "The *It Neter* or Father of the God. A Case Study of Cultural Dislocation and (Re)Location in Kemet. Part I: The Royal Court, Miscellaneous Examples and Senenmut." *Moja: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Africana Studies*. Vol. 3, Issue I. (December 2022), 10-24; Nehusi, "The *It Neter* or Father of the God. A Case Study of Cultural Dislocation and (Re)Location in Kemet. Part II: Language, The Temple, Ay and Joseph." *Moja: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Africana Studies*. Vol. 3, Issue 1. (December 2022), 25-36.

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the concept and practice of Kemet and that which obtains in much of the European dominated world today.

The subsequent development and institutionalization of education in Kemet, where Africans developed the first system of formal education in the world, from nursery to university,[65] leads to the conclusion that in the beginning of humanity, learning and teaching were not distinguished from socialization, either institutionally or conceptually. Therefore, 'non-formal' modes of intergenerational transmission of information were dominant in the very early stages of the development of humanity. The processes of teaching and learning were still in the hands of biological parents or other close relations, or others who acted as such, and reproduced the personal closeness that characterizes such relationships. The risk of distancing, or even alienation, was minimized or prevented. These modes continued to be instrumental in some locations of intergenerational transmission even after the arrival of formal education and specialization. In today's terms, mentoring was a key aspect of intergenerational transmission, whether it was through learning and teaching, or it was conducted at sites such as the family/clan, apprenticeships, formal teaching, the *Sebayat*, the Sovereign, Father of the God, Mother of the God, or other social institutions.

VI. CONCLUSION

The relocation of information about Afrika to the history and culture of Afrika transforms our understanding of Afrika and Afrikans and helps to clarify the social history of all humanity. The modern workplace with its persistent and often obscured or hidden dangers of racism, sexism, and other afflictions that challenge inclusion and equity, emphasizes the importance of the roles of mentor as well as the necessity for identifying and understanding the origins and development of this universal human practice.

The most important factor in determining the image and perception of the concept of mentor in the world today is the Eurocentric misrepresentation of both Homer's Mentor and the misplaced origin and significance of mentoring in Homeric Greece. Ultimately, the western European intellectual and academic violence that accompanied the military violence of western European enslavement, colonialism, and other formats of dominance, is a primary tool in determining the intellectual horizons of western Europeans as well as the peoples they have conquered and now dominate. The resulting epistemology of oppression demeans, pathologizes and excludes the Indigenous Knowledge Systems of conquered peoples. That is why Mentor has been selected, imposed, and widely accepted as an archetype that he never was and could not be, simply because there were, in other societies, uncounted individuals who played the same or similar roles to what he did in Homeric Greece, for thousands of years before Homeric Greece.

Contemplation of this information from an Afrocentric standpoint reveals significant contradictions that are inherent in the epistemology articulated in the term Mentor. Further, it permits, even encourages us, to ask some very important questions and to reach some extremely significant conclusions. Hegemonic mental structures imposed by western Europeans are exposed. Worlds that existed long before European domination are revealed and validated. The people who inhabited them are (re) humanized. The positive effects of this knowledge upon people today and in the future are incalculable.

For example, it may be significant of patriarchal domination that is central to Eurocentric existence that Homer's Mentor is a male, when in the history of humanity, women have been, in the very least, equal to men in the provision of mentoring services to other human beings. In addition, it should be noted that such mentoring and related services done by women are often unwaged, usually because their location is in the home. Yet, in the actual tale as told by Homer,

[65] Nehusi 2010.

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Athene is woman and divine, and she, not Mentor, is by far the most effective mentor in the story.

The single term, Mentor, thus casually deletes the presence and agency in the social history of the world of entire categories of humanity: women and people of colour, by far the great majority of humans. Mentor is therefore another example of the Eurocentric tradition of names and naming.

Yet, the term 'Mentor' is but a single representative of something much larger than itself. Another example of this epistemology of oppression is easily available from Homer's text. The term 'odyssey' and its variants, derived from the name of Homer's hero, are widely applied in European languages to mean a wandering and adventurous journey. But these very characteristics are present in journeys with identical features that were celebrated in the literatures of much older civilizations long before the Greeks and other western Europeans sought to celebrate Odysseus in this way. For example, Afrikans in Kemet celebrated such journeys of *Harkhuf*, *The Shipwrecked Sailor*, *Sinuhe,* and others. It is not illogical to expect stories with similar features in the literatures of other civilizations. The impact of the omission of these archetypes from the study of humanity helps to shape humanity's awareness of itself in ways that threaten inclusivity, equity, and sensitivity at the very foundations of ourselves in a world in which it has become commonplace for us to describe humanity as global and even integrated. It ought not to be difficult to imagine the consequences of these observations for the interpretation and teaching of such significant texts as Tennyson's poem, *Ulysses*, or James Joyce's novel, *Ulysses* (1918-20, 1922), even if only at the departure points of these journeys of the human imagination that, like the dominant but deficient Eurocentric concept of mentoring, have been instructed by a peculiar and inaccurate reading of Homer's poem.

Other patriarchal and often racist terminology that arise from and continue to uphold Eurocentric epistemology are in easy everyday use. They define untrue and unhealthy perceptions of humanity and the human reality. The absence of this information from academic discourse about Kemet and Afrika in general, and other cultures such as the Chinese, Indians and indeed of all humanity, is indicative of a much wider problem of Eurocentric scholarship. Other manifestations of this affliction lie in the many distortions, outright lies and omissions about the history of Afrika and other varieties of humanity that have become lodged, in fact institutionalized, in Eurocentric scholarship.

Mentoring was a public good, widely defused and dominant in the social practice of Kemet. It expressed the ethos of the society of Kemet and was a decisive tool in intergenerational transmission. But this fact is deleted by the deployment of the Eurocentric epistemology that deletes Kemet, other Afrikans and many other peoples from humanity and falsely centres Greece and by extension Europe, in the history of humanity.

As oppressed people transform themselves into the conscious agents of their own destiny, they seize control of their own minds and begin to beat back the boundaries of their mental enslavement and the intellectual dominance of hegemonic forces. In their moment of power, the forces of liberation of the World Majority root their epistemology in their own experiences, perceptions, and interests. Hegemonic forces will then no longer possess intellectual power and so can no longer construct the mental universe to suit their own purpose. In that moment, Mentor will, appropriately, cease to be Mentor and become a mentor, both in the story to which he immediately belongs, and in the great narrative of humanity in which everyone belongs.

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Analysis of Hydrocarbon and Heavy Metal Load in Fishes and Waters in Coastal Islands

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ABSTRACT

This study entitled ''Analysis of Hydrocarbon and Heavy Metal Load in Fishes and Waters in coastal island'' gives an explicit analysis for physico-chemical properties, heavy metals and total hydrocarbon content (THC) for water samples gotten from mangrove environment as well as determining the levels of heavy metals in fishes (Clarias Gariepinus and E.fimbriata) collected from Iko, Emeroke and Okoroette Rivers. The physical variables investigated in the course of this study were:- Temperature, Electrical Conductivity and Turbidity while the chemical variables were;- pH, alkalinity, dissolved oxygen, total dissolved solid, total suspended solid, total hardness, biochemical oxygen demand, total hardness, iron, sulphate, zinc, nitrate, potassium, magnesium, sodium, calcium, cobalt, in addition to Total hydrocarbon content (THC). In a bid to understand the status of petroleum contamination in mangrove ecosystem, total petroleum content was determined from water samples using standard scientific procedures. Six heavy metals: cadmium, chromium, copper, arsenic, lead and mercury were taken into concentration.

Keywords: hydrocarbon, heavy metal load, fishes, waters, coastal islands.

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Analysis of Hydrocarbon and Heavy Metal Load in Fishes and Waters in Coastal Islands

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ABSTRACT

This study entitled "Analysis of Hydrocarbon and Heavy Metal Load in Fishes and Waters in coastal island" gives an explicit analysis for physico-chemical properties, heavy metals and total hydrocarbon content (THC) for water samples gotten from mangrove environment as well as determining the levels of heavy metals in fishes (Clarias Gariepinus and E.fimbriata) collected from Iko, Emeroke and Okoroette Rivers. The physical variables investigated in the course of this study were:- Temperature, Electrical Conductivity and Turbidity while the chemical variables were;- pH, alkalinity, dissolved oxygen, total dissolved solid, total suspended solid, total hardness, biochemical oxygen demand, total hardness, iron, sulphate, zinc, nitrate, potassium, magnesium, sodium, calcium, cobalt, in addition to Total hydrocarbon content (THC). In a bid to understand the status of petroleum contamination in mangrove ecosystem, total petroleum content was determined from water samples using standard scientific procedures. Six heavy metals: cadmium, chromium, copper, arsenic, lead and mercury were taken into concentration. Seasonal variations of the various variables were taken into cognizance to ascertain whether changes in seasons affect chemical concentration in aquatic system. As compared with World Health Organisation standard, out of 29 tested parameters including THC, the result of water samples for both dry and wet season, 14 parameters were above permissible limits while 15 were below. Specifically, the value of hydrocarbon (THC) was above permissible limits in all the water samples. Meanwhile, the values for heavy metals in fishes were above permissible limit except copper whose value was slightly below permissible limit for both season in the three sampled locations. The result so far obtained calls for urgent attention to save the lives of fishes and surface water in oil producing areas of Akwa Ibom State.

Keywords: hydrocarbon, heavy metal load, fishes, waters, coastal islands.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Heavy metal contamination in coastal island has been a serious concern throughout the world for many decades, as it has caused devastating effects on the ecological balance of the recipient environment and aquatic organisms generally. "Heavy metals" is a collective term, which applies to the group of metals and metalloids with atomic density greater than 4 g/cm^3 or 5 times or more greater than water. Heavy metals include lead (pb), cadmium (cd), zinc (zn), mercury (hg), arsenic (as), silver (ag) chromium (cr), copper (cu) iron (fe), and the platinum group elements (Krishna *et al.* 2014).

They are considered to be grouped into the category of persistent bioaccumulative chemicals, and some of them are endocrine-disrupting and carcinogenic. These metals are highly toxic to plankton, invertebrates and various larvae at high concentrations Krishna *et al.* 2014).

Heavy metals penetrate the coastal islands of Akwa Ibom State and Niger Delta through various pathways including solid mineral extraction, toxic waste disposal, dredging, farming and oil spill from petroleum industry. From a book written by Jimmy & Osogi entitled ''Emerging issues on blue economic investment in Niger Delta Regions", it was brought to fore that oil companies has seriously polluted coastal waters in the Niger

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Delta particularly those earliest communities that oil and gas exploration began, particularly Ogoni and Eastern Obolo respectively (Jimmy & Osogi, 2025). A study by Kadafa (2012) maintain that in the past 50 years at least 9-13 million barrels has been spill by eleven (11) oil companies managing one hundred and fifty- nine (159) oil fields and one thousand four hundred and eighty-one (1,481) wells in the Niger Delta in Nigeria. His study seemed to contradict earlier works in the number of oil field, oil well and oil spill. Anifowose (2008) identified about 606 oil fields with 355 situated onshore; 251 situated offshore with 5,284 drilled oil wells and 7,000km of oil and gas pipelines. With this data, by considering the number of oil field operational in Niger Delta, one can easily deduce that there is a high level of pollution in the mangrove ecosystem.

Petroleum impacted heavy metal accumulation in aquatic food chain is no longer a Nigerian-based ecological disaster but permeates the Gulf of Mexico, Thar-Jath oilfield of South Sudan and Shoreline of Saudi Arabia (Leer, 2015). Succinctly, some of the oil fields found near mangrove ecosystem are seriously posing threat to biota and human health by extension. (Environmental Defence Fund, 2023)

By way of following International Best Practices on pollution control in oil fields, oil and gas operators are expected to cut down spillage during and after production, likewise seal wells at the end of production, yet most multinationals care little about post-management of oil production sites, thus causing the release of pollutant into soils and groundwater, particularly mangrove where aquatic organisms breeds. Recently, United States Environmental Protection Agency has documented over 120,000 orphaned and abandoned oil wells across USA and the potential risk on ecosystem has been quantified (USEPA, 2023; Wangboje and Ikwuabe, 2015).

While the developed economy is affected by orphaned wells leakages, though little effort of ecosystem restoration is on-going, developing nations including Nigeria is completely disadvantaged due to lack of funds and expertise on ecosystem recovery from petroleum related ecological hazards. Some years back, about 32 officially recognized oil fields with numerous orphaned wells had been documented in Nigeria, though with no recovery plan including many found within Eastern Obolo LGA and other parts of coastal Akwa Ibom State (Enemugwem, 2009). The indigenous people of Eastern Obolo have agitated for intervention since 1996 when Shell BP abandoned some wells in the area. Since then, the glamour for restoration of soil and water, floristic, faunatic habitat have been raised.

According to Enemugwem (2009) oil was discovered in Eastern Obolo in 1957 by the Shell D' Archy Petroleum Development Company, but commercial production began in 1976 and after 30 years of exploitation and ecological damage, the operation were shut down. Since then, extensive literatures have been built up on the consequences of oil and gas production in air, land, mangrove and water environment of Eastern Obolo.

Israel and Mbikan (2023) stresses that abandoned oil fields in Utapete and Iko oil field (OML 13) as well as Okorofield (OML 112) has had enormous effects on livelihood and socio-economic development. One of the earliest reports on the contamination of water and mangrove environment was released by Enemugwem who had conducted extensive research on the fate of petroleum pollution in Eastern Obolo from 1957-2007. He outlined the processes in drilling operations capable of discharge of contaminants into the environment such as the drill ships and jack-up rigs, drilling mud, pipeline installation, flaring and drilling waste (Enemugwem, 1990,1995, 2005, 2009). He identified about seventy six (76) sites including rivers, creeks and fish breeding grounds affected by oil pollution in the entire Eastern Obolo. Contemporary scholars like Israel U.E and Mbikan (2023) had carefully studied the fate of oil Exploration in Eastern Obolo water and coastal island disruption from 1996 – 2021 and noted that numerous resources in the coastal islands with surface water being contaminated.

Nevertheless, pollution from petroleum affects not only the land and water environment, it

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causes corrosion of roof, food contamination and bio-accumulation in flora and fauna. Given the Level of metal exposure on coastal islands especially within orphaned and abandoned oil well zones where research has shown the capability of accidental chemical leakages, numerous studies have been made in this direction including Vivin *et al.* (2019); Okokon (2019); Abiaobo *et al.* (2017); Oribhabor and Ogbeibu (2009) as well as Lindsey, et al (2013). While these studies have investigated the content of heavy metals and THC and their associated effect on fishes and water, little or no interest has been directed toward laboratory analysis of heavy metals in fish and water within coastal islands with specific focus on oil producing areas in Eastern Obolo. This work considers seasonal variation of physico-chemical properties, the concentration of heavy metals in water and fishes, and the level of hydrocarbon in the sampled waters.

II. MATERIALS AND METHOD

2.1 Study Area

This research was carried out in three most prominent oil communities in Akwa Ibom State. These locations are blessed with sufficient oil and gas deposit: Okoroette, Emeroke and Iko in Eastern Obolo. Eastern Obolo LGA is one of the earliest and largest oil producing area in Nigeria, with almost all the villages including Elek-Okpoon, Otunene, Ikonta and Obianga, Iko, Emeroke, Okoroette endowed with sufficient reserve of oil and gas. This study focused only areas within Iko, Emeroke and Okoroette oil producing communities. The coastal islands in Eastern Obolo is blessed with offshore and onshore petroleum operation and host the largest oil fields in Nigeria. Over six decades of oil production in the islands has totally polluted surface water and fishes that live therein.

The most popular island in the region is Iko Town. Iko town is a community in Eastern Obolo and was selected as the first sampling point. It is one of the busiest settlement in the area. Iko oil field has been in operation since 1973 by Shell Petroleum Development Company Nigeria Limited, in what was referred to as the Utapete Operational Zone with 32 oil wells, shut down and later leased to Sterling Oil some years ago (Etesin et al, 2013).

Iko River takes its rise from the Qua Iboe River catchment and drains directly into the Atlantic Ocean at the Bight of Bonny. Iko Town is located in the Eastern part of the Niger Delta between latitude 4°30" N and 4° 45" N and longitude 7°35" and 7° 40"E. The river has a shadow depth ranging from 1.0 metre to 7.0 metres at flood and ebb tide and an average width of 16metres (Okonta et al, 2001). Iko River has many adjoining tributaries and creeks, and part of it also drains into Imo River estuary. The shore line of Iko River is characterized by soft –dark mud flats, usually exposed during low tide, mangrove swamps with mangrove trees, shoals and sand bars.

Additionally, Okoroette being the second sampled location is a community in Eastern Obolo where oil well was first discovered by Shell BP in the 1950s after Oloibiri oil field, the genesis of oil and gas operation in Nigeria. Okoro oil field is found offshore in the Atlantic Ocean and it is situated in Okoroette community, the local government headquarter of Eastern Obolo.

This is one of the most widely known oil producing communities in Eastern Obolo. Lastly, Emeroke is a kingdom comprising of 5 oil producing villages, though suffering from serious petroleum related hazards including oil spill, mangrove contamination and water pollution. The communities are economically backward with poor water supply, little or no electricity supply, poverty, hunger, land pollution which affect agricultural activities and high cost of living due to inaccessibility. The communities within this kingdom do not have much population of indigene due to the plight they have suffered and this force the indigene to migrate out in search for greener pastures. Some migrants from Rivers State have dominated the kingdom especially the Ijaws and Andonis who have settled for many years for fishing business. The population of people within the estuarine environment is not much compared to the outskirt of Iko Town which

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is one of the busiest settlements. Numerous fruit garden and mangrove are found by the edge of the estuaries and these are the raw materials for fishers, traders and traditional medicine practitioners.

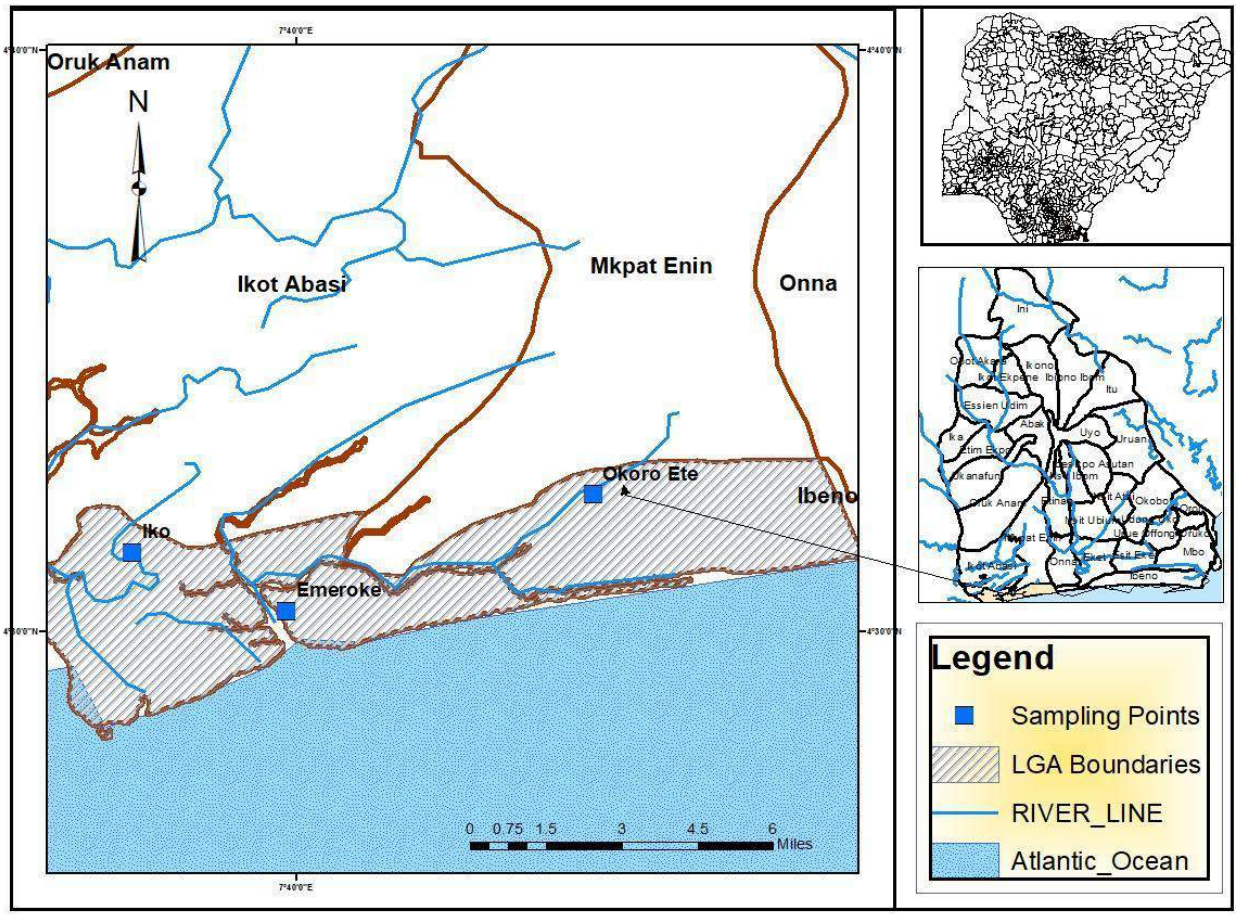

Fig 1: Map of Eastern Obolo showing Study Area

2.2 Methods

Samples were collected from oil producing communities in Eastern Obolo. Samples were collected monthly for six months from September 2022 to March 2023. A total of 18 water samples were collected at 30cm below the surface water at several points within designated sampling locations. The samples were taken once in every month. All samples were taken in the early hours of the day.

Two species of fish (*Clarias Gariepinus* and *E.fimbriata*) were collected from the study area by fisher men. The collected fish samples were properly labelled, packaged and transported to the laboratory for identification, preparation and analyses. A total of 72 fish samples were subsequently collected for wet and dry season. All captured fishes were labeled accordingly and placed in an ice chest before transported to the laboratory. The fish were also weighed and categorized based on the two species: *C. Gariepinus* and *E.fimbriata*. For fish preparation, gills and kidney were used in this study. Fish tissues were carefully dissected and dried in oven at 110^{0}C to a constant weight. Heavy metal content of the fishes were determined from the laboratory analysis (Emmanuel et al, 2017). Subsequently, all the glass wares were thoroughly washed with distilled water, soaked in diluted nitric acid for 24 hours and then rinsed with distilled water (Emmanuel et al, 2017). All the samples were taken to State funded laboratory-Ministry of Science and Technology, Akwa Ibom State.

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The collected water samples were subjected to standard analytical procedure of American Public Health Association (APHA 2005) to determine the physico-chemical properties, Total hydrocarbon content and heavy metals including Mercury, Lead, Cadmium, Chromium, Arsenic and Copper using standard scientific procedure. (Oribhabor and Ogbeibu, 2009). The level of changes in physico-chemical parameters, heavy metals and petroleum content was illustrated using chart and Anova statistical technique.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1: Mean value for Seasonal variations of waters physico-chemical properties in a mangrove ecosystem

Parameters	Wet	Dry
Ph	6.54±0.24	6.70 ±0.21
Temp. (oC)	26.82 ± 0.82	27.14 ±0.29
Ec (uScm-1)	76.56 ±13.68[a]	96.22 ±21.55[b]
TDS	34.66±4.86[b]	40.28 ±7.37[b]
Total suspended solids	107.69 ±6.77	106.99 ±9.63
Turbidity	61.31 ±8.86[a]	49.04 ±9.76[b]
BOD (mg/L)	16.58 ±2.40[a]	17.86 ±3.01[b]
DO (mg/L)	6.97 ±0.70	6.21 ±1.02
Alkalinity (Mg/L)	20.54 ±2.24[a]	23.81 ±2.51[b]
Acidity	69.84 ±7.34	69.44 ±8.78
Total hardness	20.62±1.54	25.56±3.61
Cobalt (mg/L)	0.32±0.15[b]	0.45±0.17[b]
Potassium (mg/L)	2.32 ±0.75	1.24 ±0.35
Chloride	2.99 ±0.67[b]	3.75±0.73[b]
Sulphate (Mg/L)	15.18±7.77	14.31 ±6.85
Nitrate	2.73 ±0.80[a]	2.90±0.68[b]
Zinc (mg/l)	0.97±0.25[b]	0.96±0.21[b]
Sodium	1.94±0.72	1.56±0.50
Iron (mg/l)	2.55±0.87[a]	2.03±0.76[b]
Calcium (mg/l)	5.48±1.10[b]	5.54±0.72[a]
Magnesium (mg/l)	3.04±0.52	1.90±0.36
THC	182.49±22.46	162.13±31.47
COD (mg/l)	78.78±7.14	78.78±9.87

Means with different superscripts along the same row are significantly different (Duncan's test) $p<0.05$

Source: Fieldwork 2025

Table 2: Variations in Heavy metals in water based on study locations

Heavy Metals	Okoroette River	Iko River	Emeroke River
Mercury	1.02±0.35[b]	1.58 ±0.76[b]	2.90±0.39[a]
Lead	0.37±0.12	0.17±0.09	0.18±0.07
Cadmium	0.80±0.28	1.22 ±0.39	0.82±0.23

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Chromium	0.39±0.20	0.44±0.21	0.25±0.08
Arsenic	0.48±0.16	0.44±0.15	0.41±0.18
Copper	2.12±0.56[a]	0.61±0.23[b]	0.81±0.30[b]

Means with different superscripts along the same row are significantly different (Duncan's test) $p<0.05$

Source: Fieldwork 2025

Table 3: Seasonal variation in heavy metals in water in the three mangrove communities

Heavy Metals	Wet	Dry
Mercury	1.98 ± 0.49	1.69±0.52
Lead	0.19 ±0.06	0.28±0.09
Cadmium	0.91±0.27	0.98±0.17
Chromium	0.45 ±0.07	0.27±0.10
Arsenic	0.47±0.12	0.41 ±0.09
Copper	1.29±0.22	1.06 ±0.27

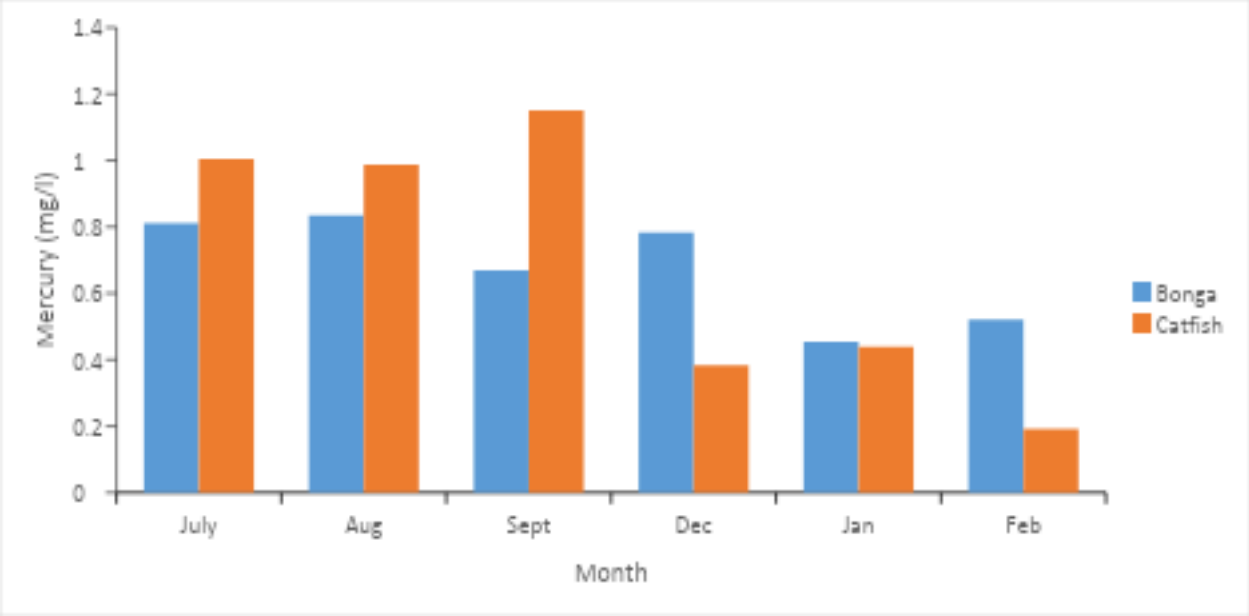

Figure 2: Variations in Mercury measured in Different Fish Species

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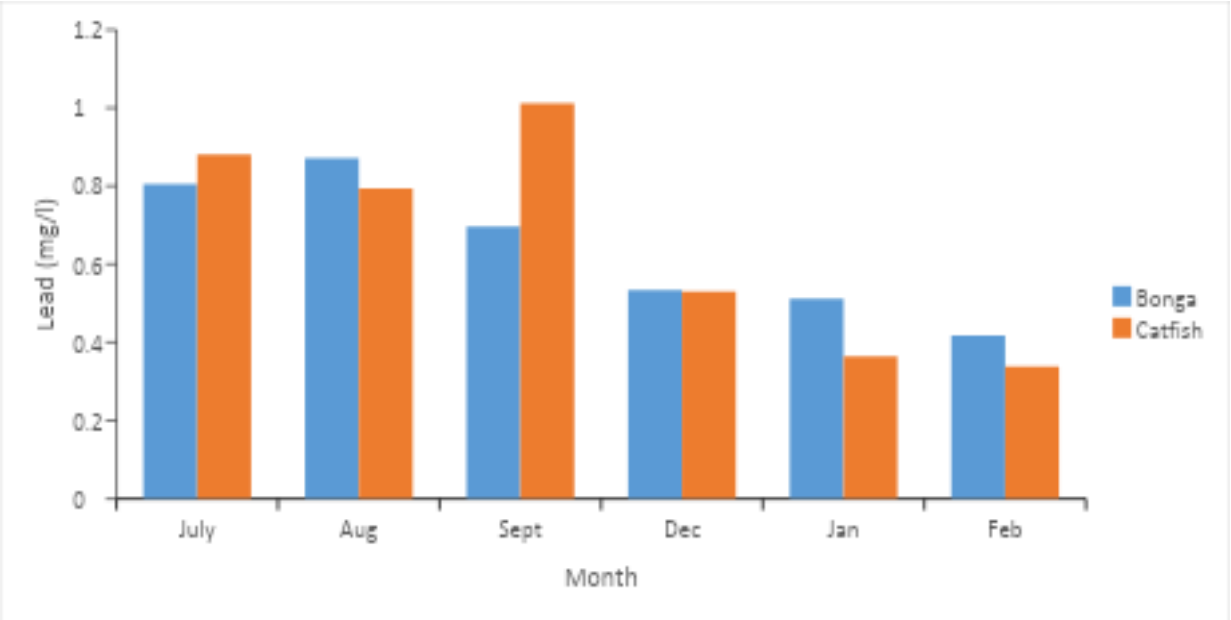

Figure 2: Variations in Lead measured in Different Fish Species

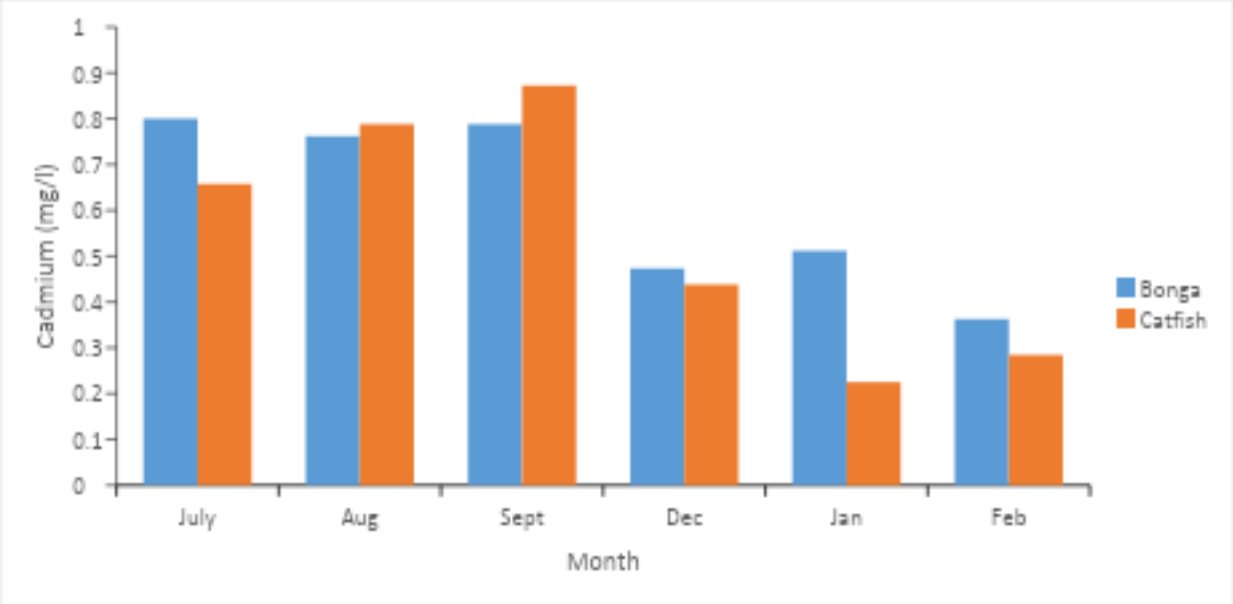

Figure 4: Variations in Cadmium measured in Different Fish Species

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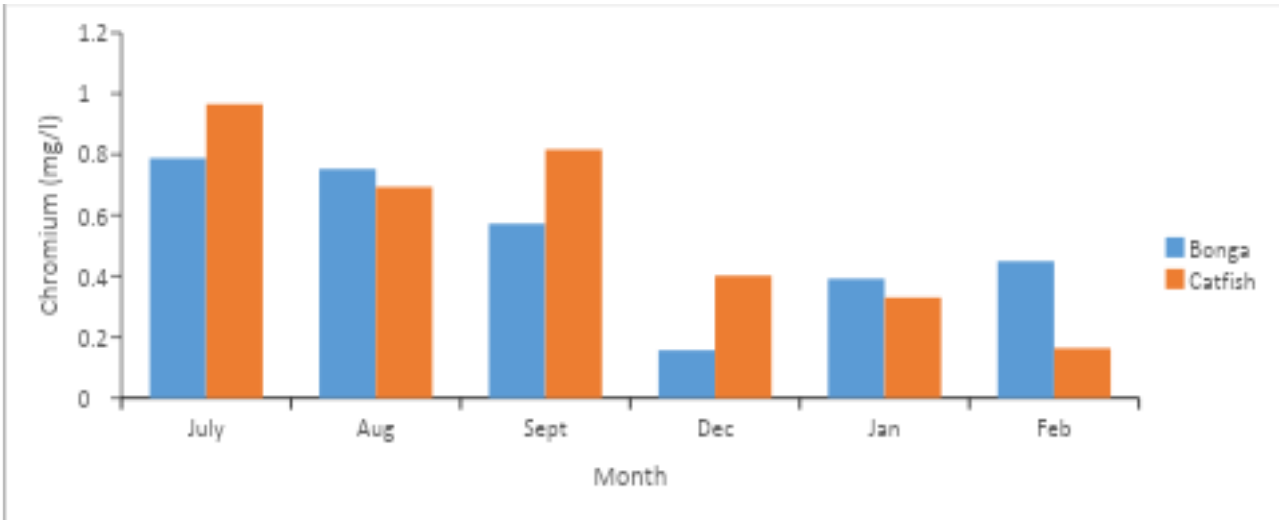

Figure 5: Variations in Chromium measured in Different Fish Species

Figure 6: Variations in Arsenic measured in Different Fish Species

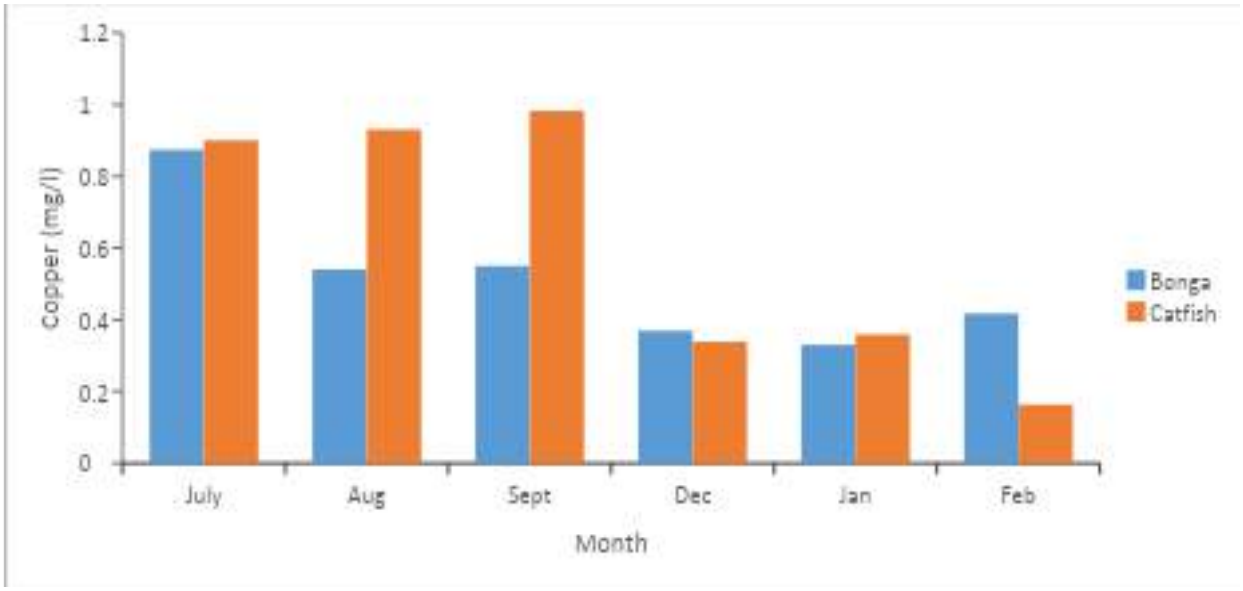

Figure 7: Variations in Copper measured in Different Fish Species

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IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The physico-chemical properties determine the overall health of any aquatic system. Anthropogenic activities influence the physico-chemical properties of rivers due to the persistent discharge of contaminants.

The seasonal variation of physico-chemical properties of water in the study area shows that during wet season, the mean value for pH was 6.54±0.24 and 6.70 ±0.21 for dry season (see Table 4.2). Patnak (2010) observed that low pH values of a river indicate poor buffering capacity of total alkalinity and may also be as a result of organic matter decomposition.

A good knowledge of pH of water is important. The result of the study was compared to studies carried out by Okeke and Adinna (2013) on water quality of Otamiri River in Owerri along Imo River. They found out that the mean pH value of the dry season water samples (6.5) and rainy season (6.4) fell within the stipulated limits of 6.0-8.5 for drinking water.

The temperature of the water samples varied remarkably between the wet and dry season. Temperature for wet season was 26.82 ± 0.82 and 27.14 ±0.29 for dry season. In terms of temperature, Ajayi and Osibanjo (2016) observed that temperature levels are higher in the dry season than in other seasons because of higher air temperature. Okeke et al., (2013) found out that temperature values of Otamiri along Imo River ranged from 30.6-32.20C in dry season and 27.0-28.60C in wet season.

The variation in temperature values could be attributed to time of sampling, river gradient, rate of flow of the river and weather condition. However, temperature plays a vital role in controlling chemical reactions in water and metabolic process in fishes (Wangboje & Ikhuabe, 2015). Increase in temperature leads to growth of algae which chokes aquatic organisms to death (Hany & Sebaee 2012) whereas decrease in temperature allows most substances become insoluble in water. The result was comparable to studies done by Ngoju et al (2021) on heavy metals in Naivasha Basin whose temperature ranges between 22-240C with a dissolved oxygen between 6.9-20mg/l.

The electrical conductivity values determined between locations in wet and dry seasons were all lower than the WHO limit of 1400Scm-1. The level of conductivity values obtained in this study could be linked to ions containing drilling wastes dumped into the rivers. The little disparity in seasonal values may be due to high volume of water and dilution effect caused by heavy rainfall. The result was similar to that of Joshua & Ediyo (2014) on heavy metals in Dzindi river, Limpopo in South Africa. According to their study, the mean value for EC was in the range of 30-133mS/cm while TDS was between 20-89mg/l. The value of EC was lower than that of Onyegeme *et al.*, (2015) who observed electrical conductivity of 17.24-22.5 µs/cm in Chokocho, Edegelem and Imeh rivers along Imo River. Duru et al; (2012) in his assessment of Nworie River, Owerri observed conductivity values of 100.0-193.2 µs/cm.

Total dissolved solids provide information on the aesthetic value, turbidity status and density of water. The contributors to the total dissolved solids in water are bicarbonate, sulphate, phosphate, nitrate, magnesium, calcium, sodium, heavy metals and organic ions (Oluyemi & Olabanji, 2011). The value for TDS in wet season was 34.66±4.86 and 40.28 ±7.37 for dry season. Alabaster and Lloyd (2000) reported that total dissolved solids (TDS) in excess of 1200 were not likely to support good fresh water organisms.

In the result, TSS dropped from 107.69 ±6.77 in wet season to 106.99 ±9.63in dry season. In terms of turbidity, it measures the loss in transparency in water caused by presence of suspended particles in water such as phytoplankton and silt from run-off (Bedassa, 2020). This is why high turbidity (>5 NTU) can stop light penetration. This can affect photosynthetic process and reduction of DO thereby affecting aquatic life. In the study area, levels of turbidity were significantly lower during the dry season than the wet season. This is because turbidity increases significantly after a heavy rain. The results recorded a higher mean turbidity value of 61.31 ±8.86 in wet season to

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49.04 ±9.76 in dry season. The higher concentrations of turbidity observed is an indication of heavy toxic load being discharged into the aquatic environment.

Feature 1: Sample river at Emeroke affected by Oil spill

Feature 2: Land Contamination calls for concern

Biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) is an empirical analysis that measure all the biodegradable materials present in water and high BOD value indicate the eutrophic status of a water

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body. High BOD concentration may induce excessive algal growth and provoke oxygen depletion in aquatic system. BOD varies between 16.58 ±2.40 in wet season to 17.86 ±3.01 in dry season. Onuoha(2003) in his findings on impacts of anthropogenic activities on water quality of the Onuimo reported that BOD is a fair measure of the cleanliness of any water on the basis that values less than 2mg/L are clean, 3 – 5mg/L fairly clean and 10mg/L definitely bad one or polluted. Biochemical oxygen demand is the amount of dissolved oxygen needed by aerobic biological organism to break down organic material present in a given water sample at a certain temperature over a specific time period. These values are however below the 28-30 mg/l (WHO, 2011) permissible levels of BOD.

For DO, there was a slight difference in the level of concentration in which 6.97 ±0.70 was recorded for wet season and 6.21 ±1.02 for dry season respectively. Dissolved oxygen concentration of 5.0mg/L and above are desirable for fish survival. Low dissolved oxygen concentrations are known to be one of the major problems of fauna and floral survival in the aquatic environment. This has been reported by Erik et al., (2016) in their study of Black and Baltic Sea.

Seasonal variation in Alkalinity (Mg/L) was between 20.54 ±2.24 to 23.81 ±2.51 for both wet and dry season respectively. Peter, & Olusegun (2019) in his work stated that the low level of alkalinity of water samples indicate that the underlying rocks which is the main source of natural alkalinity contains low carbonate, bicarbonate and hydroxide. The seasonal variation of Acidity content was 69.84 ±7.34 in wet season and 69.44 ±8.78 for dry season. Total hardness was between 20.62±1.54 for wet season and 25.56±3.61 in dry season. The value for cobalt in wet season was 0.32±0.15 and 0.45±0.17 in dry season. Potassium varies between 2.32 ±0.75 in wet season and 1.24 ±0.35 in dry season. There was difference in chloride concentration between 2.99 ±0.67 in wet season and 3.75±0.73 in dry season. Sulphate (Mg/L) varies between 15.18±7.77 in wet season and 14.31 ±6.85 in dry season. The mean concentration of sulphate shows that the value ranges from 43.67 (mg/L) and 37.33 (mg/L).

Nitrate varies between 2.73 ±0.80 in wet season and 2.90±0.68 in dry season. Seasonal variation was noticeable in Zinc between 0.97±0.25 in wet season and 0.96±0.21 in dry season. Sodium concentration was 1.94±0.72 in wet season and 1.56±0.50 in dry season while concentration of Iron was 2.55±0.87 in wet season and 2.03±0.76 in dry season. Differences in calcium concentration ranges between 5.48±1.10 in wet season and 5.54±0.72 in dry season. Magnesium concentration varies between 3.04±0.52 in wet season and 1.90±0.36 in dry season. THC was between 182.49±22.46 in wet season and 162.13±31.47 for dry season. The value for COD varies from 78.78±7.14 in wet season to 78.78±9.87 in dry season.

From findings in the study, there was a significant difference between wet and dry season in the concentration of heavy metals in fish. Mercury concentration varies between 0.909444 ±0.07 in wet season and 0.462222 ±0.06 in dry season. In lead, the concentration was 0.843056 ±0.05 in wet season and 0.449444 ±0.06 in dry season. Moreover, the concentration of cadmium in wet season was 0.778333 ±0.04 and 0.382778±0.05 for dry season. Chromium concentration was between 0.765 ±0.05 and 0.315278 ±0.05. The value of arsenic varies from 0.875556 ±0.08 to 0.476667 ±0.10 . The value of copper was between 0.795833 ±0.05 to 0.329167 ±0.06 . In terms of hydrocarbon content, THC was between 182.49±22.46 in wet season and 162.13±31.47 for dry season above permissible limit showing that petroleum impact on mangrove ecosystem is nothing but a reality.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Sustainable management of water in coastal islands is a key to development and blue economy growth especially in the contemporary era characterised by anthropogenic disturbance in the riverine communities. Human activities such as sand dredging, chemical-based fishing, abandoned oil wells, waste from petroleum

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exploitation, waste disposal from household and industries as well as pesticide from farmland have been considered a threat to the breeding ground of fishes where they are emptied into. The presence of metals is associated with pollutant capable of impacting negatively on fish population and humans who feed on aquatic organism. However, it is imperative that the health of coastal islands be protected at all cost for ecosystem functionality and economic productivity.

Hence, there is need for periodic monitoring of the level of pollutant in biota. There is also need for the adoption of geospatial tools in coastal island management in the area of water quality changes detection, fishes disappearance and real time pollutant monitoring. Moreover, inventory and periodic monitoring of islands affected by petroleum can be useful in decision making. In addition, coastal ecosystem restoration can be a good strategy to mitigate ecological problems in the study area. Lastly, Oil companies operating in the region should adhere strictly to international best practices in oil exploration/exploitation, Island conservation, maintenance of equipment and safety of their infrastructure.

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ABSTRACT

The historical narrative of Christianity in Africa has engaged the attention of many African Church historians, leading to the production of a compendium of literature on African Church history. Unarguably, a variety of themes on African Church history has been explored by African church historians from their diverse epistemic contexts. As a result, there seems to be little or no efforts among the scholars with respect to taxonomy of the diverse themes which occupy their reflections on African Church history. Guided by the historical method of data collection, the authors attempt to discuss developments, trends, consensus and disagreements as some of the essential themes which warrant classification among African Church historians. The paper further adopts the purposive sampling technique to select specific examples from the works of Andrew Walls, Kwame Bediako, Lamin Saneh and Ogbu Kalu. It finds out that two of the developments are the emergence of academic interest in African initiatives in Christianity in Africa and development of African theology. It further observes that liberation and integration are trends among African Church historians in the post-missionary era.

Keywords: church, church history, african church history, african theology.

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Developments, Trends, Consensus and Disagreements among African Church Historians: Specific Instances from the Works of Andrew Walls, Kwame Bediako, Lamin Sanneh and Ogbu U. Kalu

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The historical narrative of Christianity in Africa has engaged the attention of many African Church historians, leading to the production of a compendium of literature on African Church history. Unarguably, a variety of themes on African Church history has been explored by African church historians from their diverse epistemic contexts. As a result, there seems to be little or no efforts among the scholars with respect to taxonomy of the diverse themes which occupy their reflections on African Church history. Guided by the historical method of data collection, the authors attempt to discuss developments, trends, consensus and disagreements as some of the essential themes which warrant classification among African Church historians. The paper further adopts the purposive sampling technique to select specific examples from the works of Andrew Walls, Kwame Bediako, Lamin Saneh and Ogbu Kalu. It finds out that two of the developments are the emergence of academic interest in African initiatives in Christianity in Africa and development of African theology. It further observes that liberation and integration are trends among African Church historians in the post-missionary era. Again, the issue of identity of the African Christian features prominently in a discourse on consensus among African church historians because the question of the precise identity of the African Christian engages the theological reflection of virtually all African church historians. Last but not least, disagreements among African church historians include a discourse on the continuity of Africans' primal religiosity in Christianity.

Keywords: church, church history, african church history, african theology.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Inasmuch as the discipline of African Church history is dominated by several penetrating voices, there appears to be very little or no efforts at classifying and discussing a variety of themes from the perspectives of African church historians. Within the context of the historical method of data collection, this work attempts taxonomy of some concepts by focusing on developments, trends, consensus and disagreements among African church historians. It adopts the purposive sampling technique to select specific instances from the works of these African Church historians: Andrew Walls, Kwame Bediako, Lamin Saneh and Ogbu Kalu.

It suffices to provide a synopsis of each theme discussed in the paper. It places the whole exercise in its appropriate context by briefly examining the concepts of church history and African church history. The discussion on developments among African church historians hinges on the emergence of scholarly discourse on African initiatives in Christianity in Africa and the development of African theology. Two of the trends which permeate the discourse of African church historians are liberation and integration. On the issue of consensus among African church

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theologians, there seems to be a general agreement on the question of the African Christian's exact identity. The discussion on the continuity of the Africans' primal religiosity in Christianity is the pivot around which widespread disagreements among African church historians revolve. In conclusion, the paper underscores, among others, African theology's focus on dealing with culturally-rooted issues within the perspective of African church historians who understand theology as a productive blend of 'old' and 'new' in a quest for a unified framework for dealing with Africans' existential challenges.

II. DEFINITION OF CHURCH HISTORY

In his *Historical Theology: Continuity and Change in Christian Doctrine*, Jaroslav Pelikan maintains that church history... deals with the church's past.[1] To understand this definition, it is imperative to explore the meaning of the church. This is because in the opinion of Ogbu U. Kalu, 'the type of church history which one writes is a function of the definition of the church.'[2] Kalu explores the meaning of the church as follows:

> *[E]dha* Hebrew and *kuriakon* in Greek refer frequently to the assemblage; that is the institution of assembling. But *gahal* and *ekklesia* move beyond the institutional perception of those who have assembled. It is people–sensitive. The Greek, *ekklesia,* speaks of those who have been called out of the world into the kingdom. The world, *kosmos,* has three meanings including the world order, worldly goods, endowments, riches, pleasures and allurements (*kosmetikos*) which seduce from God. Thus, behind the classical idea of *kosmos* as orderly arrangement, is a mind behind the system, a world system established after the fall by a *kosmokrator,* a world ruler, the prince of the world, in rebellion. Friendship with him is enmity Christ. The church, therefore, is a special people of God, a pilgrim people with a mission. Mark 3:13-15 spells out why they were called:
>
> - To be companions of Christ;
> - To hear and preach the good news which will be
> - Confirmed with signs and wonders, confrontations with the forces of darkness. These could be poverty, corrupt ethics of power, false religiosity, social marginalization or environmental degradation.

The church's task is to bring the gospel to bear on all the things which concern the well-being of the human person and carry a spiritual warfare against forces which deface.[3]

The human society is therefore the context of the church, understood as God's mission.[4] James E. Bradley and Richard A. Muller have proposed taxonomy of themes examined in church history. In their scheme, 'the discipline of church history encompasses the practice of the church as well as the thoughts of the church; it studies both dogma and the intersection of the church with society and the larger world... Anything that the church does in the world is arguably a part of church history.[5]

It must however be noted that 'church history', in the thought of Kalu 'is a different genre of history with a prescribed goal, a theological underpinning and people-orientation.'[6] It interprets facts[7] from an understanding of what God was doing in Jesus Christ in each peculiar environment or ecosystem.[8] It is against this backdrop that I examine African church history.

[1] Jaroslav Pelikan, *Historical Theology: Continuity and Change in Christian Doctrine* (London and New York: Hutchinson/Corpus, 1971), pp. xiii-xviii. Cited in James E. Bradley and Richard A. Muller, *Church History: An Introduction to Research, Reference Works, and Methods* (United States of America: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), pp.5-6.

[2] Ogbu U. Kalu, 'Shape, Flow and Identity in Contemporary African Church Historiography' in *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology* XII, 1&2 (2002), p. 6.

[3] Kalu, 'Shape, Flow and Identity', p. 6.

[4] For details on the church as God's mission, see Emmanuel Asante, *Stewardship: Essays on Ethics of Stewardship* (Ghana: Wilas Press Limited, 1999), pp. 145-146.

[5] Bradley and. Muller, *Church History*, p. 6.

[6] Kalu, 'Shape, Flow and Identity', p. 6.

[7] Facts in this context refer to pieces of information or events which are the same for all historians and which form the backbone history. For a good discussion on 'the historian and his facts', see E.H. Carr, *What is History* (England: Penguin Books, 1983), pp. 7-30.

[8] Kalu, 'Shape, Flow and Identity', p. 9.

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III. A BRIEF EXAMINATION OF AFRICAN CHURCH HISTORY

If Africa[9] is part of God's created order with peculiar environment, ecosystem and people created in the image of God, then the concept of the church as explored above is not novel among Africans. African church history therefore is the story of God's pilgrim people in Africa and their experiences of God's redeeming grace in the midst of their existence in various cultural and ecological milieu.[10]

The primordial orientation of Africa / Africans and the non-novelty of Christian, church or God consciousness among them are forcefully accentuated by Frans J. Verstraelen in his book *History of Christianity in Africa in the context of African History*. He intones that 'Africa and Africans did exist already a long time before historical Christianity came into being, but Christianity, since its beginning, has been present in Africa. Because Christianity has been in Africa for almost two thousand years, its history should therefore be [examined]...'[11] Andrew F. Walls, a doyen of African church history, examines the pivotal place and relevance of Christianity in Africa as follows:

> It is widely recognized that there has occurred within the present century a demographic shift in the centre of gravity of the Christian world, which means that more than half of the world's Christians live in Africa... and that the proportion doing so grows annually. This means that we have to regard African Christianity as potentially the *representative* Christianity of the twenty-first century...The Christianity typical of the twenty –first century will be shaped by the events and processes that take place in the southern continents, and above all, by those that take place in Africa.'[12]

The implication of the above demographic shift in the centre of gravity of the Christian world is that Africa will significantly influence or determine the 'shape, flow and identity' of global Christianity. Walls underscores this point and asserts that 'the things by which people recognize and judge what Christianity is will (for good or ill) increasingly be determined in Africa. The characteristic doctrines, the liturgy, the ethical codes, the social applications of the faith will increasingly be those prominent in Africa. New agendas for theology will appear in Africa.'[13]

The observation of Walls on the centrality of African Christianity in a global Christian context does not only indicate the vibrant or active involvement of Africans in the growth of Christianity in Africa, but it also underscores calls for a paradigmatic shift in the Eurocentric approach to African church historiography. I want to pursue this argument further in the next segment of the discussion, that is, some developments among African church historians.

3.1 Developments among African Church Historians

Several developments among African church historians may be identified. Two of them espoused in this work are the emergence of academic interest in African initiatives in the planting, nursing and growth of churches/ Christianity in Africa and development of African theology.

3.2 Emergence of Scholarly Discourse on African Initiatives in Christianity in Africa

One of the key developments among African church historians is the unfolding of scholarly debates about African initiatives in Christianity in Africa. In his 'African Church Historiography Reconsidered...', Cephas N. Omenyo cites Kalu in these words: 'Early African Christian

[9]Africa in this context is a geographical entity believed to be the most compact of continents. For details on this, see Mercy Amba Oduyoye, 'African Culture and African Development: A critical Reappraisal' in Gillian Mary Bediako, Benhardt Y. Quarshie and J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu (eds.) *Seeing New Facets of the Diamond, Christianity as a Universal Faith: Essays in Honour of Kwame Bediako* (U.K.: Regnum Africa and Regnum Books International, 2014), pp. 317-318.

[10] Kalu, 'Shape, Flow and Identity', p. 14.

[11] Frans J. Verstraelen, *History of Christianity in Africa in the context of African History* (Zimbabwe: Mambo Press, 2002), p. viii.

[12] Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002), p. 85.

[13] Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process*, P. 85.

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Historiography has consistently been too Eurocentric or has overemphasized the role of Western missionary agents, who are often presented as having preached the gospel to 'passive' receptors.'[14] Walls seems to frown on the Eurocentric approach to African church historiography and seeks to highlight the contributions of Africans in African Christianity. His observation is apt: 'Modern African Christianity is not only the result of movements among Africans, but it has been principally sustained by Africans and is to a surprising extent the result of African initiatives.'[15] Walls further underscores that:

> The crucial events of Christian history have often taken place through obscure people. The missionary movement itself, in both its Catholic and Protestant phases, has usually been a peripheral activity of the church. It would be hard to guess from the average volume on this history of the church in the nineteenth century that events that were to transform the church altogether were going on in Africa and Asia, for these events are likely to occupy a few pages in the volume at most.[16]

An academic discourse that attempts to unravel the efforts, creativity, ambition and self-motivation of Africans in the spread of the gospel in sub Saharan Africa, has not been an effort to impose Christianity on the African. Rather, it is the vivid story of Africans themselves taking the initiative to root God's word on African soil by complimenting the efforts of European missionaries.[17]

The upsurge of scholarly debates and interests in African initiatives in the growth of Christianity in Africa, it has been noted already, underscores calls for a paradigmatic shift in the Eurocentric perspective of African church historiography. The paradigmatic shift calls for an African interpretation of the life of the church in Africa that does not gloss over the African agency. Kalu notes that 'The history of Christianity in Africa is not only what missionaries did or did not do, but also what Africans thought about what was going on, and how they responded.'[18]

Commenting on Kenneth Scott Latourette's impressive work, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, Walls corroborates Kalu and further contends that 'since his [Latourette's] time, much fundamental research has been conducted on the primary sources, oral and written, and new perspectives have been taken up in which Africans, Asians and Latin Americans figure as the principal agents of Christian expansion.'[19]

It is insightful to note that a call for a paradigmatic shift in the Eurocentric approach to African church historiography – to highlight African initiatives in Christianity in Africa – finds vivid expression within the broader context of the resilience and resurgence of indigenous African religions in a global religious topography. The justification is that African church historiography takes place within the larger academic setting of African historiography.[20]

In his 'African Humanity Matters: Religious Creativity and Africa's World Encounters', Jacob K. Olupona indicates the primal religious orientation of Africa's primordial era. It was an era when 'various forms of ethnic indigenous religions spread across the African Continent [and provided] cohesive foundations of nations, peoples, and religious worldviews. Based on sacred narratives, these traditions espoused their unique worldviews. They defined cosmology, ritual practices, socio-political framework, and

[14] Cephas N. Omenyo, 'African Church Historiography Reconsidered: Some Manifestations of African Initiatives in the Planting, Nursing and Growth of the Methodist Church Ghana' in Abamfo O. Atiemo, Ben-Willie K. Golo and Lawrence K. Boakye (eds.), *Unpacking the Sense of the Sacred: A Reader in the Study of Religions* (UK: Ayebia Clark Publishing Limited, 2014), p. 147. See also Ogbu U. Kalu, 'Church Presence in Africa: A Historical Analysis of the Evangelisation Process' in *ATER,* 1979, p. 14.

[15] Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004), p. 86.

[16] Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process*, P. 53.

[17] Omenyo, 'African Church Historiography Reconsidered', p.148.

[18] Kalu, 'Church Presence in Africa', p. 14, see also Omenyo, 'African Church Historiography Reconsidered', p.148.

[19] Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process*, P. 8.

[20] For details, see Verstraelen, *History of Christianity in Africa*, pp. 1-6.

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ethical standards, as well as social and personal identity.'[21]

Despite this primal religious orientation of Africa's primordial era, scholarship in the history of religion indicates that indigenous African religions were never considered a substantive part of world religious tradition because they did not satisfy certain criteria defined by the axial age of 'civilization'.[22] Some privileged European scholars, imbued with Eurocentric mindset, denied the agency of African religions. For instance, James George Frazer (1854-1941) and Edward B. Tylor (1832-1927) classified indigenous religious practices of 'natives' not as universally religious or generative of religious cultures, but as forms of 'primitive' religion or magic emanating from the 'lower' of three stages of human progress. These stages were features of European perceptions of human evolution. By this ideological framework, such European scholars labeled indigenous African religions – and Africans themselves as primitive social forms, part of a lower social order.[23]

In the light of this blatant disregard for African indigenous religion as a productive and generative practice, African scholars such as Bolaji Idowu, John Mbiti, Kwame Bediako, Kofi Asare Opoku and many others, rallied in opposition and attempted to re-write and re-interpret African traditions. By so doing, they attempted to extract the real identity of African traditions from the dross of Eurocentric historiography, and reposition it with the vitality and status now recognized.[24] The outcome of this engagement is rewarding. Olupona asserts that 'African religions command their own cultural ingenuity, integral logic and authoritative force. This corrective scholarship and critical intervention helped to redefine African worldview and spirituality and, as such, showed how African primal religion is pivotal to the individuals and communal existence of the people.'[25]

IV. DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICAN THEOLOGY

In the light of the resilience and resurgence of African traditional religion, it is not surprising to discuss the unfolding of African theology. African theology, in simple terms, may be described as Africans' understanding of God in the light of their primal religious traditions. In their introduction to Kwame Bediako's *Jesus in Africa: The Christian Gospel in African History and Experience*, Hans Visser and Gillian Bediako shed light on the nature of African theology. They maintain that 'African theology charts its own distinctive course, because African religious experience and heritage, referred to by the generic term 'primal religion', provide the substratum.'[26] Even though Africa and Africans have had their own knowledge of God, the post-missionary church, following Western missionary attitudes, did not pay much attention to this initially.[27] Bediako succinctly expresses this deficiency as the backdrop against which African theology emerged:

> [African theology arose from] the need to respond to the sense of a theological *problematik* in African Christianity produced by the widespread perception that the Western value-setting for the Christian faith in the missionary era had entailed a far-reaching underestimation of the African knowledge and sense of God; the unavoidable element of Africa's continuing primal religions, not as the remnants of an outworn 'primitive mentality', but in terms of their worldview, as living realities in the experience of vast numbers of African Christians in all the churches, and not only in the so-called Independent Churches; and the intellectual struggle for, and 'feeling after' a theological method in a field of enquiry that had hitherto been charted largely by

[21] Jacob K. Olupona, 'African Humanity Matters: Religious Creativity and Africa's World Encounters', in Gordon S.K. Adika, George Ossom- Batsa and Hellen Yitah (eds.), *New Perspectives on African Humanity: Beliefs, Values, and Artistic Expression* (Ghana: Adwinsa Publications (Gh) Ltd., 2014), p. 4.
[22] Olupona, 'African Humanity Matters', p. 4.
[23] Olupona, 'African Humanity Matters', p. 4.
[24] Olupona, 'African Humanity Matters', p. 4.
[25] Olupona, 'African Humanity Matters', pp. 4-5.
[26] Kwame Bediako, *Jesus in Africa: The Christian Gospel in African History and Experience* (U.K.; Editions Cle and Regnum Africa, 2000), p xi.
[27] Bediako, *Jesus in Africa*, p. xi.

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> Western anthropological scholarship in terminology relating to Africa that would often be 'unacceptable' to Africans. Terms like 'fetish', 'animist', 'polytheistic', 'primitive', 'uncivilised', and 'lower' – the Western intellectual categories devised to describe and interpret African religious tradition. Each of these, African theology would reject.[28]

At the heart of African theology is the African Christian's understanding and sense of God expressed in their primal religious traditions. It partly emerged from African church historians' quest to respond to Western missionaries' blatant disregard for African traditions. By this response, it may be inferred that African theology, to some extent, sought to establish the relevance of African primal religious worldview in the African Christians' understanding and sense of God. I will pursue this discussion later, when I am examining trends and consensus among African church historians.

In the meantime, Bediako corroborates Walls' observation on the training, academic orientation and theological focus of the pioneer writers of African theology. He (Bediako) writes as follows:

> It is significant how virtually all the pioneer writers of this formative period of African theology, though trained in theology on Western models, in their academic and intellectual careers in Africa became engaged in areas of study and writing for which no Western theological syllabus had prepared them, being forced to study and lecture on African Traditional Religion, ... and each one writing on it. It is remarkable that the practitioners of African theology took on the challenge of re-interpreting African primal religions, approaching the subject not as historians of religion do, nor as anthropologists do, but as Christian theologians, and arriving at some startling conclusions. [29]

An underlying motivation of the quest for an African Christian theology was an attempt 'to draw together the various and disparate sources which make up the total religious experience of Christians in Africa into a coherent and meaningful pattern.'[30] If this thesis is sustainable, then 'African theology is more accurately judged by its own primary theological purpose than by any extraneous criteria'[31] such as those defined by Western anthropological scholarship.

Once it is established that African theology's investigations into African primal religions are qualitatively different from the observations of Western anthropologists, it becomes possible to appreciate how, by its fundamental motivation, African theology may have been charting a new trajectory in theological method. It is not that this trajectory is without parallel in the totality of Christian scholarship, rather this new theological approach had no counterpart in the more recent Western anthropological thought forged within the context of Christendom.[32]

4.1 Trends among African Church Historians

Related to developments among African church historians is the style or method they adopt in their church historiography. This style is also referred to as trend. African church historians underscore two main trends as having emerged in African Christian thought in the post-missionary era, from the late 1950s to the late 1980s. One of them was the theological interpretation of the struggle for the social and political transformation of the conditions of inequality, injustice and oppression in South Africa. This gave birth to Black Theology, a theology of liberation in the African setting and in response to the particular circumstances of southern Africa. The other trend was the theological enquiry into the indigenous cultures of African peoples, with special emphasis on their pre-Christian (and also pre-Islamic) religious traditions.[33] This trend, according to Bediako:

[28] Bediako, *Jesus in Africa*, p. 52. (Emphasis original)
[29] Bediako, *Jesus in Africa*, p.52. See also Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, p. 13.
[30] Edward Fashole-Luke, 'The Quest for an African Christian Theology', in *The Ecumenical Review*, vol.27, no. 3, (1975), pp. 259-269. See also Bediako, *Jesus in Africa*, p. 53.
[31] Bediako, *Jesus in Africa*, p.53.
[32] Bediako, *Jesus in Africa*, p.53.
[33] Bediako, *Jesus in Africa*, p.49.

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> Was more closely associated with the rest of tropical Africa, where political independence took away a direct experience of the socio-political pressures that produced Black theology in South Africa. Here, the broad aim was to achieve integration between the African pre-Christian religious experience and African Christian commitment in ways that would ensure the integrity of African Christian identity and selfhood.'[34]

In simple terms, liberation and integration were the main trends among African Church historians in the post-missionary era. In this work, I focus on integration, even though the two trends are not mutually exclusive, but 'a series of concentric circles of which [liberation] is the inner and smaller circle.'[35]

The crux of integration as a category among African church historians is the theological relevance of African religious past or African primal religious traditions in the thought of African Christians. African church historians such as Kalu, Bediako, Walls and Lamin Sanneh underscore the continuity of African primal religion in African Christianity. For instance, Kalu sees the continuity of African primal religion in African Christianity as one of the key concerns of modern African church historiography.[36] In his opinion:

> The importance of doing church history which starts with African primal religion and culture is that both the church and her enemies, namely, the politicians and other religious forms, derive their character and source their idiom from the interior of African Worldview. For instance, the dominant political culture is often a deliberate attempt to weave the modern state into traditional ethics of power; however, this is often done in a manner to vitiate the salient aspects of the traditional... Other religious forms, in their symbols and invented histories, goals and demands on the state, radicate themselves in primal culture.'[37]

Bediako endorses the continuity of African primal religion in African Christianity by interrogating the criticisms leveled against African theology. He opines that:

> The failure in some criticisms of African theology may be traced to a misconception about what the tasks of these African writers ought to be. When John Mbiti's *Concepts of God in Africa* is objected to for its 'primary theological purpose', as 'attempting to lay the basis for a distinctively African theology by blending the African past with the Judeo-Christian tradition'(Ray, 1976:15); or when his *The Prayers of African Religion* is judged to be 'unsatisfactory' because it tends to blur the distinctiveness of African spirituality by seeking a *Praeparatio evangelica* rather than the integrity of the cult group' (Mckenzie, 1975-76:220-21), such criticisms obscure the contributions that these African theologians could be making towards the understanding of what is, after all, their own religious heritage; which is, indeed, a proper task of theology. [38]

It can be inferred from the above interrogation that, for Bediako, it is a mark of theological dexterity on the part of African theologians to be able to harness their primal religious resources in their Christian endeavours. Therefore, any criticism leveled against them for integrating their indigenous religious traditions into Christianity would be misplaced. That is why he emphasizes that:

> The primal religions of the [African] continent have thus been a significant factor in the immense Christian presence in Africa. While this cannot be taken to mean that there has not been any 'paradigm-shift' in African religious consciousness, it does confirm that the African apprehension of the Christian faith has substantial roots in the continent's primal traditions at the specific level of religious experience. At the least we can say that if it did

[34] Bediako, *Jesus in Africa*, p.49.
[35] Desmond Tutu, 'Black Theology and African Theology – Soulmates or Antagonists?' in John Parratt (ed.), *A Reader in African Christian Theology*, (London: SPCK), P. 54. See also Bediako, *Jesus in Africa*, p.49.
[36] Kalu, 'Shape, Flow and Identity', p. 1.
[37] Kalu, 'Shape, Flow and Identity', pp. 1-2.
[38] Bediako, *Jesus in Africa*, p. 55.

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> not have the primal religions as its sub-stratum, the story of Christianity in Africa at the close of the present century would be very different.[39]

The position of Walls on the debate of the continuity of African primal religion in African Christianity helps to understand why Bediako may be justified for interrogating the critics of African theology. In his (Wall's) opinion, African primal religions and other faiths are inextricably intertwined. He writes: 'For one thing, primal religions underlie all the other faiths, and often exist in symbiosis with them, continuing (sometimes more, sometimes less transformed) to have an active life within and around cultures and communities influenced by those faiths.'[40]

From the foregone discussion, it is obvious that the fortunes of Christianity in Africa cannot be well understood if the impact of the continent's primal religious background is ignored.[41] Lamin Sanneh demonstrates in connection with West Africa that the places showing the most marked accession to the Christian religion are also the areas of the highest concentration of the old traditional religions.[42]

Thus far, the African religious past has been seen to be a prime theological issue.[43] As a result of this, the African theologian should explore how African Christianity is essentially rooted in primal religiosity.[44]

4.2 Consensus among African Church Historians

The issue of how African Christianity is essentially rooted in primal religious tradition raises a theological question of identity. We are pursuing this segment of the discussion under the sub-topic 'consensus among African church historians' because, like the issue of continuity of African primal religiosity in African Christianity, the question of the exact identity of the African Christian engages the theological attention of almost all African church historians. Walls identifies the centrality of the issue of identity among African church historians and underscores that 'All [the African Christian theologians] are wrestling with a theological question, the prime one on the African Christian's intellectual agenda: who am I? What is my relation as an African Christian to Africa's past?'[45] Commenting on the literature of African theology, Andrew F. Walls observes the heart of the theological investigation of the religious past of the African Christian:

> No question is more clamant than the African identity crisis. It is not simply an intellectual quest. The massive shift in the centre of gravity of the Christian world which has taken place cannot be separated from the cultural impact of the West in imperial days. Now the Empires are dead and the Western value-setting for the Christian faith largely rejected. Where does this leave the African Christian? Who is he? What is his past? A past is vital for all of us – without it, like the amnesiac man, we cannot know who we are. The prime African theological quest at present is this: what is the past of the African Christian? What is the relationship between Africa's old religions and her new one?[46]

Bediako attempts to respond to the questions raised by Walls. Writing on 'African theology and the shaping of a method – theology as the hermeneutic of identity', he (Bediako) establishes that: 'To the extent that African theology's effort at rehabilitating Africa's cultural heritage and religious consciousness has been pursued as self-consciously *Christian* and *theological*, it may be said to have been an endeavour at demonstrating the true character of African *Christian* identity.'[47] He further explains that:

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[39] Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa*: *The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion* (Ghana: Regnum Africa, 2014), p. 192.

[40] Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, p. 119.

[41] Bediako, *Christianity in Africa*, p. 192

[42] Lamin Sanneh, *West African Christianity – The Religious Impact* (London: C. Hurst, 1983), pp. 227-241. See also Bediako, *Christianity in Africa*, p. 192.

[43] Bediako, *Jesus in Africa*, p. 49.

[44] Kalu, 'Shape, Flow and Identity', p. 2.

[45] Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, p. 13.

[46] Andrew F. Walls, 'Africa and Christian Identity', in *Mission Focus*, vol. 6, no. 7, (1978), pp. 11-13. See also Bediako, *Jesus in Africa*, p. 51.

[47] Bediako, *Jesus in Africa*, p. 51.

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> From the standpoint of the context of the writers themselves, the primal religions of Africa belong to the African religious past. Yet this is not so much a chronological past as an ontological past. The theological importance of such an ontological past consists in the fact that it belongs together with the profession of the Christian faith in giving account of the same entity, namely, the history of the religious consciousness of the African Christian. In this sense, the theological concern with the African pre-Christian religious heritage becomes an effort to clarify the nature and meaning of African Christian identity and a quest for … integrity in conversion, a unity of self in which one's past is genuinely integrated into present commitment so that the crisis of repentance and faith that makes us Christian truly integrates what we have been in what we become.[48]

The implication of Bediako's explanation, he points out, is contained in Edward W. Fashole-Luke's idea that 'the quest for African Christian theologies… amounts to attempting to make clear the fact that conversion to Christianity must be coupled with cultural continuity.[49] If the African Christian's identity is defined and informed by a creative and conscious integration of their primal religiosity into their Christian experience, then the African Christian is a product of multiple religio-cultural encounters. Any attempt to divorce the African Christian off their pre- Christian religious tradition would therefore be tantamount to plunging them into a quagmire of identity crisis. Bediako's assertion on this discussion is revealing:

> From the perspective of African Christian identity, the missionary presumption of European value-setting for the Christian faith, that led to the exclusion of any 'preparation for Christianity' in African primal religions, could only produce the *problematic* John Mbiti described when he wrote of the post-missionary church in Africa as a 'Church without theology and without theological consciousness'….This was the result of not allowing for the existence of a pre-Christian memory in African Christian consciousness. For theological consciousness presupposes religious tradition, and tradition requires memory, and memory is integral to identity: without memory, we have no past, and if we have no past, we lose our identity.[50]

Thus, 'the nature of traditional religion of Africa and its relationship of continuity rather than discontinuity with African belief' and identity construction is an enduring theme among African church historians.

Central to identity construction of the African Christian, that is, what it means to be 'African *and* Christian'[51] is language which is a potent tool for the expression of culture.[52] Lamin Sanneh explores how the Western missionaries appropriated the language and culture of the African Christians in translating the gospel to the people, thereby facilitating the spread of the gospel and, indirectly, contributing to the shaping of African Christians' identity as Africans *and* instruments of the propagation of the gospel. He indicates that: '[Western] missionary adoption of the vernacular… was tantamount to adopting indigenous cultural criteria for the message, a piece of radical indigenization far greater than the standard portrayal of mission as Western cultural imperialism.'[53] Commenting on Sanneh's monumental work, Kalu maintains that:

> 'Lamin Sanneh's seminal contribution explored the irony that the missionaries were forced by the logic or exigencies of the mission field to realize the debilitating effect of iconoclasm and turn to translating the message. Translation de-stigmatized indigenous languages and cultures as proper vehicles for conveying the gospel, opened the innards of cultures, preserved them from

[48] Bediako, *Jesus in Africa*, p. 51.
[49] Fashole-Luke, 'The Quest for an African Christian Theology', p. 267. See also Bediako, *Jesus in Africa*, p. 51.
[50] Bediako, *Jesus in Africa*, p. 51.
[51] Bediako, *Jesus in Africa*, p. 53. Emphasis original.
[52] Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message*: *The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1989), p. 3.
[53] Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, p. 3.

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extinction and became an instrument for uplifting many peoples.'[54]

The above consensus among African church historians does not mean that certain disagreements do not prevail among them.

4.3 Disagreements among African Church Historians

Discussion on the continuity of the African's primal religiosity in Christianity produced widespread disagreements among African church historians. At the extreme end of the spectrum were those who maintained radical continuity of Africans' primal religious tradition in Christianity. At the other extreme end were those who contended for radical discontinuity. In the middle of the continuum were those who operated between the two radical positions. The debates among the scholars in these divergent positions are summarized. The leader of the argument for a radical continuity, according to Bediako, was Bolaji Idowu. Couching his argument on the continuity and unity of God, Idowu further made an insistent call for 'a radical indigenisation of the church, on the grounds that:

> The church in Africa, as a result of its peculiar historical connection with Western cultural dominance, was failing to develop its own theology, churchmanship, liturgy, or even discipline. In order to remedy this 'predicament' of dependence' (Idowu, 1968) the African church needs to build its bridges to the 'revelation' given to Africans in their pre-Christian and pre-missionary religious traditions of the past (Idowu, 1965:26). Ostensibly intended to connect the 'old' and the 'new'in African religious experience, the fundamental postulate of the 'foreignness of Christianity' which underlies this position, tended towards a minimalist reading of the newness of Christianity in Africa at the specific level of religious apprehension. African Christian experience emerged as not much more than a refinement of the experience of the 'old' religion (Idowu, 1962: 202; 1973: 209) The vindication and the affirmation of African selfhood, which, at the start, had been conceived as the task of the church, later came to be entrusted to the revitalisation of the 'old' religions, with their God-given heritage of indigenous spiritual and cultural treasures (Idowu: 1968; 1969; 1977).[55]

This argument was maintained by other African scholars such as Gabriel Setiloane, Samuel Kibicho and Christian Gaba.

At the other end of the continuum was the radical discontinuity strongly advocated by Byang Kato, representing the thought of those Christian churches and groups linked with the Association of Evangelicals of Africa, who trace their spiritual heritage to the missionary work of western faith missions in Africa. As a radical Biblicist, Kato emphasized the distinctiveness of the experience of the Christian gospel to such an extent that he vehemently objected to the positive evaluation of any pre-Christian religious tradition as a distraction from the necessary 'emphasis on Bible truth.[56]

Kato must be commended for insisting on the centrality of the Bible for theological exploits in Africa. 'Yet' according to Bediako, 'his outright rejection of the understanding of theology as a synthesis of 'old' and 'new' in a quest for a unified framework for dealing with culturally-rooted questions, meant that Kato's perspective could not provide a sufficient foundation for the tradition of creative theological engagement that the African context seemed to be requiring.'[57]

In the middle position of the continuum were those African theologians who acted between the two extreme positions. In addition to the widespread agreement on the prevalence of an African pre-Christian religious heritage to be taken seriously, they maintained that there has been also the realization that it is important to recognize the integrity of African Christian experience as a religious reality in its own right, and that Christianity as a religious faith is not

[54] Kalu, 'Shape, Flow and Identity', p. 4.

[55] Bediako, *Jesus in Africa*, p. 54.
[56] Bediako, *Jesus in Africa*, p. 55.
[57] Bediako, *Jesus in Africa*, p. 55.

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inherently novel to Africa or Africans.[58] A theological underpinning of this school of thought was that 'The eternal gospel has already found a local home within the African response to it, showing that Christ has become the integrating reality and power linking 'old' and 'new' in the African experience.'[59]

Since African theology sought to deal with culturally-rooted issues, among others, this perspective, comparatively, was deemed hopeful to Africans because it emphasized the understanding of theology as a creative synthesis of 'old' and 'new' in a quest for a unified framework for dealing with Africans' culturally-rooted questions. Moreover, it underscored the idea that 'the Christian faith is capable of 'translation' into African terms without injury to its essential content.'[60] African theologians who belonged to this school of thought included Harry Sawyerr, John Mbiti and Kwesi Dickson.

V. CONCLUSION

The scope of African church historiography is broad and indeed, demanding. It entails many essential components which warrant thoughtful and scholarly attention of the African church historian. In this work, we have attempted to classify and discuss developments, trends, consensus and disagreements among African church historians. Two of the developments which have engaged our reflection are the emergence of academic interest in African initiatives in Christianity in Africa and development of African theology. Moreover, we have tried to show that liberation and integration were trends among African Church historians in the post-missionary era. This work has essentially focused on integration. Discussion of 'consensus among African church historians' has taken cognizance of the issue of identity of the African Christian because, like the issue of continuity of African primal religiosity in African Christianity, the question of the precise identity of the African Christian engages the theological enterprise of almost all African church historians.

Widespread disagreements among African church theologians have fundamentally centered on the discourse on the continuity of Africans' primal religiosity in Christianity. At the extreme end of the spectrum were those who maintained radical continuity of Africans' primal religious tradition in Christianity. At the other extreme end were those who contended for radical discontinuity. In the middle of the continuum were those who operated between the two radical positions. In the light of African theology's focus on dealing with culturally-rooted issues, among others, the perspective of those African theologians in the middle of the spectrum, comparatively, was deemed hopeful to Africans because of its emphasis on the understanding of theology as a productive blend of 'old' and 'new' in a quest for a unified framework for dealing with Africans' existential challenges. Furthermore, it underscored the notion of translatability of the Christian faith into African terms without any damage to its essential content.

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