

On the Eradication of Kidnapping, Hook-Up, Oke-Ite and Yahoo-Plus: The Therapeutic Roles of Igbo Written Drama and Proverbs

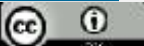
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ARTICLE INFO	Abstract
<p>Keywords: yahoo-plus, hook-up, oke-ite, kidnapping, Igbo proverbs, written drama.</p> <p>©2025 Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International</p> 	<p><i>This paper entitled “...on the eradication of kidnapping, hook-up, oke-ite and yahoo-plus: The Therapeutic Roles of Igbo Written Drama and Proverbs”, investigate pressing societal vices including ritual-based cyber crime (yahoo-plus), prostitution (hook-up), kidnapping and the ritual charms known as oke-ite. Explores contemporary social issues such as: kidnapping, prostitution (hook-up) ritual charm (oke-ite). Using a qualitative descriptive method, the study identifies the socio-cultural roots and morals implications of these acts. The paper argues that Igbo written drama and proverbs, as repositories of cultural wisdom and ethical instruction, hold therapeutic potential in correcting deviant behavior. It concludes that when youth internalize the didactic messages embedded in these traditional resources, they are more likely to abstain from engaging in such destructive activities.</i></p>

Introduction

Prostitution is a very fast rising abnormality in our society nowadays especially amongst the female gender in our higher institutions and it has been rebranded and given a smooth name “hook-up”. However, with the ailing economy and the coronavirus pandemic causing global job loss, prostitution among students on campus has taken a new dimension. Some students with lack of financial support from parents and guardians see “hook-up” as a means of generating funds for their upkeep. Youths especially students, now book appointments with the opposite sex, lecturers, politicians and others in the comfort of their homes. Due to the increasing number of young women engaging in such practice, there has emerged a new job “hook-up managers”, who scout for ladies and connect them with men on demand.

On the other hand, Oke ite is perceived by some youth as the quickest route to wealth, despite its known fatal consequences. It can shorten your life, make you blind, impotent and take the life of your loved ones too. Oke ite is a dangerous charm. Oke ite is just made by witch doctors with aims of accelerating accomplishments in life, it makes your accomplishments sudden and quicker, that’s the myth behind the sudden riches and wealth once you get oke-ite. Oke it has diverse effects and its unknown to the young generation that whatsoever accelerates self ruins, leads to death, doom, pains, anguish and agony.

Desperation has landed our youths in the journey of no return as they want to make it today and die tomorrow. Once you have oke-ite and suddenly decided that you needed it no more, all the emancipated wealth brought by oke-ite equally goes with it. If one discards oke-ite after acquiring wealth through it, they are believed to return to poverty and eventually die in misery. In years to come so many of our youths are going to be dying mysteriously, many running mad, some will be childless because they are impotent, some their wives will have ruptured uterus (womb), often accompanied

with series of miscarriages in marriage, some will give birth to kids with down syndromes, some will uselessly the future of their kids, as their children will achieve nothing than selling off father's properties and squandering the proceeds. Oke-ite is just accelerating your predestined accomplishments in weeks or years and once you are done with your predestined attainments; death follows suit and some exchange their death with lives of loved ones, especially wives and kids. Oke ite can equally uselessly your immediate siblings and youths of one's kindred. It can equally ruin the fortunes of your close associates and partners.

Also, kidnapping of human beings in recent times has taken an alarming dimensions for reasons not well addressed by successive government in Nigeria. This unlawful act has persisted in Nigeria despite the various legislations prohibiting kidnapping both at the state and federal levels of government and at the international level. Kidnapping has become rampant in Nigeria despite the presence of various security agencies. The significant impact of kidnapping and other associated crime is becoming worrisome and perplexing not only to Nigeria but to the international community. The kidnapping of all manner of persons has gained ascendancy in Nigeria. A malady previously unknown to the people has rapidly become domesticated. It has spread throughout the country extending to places as far as Kano and Kaduna in the Northern part of Nigeria. South East and south-south Nigeria have become known as the kidnapers playgrounds of Nigeria. Kidnapping as a variant of armed robbery is infinitely more disturbing as it often occurs in the open among persons going about their normal businesses and has now become a generic word both in public and private discourse going by its prevalence in the country.

Finally, Proverbs in Igbo society are the embodiment of Igbo wisdom and their philosophy of life. The meanings they encode are regarded as fixed and absolute truths.

Definitions of Terms

A critical examination of certain terms that are embedded into this research work will be considered:

Yahoo-Plus

These are all incidences of rituals done by the now trending group of occultists known as "yahoo-boys", supposedly to make quick money. Before now, they were known as "yahoo-yahoo"-internet fraudsters. They transformed into "yahoo plus", once they began employing diabolic means to scam their victims. The society, unfortunately, believes that money making rituals work and that there is a relationship between shedding of blood and making fortune. This is why due to poverty, moral decadence and lust for opulence, the youths are all turning into yahoo boys. They kill innocent people, and then go and defraud people of their hard-earned money, ignorantly believing it was the blood of the victims that brought the cash (Mbonu-Amadi, 2022).

As Soyinka said in his poem, "Abiku", yams do not sprout in amulets. It is crass superstition a practical return to primitive and barbaric life and most tragically by our youths who are supposed to be more enlightened. A good number of these lazy youths who believe that by debasing themselves, they will become rich, also engage in diverse rituals including collecting ladies pants, bathing in the public places, eating human body parts, diverse blood rituals; sacrificing their reproductive organ, humans including their blood relations; rape, incest, collecting ladies virtue through sex, spraying money in public, hosting parties where it is said that those who partake in food served during such parties die mysteriously, and so many other weird ritual.

Again, Mbonu-Amadi (2022), maintains that "yahoo plus" is partly fuelled by societal belief. We believe it works, and we communicate that belief to our immoral youths. Another reason is socioeconomic injustice-the inequitable distribution of resources. "When few people corner the common wealth of the people and rationalize it by saying it was by their dint of hard work, this is what you get. In a society that does not care about social security, as the saying goes, when the poor

is hungry, they will eat the rich”. But unfortunately these ones are not killing the rich. They are killing their fellow hungry people.

Another reason is our acquired culture of applauding wealth without minding its sources. When we do all that, the young people watch and learn. Now, people can no longer sleep with their two eyes closed, not because of terrorists, bandits or armed robbers, but because of our own children. If you have youths now as children, chances are they may kill you or your wife for money rituals (Vanguard, 2022).

Hook-up

The term hook-up has an ambiguous definition because it can indicate kissing or other forms of physical sexual activities between sexual partners (Osun Defender, 2017). The term has been widely used around the world in many generations, for many years, mostly called no relationship sex or sex without dating. A hook-up culture is one that accepts and encourages casual encounters, including one-night stands and other related activities which mainly focus on physical pleasure. According to Shannon. T. boodram (n.d), hooking-up is nothing more than settling which often leads to instant gratification for sex, pleasure, a feeling of being loved. Other terms as slangs for hooking-up are “friend with benefits”. Casual sex, body call, “recreational sex or defined as a relationship with “no strings attached”,. In Nigeria, the slang “hook-up” is a gateway to a coded industry for sex. The art of hook-up is a subtle way of paying for sex without the direct approach of prostitution. Hook-up is an advanced forms of prostitution, mostly caused by poverty. Many students engage in hook-up due to financial difficulty. Some of these “hook-up” babes have not only monetized casual hook-ups, they have turned sexing into business.

Extra effects and causes of hook-up culture includes:

- The feeling of being wanted by a cute guy.
- Finding someone they truly want to have a serious connection with
- Loneliness
- The belief that it is what boys want
- The belief that greater alcohol use is associated with more sexual activities
- An avenue for brisk business and survival in the face of grinding poverty and want
- For monetary gain

Oke ite/Nneite (Oke ite Awele)

Oke ite is a concoction of different type of animals, herbs, human parts gathered in a mud pot, tied with white cloths, boiling to perform a booming function. Oke ite is a charm that you will be appeasing with blood of animals as part of renewal rituals, this is done either monthly, seasonal or yearly and you mustn't miss the atonement rituals or you have yourself and generation to blame, as skipping the renewal rituals can cost you your sanity, life or that of loved ones. Oke ite is known as pot of progress. Okeite awele is a deadly money making ritual in clay pots or crude metal pot. “Ite ona” prepared with the blood of animals and human parts that demand regular blood sacrifices. Most oke ite money rituals are prepared with human parts, placenta, the womb of a young girl, strong wild roots, street owls, and vultures. Oke ite money ritual is not part of Igbo culture. It is said to be borrowed from other cultures and tribes. It is never our core Igbo traditional religion, Oke ite is not part of Odinaala and omenaala Igbo (Igbo tradition and culture). Oke ite is imported from Igala, Yoruba and neighboring African Nations. Oke ite can make a man impotent and even eventually one day will start demanding for your loved ones. Any charm that takes merry in the gushing of dog's blood will equally one day take human life. The truth is any charm you do in this life requires steady sacrifice to keep.

Kidnapping Defined

Literarily, the word kidnapping, which has become notorious, putrid and nauseating in the ears of virtually everyone is derived from “kid” meaning: child and “nab” which means; to snatch. Adewale (2009) pointed out that kidnapping now appears to be an emerging concern in Nigeria though it is not a new phenomenon. The unfriendly world has been used to the practice of stealing of children for use as servants or labourers in the American colonies. So it has come to mean any illegal capture or detention of a person or people against their will, regardless of age. Kidnapping can be seen as false imprisonment in the sense that it involves the illegal confinement of individual against his or her own will by another individual in such a way as to violate the confined individual’s right to be free from the restraint of movement. This involves taking away of person against the person’s will, usually to hold the person in false confinement or imprisonment without legal authority. The blacks law dictionary (2009) defines kidnapping thus (i) “at common law, the crime of forcibly abducting a person from his or her own country and sending the person to another”. This offence amounts to false imprisonment aggravated by moving the victim to another country. (ii) The crime of seizing and taking away a person by force or fraud. According to fage and Alabi (2017), kidnapping is a forceful or fraudulent abduction of an individual or a group of individuals for a reason ranging from economic, political and religious. The genesis of kidnapping in Nigeria could be traced to scramble to get fair or lion share of petroleum and other natural resources endowed by nature in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Several theories have been put forward to explain kidnapping within the Nigeria context.

Economic Theory

Accordingly, the “economic theory” views kidnapping from economic concept of making ends to meet. Nseabasi (2009) citing (Tzanelli 2006, Gerth and Mills 1948) has raised the idea that kidnapping is regulated by the laws of demand and supply and it is a type of social action that involves the calculation on the most efficient means to the desired ends. Kidnapping is a social enterprise and according to “The Nation May 10, 2002” kidnappers are businessmen, they just happen to be on the illegal side of it. This explains why perpetrators often target victims perceived as wealthy and capable of paying substantial ransoms. As kidnapping was first used as a weapon to fight for economic and environmental justice in the Niger delta, the economic motivation was intermittently used as a means to fund and sustain the fight. The beginning of 2007 saw the emergence of various other deviant groups by various names that hide under liberation struggle to commit economic crimes.

The “political theory” of kidnapping sees the act as a political tool which is motivated by attempt to suppress, outsmart, intimidate and subjugate political opponents. Turner (1998) as cited by Nseabasi (2009) established relationship between “money and politics” accordingly, where there are political motivations for kidnapping and where ransoms are also demanded. Such ransoms are often used to further the political objectives of the kidnapping organization or simply to facilitate the survival of the organizations.

Empirical Review

Certain related research findings to the paper will be considered thus:

Ngwama (2014) in his paper titled “kidnapping in Nigeria: An emerging social crime and the implications for the labour market” with the critical analysis method, concludes that: kidnapping has assumed a business status for unscrupulous criminals who kidnap for ramson. This has remained one of the greatest drawback to investment in Nigeria. Today, social vices in the form of armed kidnapping have assumed a frightening proportion thus giving vent to full realization of productivity. Though investors had always found the Nigeria business environment suffocating, kidnapping capped it all and made investment in the country both discouraging and unattractive. Indeed a young man

without formal education and facing kidnapping may look attractive. No qualifications are required to become a kidnapper, only boldness, and even such a requirement becomes less important overtime.

Again, Nwaechfu and Kamala (2009) in their research work entitled “current wave of kidnapping in Nigeria: A breach of rights of the victims” with the primary objective of identifying why kidnapping of human beings has persisted notwithstanding the constitution, terrorism (prevention) Act, 2013 and similar laws in the components states, and the paper approaches the topic by reference to statute books, law textbooks, law reports, internet sources and newspapers and concludes that: Nigeria should create community policing and neighbourhood watch. Police in Nigeria must eschew corruption. Members of the public should minimize late-night movement. People should let their loved ones know their moves per time so that any act of crime will be identified early enough and the police would be alerted for their rescue, and the kidnappers will also be arrested. Members of the public should refrain from ostentations life. The cultural habits of throwing money at the dancing arena during ceremonies such as: wedding, naming and burial ceremonies should be minimized or stopped. Such public display of affluence often attracts the potential kidnappers to want to kidnap those they perceive as wealthy, and after that demand for ransom. The root causes of kidnapping are unemployment, poverty, inadequate infrastructure and uneven development. There is the need to create enabling environment for people to be self-employed, access soft loans and establish small scale enterprises and further create employment. A regular supply of electricity would boost sole-proprietorship, which will lead to an increase in goods and services via employment creation.

Eradication of kidnapping, hook-up, oke-ite and yahoo-lus: The therapeutic roles of Igbo drama and proverbs.

Proverbs in Igbo society are the embodiment of Igbo wisdom and their philosophy of life. The meanings they encode are regarded as fixed and absolute truths. It is this fixedness and truth attributes, that are the concern of this work, especially as it affects proverbs that relate to moral standard and behavior modification.

Here, the roles of some selected related Igbo proverbs to the eradication of the identified social cum contemporary issues will be x-rayed thus:

Hook-up (Modernized Prostitution)

1. Ihe na-ato ọ́nụ́ ụtọ́ na-afụ́ ike ụ́fụ́ (What brings immediate pleasure may result in long-term suffering (e.g., physical, emotional, or reproductive harm).
2. Ike ga-agwụ́ ike (The anusi/vagina will get tired)
3. A Gbachaa egwu ọ́ laa n’ ukwu (afetr the dance, the pain goes to the waist, that means the physical body bears the pain of every human activity)
4. Akwuna/ashawo ga-ebe akwa nwa n’ ụ́la nka (A prostitute will cry for childlessness at old age)
5. Ebe nwata na-aga alota ka o na-agakwa atọ́kiri (where a child (prostitute) goes and returns, there she will go and will not return).
 - a. A closer look at no proverbs 1, 2, 3 and 4, shows the consequences of hookup/prostitution to the individual even at old age. The no 5, shows the huge danger to hook-up girls who visit unknown customer at will which in many cases result to death of the individual. If due thoughts are give to these dangers by our young girls, hookup activities will seize.
6. Oke-ite/yahoo-plus
7. Baa taa, nwuo echi bu ajo echiche. (to became rich today and die tomorrow is a bad thought)
8. Kama m rijuo afọ́ dachie ụ́zọ́, ka m buru ọ́nụ́ ma di ndụ́. (Instead of being satisfied and die on the road, let me be hungry and be alive).

9. A ghara ndụ kpaaku, onyeiro erie. (when one sacrifices his life for wealth, his enemy will enjoy the wealth)
10. Onye ji enyi kwe onya, olee anụ ọ ga-amata (he who sets trap with an elephant, is expecting to catch which animal)

The Igbo proverbs no 6, 7, and 8 explain how meaningless it is to get/become rich today and die tomorrow. They viewed it as a great loss to the individual since even his enemies can enjoy his wealth after his death. The no 9, sees the activities (oke-ite/yahoo-plus) as a big waste since the sacrifices are always more valuable than the expected riches/wealth. If our youths will get hold of these explanations. It will surely put a stop to these evil activities.

Kidnapping

Goddy Onyekaonwu in his drama book titled “Nwata Rie Awọ”, X-rayed the consequences of kidnapping.

Awọrọ:…N’ ihe gbasara itorọ ya (Obioma) na nwa ya (odnchefu) refuo, unu amarala utara tupu n’ ama, hapuzienu ihe ya na umu ndi mmuo ga-eme.

(Awọrọ: regarding the kidnap of she (Obioma) and her daughter (Odnchefu), you have thrown out food our side the compound watch and see what the spirits will do with it” ………(page 78)

Aworo: O karija m (ya agbabaa n’ ulo ya were mma gbapu wee magbuo onwe ya.

(Awọrọ:.. this one is unbearable (he Aworo) ran into the house , took a knife, ran away and killed himself)……(page 99)

As observed from the two scenes from the Igbo drama reviewed Aworo (the protagonist) kidnapped his wife and daughter and sold them out for a ransom because of a strong hatred he nurtured against them. But many years later Awọrọ got married to his daughter unknowingly and in his quest for his new wife to become pregnant and deliver safely. Awọrọ was ordered by the spirit of land to trace the whereabouts of his first wife (Obioma) so as to bring her back home and that he should not bother about his daughter since the wife will be the person to trace her daughter and bring her back home. The journey ended up revealing the two wives to be mother and daughter, and this eventually led Awọrọ to commit suicide. Our youths can discontinue and absent themselves from engaging in kidnapping after due considerations of the awaiting consequences as the drama book displayed one of such consequences which is frustration and untimely death.

Conclusion

This paper concludes that: understanding the Igbo proverbs and Igbo written drama can put a stop to these contemporary social problems in the society. And as well will aid our youths to discontinue or absent themselves from engaging in kidnapping and the like acts after due internalisation of the awaiting consequences of these contemporary social problems.

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