

## **IGBO YOUTHS AND MONEY MAKING RITUALS: RE-EVALUATING THE IGBO PHILOSOPHY OF HARDWORK IN AN ERA OF QUICK WEALTH AND MATERIALISM**

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### **Abstract**

This study re-evaluates the true essence of rituals and the philosophy of hard work in Igbo cosmology in contrast to the quick wealth and materialism syndrome that triggers money making rituals amongst Igbo youths in contemporary times. This study patronised both the primary and secondary means of data collections. The necessary generalisations and conclusions were drawn purely on the qualitative analysis and synthesis of the gathered data made through culture centered and phenomenological approaches: It was espoused that some Igbo youths indulge in money making rituals which is characterised by various vices like human sacrifice and using of people's personal effects to make diabolic enchantments as against the Igbo positive, gainful, result oriented, ritualistic stance and industrious nature. Those at the helm of these peculiar rituals are fake pastors, fake native doctors and sorcerers. These nefarious rituals equally persist despite their associated vices because of social media cum Nollywood influences, superstition, unemployment, corrupt substructure in Nigeria and strong desire for sudden riches without diligence, hard work, sincerity and discipline amongst others. Adopting the self-control theory and the objective list theory of happiness; it was realized that true success, inner-joy, happiness and contentment do not depend on wealth, riches and material acquisitions alone. One can have inner joy by promoting values and adding values to people's life. One can equally resist the urge to indulge in evil and mischievous acts irrespective of all odds. This study concludes that the Igbo communities should out rightly shun money making rituals which are aberrations to the true essence of rituals and the philosophy of hard work in Igbo land. Government authorities in Igbo land should investigate arrest and prosecute those fostering it in Igbo societies. Virtues of contentment, sincerity, hard work, diligence, rectitude and integrity should be promoted by every individual in Igbo communities.

**Key words:** Rituals, sacrifice, Igbo youths, hard work, virtues, vices, quick wealth.

## **Introduction**

Ritual killings in Nigeria especially in Igbo land as externalized mostly by some Igbo youths during money making rituals had been underscored by Obadare (2022); as reflecting mounting desperation for wealth, security and prominence amid creeping collapse of law and order. In 2022, the Nigeria's House of Representatives urged the Nigerian federal government to declare a state of emergency on the rising incidence of ritual killings in the country. They also requested the then Inspector General of Police (IGP), Usman Alkali Baba, to increase surveillance and intelligence gathering with the view of apprehending and prosecuting all perpetrators of ritual killings in Nigeria: The House members equally ordered the National Orientation Agency of Nigeria (NOA) in the same vein to initiate campaigns towards changing the situation in Nigeria. All these were focused on curbing ritual killings in Nigeria induced by quest for money, fame and prominence especially amongst the youths in Nigeria; and the Igbo communities in particular as delineated by Obadare.

J. Okonkwo, P. Okoye, U. Chiemezie, C. Chukwuogo and G. Nganwuchu (personal communication, January 25th, 2023), all lament that money making rituals are evil and does not represent the core essence of rituals in the Igbo parlance. They equally insist that it is an aberration spurred and induced by quick wealth syndrome. The Igbo people are however originally known for striving diligently and patiently in order to make ends meet. They are known for being industrious generally. They do not endorse nor celebrate laziness and unknown source of riches.

Obadare (2022) stresses amongst other things pertinent to ritual killings that it is associated mainly with the youths in search of quick and easier mode of making money; highly influenced by social media and Nollywood movies; sponsored by top politicians; encouraged by fake clerics, Imams, herbalists and native doctors who enable a society wide "get rich or die trying" cultures and the fact that it flows with the economy and culture of violence already destroying Nigeria. For instance, one of the culprits in the ritual killing of Sofiat Kehinde in 2022, simply identified as Okechukwu maintains that he learnt how to kill from watching a video in facebook. He also indicates social media for being a tool used by sundry "Merchants of wicked acts" to "advertise their evil behaviour". He exposes as Obadare recorded that top politicians pay them for human body parts.

Adedayo (2022) who records the kidnapping and beheading of one Ifeoma Angela Igwe, notes that her hunch back which is believed to contain some mercuric magical power that curates wealth was also severed off her back. He also expresses that in recent times, youngsters especially some Igbo youths, in their mad rush to make money had engaged in series of ritual observances including killing of Albinos and female virgins, cutting of human parts, and using of personal effects to make enchantments in order to get rich quick.

Despite the fact that some Christian clerics (like Fr. Oluoma) and some Muslim clerics (like Sheikh Nuru Khalid) as well as some psychologists like Prof. Oni Fagbounbe are of the view that ritual money making is not effective. African Traditional Religious Chief Priests like Taofeek Moshooos and Dr. Paul Aniето are of a different opinion. They aver that ritual money making works only that it has negative consequences for both native doctors that facilitate it and those that patronize them. However, Araba Ifayemi Elebuibon who is an African Traditional religious adherent, insists that ritual killing does not guarantee being rich, stressing that many spiritualists that embark on it are actually living a miserable life. Jannamike (2022) insists that belief in the efficacy of money ritual killings continuous to be rife, especially in a society like the Nigerian context where religion and the supernatural appear to be the opium of the people due to bewildering economic hardship and widespread poverty. Thus his stance is that superstition and poverty make the belief in money making ritual in Nigeria, especially amongst the Igbo youths to be rife and endemic. He cited the ritual killing of 24 year old Precious Okeke by her "so called", Igbo youth fiancé, Maxwell Njoku;



who committed the evil act on the instruction of a herbalist to keep her dead body in the apartment for seven days, after which he would transform into a multimillionaire: And that of Chidi Onyeishi, a tricycle operator who connived with a nonagenarian pastor and killed their seven-year-old son for a money ritual; as instances of the ritual money making observances and sacrifices prevalent amongst Igbo youths.

In the context of the established state of affairs apposite to money making ritual evidenced amongst Igbo youths: This work re-affirms that rituals are geared towards actualizing good courses in Igbo land; that the Igbo people are predominantly industrious; and that quest for making money quick by all means is not an inherent Igbo view point. One can strive to excel without soiling one's hand. Contentment, diligence, tenacity and consistency avail one the honourable and reputable mode of getting to the top and being established in God given wealth and riches. The information resourced for this study via the primary and secondary means of data collection will be analyzed qualitatively purely on the synthesis of phenomenological and culture centered approaches. The theories of Objective list of happiness and Self control patronized in this study aid in placing the Igbo youths on value oriented perspective.

### **The Igbo Philosophy of Hard work**

The Igbo people are assiduous and purpose driven. They are diligent and employ tenacity in their place of primary assignment pertinent to making ends meet. They are equally result oriented with the natural endowment of phlegmatic and optimistic mindset. Relevant literatures on the Igbo worldview as regards their industrious nature will be patronized here to substantiate the fact that the Igbo are hard working. The Igbo people do not just possess the "survival instincts"; they are equally entrepreneurial, live wires and trail blazers. They are born hustlers.

Koler (1978) being a German doctor who spent four months in Bonny in 1840, describes the Igbo people in his detailed records of the natives as very industrious. He notes that irrespective of the fact that they dwell inside the forest areas, that they are very rich in products, and had developed industries to a greater extent than the people living on the coast. He exposes that the trade of the Igbo people then extended from the sea coast to the far interiors. He stresses that the Igbo wields a warlike nature, which made significant impact on their neighbours. This equally facilitated the supremacy of their language among the neighbouring tribes, such that the knowledge of it spread, generally. Koler affirms that the Igbo land was the main destination for the trading expeditions of the coastal people. This was why the majority of the goods imported by the whites find their way to Igbo lands: Some equally go from there still further into the interior: The Bonny Canoes equally go deep into the hinterlands where the Igbo people dwell to purchase provisions for the coastal inhabitants, and goods for barter with the Europeans. Koler summarises by noting that the Igbo lands was then very rich in natural products (like maize, rice, yams, oil palms, dyewoods, cotton, horses and elephants); and that the numerous inhabitants were sedulous, and make cotton cloth, iron knives, daggers, spears and musical instruments. The Igbo people were equally wild and rapacious.

The story of the Igbo landing which is still perceived as a historic and brave act in the African-American folklore depicts the resilience nature of the Igbo. Agbo (2019) reviewing the incident exclaims that it occurred in May 1803. He reckons that the Igbo landing incident wherein about 75 Igbo men resorted to drowning themselves at the Dunbar Creek than submitting to their slave masters is still an unprecedented act of brevity among Africans. They envisioned the harsh reality of slavery they were about to be exposed to. William Mein (cited by Agbo) notes that 10 to 12 of them later drowned while some were salvaged by bounty hunters. Agbo intimates that John Couper and Thomas Spalding settled for transacting only Igbo people in slave trade because they were industrious, proud, independent and always performed their duties with little or no supervision. This typifies the Igbo stance towards dignity of labour. Thus both before and during the colonial rule, the



Igbo people had always been hard working and self reliant. They seldom resort to begging. They abhor being manipulated, marginalized and neglected. Igbo people loathes being idle or dormant.

Maximillian (2023) underscores that Igbo survival of the devastating civil war in Nigeria from 1967 to 1970 posits their remarkable history of resilience. He declares that the Igbo emerged from the travails of the Nigeria-Biafra civil war to become one of the most successful people in the world. He acknowledges the Igbo communal system (*Onye aghala nwanne ya* – brotherhood principle); *Ikenga* and *Igwebuike* (symbol of industry and strength, and unity and collective action respectively); rebuilding through kindred economic empowerment paradigm, amongst others as factors that contributed to Igbo resilience nature. Okwuosa, Nwaoga and Uroko (2021) delineates that the Igbo communal system is the bedrock of their progress.

Iloanya and Nwanegbo-Ben (2021) observes that one of the greatest values in Igbo cosmology is the dignity of the human person, and the parlance that there is dignity in labour. According to them, *Ndi Igbo* (Igbo people), are the people that understood the parlance better than every other people of the world. Therefore, an Igbo person does anything humanly possible to acquire the dignity bestowed by labour on humanity through genuine means that they are accustomed to, as well as acquainted with. Thus the Igbo people engage in virtually all sorts of business enterprise known to man. The Igbo people believe that it is only through enterprise that wealth can be created and accessed. Little wonder Onebunne and Ikwuagwu (2018) rightly observe that, “*Uchu and Ego*” (diligence and wealth), *bu mma nwoke* (is man’s handsomeness).

Jumia Travels (2017) in trying to express the Igbo philosophy of hard work exclaims that the Igbo people are the ones who will help to revamp the Nigerian economy via their Aba made goods. King Charles N. Lambert (cited by Tribune online, 2023), in a relative stance re-echoes that the Igbo people are the most industrious, resilient, and arguably the most innovative tribe in Nigeria. He maintains that the Igbo apprenticeship system known as “*Igba boy*” is a quintessence of how wealth is circulated in Igbo land. King Charles N. Lambert (cited by Tribune online) insists that the Igbo hardly say no to challenges; they do not give up easily, they are risk-takers; go getters; they are equally innovative and wields creative intelligence. Consequently, he allocated the 105,000 project manage opportunities to the Igbo under the Pan African Job center which was designated to help curb unemployment in Africa by creating over 300 million jobs for African youths across the continent.

Adim and Subai (2020) that examined the entrepreneurial mind set of indigenous Igbo entrepreneurs via a conceptual framework, concludes that the Igbo people owing to their entrepreneurial ingenuity are committed in totality to economic activities as their lineage hobby. Entrepreneurial success amongst the Igbo is not just a choice but a must as they observed. This posits that it is in the nature of the Igbo to also embrace viable alternatives. They intimate that individualism in the Igbo world is an understanding externalized in property ownership, acquisitions, productions, exchange of goods and services: Substantiating that in both traditional and modern Igbo world, much attention are directed on the economic prospects of the individual within the context of the community.

Korieh (2020) reflects that the Igbo hardworking philosophy is exemplified in the fact that they run an egalitarian society, employs a based social system rooted in their traditional human living, and a fluid gender ideology that recognized male and female roles as complementary rather than oppositional: Consequently, they were overtly successful and contributed to major historical developments including the development of agriculture, the Bantu migration, and its influence in the making of Bantu cultural areas in sub-Saharan Africa. On the global arena according to his records, the Igbo contributed significantly to the transformation of the New World through the



Atlantic slave trade and the making of New world cultures; the Igbo as well made the transition to palm oil production in the post abolition era, thereby contributing to the individualization of Europe as well as linking their society to the global capitalist economy from the 19th century. He portrays that the Igbo encounter with the Europeans continued through the British colonialism; and their struggle to maintain their autonomy eventually shaped the British colonialism in Nigeria and beyond.

The works patronised so far streamlines that the Igbo are industrious. They strive to create wealth via sincere and honourable means. The hardworking and resilience nature is not dominated in either of the gender but on both male and female gender in Igbo land. They equally assist one another in the establishment of businesses and creation of wealth. Consequently, every element of quick money making is foreign and strange to the Igbo. They simply stem from greed, avarice and inordinate selfish desires.

### **The True Essence of Rituals in Igbo land**

A ritual is a religious or solemn ceremony or a sequence of activities consisting of a series of actions, gestures, words or revered objects; performed according to a prescribed order. According to Turner (1973) a ritual is a stereotyped sequence of activities involving gestures, words, and objects, performed in a sequestered place, and designed to influence preternatural entities or forces on behalf of the actor's goal and interests. This definition posits that there are elements of rituals in almost every socio-religious and socio-cultural institution or organisation. Thus Brown (1991) indicates that rituals include not only the worship rites and sacraments of organised religions and cults, but also rites of passage, atonement and purification rites, oaths of allegiance, dedication ceremonies, coronations and presidential inaugurations, marriages, funerals, and many other religious cum cultural events. Even actions like hand-shaking and greetings may be termed as rituals pertinent to the pattern of appropriation.

The definitions afore-stated equally posits that there is nothing sinister or ominous regarding rituals. However, rituals can be manipulated by evil persons or persons with inordinate desires to suit their whims and caprices or to even perpetrate evil. This work maintains that the core aim of rituals in Igbo parlance is positive inclined and result oriented. Relevant literatures on this subject matter substantiate this too. Okafor (2021) for instance, insists that rituals in African traditional religions parlance are performed for good intentions. He affirms that those that get involved in ritual killings and rituals intended for manipulating the "gods" or "divine orders", like money making rituals are sorcerers and men with evil intentions.

Some of the elements of symbol mainly utilized during rituals in Igbo parlance symbolizes welfare and goodwill. Hence Nwokoye and Eze (2017) in explanation of the meaning of some of these symbols espoused that *Oji* (kolanut acuminate), signifies; communion, good life and long life, hospitality, reconciliation, peace, unity, sealing of covenant; and represents settlement of quarrel and anything that stands for love and unity: *Ofo* (staff), known as a symbol of authority in Igbo land, represents justice, good moral stance, a symbol of justice, a symbol of authority when handed over to a first born son; an *ofo* holder must be an upright person. *Ofo* is a spiritualized moral agent and the philosophical world view for code. It is the symbol of the Igbo peoples attuning with the all-embracing creative energy as Aghamelu and Asomugha (cited by Nwokoye and Eze) espoused. *Ogu*, is a symbol of innocence; it equally represents the spiritual force of truth and justice. Nwanchor (2021) pertinent to this elucidates that in Igbo land, rituals are performed in lieu with men's effort to survive within a given environment, against ecological perturbations. The use of phenomenological elements in rituals earmarks the fact that the intangible elements of the Igbo worldview are perceived through the optics of tangible things, substantiating the ecospirituality of the Igbo belief system. He refers to *oji*, *ofo* and *ogu* as sacred objects and elements.



Okafor (1998) insists that rituals in Igbo land are not designed and performed for theatrics, fun or to perpetrate evil. She intimates that rituals are geared towards celebration and sustenance of life. She insists that “rituals reflect life in action” (P.i). She streamlines that although the Igbo rituals are complex and vary in respect of contexts, she was able to categorize them into three for easy comprehension viz: communal, peer and personal rituals. She concludes in her assertion that:

*The Igbo propensity to perform life is clearly demonstrated in their rituals. It is also clear that these rituals do not happen by accident; Igbo people have found it meaningful to have them in the forms and positions at which they occur.... The textural richness of these rituals can be attributed to the fact that the Igbo live in a complex and contiguous world of the past, present and future in which they always strive to maintain a harmonious balance through rituals. So they have evolved their rituals to celebrate their relationship with the seen and unseen forces they co-exist with and also to mark their biological and occupational progression in time and space.... The Igbo believe that life is a gift from God; hence they use their rituals to thank God for the unique gift of life, to enlist the support of the visible and invisible forces for a fruitful life, to consecrate and venerate their deities and ancestors, and to celebrate their own biological and occupational changes. (p. 226).*

The delineation of Okafor (1998) as regards rituals in Igbo land is all embracing. It captures vividly the fact that rituals in Igbo land are goodwill inclined.

Nwaiwu (2020), and Okoli et al (2020), points out that times and seasons are marked by rituals. Lands are equally consecrated by rituals for fertility and bountiful harvest. They both concur that ritual observances in Igbo land are for good and benefit of the populace in the Igbo enclave. Ikenga-Metuh (1985) and Landy (2020) both concede to the fact that rituals are used for purification purposes. They are used for re-consecration when a peculiar place of sacredness, matrimonial home, burial ground or place and so on is desecrated. Rituals aid in the warding off of evils when *alu* or *nsọ ala* (taboo and abomination) is committed by an individual or an entire community. Rituals are employed in restoration, sustainability, sanitization, and protection of the Igbo land.

### **Money Making Rituals among Igbo Youths and its Socio-Religious Implications**

Ritual observances geared towards making quick wealth and acquisition of material things have become endemic among Igbo youngsters. A reasonable number of young Igbo men are so obsessed and engrossed with making quick wealth that they engage in various forms of evil and vices in order to create an immediate short route to riches. C. Ikwoh, K. Ibeh, N.Eboh, I. Eneh and J. Ozor (personal communication, January 26th, 2023), expresses that the majority of those in the business of money making rituals among the Igbo youngsters are the internet fraudsters popularly known as “Yahoo boys”. They involve themselves in diabolic rituals which includes using personal effects of young ladies for enchantments, sourcing for already used sanitary pads by women to make charms, ritual killings and cutting of young ladies private parts to make charms; and also wiping young ladies private parts with white handkerchiefs and using such handkerchiefs later to make charms.

E. Igweagu, N. Nzeakor, H. Ezeadi, O. Okonkwo and E. Uzoka (personal communication, January 27th, 2023), intimates that some Igbo youngsters had gone to the extent of coming out late in the midnight to bath; coming out in the open along highways and pathways to defecate, eating human excretes, sleeping with animals, eating raw food and meat, as well as even killing their parents and their loved ones including Fiancée’s just to perform money making rituals to get quick money. According to E. Ezisi, J. Ihuoma, N. Ajana, O. Ibekwe and Z. Anukwo (personal communication, January 28th, 2023), the menace of money making rituals had effected the rise in serial murders, dumping of corpse at various points in Igbo land, mortality rate, mentally insane persons rate, kidnappings, and general insecurity within the Igbo communities.

A. Anagor, S. Amanze and C. Arinze (personal communication, January 29th, 2023), notes that even female youngsters are involved in the despicable act of money making rituals. They mainly



serve as the ones that lure their friends to be slaughtered or manipulated for sacrifice. More often than not, the young ladies they use for ritual sacrifices were not killed but rather rendered useless by making them mad and dumping them in the middle of unknown destinations.

Chukwu (2021) records that ritual killings propelled by Yahoo-yahoo boys are among the commercial crimes that have bombarded the South-East region of Nigeria in recent times. Ritual killings are one of the reasons for the high rate in kidnapping in South-East region of Nigeria. Chukwu, Sahara Reports, New York (2022) and Ojukwu (2022), note that the increase in kidnapping had equally left some entire communities desolate. Such chaos equally causes disruption in economic activities, loss of revenues and capital flight. Chukwu narrated a story of a lady in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, who miraculously escaped from one of the many forest dens of kidnappers located somewhere in Imo State. She exclaimed that they dumped about 30-50 of them in a particular section of the bush and were demanding ransoms of which when the person's relations could not offer any reasonable sum, such a person will be killed and they will not see that one again. She intimated that they were selling human parts like fish for use in rituals. She later escaped because the leader of the gang took a liking to her and secretly took her to a very high wall and asked her to jump and escape from that route. Chukwu exposes that there exists rackets bordering on supply of human parts that work with ritualists (sorcerers and fake native doctors); whereas the kidnappers roam the areas and highways poaching for humans like in the days of slave trading. Every catch is important; either for ransom or for human parts retail sales, whichever comes first. I. Onah, E. Edeh and A. Eze (personal communication, January 28th, 2023), discloses that the forest around Nsukka, Abakiliki, some parts of Enugu, Anambra, Imo and Abia states had various kidnappers den where they retail human parts.

According to Chukwu (2021) most ritual killings in South-East region of Nigeria are linked to Yahoo-yahoo syndicate system. He maintains that at first, it used to be all about just duping people, but it has developed into a big enterprise. This has exploded into a menace as many young persons, especially students in Igbo land, embraces this new trade of procurement of human parts to prepare sensitive charms that help them in the yahoo-yahoo rackets. Chukwu notes that youngsters were convinced that with such charms, the kingpin would command any person to part with any amount of foreign currency. These equally boost the upsurge in kidnapping and mysterious deaths and disappearances even where ransom had been paid. Chukwu records of the discovery of 23 primary school children that were held hostage with their school bus in Obingwa evil forest in Abia state. The military that discovered these school children actually went into the forest both by air and land to rescue some members of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) returning from Uyo, Akwa Ibom state, through Abia state. The military notified as Chukwu exposes, that they equally saw various strands of kidnapped victims tied to trees and some in bush huts. They equally saw so many dead victims at various locations in the forest. Chukwu asserts that kidnapping which began as an organized crime, has grown into an industry courtesy of "Money Making Rituals".

At some point in 2021 and January 2022, especially in Isiala-Ngwa and Ihiala in Abia and Anambra states respectively, residents fled from their homes over the endemic cases of ritual killings in those places then. Sahara Reporters, New York (2022), reliably gathered from the fleeing residents from these places that people were being hacked to death and their bodies mutilated by unknown persons, who go away with vital organs. Ifeanyi Okoli and Ezekiel Mbah from Isiala-Ngwa (cited by Sahara Reporters, New York), discloses that people kept disappearing from the area mysteriously with their mutilated bodies later discovered in the bush or roadside within that period. He affirms that at least four persons were killed in such manner then. Kelechi Anyoku, a student of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Uli, under Ihiala Local Government Area of Anambra state (cited by Sahara Reporters, New York), discloses that most of her colleagues in the area had moved out of their apartments following the incessant ritual killings and diabolical attacks in the region then. She

intimates that up to three mutilated bodies were discovered along a major highway linking the town and other parts of Anambra at that time.

One of the money making rituals that youngsters in Igbo land majorly engage in is “*Oke-ite or Okeite*”. E. Ilodigwe (personal communication, January 28th, 2023), indicates that it is common among interest fraudsters known as “Yahoo-yahoo boys”; who release semen inside a lady and after sometime it decays inside the lady with the youngster getting rich in the process. Nnatuanya (2022) on his own research explains that *Oke-ite* ritual is a charm prepared with different animals, including dog, elephants, monkeys and often times human parts maybe involved. The preparation involves the use of different types of herbs, roots and other ritual materials with the combination of various kinds of drink mixtures. It has different names pertinent to different localities: Ayamelum community calls it “*Oruru*”, (Luck charm), others refer to it as “*awele*”. Azubike Okudo (cited by Nnatuanya), explicates that there is equally “*Nne-ite*”, apart from “*Oke-ite*”; both are rituals performed for Igbo youngsters on the fast lane to make quick money by fake native doctors, prophets and sorcerers. It is generally believed that this peculiar ritual makes the patronisers subsequently rich. The price charged in preparing this rituals differs according to the sacrificial item used as C. Ikedera (personal communication, January 29th, 2023), intimates. O. Ozoemena (personal communication, January 29th, 2023), adds that *Okeite* and *Nne-ite* rituals have severe implications that those that involve in them are oblivious of, little wonder Dr. Paul Anieto (cited by Adedayo, 2022), espouse that all negative inclined rituals especially money making rituals which involve human sacrifices and diabolical incantations attract severe negative impacts which may be transferred to the person’s generations: such negative impacts include death of loved ones, impotency of the patroniser, physical disabilities of the person’s children and eventual poverty and inability to succeed at the long run.

Akuabata (2021) reveals that *Okeite bu Ajoogwu* (*okeite* is a very dangerous and evil ritual); stressing that *ochu ngwa ngwa na-ana ngwa ngwa* (he that is quick to cut corners and make it in life dies quick). Sequel to ritual killings in quest of quick money making, Gabriel (2021) records of ritual killings involving beheading of individuals in several places in Anambra, Enugu, Imo and Abia states. She exclaims that each of the instances is bizarre; and the *Oha na eze ndi* Igbo equally declares that it is a taboo, unacceptable and not of Igbo core origin and inclinations. Okonkwo (2022) exclaims that there are so many incident of ritual sacrifices for quick wealth that resulted in the death and mutilation of people’s body parts, insanity of victims and total disappearance of victims all over Igbo land in contemporary times that are not even recorded. The recorded cases are just a few and a tip of the ice berg.

Money making ritual is despicable, disastrous and unprofitable. Youngsters in Igbo land must desist from it because it involves pure evil incantations, wicked and atrocious activities, shedding of innocent blood as well as harming of innocent people. That was why the Regent of Nri kingdom of Anambra state, His Majesty, Prince Ikenna Onyesoh (cited by Orakpo, 2023), reveals extensively that:

*...when innocent blood is spilled in Igbo culture, there is a ritual that must be performed, it is called Iko mmee (that is, atonement after a murder has been committed). The atonement must be done for that community to recover because the spirit of the victim is never at rest until those rituals are performed. After the atonement, there is ikpu alu which is a sacrifice of expiation. It serves as a ransom to reconcile and redeem the sinner; then ikpochi onunu because where there is an alu (abomination), spiritually, there is an onunu (a pit) that needs to be filled. When all that is done and the place is cleansed, in some cases, the victim’s spirit would ask that he/she is reborn, meaning that the person responsible for the killing or his/her family member, has to marry, have a child in the victim’s name for the victim spirit to be at rest. (p.1).*



He rounded up by lamenting that the youngsters involved in these diabolic rituals are not fully acquainted with the fact that many years ago when there was still slave trade; that some families are still recovering from the effects of selling or killing an innocent person. Some families are still experiencing the negative impacts, both spiritually and physically, of slave trade. Young men in Igbo land are actually not thinking of posterity; the damages, the darkness that they would bring to their families for involving themselves in ritual killings and associated evils. The socio-religious implications are sinister and traumatic; it lasts for generations. Nothing good can come out of money making rituals.

### **The Objective List Theory of Happiness**

According to Andreea (2017) objective list theory of happiness is equally referred to as the meaningful life theory of happiness. Niwlikar (2022) declares that this theory was postulated by Martin Seligman in 2002. It holds that a happy person does not perceive happiness based on pleasure versus pain, or wanting versus attaining. Instead, it lays emphasis on things that are more valuable or things that are more meaningful. Such things like good health and sanity, good relationships, strong faith, charity and altruism, sound mind, career accomplishments and personal dreams being actualized count more as basis for inner joy. In objective list theory, happiness is not an act or pretence; or even a pain free life, nor is a happy person simply someone who gets what he wants all the time. Instead, a happy person can be one who is poor, ill and even lonely; but once he has a purpose of greater good, then he can in real sense be happy and have a happy life. Thus happiness under this theory does not depend on material acquisitions nor fame and prominence but on core values and purpose driven stance.

Royzman, Cassidy and Baron (2003), and Seligman and Royzman (2003), explain that objective list theory of happiness lodges happiness “outside of feeling and unto a list of “truly valuable” things in the real world” (p.2). Here happiness is determinant by a list of worthwhile and valuable pursuits that add values to human kind which one attains. Such pursuits include; career accomplishments, friendship, freedom from disease and pain, material comforts, civic spirit, beauty, education, love, knowledge, and good conscience. Consequently, happiness under this theory does not hinge on whether core targets are actualized or not, they hinge on being human. Happiness here depends on the fact that once there is life, there is hope. Happiness is a constant under this theory and not dependent on tangible or intangible things whatsoever. The person is happy because he is a human being created for a reason and perfect purpose.

Griffin (1986), Fletcher (2013) and Eden (2014), streamlines that objective list theorist’s hold that there are a variety of objectively valuable things that contribute to one’s well-being. This list of objective valuable things which include aesthetic appreciation, creativity and love amongst others are understood as basic or intrinsic goods, they are valuable in themselves. Their value is not because of some instrumental benefit they provide. The list is tagged objective because its items are purported to be good for one regardless of how one feels about them. With the tool of this theory, the average Igbo youngsters will realize that happiness, wellbeing and success do not depend only on fame, materialism and monetary acquisition. They will learn to build healthy relationship, value human life, pursue core values, enforce a sanitized society and be contented with their stance irrespective of all odds.

### **Self-Control Theory**

This theory explicates that individuals resist engaging in criminal and inordinate acts because they wield high self-control. Burt (2020) declares that Gottfredson and Hirschi were the proponents of this theory in 1990. Valasik (2014) adds that individuals that wield self-control do not get involved in rash actions, inordinate behaviours and acts of criminality. They rather delay satisfaction of immediate impulse and pursue long-term goals. Valasik affirms that self-control theory argues that

an individual's propensity for criminality develops early in childhood and then remains stable across the life course. The theory ignores positivistic criminology by arguing that criminals are not distinctly distinguished from non-criminals. Individuals are considered to be rational actors who engage in a variety of selfish acts that facilitate pleasure and avoid discomfort. As Valasik intimates, self-control therein suggests that effective child rearing can instill individuals with a higher level of self-control, reducing their propensity to engage in criminal acts and other analogous behaviours.

Burt (cited by Gregory, 2023), expresses that self-control theory dictates that "... people with low self-control remain rational and hedonistic, but are myopic; their criminal and analogous actions reflect nothing more than a lack of foresight or consideration of delayed consequence" (p.1). Thus, proposing that criminal behaviour is influenced by an individual's self-control. Self-control theory emphasizes the importance of positive cum morally sound childhood experiences and socialization in the development of high self-control. Gregory stresses that people are not inherently criminally-minded, and that how they were parented before the age of ten has a critical effect on their ability to control how they conduct themselves in the society.

Miller (2020) exposit that the benefits of self-control are plentiful and essential for successful lives. Effective self-control has been linked to success in academics and occupations, as well as social wellness; good mental and physical health, reduction in crime, and longer life spans are also linked to self-control. With the tool of self-control theory, youngsters in Igbo enclave will not even be considering money making rituals. There will not even be thoughts of quick money making in their mind sets.

### **Reasons for the Prevalence of Money Making Rituals among Igbo youths**

The socio-religious implications of money making rituals examined in this work portray that the dangers of money making rituals include shedding of innocent blood, generational curses, mental insanity, insecurity amongst other evils and vices. Irrespective of these negative impacts of money making rituals, it persists among the Igbo youths because of the following reasons:

- **A perverse society:** It is quite unfortunate that laziness and quick wealth without sincere labour is being endorsed in most Igbo enclaves in recent times. Elders seldom shun evil, and parents celebrate their children when they come home without inquiring their source of income. Endorsing of various strands of anomalies, irregularities and absurdities will only facilitate despicable acts like money making rituals.
- **Lack of quality parental training:** Most parents in recent times fail in administering sound moral codes and disciplines in their children right from the cradle. This in turn affects them adversely as they grow. Self-control theory has exposed that individual's with quality parental upbringing seldom get involved in acts of criminalities.
- **Misplacement of priorities:** Prioritising on fame, wealth and acquisition of material things as against dignity of labour, good reputation, integrity, core values, sound morality, virtues and self-respect breed vices like money making rituals. The objective list theory of happiness has expatiated that happiness can stem from building healthy relationships and pursuing core values and virtues.
- **Fake pastors, fake native doctors and sorcerers:** The increase in the number of this category of persons in the Igbo society has aided in corrupting and positing a false representation of core Igbo stance on rituals. They deceive youngsters into engaging in money making rituals.
- **Corrupt substructure in Nigeria:** This facilitates unemployment. Most youngsters when they are lazy start browsing for ways of escape in their minds. Unemployment breeds laziness, laziness breeds idle mindedness which is the devils workshop; this empowered by the exuberance of youthful age tilts youngsters to the end point of resorting to evil means to make money. Some politicians equally are involved in diabolic rituals and thus engage

youngsters in being their errand boys in the business. Such back up and influence can deceive as well as destroy youngsters completely.

- **Superstitious beliefs:** This is one of the reasons youngsters believe in money making rituals. It is undue belief on supernatural occurrences as against basic belief on realities. Some Youngsters believe that the source of making wealth lies in contact with the spirit world. Some even believe that evil men can keep someone trapped in the bondage of poverty via enchantments. This most times is induced by fear, poverty stricken mentality, illiteracy and ignorance.

### **Towards Promoting the Igbo Philosophy of Hard work and True Essence of Rituals**

This study proffers the following suggestions on how to re-establish and re-institute the Igbo philosophy of hard work and equally sanitize the Igbo enclaves of obnoxious rituals like money making rituals endemic among the youths:

The campaign towards restoring of a sanitized Igbo community devoid of money making rituals for quick money and endorsement of all manner of riches should start at the family which is the foundation for all social institutions. Parents' role in this reformation course should not be treated with levity. Parents must ensure that they serve as role models and teach their children from the cradle the basic tenets of contentment and sincerity.

Igbo communities should start laying emphasis on hard work and inculcation of core values like integrity, respect, servant leadership, sportsmanship, love, patriotism and brotherhood. There should be a concerted effort of the church, state authorities, president generals and *Igwe* in councils cum kindred heads within Igbo regions in Nigeria towards ensuring that unknown sources of wealth are questioned, frowned at and vehemently rejected. Individuals that encourage quick money at all costs via money making rituals should be confronted, arraigned and severely disciplined.

Igbo elders must assist in making sure that fake pastors, fake native doctors and sorcerers involved in fostering and deceiving youngsters into money making rituals are detected, exposed and ostracised. Taboos and abominable acts should be clearly delineated and re-introduced into the Igbo communities. Local vigilantes should equally assist in enforcing this. Land lords harbouring youngsters involved in ritual money making as well as the facilitators should be arrested and lawfully prosecuted.

Core Igbo history should be included in the academic syllabus of primary and post primary institutions in Igbo land, emphasizing on the true essence of rituals and what the Igbo people are originally known for. Instead of learning only how to draw cockroaches and label butterfly body parts, everyone in Igbo communities must be acquainted with Igbo taboos, abominations, dos and don'ts as well as what the Igbo enclave originally stands for.

Churches should begin to appreciate Igbo core traditional values. Not everything traditional is evil. Good aspects of Igbo traditional values should be enthroned even in the churches. Money Making Rituals and other associated rituals must be defined for what they are; pure evil and wickedness, and is not of Igbo origin and culture. The church must assist in propagating the gospel that one can still make wealth via sincere and just means; more so, that the value of life does not depend on the amount of money in one's account or the various properties that one possesses.

### **Conclusion**

This study has re-evaluated the Igbo philosophy of work and the actual essence of rituals. Money making ritual is pure evil, wickedness inclined and a total aberration of the essence of rituals in Igbo land. Money making rituals and associate rituals are peddled by men of low self control, immoral stands, irresponsible and deplorable standards, despicable nature and debased cum obscene mind set.

Further research in respect of where persons that are involved in evil rituals like sorcerers and the likes gets there initiatives since it is not of Igbo core origin can still be explored. Thus this study does not claim to be exhaustive, it is rather a bird's eye view of the topic under survey. The solutions proffered in this work will go a long way in containing money making rituals and the mad strife for quick wealth amongst Igbo youths.

### Recommendations

There is no gain in Money Making Rituals. There is nothing positive, emulative nor morally sound about soiling ones hand in order to make money by all means and at all costs. This study recommends that everyone must learn to search for one's area of passion in life, develop it and pursue sincerely to achieve great feats through such natural passions and talents.

Each Igbo youngster should always dig down deep and discover their peculiar core values and beliefs, and then set meaningful goals that are congruent with the Igbo core values and belief system. They should stop living fake and impulsive life style. They should rather live a life of intention while adding value to others.

Youths in Igbo land should learn to practice gratitude, turn their pains into purpose, be part of community development focus, and spend quality time with the elders and people who inspire them positively. The Igbo youths must understand that God created everything for His purpose which is for good.

Life is temporary; Igbo youngsters should use their talents to bring pleasure to God on everything they do. They must understand that they are serving God even in the midst of their personal endeavours. They must resolve to always worship God through everything they do, trust Him in every action, place their confidence in Him completely, and always surrender themselves to His will.

Finally, every person in Igbo land must be preaching on the value of time. That time is life, thus one must prioritise one's time and invest it appropriately. In consonance with the objective theory of happiness, youngsters in Igbo land must understand that the purpose of life is not just to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honourable, to be compassionate and to have it make some difference that one have lived and actually lived modestly and for good.

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