

The Impact of Social Environment on Traditional Religious Practices in Igbo Land

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ABSTRACT

Traditional religious are constellations of beliefs, practices, and institutions used to describe a common type of religiosity. The practices are inclusive of all sorts of behaviour and corresponding attitudes that negatively affect human especially women thereby eliminating their rights, such as their right to life, physical integrity, health, dignity and education. It is in the light of these anomalies that this study sought to exposed the impact of social environment on traditional religious practices in Igbo land. It specifically sought to ascertain the negative and positive impact of social environment on traditional religious practices in Igbo land. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population for the study consisted of all the 100 traditional rulers from Enugu, Imo, Abia, Ebonyi and Anambra states, South East Nigeria. Out of the One hundred copies of the instrument distributed only 87 was retrieved from the respondents representing 87 percent return rate. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the two (2) research questions. The result obtained showed that social environment negatively impact on traditional religious practice because it makes them a failure, a backslider, to be ostracized and have no mercy for anyone who commits abomination die. The finding also revealed that social environment positively impact on traditional religious practice because it views marriage as ideally ordained by the supreme being, helps to preserve the pure race, helps the traditionalist to commune with their ancestors and is used as a symbol of justice. Based on the findings, the researcher recommends, among others, that Governments should promote cultural relativism among people of diverse culture with the aim of discouraging the adherent of traditional religious practices that one's religion is better than the other

Keywords: Social Environment, Traditional Religious Practices and Igboland

INTRODUCTION

Traditions are age-long established doctrines, conducts, patterns, and belief systems transferred generation to generation by community members [1,2,3]. These are based on cherished societal values which are upheld, guided, protected and enforced by strong prohibitions in bans, fines, taboos and superstitions. Didactic moral lessons are learnt by violators and invariably serve as deterrence for intending offenders [4]. Traditions may not be easily changed as it is an established practices and its adherence surpasses generations. Across the globe, countless numbers of people

have been subjected to dehumanising practices under the disguise of traditions or culture. Some have been battered, injured, tortured, wrecked and exploited mentally, socially, psychologically, and physiologically due to these age-long practices [5]. Nigeria as a multicultural society has rich cultural values and heritage and the Igbos of the South East, Nigeria is not an exception. It is against this background that the paper sought to expose the impact of social environment on traditional religious practices in Igbo land [6].

Statement of the Problem

Social environment seem to be one of the major sources of negative impact of traditional religious practices. In most

cases social environment influenced by the western culture or view tags our traditional cultural practices as moribund.

This in effect hinders the effective growth of our traditional practices especially our women in forms of physical or psychological violence that prejudice the bodily integrity or mental wellbeing of women and children-especially girls-based on the inferior position they have in the social grouping and are considered as long-established and community accepted practices deserving tolerance and respect. The practices are inclusive of

all sorts of behaviour and corresponding attitudes that negatively affect women thereby eliminating their rights, such as their right to life, physical integrity, health, dignity, education. It is worrisome that some of these practices still thrives in some communities in South East Nigeria. It is against this background that the study sought to expose the impact of social environment on traditional religious practices in Igbo land.

Objective of the Study

The general purpose of the study sought to expose the impact of social environment on traditional religious practices in Igbo land.

Specifically the study sought to:

1. ascertain the negative Impact of social environment on traditional religious practices in Igbo land.
2. find out positive impact of social environment on traditional religious practices in Igbo land.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study.

1. What are the negative Impact of social environment on traditional religious practices in Igbo land?

2. What are the positive Impact of social environment on traditional religious practices in Igbo land?

Review of Relevant Literature

Conceptual Framework

Igbo land

The Igbo peoples are located predominantly in the Southeastern part of Nigeria. The Southeastern part of Nigeria consists of five states that are known as the core Igbo-speaking states [7,8,9,10]. They are Imo, Enugu, Ebonyi, Anambra, and Abia. Igbo people can be seen in some parts of other states. The states are Delta, Rivers, Bayelsa, and Akwa Ibom. According to the 2006 Census of Nigeria, the Igbo population is estimated to be

around 21 million, whereas the land area is about 15,800 square miles. They occupy the area between 5.8° north and 6.8° east. Linguistically, they belong to the new Benue-Congo of the Niger-Congo Language family [11,12,13,14]. Their occupations include trading, farming, craft making among others. In the Igbo language, there are so many dialects, which are mutually intelligible.

Social Environment

The social environment, social context, sociocultural context or milieu refers to the immediate physical and social setting in which people live or in which something happens or develops. It includes the culture that the individual was educated or lives in, and the people and institutions with whom they interact exhibits their traditional religious practices [15,16,17,18]. The interaction may be in person or through

communication media, even anonymous or one-way and may not imply equality of social status. The social environment is a broader concept than that of social class or social circle [6]. The physical and social environment is a determining factor in active and healthy aging in place, being a central factor in the study of social environment in relation to traditional religious practices.

Traditional Religious Practices in Igbo land

Igbo religion is traditional according to [8], in the sense that it is rooted in their culture. It is received by oral authority by one generation and transmitted by the

same process to subsequent generations and, thus, has effect of being widely diffused among its adherents and of deeply colouring their consciousness. It

exhibits for this very traditional peculiarity highly ontological phenomena, pertaining to the question of existence and being. Furthermore, within the traditional life, the individual is immersed in a religious participation, which starts before birth and continues after death, for the life of an Igbo man is like a religious drama, which vitally links the living with the ancestors and those yet to be born in a mystic continuum. [13], says that the Igbo who belong of course to the West African subregion are a truly religious people of whom it can be said as it has been said about the Hindus that they eat religiously, dress religiously, sin religiously and the religion of these natives is their existence and existence is their religion. Religion in Igbo traditional society partakes fully of all the features of world traditional religion, including its beliefs, sacred myths, oral qualities, strong appeal to the hearts of adherents, high degree of ritualization, and possession of numerous participatory personages such as officiating elders, kings, priests, and diviners. Everyone is in fact a religious carrier. There are no missionary elders to propagate the religion, and one individual does not preach his religion to another as is the case with nontraditional proselytizing religions. The objects of Igbo religion and worship in the strict sense according to Ejizu are threefold: God, nonhuman spirits, and the ancestors. The Igbo believe in the Supreme Being, who is the controller of the world and all that are in the world. Their firm belief in the Supreme Being is manifest in the names they give their children as Chukwuemeka (God has done much), Chukwuka (God is greater), Chukwuma (God knows), and so forth. It is worthy of note to observe that the High God is not represented in any carved or molded form, is not assigned a shrine. He is said to have his abode above the sky. In more generalized sense, this deity is believed to be ubiquitous and invisible. He is looked upon as the fountain of justice. The Igbo, apart from their belief in the great God conceived as transcendental and incomprehensible, also believe in a pantheon of lesser deities, such as Ala (earth goddess),

Ufiejiokū (god of agriculture), Idemili (god of water), Agwū (god of medicine, divination, and possession), and so forth. The activities of these lesser deities are closely associated and interwoven with the daily life of the Igbo people. These deities, they believe, protect them, control their behaviour and worldview. Conversely, human beings have some influences over these deities. In addition to the above-mentioned gods are some personalized gods such as Chi and the Ikenga. The Igbo believe also in the cult of the ancestors. Every Igbo man has his own personal image or figure of Chi and the Ikenga [8], and everyone reveres the ancestral spirits (referred to as Ndi nna anyi (Our fathers). The personal god, chi, is what they call the guardian deity deputizing for Chukwu. [9], in the same vein sees this concept of Chi as a genius or spiritual double. The essential role of Chi concept is seen in the Igbo proverb, which says Onye kwe, chi ya ekwe (when one says yes, his personal god says yes). In spite of the fact that the Igbo believe that the individual is the maker of his own fortune, they also believe in predestination, for they also agree that one's Chi refers to one's luck, which is associated with his destiny. In other words, what the person is going to be has already been preordained before he came into the world. This destiny can be written on his palm and palmists can interpret this destiny [10]. Again, akara aka ojoo, that is, "hard luck," is a common explanation for one's ill-luck in this world. In addition, Igbo religion makes use of Ikenga. Ikenga is usually owned by every adult male who has attained manhood. The possession of Ikenga comes at a time when the individual has obtained a measure of independence from his father and is able to build his own family. This Ikenga has to be celebrated, vitalized, and consecrated before it becomes effective. In some parts of Igbo, for instance, in Nkpor in Idemili-North Local Government Area (LGA) of Anambra state, the Ikenga is spilt during the funeral celebrations of the owner. Commenting generally on the traditional customs of Onitsha people, [14] says, as

could be expected, associated with the indigenous religious beliefs and practices of the people of Onitsha were time honoured customs handed down from their ancestors. Some of these customs include: the cleansing of the town of pollution and desecration, the institution of slavery, human sacrifice, killing of twins, taking of oath and trial by ordeal, first and second burial for the dead, long mourning period for widows, and of course the practice of polygamy [14]. In a more concrete manner the traditional religious practices include Libation and prayer, eating fishes from sacred streams, osu caste system etc. Eating Fishes From Sacred Streams- Also in some parts of Igbo land such as Njaba LGA of Imo state, Udi and Nsukka areas of Enugu state, Awka, Nkpor, Ogidi, Aguleri, and so forth, all in Anambra state, the early Christian converts not only went out regularly to convert their heathen neighbors to Christianity but also showed their contempt for the traditional taboos: for example, eating the forbidden fish from certain streams in the towns. Tradition had it that the fishes were not allowed to be touched or killed, for they were dedicated to the god of the stream, but the Christian converts caught and ate them just to show that the gods of the stream had no powers to harm them, because God created all things for man's use. The action pained and annoyed the traditional worshippers. They left the converts to the vengeance of the gods but the gods seemed to have taken no notice. The natives started to fight for the gods by ostracizing the Christian converts. Osu/Ohu (Outcasts/Slaves): The Igbo osu caste system is a practice of traditional religion and culture. Caste system also exists in Egypt, among the Hebrews, in China, in Japan, among the Germans, and in Russia, Spain, and Portugal [14]. It is a taboo in most Igbo communities and in fact, an abomination for a free born to get married an Osu/Ohu. It is also a taboo for a free born (nwa afo), to sleep under the same roof with an osu. When Christianity came, the missionaries condemned human sacrifice and outcast system. Both Osu and Ohu and other converts started to worship God together in the same

church, for in the sight of God, all men are equal. The traditionalists frowned at it but the new Christian converts did not mind having Christian fellowship with the outcasts. It is important to note that the Osu caste system officially, has been abolished by the Eastern House of Assembly. It is no longer an abomination for a free born to marry an osu/ohu because an enterprising ohu could buy back his freedom and could marry into the household of his master. King Jaja of Opobo was a typical example. He not only bought his freedom but also went ahead to found the Opobo Kingdom where he became the king. But in the present-day Igbo nation, ohu, in some Igbo states have their freedom but for osu, it is not yet fully practiced. No wonder Mamah, Ujumadu, Okoli, [6] state, "Eastern House of Assembly on May 10, 1956 abrogated the obnoxious practice through an Act of Parliament, but 60 years after, this has not done the required magic . . ." According to Sir Ogbonna Emmanuel (oral interview, 2016), the issue of free born and osu led to a bloody communal clash in Alor-Uno in Nsukka LGA of Enugu State in 2016. Many lives and property were lost. "The propagators of the crisis are all Christians," said Sir Ogbonna. Members of Alor-Uno community socially and politically marginalized their brothers in the name of osu caste system. Even to date, most Christian converts are not courageous enough to put their Christian belief into practice in the equality of human beings, by marrying an Osu or Ohu, for they know that the person and his family will be ostracized by all his kindred, who ironically are more of Christians. Prayers and Libations: No worship in traditional religion is complete without prayer and pouring of libation to ancestors. The father, who is the head of the home, prays very early in the morning before he could even greet anybody. It takes the form of saying "Good morning" to the divinities and of reaffirming his acknowledgments of them to be the controllers of destiny. Conflict arises in the worship of ancestors. Christianity preaches that there is only one God, the creator of everything and that no worship

could be given to any other false god. But Dr. Ekweremadu Boniface [8] draws our attention to the fact that traditional religionists pray and pour libation to worthy ancestors believed to have lived righteously during their lifetime on earth. And, one begins to wonder the difference between this traditional practice and Christian's ceremony on November 1 and 2 (All Saints' and All Souls' Days), the days set aside for remembering the Christian brethren whom they believed lived righteously and died in Christ. Christians refused to partake in annual festivals of the ancestors, which have ceremonial rituals. This eventually results in great discrimination and brings estrangement in their relationship with the traditionalist. Subsequently, the practice of ancestor worship in the traditional African society is defacing as a result of western culture. The Igbo society believes in character and has very strong belief in life after death. [8] posits that when a person dies, his soul or spirit wanders around the bush, until his relations perform the necessary and befitting burial rites. The waiting stage before the incorporation of the deceased into the world of the dead is called transitional period of the deceased. The ancestors, the Igbo believe, wield tremendous powers of blessings and power of curse. After the interment of a fulfilled elder, and after the obsequies must have been completed, the family usually the *okpala* (the first male child in the family), erects a shrine and creates an *okposi* (*of*_o like sticks) for venerating the spirit of the dead through prayers and sacrifices. The Igbo, according to [11], believe that sometimes the dead ancestor may reincarnate into their agnatic families. They believe that the dead ancestors do not come back in their original forms; rather, they become especially interested in the newborn child, who they say may inherit some of the ancestors' characteristics. The ancestor becomes the tutelary spirit of the child and sees to the well-being of the child. The Igbo regard these ancestors as the special guardians of morality and create shrines in their honour, as well as creating symbolic references to their

existence. More to the above, the Igbo believe so much in the concept of *of*_o. An Igbo man uses the *of*_o as a symbol of justice, righteousness, and truth. Not only that, *of*_o to him symbolizes fair play, innocence, trust, good luck, peace, equity, sacredness, good moral conduct, good leadership, accountability, and honesty. [15] avers that *of*_o performs three functions in Igbo land, that is, social, political, and religious but the political and religious functions are most important in that no serious rite or ceremony is performed without making use of *of*_o. What the Bible is to the Christians, *of*_o is also to the traditional Igbo people. The poor and the widow take consolation in *of*_o, especially in land cases, for without the fear of the *of*_o, they will be maltreated by the rich and powerful and from the name such as *Ofo*_{buike} (*of*_o is strength), you see that the Igbo regard *of*_o very highly. *Ofo* has various types, namely, *of*_o *ala* (*of*_o for mother Earth), *of*_o *umunna* (*of*_o for the kinsmen), *of*_o *oz*_o (*of*_o for titled men), *of*_o *dibia* (*of*_o for diviners), and so forth. More to the above religious practices is *Ogu*. In most parts of Igbo land, *ogu* is closely connected with *of*_o. It is also a measure of justice and fair play. Many Igbo clans always use *of*_o and *ogu* together, for example, "eji m *of*_o na *ogu* meaning I have *of*_o (justice) and *ogu* (innocence). *Ogu* is more of a concept than of a physical object. It symbolizes innocence [13]. *Ogu* also serves as a peaceful gadget. In Igbo land, if one is quarreling with somebody, one can give the stalk of *ogirisi* leaf (*uboldia*; a sacred plant that is used as *ogu*) to an elder relation of that person and warn him or her to keep away from him or her or to show that he or she does not want his or her association. In most Igbo societies, you do not take action against someone who offends you without first of all sending him *ogu* at least three times. This is called (*imanye* *ogu*), that is, sending him a note of warning through his relation or a close friend. *Ogu* creates an atmosphere for peaceful settlement. The ordinary *ogu* and *of*_o have psychological effect and work on the conscience of every Igbo man and

woman. Marriage Customs: Christian marriage is different from traditional marriage in Igbo nation. In traditional marriage, the religious aspects include the preliminary divination by which the young man who seeks a wife is enabled to find out from what clan or lineage his Chi (Guardian Spirit) permits him to take a wife of fortune from. When the diviner pronounces the clan or lineage and the girl is found, all the preliminaries are finished and the bride price is paid, the girl is ready to go and settle in her new husband's home (there may be little modification depending on the area in question) Christians are opposed to this aspect of traditional marriage. They contend that their own way of marriage is the ideal as revealed by God. But how far is the ideal Christian marriage as revealed by God separable from the traditional marriage? This is the question often asked by some traditionalists. They argue that the Christian marriage and many Christian families are failures in traditional marriage life, going by the number of Christian divorces prevalent now. Another area of conflict is polygamy. The traditionalists believe that the number of wives a man has shows his opulence. The number of wives often determines the number of children. And, one of the major reasons of having many children according to Mr. Enem Ignatius [12] is to have enough labor for farming, which is their major occupation. But the idea of polygamy runs contrary to the Christian doctrine of monogamy, which believes in one man, one wife. Many

Christians are in dilemma when they have marital problems such as childlessness or problem of gender mix in the children. If ever the man defies the church order and marries more than one wife, he is made a backslider. He is denied the Holy Communion and other church rights. Ala is one of the major religious practice of the Igbos in South Eastern Nigeria. Igbo people hold most sacred, the Earth (Ala) on which they tread and from which they draw means of sustenance and vital resources such as food, crops, water, and so forth. Ala, according to [15], is the sustainer of all lives and fertility. It is on land that we build our houses. It is also this land that the dead go when they die and are buried. Ala is so sacred that anyone who commits an abomination against it does not hope to survive. This explains why *nsọ ala* (abomination against Ala) is dreaded because it has severe repercussions. A typical example is found in Achebe's (1958) *Things Fall Apart*, where Okonkwo, the protagonist, had to flee from *Umuofia* for 7 years for committing homicide, a crime particularly abhorrent to the earth (Ala). Okonkwo's homicide was not premeditated, and because of that, it is a female *ọchụ* (manslaughter) for which its penalty is relatively mild. Ala is the owner of all men, living and dead. She is responsible for public morality and offenses against the law. They also give their children names connected with Ala, for example, *Ala emeka*—the earth has done a lot, and so forth.

Theoretical Framework

Social Norm Theory

Social norm theory explains that social phenomena result from people's unplanned interactions over a long period of time and have been seen as acceptable. These social interactions come to play naturally. The theory further explained that if norms can thrive and spread from generation to generation, they can also wear out naturally and die off. Negative Traditional Practices came due to societal norms and conventions that members of the society practice to acquire social status and respect. Members of the communities and families find it difficult

to deviate for land norms because of the fear of exclusion and "ostracisation". Social norm theory explains that the family decision to continue to uphold these negative norms largely depends on the decisions of others engaging in them. Negative norms can usurp one's protective attitude, thereby promoting compliance of such acts even in the 21st century. When these analogies are clearly understood, ameliorating or abandoning negative traditional practices will be easy, then, global best practices will emerge thereby helping us to understand the

important of holding firm with traditional

religious practices with respect.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The area of the study was Igboland which is comprised of the 5 states in South-East, Nigeria. The population for the study consisted of 100 traditional rulers selected from the 5 states that makes up the Igbo Land. The researcher adopted a purposive sampling technique for the study. A sample size of 5 respondent were drawn for this study using Taro Yamane formular. Population size for the study is 100 traditional rulers from Enugu, Imo, Abia, Ebonyi and Anambra states, South East Nigeria. The researcher used questionnaires for the purpose of obtaining the desired result. The instrument had a 4-point response scale with response category of Strongly Agree (SA)-4 points; Agree (A)--3 points; Disagreed (D)--2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD)-1 point. The instrument was

validated by experts from Nnamdi Azikiwe Univerity Awka. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using the test-retest reliability estimate and it yielded a reliability coefficient of .73 for cluster 1. The study was carried out among the 100 traditional rulers from Enugu, Imo, Abia, Ebonyi and Anambra states, South East Nigeria. Out of the One hundred copies of the instrument distributed only 87 was retrieved from the respondents representing 87 percent return rate. The one research question was analyzed using mean with standard deviation. The researcher used the mean ratings of the numerical value assigned to the response options. A cut-off was determined by finding the mean of nominal values assigned to the options in each questionnaire items using the formula;

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

Where \bar{x} = mean score

X = the score

N=Number of items

Thus.

$$\bar{x} = \frac{4+3+2+1}{4} = \frac{10}{4} = 2.50$$

Decision Rule

The researcher adopted mean, standard deviation, and grand mean in analyzing the research questions and for making inferences on the data collected and analyzed. For the research question any

item whose mean score is greater than or equal to 2.50 is regarded as agreed while any item whose mean score is equal to or less than 2.50 is regarded as disagreed.

Presentation of Results

This section presents the results of the study according to the

research question that guided the study.

Analysis of Data

The data analyzed was presented in Tables 1

Research Question 1: What are the negative Impact of social environment on traditional

religious practices in Igbo land.

Table 1: Mean (\bar{x}) Rating with Standard Deviation of the Negative Impact of Social Environment on Traditional Religious Practices in Igboland.

.S/ N	ITEMS	N=87				\bar{x}	SD	Decision
		4 SA	3 A	2 D	1 SD			
1	Influence of social environment makes a traditional religious practice a failure based on the divorces prevalent now	47	23	10	07	3.26	0.96	Agree
2	Influence of social environment makes a traditionalist who disallow polygamy a backslider	39	27	11	10	3.09	1.02	Agree
3	Influence of social environment makes a traditionalist who married an osu to be ostracized	53	19	-	15	3.26	1.12	Agree
4	Ala is sacred that anyone who commits an abomination against it dies	61	-	21	05	3.34	1.03	Agree
Grand Mean						3.24	1.03	Agree

Table 1 shows that of the 4 items on the negative impact of social environment on traditional religious practices in Igboland, the respondents agreed with the 4 items 1, 2, 3 and 4 as they recorded mean scores of 3.26, 3.09, 3.26 and 3.34 which are above the cut-off point of 2.50. The standard deviation for all the items raised is 1.03 which is small signifying that the responses are closely clustered around the mean. The Table also shows that the respondents grand mean score for the items raised is (3.24). From the foregoing,

the answers to research question one is that influence of social environment makes a traditional religious practice a failure based on the divorces prevalent now, traditionalist who disallow polygamy a backslider, traditionalist who marries an osu to be ostracized and traditionalist who commits abomination against ala (the land) to die.

Research Question 2: What are the positive Impact of social environment on traditional religious practices in Igboland.

Table 1: Mean (\bar{x}) Rating with Standard Deviation of the Positive Impact of Social Environment on Traditional Religious Practices in Igboland.

S/ N	ITEMS	N=87				\bar{x}	SD	Decision
		4 SA	3 A	2 D	1 SD			
5	Marriage is ideally ordained by the supreme being	51	33	-	03	3.52	0.68	Agree
6	Osu caste system helps to preserve the pure race	65	-	17	05	3.44	0.99	Agree
7	Prayers and libation helps the traditionalist to commune with their ancestors	67	10	10	-	3.66	0.68	Agree
8	Ofo is used as a symbol of justice	71	11	-	05	3.70	0.75	Agree
9	Ala is sacred that anyone who commits an abomination against it dies	61	-	21	05	3.34	1.03	Agree
Grand Mean						3.53	0.83	Agree

Table 2 shows that of the 5 items on the positive impact of social environment on traditional religious practices in Igboland, the respondents agreed with the 5

items 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 as they recorded mean scores of 3.52, 3.44, 3.66, 3.70 and 3.34 which are above the cut-off point of 2.50. The standard deviation for all the

items raised is 0.83 which is small signifying that the responses are closely clustered around the mean. The Table also shows that the respondents grand mean score for the items raised is (3.53). From the foregoing, the answers to research question 2 indicated that

marriage is ideally ordained by the supreme being, Osu caste system helps to preserve the pure race, prayers and libation helps the traditionalist to commune with their ancestors, ofo is used as a symbol of justice ala is sacred

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. Social environment negatively impact on traditional religious practice because it makes them a failure, a backslider, to be ostracized and have no mercy for anyone who commits abomination die.

2. Social environment positively impact on traditional religious practice because it views marriage as ideally ordained by the supreme being, helps to preserve the pure race, helps the traditionalist to commune with their ancestors and is used as a symbol of justice and sanctity for land.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The first research question sought to ascertain the negative impact of social environment on traditional religious practices in Igbo land. The result in Table 1 indicates that social environment negatively impact on traditional religious practice because it makes them a failure, a backslider, to be ostracized and have no mercy for anyone who commits abomination die. This finding affirms the findings of Onyejiuwa (2009) who held that Christian marriage and many Christian families are failures in traditional marriage life, going by the number of Christian divorces prevalent now. This is consistent with the finding of Ndulo, (2014) who held that it is a taboo in most Igbo communities and in fact, an abomination for a free born to get married an Osu/Ohu. It is also a taboo for a free born (nwa afọ), to sleep under the same roof with an osu. The second research question sought to find out the

positive impact of social environment on traditional religious practices in Igbo land. The result in Table 2 showed that social environment positively impact on traditional religious practice because it views marriage as ideally ordained by the supreme being, helps to preserve the pure race, helps the traditionalist to commune with their ancestors and is used as a symbol of justice and sanctity for land. This finding is in support of [8] who contend that traditional religious practice such as marriage is the ideally revealed by God. This is consistent with the finding of [11] who held that traditional religious practices is received by oral authority by one generation and transmitted by the same process to subsequent generations and, thus, has effect of being widely diffused among its adherents and of deeply colouring their consciousness.

CONCLUSION

Conclusively from the above analysis and interpretations done and the information from related literature, it implies that

social environment negatively and positively impact on traditional religious practices in Igbo land.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To achieve this mission the following recommendations were made based on the findings of this study as follows: Governments should promote cultural relativism among people of diverse culture with the aim of discouraging the

adherent of traditional religious practices that one's religion is better than the other. By so doing, the negative impact of social environment on traditional religious practices in Igbo land will be curbed and the positive impact promoted.

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