IMPACT OF WESTERN EDUCATION ON THE TRADITIONAL PRACTICES AMONG
THE EFIKS IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The article sought to determine the impact of Western education on the traditional practices among the Efiks in Cross River State. 488 respondents were involved in the study, chosen by a stratified random sampling from four Efik speaking Local Government Areas. A questionnaire was prepared on the traditional practices. Three null hypotheses were formulated for the study. One way analysis of variance and Fisher’s protected LSD Multiple test analysis were used in the study. All the hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance. The results showed that education influenced their perception of un-circumcision as a taboo to marriage. Education had no significant influence on keeping of mourning house, and perception of menstruation as a bad omen. Recommendation was that the uneducated should be encouraged to acquire formal education and those at the secondary level should to the tertiary institution in order to broaden their knowledge.

Most Africans are highly superstitious as a result of environment as a result of environment and processes of their upbringing in this regard Onwubiske (1991.4) contented that: "the traditional imagination can also exhibit unique variability and acuteness of perception beyond that of people who subsist only on modern realities. It is sensitive to the deeper layers of experiences in a way that is no longer common in modern industrial societies." The Efiks believe in all sorts of things including deities, spirits, ancestral (deed) spirits, magic, mourning house, un-circumcision on a taboo to marriage etc. Keeping of mourning house and putting on black dress was believed to be a way of appeasing the soul of the departed. An uncircumcised woman was a taboo to marriage. The modern Efiks do not, for sure, adhere tenaciously to the tradition, beliefs, ethnics and culture of the Efik because of formal education. All forms of training and socialization were carried out in the traditional context of real life situation. Every Efik son and daughter must be circumcised to be fit for marriage. She was secluded and laughs domestic duties and how to stay with her husband and his family, how to dress hers; seek in order to capture the man's heart at all times. Efik outshine contributes to the national reputation of Efik

Women as accomplished seek and home makers. Five different dishes displayed are:-

a. Edikangikong and osoboebia or ukom
b. Ekpangnkwokon ye osoboabiammeukom
c. Ekpangnukwokwo (prepared with eee-yam and water yam)
d. Usung ye efiaefere the famous Calabar white soup relished by missionaries.

Other traditional initiations are Ekpe, Cult, Nnabo, Obong: Akata to mention but a few for men.

Theoretical Foundations
Level of Education and Traditional Practices

It is a fact that level of education influences traditional practices. The researcher was opportune to interact with different men and women at different level of education. They had these to say:-
a) **Uneducated:**

From the interview held with four couples in the village concerning their opinions of the tenacious adherence to traditional practices they said strongly that they love them. Quote "the spirits behind them are very powerful, and one added "I do not want to die".

b) **Secondary Education**

Secondary school leavers were also interviewed to know their opinion concerning the traditional practices they were all in support.

c) **Tertiary Education**

Graduates were interviewed on their opinion about traditional practices, both the males and females answered that though most people give affirmative responses, but to them the Bible had made it clear that deities and spirits have no power.

**Keeping of Mourning House (UFOK IKPO)**

It was believed by the Efiks that the spirit of the dead are aware of what is happening in this life and can be made happy. According to Uduig women (1995:92), the African view of man upon which the belief in man's spiritual companions is rooted in. African's view is that the world consists of physical (or material) and spiritual substances. Human society therefore had extra-human or supernatural dimension because life continues after death and the dead remains a part of it. In ancient Efik, a widow suffered much during the mourning period. She was not allowed to do her hair, wash her clothes or even bathe regularly. In extreme cases she was buried with her husband.

**Perception of Circumcision as a Taboo the Married**

Women's status around the globe captures that shapes of women's lives across continents and cultures. Joniseager (in A. E. TMA No. 5 1998 P.3) explored the shifts that have accrued and portrays current status of women in relation to "under the knife female genital mutilation also called female circumcision or genital cutting is extensively practiced in parts of Africa and the Middle East. It serves to control the women's sexual behavior and infibulations ensures premarital virginity.

Among the Efiks, women circumcision was tenaciously observed before the advent of the Western Education. To them, they were of the opinion that any woman uncircumcised, was with a cock crest. This meant that the clitoris was as long as the male genital organ and such a woman was not associated with in the society. Circumcision was mandatory for every female child in order not be stigmatized, and the tradition of circumcision was part and parcel of the Efiks in which the uncircumcised maiden was a taboo against marriage.

Mbiti in (Onwubiko, 1991:88) acknowledge the importance of marriage in Africa when he stated; "for African people marriage is the focus of existence. It is the point where all members of a given society meet, renewed and revitalized.” Marriage is a drama in which everyone becomes an actor or actress and not just a spectator. Perception of Menstruation a bad Omen ‘ITIE ISONG’

Efiks in the past centuries regarded menstruation as bad omen. Whereby, the woman must not touch anything nor go out, but must be seated on top of a dug hole for the duration of the menstrual flow, in order that all the blood may drain down into the hole. According to Kessler (1976:200 in support of how menstruation was regarded, had this to say: "some societies regarded menstrual blood as a physically dangerous fluid in itself. All contact with it must be avoided on pain of very severe illness or possible death." Menstrual blood is also believed to have properties which endanger the well-being of the entire group. The inadvertent passage of Menstruating women through a pasture or a field can endanger growing animals and plants.

Western Education in Efik Land: The nature of western education is mainly of character training, reading and writing.

**Education and Cultural Depreciation**

The century's long contacts of the Efiks European traders and missionaries at Old Calabar actively propagated European norms and ways of life which had a profound influence on the local mode of dressing, behavior, attitude and beliefs among the Efiks. Education and Traditional Practices
Formal education of the Western society had spread both its personnel and its material so widely that it is relatively impossible to find people who have been contacted either directly or indirectly. Education operationalized serves multi-lateral purposes for individuals, parents, the society, and the government.

During circumcision, the girls involved were kept in seclusion up to seven years or more. The longer the duration, the more prominent the family's name became. (Source: The Strong of Old Calabar).

Statement of the Problem
In recent years among the Efiks, there have been hue and cry about traditional practices, mystical powers and supernatural forces at work like deities, spirits, witchcraft etc. having upper hand in causing barrenness, ill health, sudden death, impotency in man etc. in spite of effort at mass literacy campaign, religion and enlightenment through mass media, hospitals, etc. on the causes of death, barrenness, ill-health, etc. people still attribute their mishaps to mystical powers and turn to charms, amulets and juju. This work examines the impact of western education on the traditional practices of the Efiks.

Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this study was to determine whether advancement in western education was capable of reducing adherence to traditional practices, in specific terms, the study was aimed at determining if education can influence the extent of one's practices of tradition in terms of:
1. Keeping of mourning house
2. Perception of menstruation as a bad omen
3. Perception of un-circumcision as a taboo to marriage.

Research Questions:
As a guide, the following research questions were asked. Does the Western education significantly influence the traditional practices of the Efiks on?
1. The keeping of mourning house.
2. The perception of menstruation as a bad omen.
3. The perception of un-circumcisions as a taboo to marriage.

Hypotheses:
1. There is no significant influence of the Western education on the keeping of mourning house.
2. There is no significant influence Western education on the perception of menstruation as a bad omen.
3. There is no significant influence of Western education on the perception of uncircumcision as a taboo to marriage.

Assumptions:
This study was based on the following:-
1. That formal education has a significant influence on Efik traditional practices.
2. Most traditional practices of the Efiks have list their fame among the modern Efiks because of Western education.

Significance of the Study:
It was expected that; the findings of this study. Apart from (a) updating records on the impact of western education on the traditional/cultural practices of the Efiks may disabuse the minds of Efiks that deities, spirits, ancestral spirits etc; have no power to kill those who do not keep to traditional practices.

Scope of the Study:
The researcher used the Efiks speaking Local Government Areas. These were Odukpani, Akpabuyo, Calabar Municipality and Calabar South.
Keeping of Mourning House "Ufoklkpo".

The Efiks believe that a community of spirits and the dead exist alongside the community of human beings and that there is mutual partnership between them, because life continues after death and the dead remains part of the community of the living. This is in line with Onwubiko (1991:94) who contended that among the Igbo, the land of the Living is not far removed from the domain of the ancestors.

Perception of un-circumcision as a taboo to marriage

Circumcision was a means of controlling women sexual behavior. Un-circumcised woman would be adjudged as unfit to marry and this is very undesirable as Mbiti (in Onwubiko, 1991:88) acknowledge that:

For African people marriage is the focus of existence. It is the point where all members have a fulfillment of a romantic dream as it is so often portrayed in our society.

Perception of menstruation as a bad omen 'Tie-Isong'

Menstrual flow was taken as a bad omen so women were not allowed to touch anything because they were deemed unholy and contaminators. Kessler (1976:73) reported that it is not surprising that men refer to a woman during her menstrual period as 'she with the evil eyes' and requires her to remain in seclusion.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study employed the ex-post facto research method because the possible causes of traditional practices are studied after they had presumably exerted their effects on the respondents before the study.

Area of the Study

The area of the study was Cross River State of Nigeria. It is bounded on the East by Cameroon Republic, on the West by Akwalbom State, North by Benue State and South by the Atlantic Ocean. The Efiks main areas of habitation are Odukpani, Akpabuyo, Calabar Municipality and Calabar South.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised people who uneducated, secondary and Tertiary educational attainment, numbering 2,655 from the four Efik speaking Local Government Areas.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The stratified random sampling technique was used for the study. The study sample consisted of 500 Efiks drawn from 28 families. 130 from 8 families in Odukapni; 140 from 9 families in Akpabuyo; 120 from 5 families in Calabar Municipality; and 100 from 6 families in Calabar South were used for the study.

Measuring Instrument

The instrument used for this research was the individual experience questionnaire developed by the research with the help of some experts.

The questionnaire had two parts. The first part requested of the respondents their personal demographic information such as their age, Local Government Area and educational attainment.

The second pan measured the respondents’ traditional practices. This pan used six points Liken type alternate responses in the descending order of: V.S.A. - 6, S.A - 5, A-4, D -3, SD-2, V.S.D-1.

Validation of instrument

After the construction of the instrument it was given to experts in the department to assess for its appropriateness.
Administration of the Instrument

The questionnaires were taken to each Local Government Area and the Efik families in the clan by the researcher during their family meeting. In the office, the questionnaires were distributed to the selected subjects who after filling returned them to the researcher.

For the families, the heads picked them for the researcher, those who could read and write, the questionnaires were collected on the same day after some hours. For those who could not read and write, the researcher read, interpreted and completed their questionnaires.

The Results

The data obtained were analyzed using analysis for variance (ANOVA) and was carried out hypothesis by hypothesis.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference between the uneducated, secondary and the graduate of the Efiks in their adherence to traditional practices.

**Table 1: Analysis of Variance: A Comparison of the Uneducated, Secondary and the Graduate of the Efiks in their adherence to traditional practices.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keeping of Mourning house</td>
<td>Uneducated</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable variation</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F-ratio of variation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keeping of Mourning house</td>
<td>Between</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within</td>
<td>6079</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6105</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference between the uneducated, secondary and the graduate of the Efiks in their perception of menstruation as a bad omen.

**Table 2: Analysis of variance: A comparison of the Uneducated, Secondary and the Graduate of the Efiks in their perception of menstruation as a bad omen.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>X~</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perception of menstruation as a bad omen</td>
<td>Uneducated</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable variation</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F-ratio of variation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perception of menstruation as a bad omen</td>
<td>Between</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of menstruation as a bad omen</td>
<td>within</td>
<td>20123</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>20205</td>
<td>487</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant difference between the uneducated, secondary and the graduate of the Efiks in their perception of un-circumcision as a taboo to marriage.
Table 3: Analysis of variance: A comparison of the Uneducated, Secondary, and the Graduate of the Efiks in their perception of un-circumcision as a taboo to marriage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>X~</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perception of un-circumcision</td>
<td>Uneducated</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a taboo to marriage</td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F-ratio of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perception of un-circumcision</td>
<td>Between</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>107.5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as a taboo to marriage</td>
<td>within</td>
<td>10769</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>10984</td>
<td>487</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant at .05 level, df = 2 & 485, Critical F-value = 2.99

Table 4: Fisher's protected T-test Analysis on Adherence to traditional practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adherence to traditional Practices</th>
<th>Uneducated (n- 190)</th>
<th>Secondary level (n- 181)</th>
<th>Graduate level (n- 171)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perception of un-circumcision</td>
<td>21.0a</td>
<td>1.8c</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as a taboo to marriage</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MSW 22.2

a. Group means are along the diagonal
b. Differences between means are above the diagonal
c. Fisher's protected t-test value are below the diagonal and significant at 0.05 levels

The result of the data analysis revealed that there was no significant difference among the uneducated, secondary level and the graduate of the Efiks in respect of their adherence to traditional practices like keeping of mourning house, and their perception of menstruation as a bad omen. A significant difference was seen among the uneducated secondary level and graduate of the Efiks in their adherence to traditional practices in their perception of un-circumcision as a taboo to marriage. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Examination of table 3 showed a significant F-value of 4.8 in perception of un-circumcision as a taboo to marriage. These values at .05 alpha levels and with 2 and 485 digress of freedom were seen to be greater than the critical F-value of 2.99. The null hypothesis was rejected.

Examination of the result on table 3 in the perception of un-circumcision as a taboo to marriage, the graduates were significantly different from the uneducated (t =4.2, p>.905), the uneducated were significantly different from the secondary (t = 1.8 p>.05), while the secondary level of the Efiks had (t =.06, p>.05). On the perception of un-circumcision as a taboo to marriage, the perception of the graduates was less than the uneducated, and the uneducated perception in turn was less than secondary level.
Summary and Discussion of Findings

Three research hypotheses were formulated for testing based on the findings of the study. With reference to the impact of western education on the tradition practices of the Efiks. The results in table 1, showed that keeping of mourning house is performed by all the Efiks whether uneducated, secondary or graduate since the funeral rituals of relatives, husbands or wives are carried out in order to appease the dead spirits. The result shows no significant difference between the uneducated, secondary or graduate of the Efiks in the keeping of mourning house. This result is in support of Amaku (1957) that failure to carry out traditional ordeal in order to appease the dead spirits could lead to death.

With respect to the perception of menstruation as a bad omen (hypothesis 2), the findings to Table 2 showed that there is no significant influence of western education on the perception of menstruation as a bad omen between the uneducated, secondary and the graduate of the Efiks. The society makes them to know that they are unclean during their menstrual flow. They are not free to go near a shrine, juju, neither to touch a concoction or important herbs. Kessler (1979) supported this as he said that some societies regarded menstrual blood as a physical dangerous fluid in itself, and have properties which endanger the well-being of the entire group. The finding on the perception of un-circumcision as a taboo to marriage (hypothesis 3), showed a significant difference between the groups. This is because the graduates are the most exposed to the adverse effects of circumcision through seminars, mass media, magazines, as well as science and technology.

Following the findings of this study, it is hereby concluded that the western education contributes significantly towards disabusing the minds of the educated Efiks, particularly on the perception of un-circumcision as a taboo to marriage and belief in deities. Consequently it was recommended that: the Efiks should embrace education whole heartedly, and see it as a means that enhances long life and not as adulteration of Efik traditional practices and culture. This could be done through enlightenment campaign in the rural area on the need to stop female circumcision, the dangers and its effects should be made known to them. The men and women should make themselves available in the hospital when they are sick for treatment, and disabuse their minds that the ancestral or dead person’s spirit is the cause.

Recommendation

From the conclusions drawn, it is recommended among others that traditional values that are deemed worthwhile in Efik culture should be maintained. Also, Efik culture should form part of the curricula of subjects such as Efik Language, Literature in English. Department of Efik Culture and History should be introduced in the state owned tertiary institution in Cross River State. Further, students of Efik origin as well as non-indigenes should be encouraged to visit ancient artifacts. Job opportunities should be created in relevant ministries and through consultancy in order to readily absorb graduates of Efik Culture and History.

References


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