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The Orientation of African Time Concept on Task Accomplishment among Media Staff of Nigerian Television Authority (NTA)

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ABSTRACT

The ideals of African Time are predicated on the premise of an orientation where the concept of time is defined aside from the what is known of Universal time in an Africa context. The study on the Norms and Orientation of Africa Time Concept was investigated to find out how African Time orientation have impeded productivity in Nigerian Television Authority, also to examine the rationale behind Nigerians and Africans alike having a different ideology to Universal Time Concept and lastly, to examine the extent the concept of African Time affect efficiency and task accomplishment in NTA. Furthermore, the study purposively picked a total of One Hundred and Fifty (150) respondents who were distributed questionnaires in NTA Jos Network Centre and NTA Television College, Jos. Sequel to this, Simple Percentage Test was used to test coded data with results confirming that the notion behind African Time Concept is attributed to norm and cultural orientation in a typical African society, also revealed in the study is the perspective that turnover in NTA overtime is a product to time management skills and Lastly, the outcome of the study confirmed that the idea of African Time is synonymous to lack of respect to time, and always waiting for others to arrive first and get the task initiated. Conclusively, the study concluded by making recommendations on the need to unmask the African Time ideology for development and inculcate the Universal Time standard in every facet of our lives.

Keywords: African Time, Universal Time, Orientation, Task Accomplishment.

INTRODUCTION

In Britain, African time is referred to black people's time or Caribbean time, in United States of America, it is commonly known as CP time that is Coloured People's time. "African Time" is a phrase used to describe the relaxed attitude that many African exhibit towards schedules. The concept of African time is elusive and remains a topic of debate

and criticism in modern Africa. In October 2007, Ivorians staged a campaign against African Time concept. This campaign tagged 'Punctuality Night' got the support of President Laurent Gbagbo to recognize the implication of African Time to businesses and National development. The campaign climaxed with a communiqué slogan "African Time is killing Africa-lets fight it"[1].

Reuters (2008), reported that the organizers of "Punctuality Night" demands recommendation as the hope to heighten awareness of how missed appointments, meetings or even late buses cut productivity in a region where languid tardiness is the norm. Reuters (2008) reported that the organization of "punctuality Night" demands recommendation as the hope to heighten awareness of how missed appointments meetings or even late buses cut productivity in a region where languid tardiness is the norm. Regardless of colour, nationality and race, we all have the same amount of time made available to us each day. And because of it enormous value to humans and the existence of any organization. It cannot be undermined because once it has passed, it is gone forever. For this reason, there is the need for an appraisal of 'African Time' concept considering its stereotypic nature among other nationalities and the challenges it poses to the corporate existence of media organizations in Nigeria[2].

Ghanian Chronicle May 17, 2004 observed that: One of the reasons for continuing underdevelopment of our country is our nonchalant attitude to time. The problem of punctuality has become endemic that lateness to any function is accepted and explained off as African time. Experience of African Time among Nigerians has hampered events, affected organizational productivity and resulted into rift in relationships[3].

Poppel (1978) Sees time experience as a fundamental aspect of human existence. Among these expectations he noted were: (i) duration (ii) non simultaneity (iii) order (iv) past and present (v) change, including the passage of time[4]. In Nigeria, many government ministries employees who should be in their offices during working hours doing their respective jobs are usually seen coming late or seen under trees

or in group discussing issues that are not meaningful to the survival of their organization. It is in this regard that victor (2013) asserted that “African Time” lingers around like an awful that will not go away. Everywhere you go among media Organizations in Nigeria you see example of tardiness that can be linked back to the Myth of Africa Time. The most disturbing is the fact that African Time has invaded institutions of learning and Media Organizations who are supposed to nurture the society on the ideals of time consciousness. Instead, habitual lateness to lectures, meetings, events and functions by those concerned. The implication of African Time on task accomplishment in Media Organization has to a great extent retarded growths and productivity in virtually all facets of departments in any Media Organization in Nigeria[5].

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A cursory glance at scholarly works on the African Time concept, Mbiti (1969), argues that the African Time concept does not place the Africans at an advantageous position for development. The concept of African “Time” is one which tardiness, lousiness and total disregard for schedules and programs. This position further buttresses that African deity of time is pre-dated to the pre-literate society where the ideals of development were retarded by perceived cultural tendencies.

Nyasami (2010)[5], asserted that ‘No meaningful progress can be achieved in all facets of human endeavour in the absence of a well co-ordinated programme that is managed with specific of time and space. If this is known and accepted as a pre-requisite for development, why is the African Time concept associated with laxity, laziness and lousiness giving so much priority within the African society?

Augustine (1963) sees African Time as an elusive concept. He writes, if anybody ask me I know it. But if I wish to explain to him who asks, I no longer knew “it” (P.

264) Augustine (cited by Omoregbe, 1991) [6] avers that neither the past, present nor future

exits, for the past is nothing but the human mind as it remembers, the present is nothing but the human mind as it considers the future, the human mind is expectation. To an African there, is a relationship between time and event but what is utmost to an Africa is the event and activities (Mbiti, 1969). For instance as cited in Kanu (2015)[3], on Tuesday, 28th October 2003 BBC News reported that intentional journalists in UK were kept waiting by the king of Ghana's largest ethnic group who was visiting Alexandra Palace in North London at the climax of a Ghanaian trade exhibition, Ghana Expo 2003. The journalists had been informed that Otumfuo Osei Tutu II from the Ashanti would arrive at the exhibition at 1100. The time was changed to 1400, but the king did not show up until two hours later when the journalists had already packed and left. This incident made the white to remark that, time to Africans is viewed in the light of cultural orientation based on which they tend to have different perspectives to the meaning of an ideal to Universal Time.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Conflicts have broken out among groups organization have fired and sanctioned their employees and above all task are not accomplished effectively and efficiently with reasons attributed to time orientation among Africans, this is because tasks are not promptly executed as a result of poor time orientation, thus organizations tend not to achieve their task of job commitment and accomplishment within a time lag and this is believed to negate organizational efficiency.

This is seen when Nigerians stayed back for other to arrive first or stay back for others to initiate the task that needed to be accomplished before they could get involved.

RESEARCH QUESTION

1. What factors are responsible for the different perception of time among Nigerians?
2. To what extent does the concept of African Time affect efficiency and task accomplishment of NTA?
3. How is the concept of African Time viewed against the standard Time?

4. Do Nigerians and Africans in Diaspora implore the “African” Time ideology in their task accomplishment?

5 What are the implications of imploring African Time ideology in a work setting of NTA?

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the pre-disposing factors responsible for the different to perception to time among Africans.

2. Secondly, to evaluate how the African Time concept affects efficiency and productivity in NTA.

3. To examine how and why Africans perceive time different from the usual standard time.

4. To also examine the perspectives of Africans in Diaspora to the concept of African time in task accomplishment.

5. Lastly, to observe the implications of the African time concept in a work setting.

METHODS

POPULATION

The population of study consists of 150 respondents who were randomly selected from Nigerian Television Authority Jos Network Centre and NTA TV College Jos. These respondents include Males and Females who fall within the age range of 18-65 years. The choice of this population is predicated on the premise that they were all selected from Nigerian Television Authority[8].

INSTRUMENT

A structured and standardized instrument (questionnaire) with significant coefficient reliability measuring Time Perception, African Time Concept and Task Accomplishment was used. The items were subjected to validity and reliability test to confirm its standardization and it does prove valid and reliable.

It is instructive to note that the instrument is made up of 15 items that covered all domains of the key variables. The response format adopted was a Likert Response Format to determine a respondent’s degrees and magnitude of agreement/disagreement to items.

Furthermore, the scoring was summative and the keys to responses were added cumulatively[7].

PROCEDURE

The questionnaire was administered with the aid of research assistants who were trained on questionnaire administration both at the pilot stage and the main study. The concept of debriefing was adhered to by all that were involved in the administration process.

Expectedly, the respondents were assured of their confidentiality and were made to ask questions in areas that constitute doubt and complexity.

The main study implored the process where consent was sought from the management and employees of the target organization. Finally, the questionnaires were returned two days later with a vote of thanks.

RESULTS

ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Items 1-5 in the questionnaire answered questions on the demography of the respondents.

Table 1: Age range

Table 1:	Age	Frequency	Percent
Valid	18-36 yrs	130	86.7
	37-64 yrs	12	8.0
	65 and above yrs	4	2.7
	Missing	4	2.7
	Total	150	100.0

On table 1 above, 130 respondents (86.7%) fall within the age range of 18 - 36, 12 respondents (8.0%) fell within the age range of 37-64, 4 respondents (2.7%) fall within the age range of 65 and above, while only 4 respondents (2.7%) of the entire research population did not indicate their sex

Table 2: Socio-economic status

Social economic Status		Frequency	Percent
Valid	lower	10	6.7
	Middle	134	89.3
	Upper	6	4.0
	Total	150	100.0

On the above table, 10 respondents (6.7%) falls within the status of lower economic status, 134 respondents (89.3%) were the majority of respondents, while 6 respondents (4.0%) falls within the upper socio-economic category.

Table 3: Educational qualifications

Education		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Primary	2	1.3
	Secondary	7	4.7
	post secondary NCE/ND-BSC	119	79.3
	Post Graduate	19	12.7
	Missing	3	2.0
	Total	150	100.0

On the table above, 2 respondents (1.3%) indicated having only primary school certificate, 7 respondents (4.7%) had secondary education, 119 respondents (79.3%) had attained post-secondary education, while only 19 respondents (12.7%) had attained Postgraduate certificate. There were a total of 3 missing values which accounted for about 2.-% of the research population.

Table 4: Sex

Table 4: Gender		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	69	46.0
	Female	75	50.0
	Missing	6	4.0
	Total	150	100.0

Table 5 above, 69 respondents (46.0%) were males while the remaining 75 respondents (50.0%) were females. There was a total of 6 (4.0%) missing values.

INFERENCE STATISTICS

RESEARCH QUESTION 1

What factors are responsible for the different perception of time among Nigerians?

The research questions were answered from items 6, 7 and 8 in section b of the questionnaire.

Table 5: What will you attribute in differences in time perception among Nigerian?

Item		Frequency	Percent
Valid	attributed to lower and upper class	5	3.3
	cultural orientation (making it a way of life)	20	13.3
	disrespect for time	22	14.7
	ignorance and lack of commitment	6	4.0
	lack of commitment and laziness	14	9.3
	laziness and orientation	22	14.0
	lower class have poor time management because they are thinking of hustling	6	4.0
	Orientation	27	18.0
	orientation and perception	9	6.0
	perception and orientation	4	2.7
	perception of desperation	6	4.0
	too many things to do at the same time	10	6.7
	Total	150	100.0

Results for the table above revealed that 27(18%) believed orientation as key to Africans having a different time perception. Taking a closer look at the result, 22 (14.7%), 21 (14%) and 20 (13.3%) of the respondents also gave disrespect for time, laziness and orientation, and cultural orientation (making it a way of life) as reasons why Africans have a different perception to time.

RESEARCH QUESTION II

To what extent does the concept of African Time affect efficiency and task accomplishment of an organization?

The research question was answered by items 3 and 7 in Section B of the questionnaire.

Table 6: African time concept is attributed to low task accomplishment in organization

Response		Frequency	Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	23	15.3
	somehow disagree	19	12.7
	Neutral	5	3.3
	somehow agree	21	14.0
	strongly agree	82	54.7
	Total	150	100.0

Table 7: I Perceive African Time Orientation as an impediment to effectiveness and efficiency to work specification

Response		Frequency	Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	23	15.3
	somehow disagree	12	8.0
	somehow agree	25	16.7
	strongly agree	90	60.0
	Total	150	100.0

Results for the tables above revealed that in table 6, majority of the respondents; 82 (54.7%) strongly agreed that African Time concept is attributed to low task accomplishment in organization, going further, in table 8, 90 (60%), majority of the respondents indicated that they perceive African Time Orientation as an impediment to effectiveness and efficiency to job specification.

RESEARCH QUESTION III

How is the concept of African Time viewed against the standard time?

The research question will be answered from items 5 and 6 in Section B of the questionnaire.

Table 8: I perceive "African Time" different from Standard Time

Response		Frequency	Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	36	24.0
	somehow disagree	22	14.7
	neutral	8	5.3
	somehow agree	22	14.7
	strongly agree	62	41.3
	Total	150	100.0

Table 9: Nigerians believe in African Time than the Standard time

Response		Frequency	Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	24	16.0
	somehow disagree	6	4.0
	neutral	8	5.3
	somehow agree	39	26.0
	strongly agree	73	48.7
	Total	150	100.0

How is the concept of African Time viewed against the standard time, results from responses revealed in table 8, 62 (41.3%), indicated that respondents strongly agreed that the concept of African Time is different from standard time. Going further, in table 9, 73 (48.7%), a majority of the respondents indicated that they strongly believed that Nigerians believed in the African Time than in the standard time.

RESEARCH QUESTION IV

Do Nigerians and Africans in Diaspora implore the African Time ideology in their task accomplishment?

The research question was answered from items 8 and 9 in Section B of the questionnaire.

Table 10: the idea of African time is only applicable to Nigerians resident within Africa

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	39	26.0
	somehow disagree	21	14.0
	neutral	24	16.0
	somehow agree	13	8.7
	strongly agree	53	35.3
	Total	150	100.0

Table 11: I believe the African time orientation is only applicable within Nigeria Context

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	22	14.7
	somehow disagree	25	16.7
	neutral	28	18.7
	somehow agree	28	18.7
	strongly agree	47	31.3
	Total	150	100.0

Research question four focused on Nigerians and Africans in Diaspora on how they implore the African Time ideology in task accomplishment. From the analysis of results in table 10 and 11, 53 (35.3%) responses gathered showed that respondents strongly agreed that the idea of African time is only applicable to Nigerians resident within Africa (table 10), and that the African time orientation is only applicable within Nigeria Context, according to 47 respondents (31.3%) in table 11.

RESEARCH QUESTION V

What are the implications of imploring African Time Ideology in a work setting? The research question was answered from item 14 in Section B of the questionnaire.

Table 12: Which of these best explain your opinion on African Time

Item		Frequency	Percent
Valid	late to work	55	36.7
	waiting for others to arrive	66	44.0
	getting task accomplished outside a specific duration	19	12.7
	all of the above	8	5.3
	Missing	2	1.3
	Total	150	100.0

Table 12 shows the responses of respondents on their perception to the implications of imploring African Time Ideology in a work setting. According to their responses, majority of them, 66 (44%), indicated that waiting for others to arrive before they themselves decide to show up is an implication. Doing this would mean leaving the job for anybody else. This

makes the job not done because every other person is waiting for the next person to come on time making them all late according to the response of 55 (36.7%) of the participants. A closer look at the result also showed that 8 (5.3%) of the participants believed that all options were factors that caused the existence and implication of African Time.

CONCLUSION

The outcome of the study has confirmed reasons for low turnover in many organizations, particularly in NTA as lack of respect for time, this has been emphasized to be the best explanations to 'African Time' as opined by the respondents. Other reasons as opined by respondents were lateness to work or events, waiting for others to arrive first and initiate the task that needed to be accomplished and lastly, the idea of 'African Time' is only imbibed or implored within the African society as a cultural heritage.

The 'African Time' concept needs to be unmasked within the African society, if Africa is to conform to 21st Century trends of development.

The time to tolerate the myth of 'African Time' has passed. Therefore, Africans and Nigerians by extension should take their destinies in their hands in order to inculcate the Universal Time Standard in every facet of their society. There is every need to stop suffering silently in the hands of those who have fashioned these popular excuses to simply explain their habits of lateness to work.

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