

Full Length Research Paper

An ethnographic study of Igbo naming ceremony (*IBA NWA AFA*)

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In 2002, as part of a larger study, the present researcher undertook an ethnographic exploration of the Igbo naming ceremony. The aim was to identify the vector quantities implicated in the practice of this ceremony as well as the symbolic and mimetic acts and fixed expressions that constitute the fabric of the ritual process of the ceremony. The second aspect of the study was to gain a hermeneutic perspective on the ceremony, with a view to understanding the people's goals and intentions in conducting the ceremony as well as their religious interpretations of its meaning and significance in the life of the child. Also explored were the principal myths underpinning its practice and the extent to which the study of that ceremony could be used as a ladder into achieving a holistic understanding of the basic tenets of Igbo religion. This article presents the key findings of the study. The result showed that it is by means of this ceremony that a newly born Igbo child gets to become defined as an individuated human being through the ritual act of being assigned a name by which to identify him or her in the course of his or her earthly existence. The result of the study also showed that the cultural practice of Igbo naming ceremony encompasses a six-stage process: announcement, preparation, presentation/naming, feasting/communion, and departure stages. The importance of the ceremony for gaining a full understanding of the basic tenets of Igbo Religion also emerged from the results of the study. Hence, the findings of the present study confirm Horton's assumption that the benefit tenets of African Indigenous Religion could be discovered through a comprehensive study of the important rituals and ceremonies of the various African peoples.

Key words: Igbo, Nigeria, Igbo indigenous religion, naming, ceremonies, rituals.

INTRODUCTION

Igbo naming ceremony is one of the Igbo birth rites¹. The others include: the cutting of the placenta and the umbilical cord, the seclusion and the purification as well as the circumcision rites. Both boys and girls are involved in this practice although circumcision especially for the girls is performed at a later age to come closer to their puberty rite. Among the Igbo, these rites hold the same significance as suggested by Gennep (1960: 62) who

indicated that, "They are intended not only to neutralize an impurity or to attract sorcery to themselves but to serve as actual bridges, chains or links – in short, to facilitate the changing of condition without social disruption or an abrupt cessation of individual and collective life".

Among the Igbo, the ceremony of giving a name to the new born child is one that comes immediately after the

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seclusion and the purification rites are performed. Such a ceremony, as seen by Obiego (1984), is the concern not only of the agnate (*umunna*) but also of the whole village. It brings together relatives and friends from other villages and even from outside the village group. Parents and grandparents are the principal actors concerned in the naming of the child. Hence, the naming ceremony, among the Igbo, is a type of peace offering in which the community comes together to pray for the child and for the health of the parents.

Research questions

The principal questions the researcher investigated in relation to this ceremony are as follows: (a) What is this ceremony really concerned with? (b) Why, according to the Igbo, must a name be given to a child? (c) What is (are the myths regarding) the consequence of omitting it in the economy of the child's life? (d) And when (in terms of time after birth) is it performed? Who make up the officiant/s and the participants (witnesses to the ceremony)? (e) What processes and procedures are followed in its practice? (f) What ritual objects are implicated? (g) What kinds of prayers (pattern and content) are used in the process? (h) Who gives the name to the newborn? (i) What kinds of names are involved? And (j) What are the indigenous Igbos' religious interpretations of its meaning and significance in the life of the child?

These are important questions that needed to be answered to improve our holistic understanding of the meaning and significance of this ceremony among the Igbo people of Nigeria. To gain answers to these questions, some relevant Igbo elders in the two communities studied were purposively selected and interviewed. Their various responses to them are summarized in the later part of this report.

REVIEW OF RELATED OF LITERATURE

To determine the conclusions of previous investigators in relation to the above mentioned questions and others related to them, studies and/or writings by Ubah (1982), Nwoga (1984), Ekwunife (1997), Mere (1973), Obiego (1984), Anozie (1998), Arinze (1970), Okafor (2001), Uzukwu (1981), Ezekwugo 1973, Ejizu (1987), Echeruo (1979), Achebe (1989) and Uchegbue (2010) were reviewed. The result showed that it was only the study by Uchegbue (2010) which had focused specifically, like the present one, on the ritual naming of the newborn in an Igbo (Asaba) community across the River Niger. Similarly, while the study by Uchegbue (2010) focused on the naming ceremony among the people of Asaba, in the Delta State of Nigeria, the present study targeted the practice of naming ceremony among the Nri and Ihiala (Igbo communities) in Anambra State of Nigeria.

However, one thing that is common to both studies was that they were both concerned with understanding the practice of naming ceremony among the Igbo people of Nigeria (Uchegbue's, among the Asaba Igbos, and the present study, among the Nri and Ihiala Igbos of Nigeria). Yet, while Uchegbue's (2010) study was largely concerned with understanding the actual meaning and significance of the ceremony of naming a new born among the Igbo of the Delta State of Nigeria, the present study (with participants drawn from among the Nri and Ihiala Igbos of Anambra State, located in the Eastern part of Nigeria), was in addition designed to find out the extent to which the goals, spiritual agencies, and attitudes of the people to the spiritual agencies of Igbo Indigenous Religion (IIR) could be understood through the study of their naming ceremony.

Furthermore, the review conducted revealed that none of the other studies or writings was comprehensive enough as to be able to garner answers to all the questions of interest to the present study earlier stated. However, reviewing those previous studies cited above was found illuminating as most of them in one way or the other showed that the experience of having a child is an important event in an indigenous Igbo's life. And most of them, like the study by Obiego (1984) and Uzukwu (1981) agreed that giving a child a name marks a milestone (as will be explained later in this report) in his or her life. Some of the studies such as those by Arinze (1970) and Uba (1982) also provided some important clues regarding what could be said to constitute the principal spiritual agencies of IIR. On the whole, however, the need for the present study had largely persisted despite the results of the respective studies by these investigators.

The theoretical framework

The key theoretical framework of the study is that of Horton (1995) who proposed that the basic tenets of any indigenous religion could be determined through the field study of the principal rituals and ceremonies of the people professing the religion. Following this framework, the present study of Igbo naming ceremony was undertaken to explore the extent to which the basic tenets Igbo Religion (its goals, spiritual agencies; key officiants and the attitudes of the people to the spiritual agencies of the religion) could be discovered through the study of this ceremony. The research is therefore meant to serve as a field test of the validity or invalidity of Horton's assumption set above.

Design and Methodology

The culture area methodology

The research methodology adopted for the study was the "Culture Area Approach". This approach was considered pertinent since this

is an emic study in which the researcher shares the same culture and language as the people to be studied. To implement it, the researcher applied the participant observation method (POM), which made it necessary for her to engage in the actual field-study of the said ceremony. The participant observation method that was resorted to involved the study of the Igbo naming ceremony (INC). It was believed that only in this way can one achieve what Maxwell (1992) refers to as descriptive validity, or 'reportage accuracy', as well as 'the interpretive validity of the research report'. Two Igbo communities were included into the actual study process: Nri and Ihiala Igbo communities both located in the Eastern part of Nigeria as earlier mentioned.

Sampling procedures/ instrumentation

Three levels of sampling procedures were adopted in the study. They included purposive, quota and snowball sampling procedures. Purposive sampling was used to target only Igbo Naming Ceremony (INC) in the two communities studied. Quota sampling was used to ensure proportional representation of the issues of study across sex lines, village variation, age and ideology of respondents. The snowball sampling technique was adopted in locating and chasing the critical incidents of interest to the study and in reaching the pertinent people for the interview. Six men and women elders (aged 60- years and above), who take part in the ceremonies were interviewed, in each of the two communities. In this way, the total number of elders interviewed, when stated mathematically, stands as $6 \times 2 = 12$, i.e. 6 elders from each of the two communities were interviewed. Here, the decision to interview six participants (through a focus group process) was guided by the position credited to Willig, (2001:29) who "suggests that focus groups should consist of no more than six participants. This is to ensure that all participants remain actively involved in the group discussion throughout the data collection phase. Also, it is extremely difficult to manage or accurately transcribe a group discussion of more than six participants."

In addition to the use of the (focus group) interview process, two other approaches were used in the study: (a) Observation instruments, (namely the participant observation method [POM], and (b) Documentary sources.

To effectively use the POM in the study, an observational schedule was constructed. This guided the field observation of the ceremony that was made. An opportunity was created before the observation of the ceremony started for the researcher to introduce herself and her research assistants to the congregation in attendance. This process was necessary to prevent the people being scared by the presence of the researcher and her assistants among them.

Pilot study

The pilot stage of the study yielded information about Nri as the most pertinent community in the Igbo culture area under-study where this particular ceremony had resisted a drastic change despite the influence of Christian religion and technological development in their midst. On the other hand the decision to include Ihiala as the second (Igbo) community for the study was taken to indicate one example of places where changes in the pattern of practice of these ceremonies are taking place due to the influence and dominance of Christian religion in their midst. The need to introduce such a triangulated community model in the study arose from the data emerging from the pilot study.

Data collection technique

The technique of methodological triangulation guided the

researcher's data collection strategy. Three major aspects of methodological triangulation, relevant to the present study's design were used: space triangulation, time triangulation, and investigator triangulation (Cohen and Manion, 1992). Space triangulation methodology was involved because the research was conducted in more than one Igbo community (Nri and Ihiala). And even in each community studied, observations were made in more than one village within that community. Time triangulation was involved because a diachronic study strategy was built into the study's overall design. To implement this, effort was made to gather data by means of documentary sources and the inclusion of the Ihiala community that helped to detect the kinds of changes taking place in the way the ceremonies are being conducted now compared to the way they were conducted in the past. Investigator triangulation was involved since the researcher conducted the participant observation of the ceremony studied, with the assistance of two other male and female research observers. This approach was supplemented with the friend of a friend approach (which refers to the process of building a sample of participants by including the friends of those already contacted) emphasized by Milroy and Milroy (1985) intended to enable the researcher to get into the patriarchal world of the Igbo so as to acquire some real information on the ceremony studied.

Data analysis strategy

Data that accrued from the study was largely qualitative in nature such as beliefs, spiritual agencies addressed, symbols, sacred objects/officials, incantations, music, chants, operative acts and prayers and practices encompassed in the ceremony. For this reason much of the data accruing from the study involved the use of content analysis of certain levels of the data, arranged under themes; tabulation of data trends and histograms. The central attempt in the analysis plan was to go beyond mere data description to pursue accurate data interpretation that go with the theoretical framework and the key objectives of the study. Trend analysis was also used to answer and discuss the basic questions posed in the study (which guided the questions posed to the interviewees).

RESULTS

The results of the study in relation to the key themes of the study earlier outlined will now be highlighted and thereafter analyzed and discussed.

Meaning and aim of Igbo Naming Ceremony

Representing the views collected from Nri elders under the above theme are those by Anekwe (Oral interview, 17/6/02), and Nweke (Oral Interview, 19/6/02) who agreed to be named. For example, according to Anekwe the purpose of the Igbo naming ceremony is the outdooring of the child (*Nkuputenwa*). In his view, the naming ceremony, *IbaNwaAfa*, marks the official presentation of the child to his or her human agnate community (*umunna*) climaxed by the giving of a name to the baby in the presence of the child's agnate (*umunna*) - the members of his/her father's kindred).

Nweke (Oral Interview, 19/6/02) on the other hand identified a second goal for the naming ceremony among

the Nri community. In his view, the aim of this ceremony is to fulfill the social-religious obligation that comes into effect after the birth of an indigenous Igbo child. And this is the need to perform a ritual of thanksgiving to gods and ancestors for the gift of the child and to ask for blessings on his/her behalf as s/he begins his/her earthly journey. According to Uchegbu (2010:157), "among the Igbo, naming ceremony is the most elaborate and religiously significant of all the infancy rites". In other words, among the Nri community, the naming ceremony is intended first as a ritual of giving a name and welcoming of the child into his/her human fold. Secondly, it is understood as a ritual for praying to God, the village deities, and the ancestors to protect and take adequate care of the child as s/he lives among his/her people.

Interview with some elders from the Ihiala community brought other significant dimensions, while agreeing with those located at Nri, as regards the meaning and importance of this ceremony. For example, Obiudo (Oral Interview, 7/8/02) who spoke for the community elders from Ihiala in this regard opined that the one reason for this ceremony derived from an Igbo myth that a newly born child has a double audience. This encompasses members of his/her peers in the world of the unborn children and those of the human community in which s/he has been born as well as being blessed with a double-voiced relationship. According to him, to say that a newborn child is invested with a double-voiced relationship means that, until s/he is named s/he is still in communion with two types of constituencies, the human constituency and the constituency of the unborn babies. A newborn baby according to this myth has two dialects with which s/he communicates with the two communities. With one speech act, unknown to humans, s/he talks to his or her peers in the world of the unborn children. And they can allure him or her to come back to them through such continued exchange of views with them. With the other speech act (e.g. crying) s/he registers his or her presence in the human world; and through this, s/he requests for a name by which to be known and related with. Continuing, Obiudo, points out the myth and reason behind giving a name to children after twelve days of their birth in the following words: "The world of the unborn children is the world of beings without body. In such a world, members have no need for a name. Life in the human world is lived by means of a name. We become completely human in being named. And once the child is named, his/her link and invisible loyalty to his or her peers in the world of the unborn children become broken". Liseli (2012:39) is in agreement with the above view when he observed that "among the Kongo ethnic group for instance, a new born was not regarded truly human until the bestowal of a name".

From the above observations one can then say that in general, among the two communities studied, the naming ceremony is one of the first major rituals of great traditional importance to the child and his or her people.

With it a child is incorporated and received officially into the human agnate (*umunna*) community and become officially separated from his or her prenatal world. In this way one can say that such a ceremony has a double dimension, that is, social and religious, and therefore a turning point in the history of the child.

The time of naming a child

The practice of giving a name to a new baby is important as has been implied in the previous section. Interview with elders from Ihiala community showed that it is a ritual that is grounded on a proper time perspective since from information accruing from the present study it cannot be performed immediately the child is born. For example, according to one of the Ihiala elders interviewed, Chidi (Oral Interview, 10/8/02) making a point that was concurred to by others in this regard, noted that "the naming ceremony ritual is not performed immediately the child is born. It must wait till the 12th day or three Igbo weeks (*Izu-nato*) of the child's birth." He explains that the reason for this is related to an Igbo myth that every new baby must first be given sometime to weigh and choose if s/he really wishes to stay. That is, whether he/she wishes to be incorporated into the human community or if s/he desires to go back to where s/he came from. Although we know that babies are not able to engage in this process, this rationale was built into the Igbo myth explaining why the Igbo naming ceremony is not conducted immediately after birth.

In line with this myth, according to Chidi, when a child dies before the 12th day after birth and therefore could not be named, it is a sign that s/he has decided not to stay but has chosen the option of departure to the world of the unborn children. On the other hand, surviving up to the 12th day of birth is an indication to the members of his or her agnate community (*umuuna*) that s/he has weighed and has chosen the option of membership in the human world.

Consequently, according to Chidi, the *IbaNwaAfaceremony* commonly takes place on the 12th day from the day of the child's birth. This space gives enough time for the parents to believe that s/he has given them sufficient signal that it does not intend to die, that s/he has come to stay.

Commenting on this same issue of why the delay of the naming till the 12th day of the child's birth, another interviewee, an elder Ezebuein oral interview (15/6/02) from Nri community explained that this is traditionally done to find out whether s/he would give some extraordinary manifestations of the kind of trait or characteristic s/he is made of. That is, whether s/he has some supernatural powers with which s/he might be identified. According to Paul (Oral Interview, 15/6/02), another informant in the study, such period of waiting for possible significant manifestations from the baby does

not only involve a type of passive waiting for the signs. It also involves the act of consulting the diviners or fortunetellers (*IgbaAgu*)² in search of who is behind the child's earthly journey, in terms of his or her destiny spirit (*Onye-Uwa*). As Paul put it, "the value of waiting for significant signs from the baby is to find a suitable name for the type of being s/he manifests". More information collected under this theme will be further clarified below under the preparation stage of the formal structural process of this ceremony.

A focus group discussion with women from Nri and Ihiala communities produced an interesting gendered response to the whole question of why this ceremony has to wait till the 12th day of the birth of the child before it could be conducted. Thus in the view of one of the women discussants from Ihiala community Uduaku (Oral Interview, 22/6/02) speaking as a representative of the rest in this regard, observed that this waiting is calculated to give the mother of the baby some time to heal and recuperate from the aftermath of childbirth. And as the women group from Nri, represented by Akukalia (Oral Interview 15/8/02) put it, this delay is necessary to enable the mother of the baby to be in a position to heal completely before she can be in a position to play host to the agnate (*umunna*) community during the naming ceremony.

The above responses suggest that in the view of these women, the eleven days distance from the day of birth to the appointed day of the naming ceremony gives the mother of the new born that necessary restful period. This is essential to enable her to participate fully in the planning and the social aspects of the ceremony. This includes the tasks of receiving guests, monitoring the proceedings and ensuring that everything goes well at the occasion. These indications mean that INC can be described as a typical example of an African social drama that can be broken into three tier time components namely the period of separation, the period of transition and the period of incorporation (van Gennep, 1969). In this regard, the period of separation covers the period from conception to the birth of the child. This marks the time of breach between the child and his or her peers in the world of the unborn children. The period of transition, encompassing the time from birth to the 12th day of the child's birth, stands for that period when the baby strictly speaking is neither fully human nor merely a formless spiritual guest in the world in the manner of his or her peers in the fore-world of children. The period of incorporation stands for the period of the naming ceremony proper. It represents the actual day of the child's full birth into the human world ascribed with a personal name.

Key officiant/s witnesses to the ceremony

Under this theme, data from the field as to the question of who gives the name to the child and the issue of the

composition of those who should be there to witness the ceremony, were received through live observation by the researcher and her two assistants from instances of Naming Ceremony in the two communities studied. The result showed that the primary person who gives the name to the child at the Naming Ceremony is the father of the child.

The father of the child was discovered to be the principal officiant in this ceremony. And the reason for this was explored in the study. It was noted that this was the case because the Igbo people are a patrilineal group. In that way, the ritual was conducted in the presence of the child's *umunna*. Those who witness the ceremony consist of the elder members of the agnate (*umunna*), plus other members of the kindred group as well as people from other village group, both men and women. Other children of the agnate were also welcomed in this ceremony. During the ceremony such children were seen to manifest signs of being happy that they now have another of their kind. Some of them not quite related to the new born appeared happy just because of the feasting that accompanies the naming of the child born in their midst.

In preparation for the actual ceremony of naming the child, the infant was brought outside, leaving the mother's hut for the first time, now officially exhibited or shown to the assembled guests. S/he is brought out by the paternal grandmother and then handed over to the father who is the actual person to present him/her to the agnate community.

The naming ceremony process

In preparation for the actual ceremony of naming the child, the infant is brought outside, leaving the mother's hut for the first time, to be officially exhibited or shown to the assembled guests. S/he is brought out by the paternal grandmother and then handed over to the father who is the actual person to present him/her to the *umunna*.

The process of naming is inaugurated as the child was being formally presented to the agnate community. During the actual naming process, the father of the child carried the baby in one hand and palm-wine in the other and performed the naming. He began presentation by saying that he wants the child to be called 'Chukwuma' (God knows).

An instance of the presence of some vector quantities in the performance of this ritual was reflected in the fact that the participants were usually seated while the father of the child makes his presentation of the child, in a standing position. This sitting position of the participants was continued even during the communal meal period and during the prayer and the blessing of the child's session.

During the prayer session it was noticed that elderly participants were striking their closed fist on the ground in

front of them as they chorused the fixed expression, (*Isee*, which means, "Indeed thus we say"), after each stanza of the prayer of blessing of the child. While the actual process of naming was to be found uniform in the two communities studied, an element of variation was observed in one ceremony context in Ihiala community. There, the person who gave the name to the child was not the very father of the child, but the eldest member of the child's father's agnate. Further field inquiry showed that this variation was applicable mainly in situations where the father of the child died before the birth of the child. In such a case, according to some respondents, the child is usually given the name, '*Amanna*' (a child who came after the death of his/her father and therefore he could not know him). In this context, Wieschhoff (1941:214) agrees that "names are not merely considered as tags by means of which individuals may be distinguished but are intimately associated with various events in the life of the individual as well as those of the family and the larger social group".

Field investigation of this ritual process in the two communities also showed that this same practice is applicable to the Nri community too. This means that although in general terms, one could conclude that in INC, the more usual practice is for the father of the child to take up the prerogative of giving a principal name to the child. But the above observation, suggests that it is not always the case that it is the biological father of the child who takes up this role.

The idea of the principal name for the field that is given in this ceremony was raised because further field investigation on this matter brought up the gender question of, could the mother of the child give the name too? To this question, respondents from the two communities unanimously responded that the mother could do so but only after the father has given the child a name officially. Indeed, some of the respondents from Ihiala community implied that any member of the child's family can give a name to the child but the one that is taken and officially recognized at this ceremony is the name given to the child by his/her father.

Pursuing this aspect of the investigation further, one respondent from Nri, Okoye (Oral Interview, 11/8/02) indicated that the mother of the child could address the child by the name she herself has given to the child, and can be calling the child that name after the ceremony is over. Her doing this does not, however, in their view, have any negative effect on the official name of the child as given by the father. This explains how pet names from the mother of the child and other relatives emerge and are allowed to stay alongside the one given to the child by the father during this ritual naming of the child.

Ritual objects in Igbo Naming Ceremony

Data from the two communities studied showed that the following constituted the ritual objects involved in the Igbo

Naming Ceremony.

1. 4 kola nuts or more. (*oji*)
2. 2 or more alligator peppers (*ose-oji*)
3. 1 cock, (*okeokpaokuko*) or more, depending on the wealth of the family of the child, or as my respondents put it in Igbo language, "*ka aka onyera*" (Nri), or "*ka aka onye ha*" (Ihiala).
4. 2 bottles of local gin (*kai-kai* or *kinkana*)
5. 2 gallons of local palm wine or more (*Nkwuenu/Ngwo*).

Symbolic significance of the ritual objects

Interview data on the symbols of some of these items were pursued during the fieldwork. In this context, respondents from Nri emphasized the symbol of the presence of variety of placatory gifts in the list above. These included the animal gift of a cock, to reflect the abundance of joy of the members of the child's agnate for the gift of a child. Respondents from both communities on the other hand agree that the presence of the four kola-nuts or more stands for the spirit of prayer on the part of the *umunna*. With it, prayers are offered for the child to grow to adopt the agnate *spirit* that will enable him/her to grow without deviation from the discipline and guidance of the community.

Regarding the basis for the presence of four kola nuts or more, in this ceremony, Nwoga (1984:28) explains that: "In offering kola, multiples of two and four are given and not the odd numbers – thus events demands four, eight, sixteen, sixty-four kola nuts and some multiples of four in between. According to him, when kola nut is split the number of lobs found in the kola nut has been given symbolic meaning. Three is *akadike* (the strong arm), four is peace, five is wealth and children and so fourth".

In Ihiala, in particular, one informant, Obiajunwanne (Oral Interview, 13/8/02) stated in relation to the symbol of the alligator pepper, that its presence in the naming ceremony was taken to stand as a word of reminder to the parents of the new child during this solemn occasion, namely, to remind them of the fact that parenting can be both joy and pain, just as the alligator pepper is known to sting as well as bring a nice aroma to s/he that chews it. In addition, the birth of a child brings an emotional satisfaction to the parents: To the man, the event is a proof of his manliness and to the woman of her fruitfulness. It moreover provides a status symbol and further, an opportunity for both parents to develop towards greater maturity. Children bring joy to many even when their day-to-day life is full of harshness and poverty. But it was believed that, in the end, with perseverance and effort on their part, the child could grow to become a full-fledged adult that will bring honour not only to himself/herself but also to his/her parents and the *umunnaat* large.

An elder from Nri, Ihenwaeme (Oral Interview, 17/8/02) observes in relation to the presence of wine in the items presented above, indicating that it is there to symbolize the idea of the celebratory spirit among the agnate blessed with a child. He also said the cock symbolizes the idea of the dawn of a new hope, a new opportunity and blessing in the family through the birth of the newborn child.

These clarifications show that Igbo ritual objects, like in the context of the present ceremony, are used as symbols that speak larger and longer than the actual concrete items, which they represent (Turner, 1968).

Sample prayer form used in Igbo Naming Ceremony

The researcher noted that the prayer variations from the two communities studied are not much different, but mainly dialectal. In relation to the basic prayer form used in breaking the kola-nut, and in asking for blessings and protections on the child, and on the rest of the agnate (*umunna*), the results from one of the naming ceremonies witnessed by the researcher and her two research assistants at Nri are presented below. During that the ceremony, the officiant, Uzonna Ike, the chief elder of the *umunna*, took one of the kola-nuts in his hand and lifting up his face towards the sky prayed in the following words:

| Officiant Igbo | Officiant (English version) |
|---|---|
| Greeting and addressing god, spirits and ancestors | |
| <i>Chukwuabiaama,</i> | Chukwu, He who was before all of us |
| <i>Ezechitoke,</i> | The king of all creation |
| <i>Omamaamachaamacha,</i> | The known but infathomable |
| <i>Isi nsikogbalu Igbo ghali,</i> | The crab's head that is a mystery to the Igbo |
| <i>Eze bi n'</i> <i>IgweOgoduyanakpunani</i> | He who lives above with his feet on the ground |
| <i>NwokeOghologhoanya</i> | A man with distended eyes that sees everything. |
| <i>Ndimuo di baanyi,</i> | Our gods and ancestors |
| <i>AnyanwunaAgbala,</i> | The sky and the sun gods |
| <i>Ndenbunandeegede</i> | Our ancestors and forefathers |
| <i>Anyiekene.</i> | We thank you |
| Participants: <i>Isee</i> | Participants: Indeed thus we say/agree. |

Begging agencies to break the kola-nut for them and make it a sacred meal

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Nalunuanyi (Nararanianyi) ojia</i> | Receive this kola nut |
| <i>Taanun'otuk'anyi ta n'ibe</i> | Eat it whole, while we share the pieces |

Bianugozieojiak'anyisina Come and bless this kola so that we will

itayanwetandu. obtain life through eating it.
Participants: *Isee* Participants: Indeed thus we say/agree.

Prayer of thanksgiving and for his welfare

Obi di anyitorinnenanwa We are very pleased

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Enyereanyi.</i> | For the child given to us |
| <i>Anyinaekeneunu</i> | <i>We thank you all</i> |
| <i>Avia a bu ... (Afayabu)</i> | His name is ... |
| <i>Anyinaayoagamn'iruya, aruike,</i> | We pray for his progress in the world, |
| <i>Ogbogbo/ogonogondu,</i> | for his health, virile and long/strong life and |
| <i>Na ifeejienenduanyan'ebeono.</i> | the wealth with which his/her life will be enhanced |
| Participants: <i>Isee</i> | Participants: Indeed thus we say/agree. |

Prayer to the ancestors to pave his way for him

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Ndimuo di banyinaNnannanyifa</i> | Our gods and ancestors |
| <i>Tivolu nu yaezi,</i> | Make smooth his/her life path |
| <i>Kaotoo, so luuloyamee</i> | So s/he can live long, to do and |
| <i>ifeibeyan'eme</i> | to take his/her seat among his/her mates |
| Participants: <i>Isee</i> | Participants: Indeed thus we say/agree. |

Prayer for peace and joy

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <i>Udo no oghu</i> | Peace and Joy |
| <i>Ejeabata</i> | Successful going out and coming in |
| <i>K'anyinayoebennenannayano</i> | We pray on his/her parents behalf |
| Participants: <i>Isee</i> | Participants: Indeed thus we say. |

Prayer for offspring

Na isinnenannanwaaanyinaayo We pray on behalf of the parents of this child

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>Omumunwokenaomumunwanyi</i> | blessing of more children of both sexes |
| Participants: /see | Participants: Indeed thus we say/agree. |
| Prayer for wealth to sustain life | |
| <i>Ife akuakuifeenwe- enwe</i> | For animals and possessions |
| <i>K'anyinayon'isi fa (n'isi ha).</i> | We pray on their behalf |
| <i>Kaeliitaa, k'eli e ozo</i> | May we come again in this family for a similar celebration of joy |
| Participants: Isee | Participants: Indeed thus we say/agree |

| | |
|--|---|
| Prayer for the welfare of his entire agnate (<i>Umunna</i>) | |
| <i>Ndib'anyi, anyigaadisinu</i> | Our people, we shall all live |
| <i>Yagazieluununine</i> | May things go well for you all. |
| Participants: /seeeeeee | Participants: Indeed thus we say/agree!!! |

In each of the two communities studied, the members of the participants as shown above respond with the single fixed expression: 'Indeed thus we say/agree' or */see*, at strategic intervals during the prayer ritual. This gesture was interpreted to mean that this ceremony is one in Igbo Religion where the participants do not operate as a passive audience but as a participant community during the entire ritual process.

A close inspection of this prayer text shows some principal elements embedded in it. These include: praise and worship, thanksgiving, supplication for protection and support of the child, his/her parents and other members of the community present. This implies an inclusive recognition by the people, of the important contributions of not only the Supreme Being, but also other gods, spirits, and ancestors, in the affairs of their lives.

In addition, a major contribution of this study from the results set above is that Igbo prayer ritual is communally owned spontaneously generated and focuses in its contents beyond concern for praise and worship. The elements of the prayer place emphatic stress toward making petitions relevant to the needs of the participants. The whole ritual was discovered to be not just God-centered, but human-need centered as well (Horton, 1995).

Formality and components of the ritual process

The process format of the ceremony was also noted

during the field observation of live samples of the naming ceremony in each of the two communities studied. The field experience for example, showed that broadly speaking the following six stages were traversed in the performance of the naming ceremony. These include: the announcement, the preparation, welcoming, presentation and naming, feasting and communion, and the departure stages (Figure 1).

The U-curve depiction of the stages shown in Figure 1 points to the sequence of stages and movements of the rituals of activities in the INC. The above figure draws attention to six major stages embedded in this ceremony as was observed in Nri and Ihiala communities at each session, in a kind of face-up U-curve position. This means that each session ends in a spirit that still looks forward to another of such occasion as the Igbo proverb express it: *K'elitaak'elikwaozo;ofuofu, teghete*, meaning that they look forward to another of the same occasion to eat and celebrate with the parents of the child as they have eaten/celebrated that day.

The ritual stages follow one another sequentially at the end of each stage, except for the last stage, which do not form a closed circle by the end of the session. This signifies the participants' belief that many more children are on their way to the couple. They hope to come back very soon to the family for another naming ceremony with the parents whom they pray to have many more children in their marriage.

The six stages will now be discussed one by one to explain them further, beginning with the announcement stage.

Announcement

In both communities, the ceremony starts with a prior announcement to the agnate that a child is born to them. This announcement is made informally through the word of mouth via the snowball technique. The services of the town crier (public announcer) are not used in this context. Through the snowball process each member of the *umunna* who hears of the birth of the child takes the onus to share and spread the good news to those others who s/he believes have not heard of it. The content of this informal announcement regarding the birth of the child carries not only the news of the gender of the child but also the Igbo market day when the child was born. In this way, members automatically become able to reckon the ritual date for the naming ceremony process.

Preparation

This refers to the period of gathering/purchasing of the items for the naming ceremony, such as the kola nuts, the cock, and making arrangement for the native palm wine to be used. Respondents from Nri community indicated that some families during this preparation stage

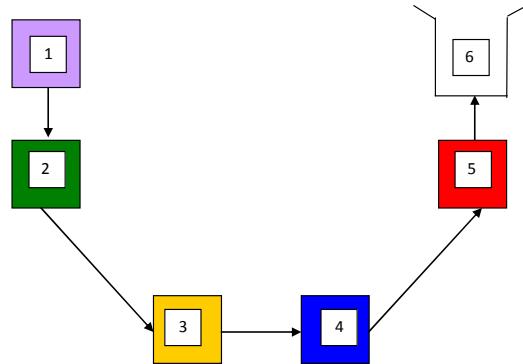


Figure 1. A U-curve depiction of the 6 stages of Igbo naming ceremony. Key: 1.The Announcement Stage; 2. The preparation Stage; 3. The Welcoming Stage' 4.The Presentation/Naming Stage; 5. The Feasting/Communion Stage; 6. The Departure Stage. Source: Researcher's representation.

engage in the pre-naming ceremony of *IgbaAgu*. This is the process of ritual determination of the ancestor or village deity that was behind or sponsored the coming into the world of the newborn child in question (*Onyenoluyauwa*) through the process of divination. According to Uchegbu (2010: 157), "several factors determine the name given to a child". Hence finding out who the child's spiritual patron (the child's *Onye-uwa*) is important because the name to be given to the child may be decided by finding out from that agent the name s/he will want the child to be called. In Nri community, some of the names given to children are that of a deity who through divination was discovered to be their *Onye-uwa*. Interview data from some respondents from Nri community showed that even where a specific name is not determined through the inspiration of the *Onye-Uwa* agent, the ritual of determining the child's *Onye-Uwa* is still part and parcel of the formal process of rooting the spiritual patron of the child. This also is one of the important components of consolidating the child's arrival and membership in the human community of his/her people. It is part of the process of spiritually naming him/her alongside the targeted formal naming ceremony ritual proper to be celebrated by the agnate (*umunna*).

Welcoming and presentations of gifts to the child

As each lineage (*umunna*) member arrives for the ceremony, he/she was observed to take the trouble, before settling down at the child's father's *Obi*, to first of all enter the mother's hut to see, greet and give some gifts to the new born child and the mother. These gifts came in various forms from the relatives on both side of the father and mother of the child³. The items presented to the child and the parents constituted part of their

contributions towards sponsoring the occasion. Some come with already cooked food while others bring them fresh foodstuffs. In support of the above, Anozie (1998:63), points out that: "No contribution to the welfare and well-being of the community could equal that of the gift of a new member. As the community is fully linked to this aspect of individual's life, child bearing have a very serious social tone. God gives life to a person but society fits individuals into a sociable and communal entity". This observation in line with the view offered by Mwaura (2001:300), who said that among the Abaluhya people of Kenya, "in naming, a child is dedicated to the community to be part and parcel of all its realities and experiences that is, its privileges and responsibilities."

In this way, the newborn child is not forgotten in this gift giving stage as some relatives bring him or her some ready-made baby clothing materials also. All these gifts according to some respondents signify and point to the Igbo saying that, "a child belongs only to the mother when s/he is in the mother's womb. As soon as the child is born s/he becomes the responsibility/property of all his kit and kin." Other respondents indicate that presentations of these gifts by the participants, symbolize the theme of solidarity and the brotherly spirit of communal sharing of family burdens that form part of the social ethics of the Igbo. It also encourages the phenomenon of investment in social support and ethic of mutuality among the Igbo.

It must be mentioned that this stage is not hurried. It could last for an hour or more. Some of the interviewees gave the impression that the stage is typically allowed to drag strategically to enable majority of the participants to assemble and settle down before the actual presentation of the child to the agnate (*umunna*) could commence. This stage is thus essentially the social component of the naming ceremony ritual process. During this period members take their time to exchange words of affection with fellow participants. This therefore reflects the build up stage of the ceremony proper.

Ritual presentation and naming of the child

In both communities, what followed the period of welcoming and presentation of gifts to the child is the stage of formal presentation of the child to his or her father's kindred, the *umunna*, and the time for the ritual naming and blessing of the child to take place. According to Nwoga (1984:20), "every child becomes fully human only when it has been formally received into a community most often by ritual presentation to the elders of the kindred".

As mentioned above, two principal officiants were implicated at this stage. The first is the father of the child who presents him/her to the congregation, giving him/her the name chosen for him/her (often, as we have said, determined through divination). Second, the blessing of

the child that goes with the ritual breaking of the kola nuts by the oldest man among the (*umunna*) present for the occasion.

There was no instance during the fieldwork in the two communities covered, where a woman is given the power to preside over this ceremony in any of the sample ceremonies observed. The Igbo naming ceremony is therefore gender-biased on the male members of the agnate. But this is not surprising, as the two Igbo communities studied are patriarchal in organization. In the two communities, majority of the ritual practices were presided over by males. One of the participants interviewed from Nri, Ukoha (Oral Interview, 11/8/02) argued that part of the reason for this bias is because among the Nri community, elderly adult women available are typically married mothers that are members of different (*umunna*) communities by birth from the one into which the baby is born. For this reason women are assumed unqualified to preside over the ceremony, as this involves the privilege of addressing the gods and ancestors of the child's agnate and not theirs.

Feasting and communion

After the breaking of the kola nut and the blessing of the child, the cock is killed through slitting of its throat and a communal meal is prepared with it. Everyone present participated in this meal that entailed some eating and drinking. The ritual of sharing meals together signifies the act of communion between the living and the dead, as well as between the people and the gods and spirits of the child's village. This again seals the actual process of incorporation of the child into the agnate (*umunna*) community.

The Igbo people, the respondents emphasized, attach a lot of importance in communal meal at occasions like the naming ceremony⁴. This is said to arise from the fact that it is assumed to unite them together, giving them a sense of sharing with one another. It was also noted to be a ritual that brings a feeling of joy, happiness, solidarity and love for one another expressed in eating from the same plate in these ceremonies. During the sharing of the meal the elders were usually served first. The basis for this according to the informants was because the Igbo culture puts a lot of accent on seniority and hierarchy of human organizations.

Departure

The last and final stage represents the departure stage showing not only the participants' spirit of openness to *Chi* and *Eke*, the creative deities in Igbo Religion, but also the hands of surrender in trust to obtain more of such favours as observable in members as they depart in an open mood. The Igbo Naming Ceremony is a one-day

ritual occasion and so people depart after the communal meal is over. But participants do not just stand up and depart. They do so only after exchanging, final closing friendly greetings and words of appreciation to the chief hosts, the husband and wife who invited them to the occasion. Each departs with the full idea in his/her mind that the day has been well spent, with the name of the new child now fixed in their memory. The departure ritual in Igbo naming ceremony is therefore highly structuralized.

DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RITUAL

The primary data from the field observation of the Igbo Naming Ceremony presented above will now be discussed. The discussion will begin with examining in closer detail the taxonomy of Igbo names

Taxonomy of Igbo names given to children at naming ceremonies

Field investigation from respondents from the two communities under this heading revealed that names that could be given to the child under the auspices of the naming ceremony are many and varied. Among them, the following taxonomy listed in the table could be noted. Those cited in taxonomy above include both those mentioned during the sample ceremonies observed, as well as those gathered from interviewing the respondents and participants. Presented in Table 1 are therefore the list of significant names in their various categories and meanings.

Naming and aspects of Igbo belief systems

The results of the present study just highlighted contain a lot of clues as regards the belief systems, and ritual practices encompassed in Igbo religious, philosophical and psychological traditions. These aspects will now be discussed and an attempt made to relate the findings to the assumptions and premises of the study.

In the above taxonomy, names listed under Column 1(Consolatory /Melioristic Names) refer to those that reflect the feelings of the parents at the time when the child was born. They are names that evaluate human actions and caution for prudence and patience in human affairs generally. These include such names like: 'Ochiabuto' (Salutation is not love) and 'Osochiegbu' (Fate's accomplice in the downfall of others). They show that some Igbo names have a declarative and warning character, intended to be a life guide to those who bear or use them.

Similarly, some of the names discovered in the field in

the study of the naming ceremony show that certain proverbial names are used by Igbo people to justify a position, with all of such names attesting to certain aspects of the core of their belief system. As Obiego (1984) points out, these are names that speak volumes regarding the nature of the Igbo spirit. They are situational names surrounded with circumstantial experiences. Such names are 'Nkiruka' (Greater blessings still lie in the future), 'Iruka' (Tomorrow is greater) and 'Echidime' (Tomorrow is pregnant, so nobody knows tomorrow). These names in Igbo framework are intended to help to counsel and console those not yet well treated by fate.

Names under Column 2 above (Igbo Market Day Names) refer to the day of the week or the time/event in the community when the child was born. Thus a name like 'Nweke' shows the tendency of the Igbo to immortalize the name of the day of the Igbo week when the child was born. In this case a child born on the *Eke* market day is given the name, 'Nweke'; the one born on *Afor* day is given the name, 'Nwafor'. A child born on *Nkwo* market day, is called 'Nwankwo' while the name 'Nwoye', is given to a child 'born on the second day of Igbo week, Oye day'.

Names listed under Column 3 above (Theophoric/Destiny Names) refer to those that show the religious import of Igbo names. Such names are given either as gratitude to God, such as: 'Chukwudalu', 'Thanks be to God'; 'Chukwuemeka', 'God has done well' or to a specific village deity, for example, the earth-goddess such as 'Anaemeke', 'the earth-goddess has done well' for the birth of the child.

A number of Igbo names as generated under this column contain a lot of information on Igbo religious philosophy and theology. A close examination of some of those names reveals that most names given to the child under this ceremony are shorthand expressions of Igbo religious creed and experiential and circumstantial wisdom. They also make reference to the Igbo idea of God, life, death, ethics, Igbo theology and general orientation to living. For example, testimonial names 'Chukwudi' (God exists), 'Onyekachukwu' (Who is greater than God?) and 'Chukwuebuka' (God is great), contain eloquent clues regarding Igbo idea of God. They assert that God exists; that nobody is like Him; and that He is great. Other names like 'Chukwudalu' (Thanks be to God!) and 'Chukwuemeka' (God has done well) are also in the same trend. They attest to the relational character and the idea of Igbo Religion as a religion of gratitude. These names as Obiego (1984:78) points out show that: "For an ordinary Igbo (as with any other group of mankind on earth) the demonstration for God's existence does not begin with the gamut of metaphysical reasoning or the 'five ways' of 'the Angelic Doctor'. On the contrary, it begins from God's providential care for men – from men's experience of that 'awesome immanence of the wholly other' – i.e. men's experience of God coming as providence – good and thoughtful of men, giving children

to the barren, food to the hungry, perseverance to the despairing, justice to the afflicted, and peace to troubled household".

Theophoric names or those related to particular Igbo divinities were also unearthed in this ceremony, such as 'Nwanyanwu' (The child of the sun-god), 'Nwigwe' (The child of the sky-god), 'Nwamuo' (The child of a divinity), 'Nwala' (A child of the earth-goddess), and 'Ngene' (a name for one of the river deities among the Nri community). In some of these names, the Igbo demonstrate strongly their faith in the contributions of divinities other than the Supreme Being (*Chukwu*) in the affairs of their lives.

Some of the names discovered under this column, also reveal the strong Igbo belief in the uncertainty and fragility of the human experience and therefore in humans' dependence on the support and providence of their gods and ancestors. Such are names like 'Chikwe' (If my *Chi* approves the plan), 'Nkechi' (Whatever the destiny spirit decides), 'Ogechi' (God's time), and 'Anele' (We wait and see). They speak volumes on the nature of Igbo philosophy and existential orientation.

Names listed under Column 4 (Testimonial/ Ejaculatory Names) above reflect the tendency of Igbo people to give a name to a child that depicts their pragmatic view of the child in question or the background of event in his or her family at the time s/he was born. For example, a name like 'Amanna' shows that the child was born immediately after the father's death. And a name like 'Ositadinma' reflects the idea that things were not so smooth in the family of the child before s/he was born. The parents start to believe that things could improve in their lives with the arrival of the newborn. In that case the child's birth is construed as a new way forward in the life of the whole family.

On the other hand names like 'Uzoezie' (My road has been straightened), 'Obialo' (My heart is now at ease or pacified), 'Chiedozie' (My *Chi*, destiny spirit, has repaired the damage), 'Amaechina' (May my family lineage not be closed), 'Obiadi' (The homestead is now preserved), 'Ndirika' (He is blessed who survives his suffering), and 'Uzoechina' (May my path to a good fortune not close). In fact all names generated in this column, sum up the spiritual view of the people, including their beliefs and reactions to the chances and challenges of the human experience. These include their joys and sorrows, fortunes and misfortunes, their happiness and sadness, their hopes, expectations and aspirations and their ethical orientation.

Names reflecting the Igbo religious values and philosophy are those tabulated under Column ⁵(Advisory/ Experiential Names)above. In this context a name like 'Onwuamaegbu' (death does not follow any order in selecting its victims) or a name like 'Ekwutosi' points to the Igbo moral value and general orientation to living that enjoins us never to talk against people behind their back. All these show that Igbo naming ceremony is more or

less like a minefield for the excavation of the major moral and religious values, principles and belief systems encompassed in Igbo Indigenous Religion.

In general however, the trend so far shows that naming is a strategic human ritual. It confers identity, and a means of self-reference to the child. It is also a ritual through which an individual is to be known and made reference to. It is therefore an important means for successful living in the world.

Similarly names like 'Onwuamaegbu' (Death does not know how to kill), 'Onwuamaeze' (Death is not a respecter of persons, it kills even kings), and 'Onwuzuluigbo' (Death is universal) show the Igbo belief that death is a natural end of life for everybody both the poor and the wealthy. It speaks to their existential observation that death does not select its victims. These names also show that, in Igbo world-view, death, as a phenomenon, is conceived as capricious. It chooses its path and does not go by age or seniority.

Other names such as 'Adigwe' (Group is stronger than an individual), and 'Igwebuikie' (Unity is strength) also discovered in the study of this ceremony, point to an aspect of the Igbo social ethics that emphasizes communal ethos and the Igbo belief that, they can only grow through investment in human and cooperative support of others. Another aspect of such ethics that is oriented to communalism is similarly revealed in names like 'Ebunilo' (Do not carry malice in heart/life) show indications of centuries of experience and a result of an accumulation of the experiential wisdom among the two communities studied.

Some of the names appear to come as a protest by one or both parents of a child who had been a victim of an unjust trial by fate, or an unjust public reproach, victimization, abuse, evil-speaking or gossiping from neighbours or community. This trend is illustrated in names like 'Ekwutosi' (Do not blackmail others), and 'Onuabuchi' (Our destiny is not in human hands), 'Ochiabuto' (Salutation is not love) which attest to the people's way of responding to social offences and distress.

Names like 'Nwadiuto' (It is sweet to have a child), 'Nwabugwu' (Having a child is an honour), 'Nwakaku' (Child is greater than wealth), 'Nwamaka' (Having a child feels good) are those that justify the belief among the Igbo that having children is a great investment and a great blessing.

An important implication of all these findings is that Igbo Naming Ceremony is a good-enough-in-road into the variety of spiritual agencies that are appealed to by Igbo religious worshippers. Igbo names are not only chosen very carefully but are also believed to represent the person named. They are also attached with mystical power. Myers (2010:23) agrees that "your name represents your immortality. This concept readily... explains how African peoples on the continent and later throughout the Diaspora, experience reality as union between both

spiritual and the material".

Principal spiritual agencies embedded in Igbo names in Igbo indigenous religion

The results of the present study gave eloquent indication of the typical spiritual agencies in Igbo Indigenous Religion. These were deduced from the above list of Igbo names given to the child at the naming ceremony. The trend showed that in studying these names the following constitute the spiritual agencies of Igbo Religion:

1. *Chukwu* (the Supreme Being, and the King of all creation)⁵
2. *Ngene* (nature deity)⁶
3. *Amadioha*(the god of thunder and lightning)⁷
4. *Ndi-ichie* (the ancestors)⁸
5. *Ikenga* (the god of strength, enterprise and fortune)⁹
6. *Ana, Ala, Ani* (the earth-goddess)¹⁰
7. *Eke* (god of creativity)
8. *Chi* (the child's *Onye-uwa*, the spiritual agent that sponsored or brokered the child's earthly existence and destiny, and so the child's spiritual double or resident deity).
9. *Agwu*(god of divination and healing)¹¹
10. *Udo*¹²
11. *Ogwugwu*¹³
12. *Anyanwu*

The above list shows that Igbo Religion is a religion that recognizes a plurality of gods. The trend shows that the Igbo people are democratic and inclusive in their religious orientation, evolving an eclectic perspective in relation to the spiritual agencies of their religion. Their way of making reference to the agencies in the prayer form presented above tends however, to betray their tendency to give the first pride of place to *Chukwu* the Supreme Being. This is followed by village deities and the *Ndi-ichie* referred to, in the prayer given above as *Ndi-muo di b'anyi* (our gods and ancestors). Okafor (2001:11) reporting about the religion of his village group in Igboland stated that: "Imezi-Owa people are deeply religious. ...They believe in the existence of a Supreme Being called Chukwu Okiki (God the creator) who is the source of life. Apart from Him, there is also a belief in a personal god called chi to whom sacrifices are offered during good and bad times. Furthermore, there is a belief in a pantheon of other deities. Sacrifices of petition, atonement, appeasement, thanksgiving, etc. are offered to them".

The attitude of the Igbo as could be deduced from the names given is even more eclectic and egalitarian than hierarchical or exclusive allegiance to the Supreme Being, in their allotment of respect and regard to these agencies. Some of the names highlighted reflect the tragic sense of life that characterizes much of Igbo world-

view that appears to underpin their religious attitudes, goals, rituals and practices.

Findings from the study of the Igbo naming ceremony demonstrate that there are more spiritual agencies of the religion than had hitherto been identified by previous investigators like Ezeanya (1963) and Arinze (1970). Clues as to the presence of these agencies in Igbo Religion were found embedded in the prefix of most of the names given to the newborn child under this ceremony. For example, some of the names that could be given to a newborn child during the Igbo naming ceremony include: Chinualumogu (May Chi fight for me), Chi-ekezie, (My Chi has redefined me), Chikwuebuka (God is great), Chinagorom (Chi has been my advocate), Chikaodili (Chi is in charge).

All these names support the views of the previous researchers that among the spiritual agencies in Igbo Religion are the Supreme Being (Arinze, 1970; Ubah, 1982) and Chi (Ezkwugo, 1973; Nwoga 1984). Ngene is a name of the god of streams in most villages in Igboland. Ana/Ani/Ala (the earth goddess) is an agency that has been recognized by previous investigators such as Arinze (1970).

Although it can be said that a good number of the spiritual agencies highlighted above have been identified by previous researchers, they had merely been discovered part by part by these researchers. No one of such studies has created a context like undertaken in the present study as whereby all of these agencies can be identified at one go. Consequently, the major contribution of the present study of Igbo naming ceremony is the opportunity it has provided to unearth and note, at a glance, the presence of these agencies in Igbo Indigenous Religion. In this way, it has generated a comprehensive image of the variety of spiritual agencies in Igbo Indigenous Religion.

In particular, an important discovery from the present study is that Igbo names have meanings. Some serve as a diary of the parent's experience. Others serve as texts attesting to the nature of the peoples' philosophy and orientation to life. Some have some morals behind them. In this way, through naming a person gains not only a personality but also kinship identity. Supporting the above observation, Mbiti (1975:87) asserts that "the name is considered in African societies to be very much part of the personality of the person. Therefore, it is taken seriously, and chosen with care and consideration. Often names of people have a meaning, and it is this meaning which must be given due consideration". To be named therefore, is part and parcel of what it means to be human and to belong to a human community. It contributes to making the individual feel welcomed in the human world. It is therefore a cardinal process in one's earthly experience. The above indication is in line with Liseli's (2012: 39) observation that "naming among the Congolese also holds immense importance. Among the Kongo ethnic group for instance, a new born was not

regarded truly human until the bestowal of a name."

Aspects of Igbo religious values in the naming ritual

A close examination of the prayer texts collected under the present study gives important clues as to the major values of Igbo Religion and culture. Such values are seen reflected in the items mentioned in the petitions submitted to the spiritual agencies of the religion under this ceremony. For example, the sections of the prayer text collected under thisceremony, which contain clues as to the major values of Igbo Religion, are highlighted in section A, E and G.

A discourse analysis and collation of the information contained in the prayer text shows that the following are among the major values of Igbo Religion: Life (*Ndu*), Offspring (*Nwa*), Wealth and Possessions (*Aku-na-Uba*), Peace and Joy (*Udo-na-Oghu*). The first two stanzas of the prayer text contain the declaration that the participants are gladdened by the fact of the child that was born. (*Obi di anyiutorinnenanwaenyeanyereanyi*). This assertion betrays the great value that is placed on the phenomenon of having children in Igbo culture. With a child, the continuity of a homestead is assured. As the Igbo proverb puts it: "*Amutanwaomutabeya bun du ebebe*" (when a child is born and that child lives to give birth to another child ... and the chain continues, that means, unending life).

Similarly, the prayer text above went ahead to ask for the child's health, progress, a good and strong life, wealth and peace and joy on behalf of the child (*Anyin'ayo*, *agaamniruya*, *ogonogondu*, *naaruisiken'ebeno*). All showing that they key aspects of the prayer text draw attention to the chief values of Igbo religious worshippers. Now the idea of the presence of five values in Igbo Religion as revealed under this ceremony is very well supported by Ekwunife (1997:78) who identifies similar emphasis, as discovered in the field study of this ceremony, on the following five values in Igbo Religion: 'Life as a supreme value, Offspring, Wealth, Love (*Ifunanya*), and Peace (*Udo*)'. A slight variation between his findings and the present one is as regards the name to call the fifth value. He refers to it, as love while in this study the name given to it in the prayer text highlighted above, is joy (*oghу*). But, when looked at closely, one sees that there is no conflict in the two lists since the presence of peace and joy in a home is a sign of the presence of peace and love in that same home.

In reference to these values, Ekwunife (1997) observes that none of them can stand alone as a unit. This point is illustrated by the fact that in the study of the present ceremony, they are all mentioned together in the prayer text cited above.

Some other Igbo scholars have earlier given thought to the important place occupied by these same five values in Igbo Religion. One of such scholars is Uzukwu (1981:

10). He observes that "the principal access to the Igbo people's understanding of the universe and its multiple relations, the key to the core of the people's hopes and fears as they search for, follow, and try to shape their destiny, is *ndu* (life). And their goal is to preserve it, increase it, and realize it to the full".

The other scholar is Mere (1973). Making reference to the eminent value that is accorded to the idea of having children in Igbo culture, Mere (1973:93) points out that: "Traditionally children are highly valued. They have to continue the ancestral line in order to retain the family's ownership of whatever property belongs to it. The reality of family extinction cannot be ducked where children are not forthcoming. Such a situation is socially abominable. On the part of any Igbo parents, having children wards off the anxiety of growing old and fear of loss of property to undeserving fellows".

Sharing his views on the emphasis on wealth in Igbo Religion and Culture, Ekwunife (1997:78) points out that "wealth and riches (*akun'uba*) in Igbo context does not necessarily mean abundance of material goods as modern Africans conceive it; nor does it exclude some measures of affluence. In his view, wealth for the traditional Igbo is a comprehensive term. It includes in its coverage: some landed property, numerous children, relations and dependants, human skills and other endowments of nature through which a man can make a living".

Such comments as these are useful. They show that the five Igbo traditional values identified under this ceremony must be conceived as principal values for the traditional Igbo. This is because in terms of their ritual value, their job is to motivate choices of relevant prayers and petitions for the Igbo religious participants at salient occasions.

A number of deductions can be made from the results of the study of the naming ceremony in relation to the key questions of the present study focusing on the goals, Spiritual Agencies of Igbo Religion and Attitude of the people to these agencies. This is the angle of this discussion to which attention will now be directed.

Naming and the goals of Igbo indigenous religion

The major goals of Igbo Religion stand out from the prayer text generated in the course of the study of this Naming ceremony, and in the meaning/supPLICATIONS contained in the names given to the newborn child. For instance, a typical prayer that was made by the officiant, during that ceremony, shows that Igbo Religion is essentially a religion of praise, worship, thanksgiving, and petition. They engage in each of these rituals to win the hearts and invest in the goodwill of the spiritual agencies of their religion.

Thus, in every Igbo cultural celebration of which the naming ceremony is one, the officiating elder, usually starts with the breaking of the kola-nut. He picks up a

piece of kola-nut from the bowl of eight or more kola-nuts, as reported earlier from Ihiala community, and calls on the Supreme God, and litany of the village deities and spirits as well as the ancestors, and prays as follows on behalf of the child being named, for:

1. his/her progress and health,
2. wealth with which his/her life will be enhanced;
3. growth without problems in his/her parts life,
4. his ability to take his/her seat among his/her age mates; and
5. his/her peace and joy and successful going out and coming in, all the days of his/her life.

But that is after showing their praises to these agencies. Yet, these trends show that in Igbo Indigenous Religion an important goal is not only for praise and worship, but also for a search for earthly blessings on behalf of the living; a search for protection against the changes and challenges of the human experience. Indeed, as Ejizu (1987:132) put it, the prayer economy of Igbo Religion shows that: "Man's life and the general welfare of his world are the central focus of attention; the primary thrust of most religious activities is geared towards the enhancement of man's life and the promotion of his total well-being. This emphasis portrays the belief in Igbo Religion that 'man's life, although received from God, is the greatest good to be fostered".

All these are testimonies to the fact that a major goal of Igbo Religion as found from the study of this ceremony is double-edged: praise and worship and a search for the enhancement and protection of the personal well-being and fortunes of its worshippers and an opportunity for thanksgiving for favours received. They also betray a clear recognition in Igbo Indigenous Religion of the exalted position and power of the supernatural order and supersensible beings over human beings and the material order.

Attitude of the Igbo to the spiritual agencies of their religion

This is among the key basic questions according to Horton, (1995), which have been left unexplored by previous researchers in African (Igbo) religion. It was one of the majors concerns of this study. Part of the aim was to find out by means of this study what can be said to be the nature of the attitudes of the Igbo people to the spiritual agencies of their religion. And from close examination of the prayer texts, the symbolic gestures, and the operative practices encompassed in the Igbo naming ceremony studied, it could be concluded that the attitudes of the Igbo to the spiritual agencies of their religion can be qualified with such terms as:

1. Attitude of Deference, as well as faith and trust in their spiritual agencies and absence of a non-fanatic

- attachment to any one of the spiritual agencies
2. A sense of appreciation and gratitude,
 3. A sense of categorization or scaling, and
 4. Democratic and egalitarian attitude and a sense of Rotational Sensitivity.

Presented below is a more detailed attempt at clarifying this conclusion.

Attitude of deference, faith and trust in their spiritual agencies

One important fact to be noted in going through the prayer texts generated in the study of this ceremony is a glaring sense of deference manifested in the language of the prayer texts presented during the naming ceremony (*IbaNwaAfa*) ritual. In conducting a discourse analysis of such prayer texts, it was discovered that some operative words reveal that the Igbo manifest a clear attitude of respect and a feeling of deference to the spiritual agencies of their religion. The indicators for these attitudes can be seen revealed in prayer phrases said by the oldest man from the child's agnate).

In all the prayer phrases in section A and B of the prayer text cited earlier in this report, it is obvious that among the principal attitudes of the Igbo to the spiritual agencies of their religion is that of deep respect and deference. This is particularly brought out in the last two phrases where the spiritual agencies were being invited to come and eat kola and to eat it whole while the worshippers canshare the pieces. This is an indication that they recognize that these agencies are not in the same class or rank or order of being with ordinary humans in the world. From the same prayer phrases by the officiant during the naming ceremony, a sense of respect is also well brought out in paying homage to God, the Supreme Being as shown in section A of the prayer text earlier cited.

These phrases, arising from their prayer of praise, demonstrate that their sense of due respect and deference for the spiritual agencies of their religion is based on a solid African metaphysics and a philosophical theology.

Sense of appreciation and gratitude

Another attitude of the Igbo to the spiritual agencies of their religion is that of a sense of gratitude and appreciation for the favours and protections they receive from these agencies. This attitude is well illustrated in the prayer text arising from this study highlighted above. There, the first thing to strike an observer is their attempt to express gratitude to the spiritual agencies of their religion for the gift of the child to be named. They do this, so to say, as a first order of business before pleading for more blessings for the child and for favour in the lives of his or her parents. That section, thus, presents a clear

indication, as a result of the study of this ceremony, that Igbo Indigenous Religion is not only a religion of petition and protection but also a religion of gratitude.

Attitude of categorization or scaling

Yet another attitude of the people to the spiritual agencies of their religion as revealed in the study of this ceremony is that of a sense of categorization and scaling. This is reflected in the order of some of their prayers of praise as generated in the study of their naming ceremony (*IbaNwaAfa*). In the prayer text presented in that ceremony as highlighted earlier, the officiant began with mentioning the Supreme Being, the Divinities and the ancestors in that order, showing that in their sense of estimation and scaling the Supreme Being is first among these other agencies. The invoking of the divinities before the ancestors gives testimony to their belief that compared to the ancestors; the divinities are in a stronger position in terms of their power to influence things in their lives. Commenting in this regard, Nwoga, (1984:32) observes that: "With regard to the structure of Igbo Religion, the principle of dualities and the concept of being-as-action predispose the Igbo to the acceptance of a wide range of deities and being forces. There is between these deities not a hierarchy of beings as such but a hierarchy of function, which makes it possible for a deity that, is very powerful in one area of Igboland to be completely disregarded in another community".

This attitude of categorization and scaling of the spiritual agencies of their religion is confirmed by Ubah, (1982:101) when he pointed out that, "the ancestors are expected to influence the divinities in respect of matters, which they cannot deal with alone or directly. The divinities are always said to possess more powers than the ancestors".

There was, however, no question from the view of the respondents that the ancestors as spirits are in a privileged position to these divinities than the humans themselves.

This calculation is perhaps one of the considerations that influenced Temples' (1945, 1959) emphasis on the notion of the hierarchy of beings in African religious and philosophical thought.

These clarifications show that the Igbo have a proper sense of estimation of who is who in the spiritual calculations of their religion. And this sense of categorization and scaling influences, indeed, to a great measure, the ritual order of their religion.

Democratic and egalitarian attitude and a sense of rotational sensitivity

Another important attitude of the Igbo to the spiritual agencies of their religion revealed in the study of this ceremony is that of their democratic and egalitarian

orientation and a sense of rotational sensitivity to these agencies. Commenting in this regard, Nwoga (1984:47) states that:

"An important factor to mention with regard to Igbo Religion is the democratic nature of the Igbo approach to the deities. The Igbo do not go into the dangerous road of deciding between the deities which of them may be senior to others. More importantly, they do not refuse to acknowledge the deity of any deity that is proclaimed deity".

This can be found embedded in the prayer texts generated during the naming ceremony ritual. Their attitude in this regard is specifically reflected in their prayer of praise at that ceremony which took into account a clear mention and recognition of the support of Chukwuor the Supreme Being in the joyful gift of a child to the Igbo family implicated in the ritual. They also mentioned and recognized the goodwill and support of the other divinities, including the role of the ancestors as agents of protection, support and blessings in their lives as seen from section A and D of the prayer text. The text demonstrates that in Igbo prayers of praise and petition, attention is rotated not only to the influence of God or the Supreme Being in their lives but also the recognition, contributions and support of other divinities and those of the ancestors.

This attitude of rotational sensitivity to the role and importance of multiple agents of favour in their lives can also be seen reflected in the following phrases embedded in the same prayer text collected under their naming ceremony ritual. This shows that their egalitarian attitude in this regard extends to the asking, not only for the welfare and progress of the child being named, but even for those of the parents, the animals, and all the other members of the child's agnate (*umunna*) present, as shown in sections C, E, F and G of the earlier cited prayer texts.

The same rotational sensitivity in their religion is again seen reflected in the thanksgiving section of the same prayer texts where the thanksgiving was voted and generalized to all the spiritual agencies of the religion. The trend in section C, of the prayer text, demonstrates that in their prayer orientation none of the agencies was singled out in particular for a special appreciation.

Such orientation means that the Igbo demonstrate a multi-partial attitude to the spiritual agencies of their religion. In clarifying the basis for the presence of this multi-partial attitude to the spiritual agencies of their religion, Achebe (1989:42) points out that "whereas in some cultures a person may worship one of the gods or goddesses in the pantheon and pay scant attention to the rest, in Igbo Religion, such selective-ness is unthinkable. As far as the Igbo people are concerned all the people must placate all the gods all the time". This orientation arises from the cautionary proverb popular among the

Igbo that even when a person has satisfied the deity *Udo*¹¹ completely, *Ogwugwu*¹² (deity) may yet kill him and yet *Ogwugwu* is known in Igbo Religion as a consort of *Udo*.

Field data from the present study revealed that it is the striving to come to terms with a multitude of forces and demands, which gives Igbo life its tense and restless dynamism. For in the last analysis, according to some respondents, all extremism is abhorrent to the Igbo sensibility. The trend in this study thus provides an empirical support for the existence and recognition of many gods in Igbo Religion. This is reflected in the people's fervent attempts to see that they worship all these agencies multi-partially, in times when they have the need to celebrate joyful occasions in their lives.

Conclusion

The present study was conducted to find out what can be learned of Igbo Religion through the study of Igbo Naming Ceremony. The results proved that the proper study of the Naming Ceremony of Igbo could indeed generate answers to some the three basic questions of the religion posed by Horton (1995). The trend shows that Igbo Religion, when studied in the raw, as undertaken in this study, through a field study of Igbo Naming ceremony, has well-thought out answers in terms of its goals, the spiritual agencies of the religion and the attitude of the people to these agencies.

This means that with the study of this ceremony the principal objectives of this study have been achieved. From the results emanating from the study of the Igbo naming ceremony, we have come to discover a lot about the belief systems and some myths underpinning the Indigenous Religion of the great Igbo people of Nigeria. In addition, with the prayer patterns collected in the fieldwork in the course of the present study we now know what one can call the principal goals of Igbo Religion: praise, worship, thanksgiving, and petition for protection and earthly blessings.

The result of the study equally demonstrated the inclusive and pluralistic nature of the spiritual agencies in Igbo Religion. This confirms the view of previous investigators (Ubah, 1982 and Echeruo, 1979) that over and above the Supreme Being and other divinities and spirits that are addressed by the worshippers are autonomous forces in their own right.

Even the nature and pattern of Igbo religious practice has been determined from the study of the naming ceremony. We now know from studying this ceremony that Igbo religious practice includes both animal offering and placatory gifts, including speech, body movement, sacrifice and communal meal sharing. Important symbolisms of the religion were also noted in the course of this study showing that rituals in Igbo Religion are covered by the conclusion credited to Turner (1968), that

African religious ceremonies are highly symbolic. Turner's theory of the systematic nature of African rituals/ceremonies was also confirmed in the study of the present ceremony. The results show that Igbo Naming Ceremony is a systematic process that encompasses a number of stages that unfold in logical fashion, showing an enormous element of order in its practice.

In addition, the content of most Igbo names show that, names and naming play strategic roles in the belief systems and customary orientations of the parents. Some, as we have seen, are consolatory in orientation, while others are testamental in emphasis, testifying to the beliefs and assumptions of the parents about the nature of life and human existence. Some, like destiny names show that for the Igbo, there is a belief that 'what will be will be' as long as God is in support of it. Others like the market day names demonstrate that among the Igbo, some names are used for event reckoning or for calendarical purposes enabling Igbo parents as members of an oral culture tradition to write the date when a child was born in the child's name.

Finally, then, one can say that judging from the trends discovered in the present study of the Igbo naming ceremony, a pluralist and inclusive position is the more justified path to take in making reference to the number of goals, ritual objects, spiritual agencies and attitudes of the people to spiritual agencies of Igbo Religion. Hence, the general implication to be drawn from the present study is that that a lot about the basic tenets of African Indigenous Religion could be discovered through the systematic study of similar rituals and ceremonies of the different indigenous peoples of Africa like the naming ceremony of the great Igbo people of Nigeria examined in this study.

END NOTES

1. The Igbo birth rites are the entrance gates to the Igbo culture for an individual as well as the fundamental traditional rites, which introduce and insert the Igbo child into the culture of his/her community. Its objective is to gain recognition, integration and consolidation within traditional community.

2. *Igbaagu* is a divination process, which is entered into after the seclusion period of child's birth. This is done to know who is behind the childbirth and to know which name to give him/her. The diviner is believed to possess powers to communicate with the supernatural world and is able to find out the wishes of the dead relative. If it is revealed that it is a dead ancestor, or a deity that is behind the child's birth, the child is named accordingly. Deities are normally the Chi of children of families that have a deity in their midst (see Mwaura, P.N. "A Theological and Cultural Analysis of Healing in Jerusalem Church of Christ and Nabii Christian Church of Kenya". Ph.D. Thesis, Kenyatta University, 2001.

3. Nature brings the child into the world, but the society creates the child into a human being, a corporate person. For it is the community, which protects the child, feed it, brings it up, educates it and in many other ways incorporate it into a wider community (Anozie, 1998:16)

4. The festive aspect of the Igbo naming ceremony consists of eating, drinking, dancing and merriment.

5. Chukwu: This name is translated and accepted as the Great Chi or God. The best rendering of Chukwu, in Metuh's (1981:24) view, would be "Great Providence". Sometimes Chukwu is simply known as Chi; this creates some confusion because one is not sure of which spirit is meant: Chi (Chukwu), the High God or Chi, the controller of individual destiny. According to Talbot, (1969:40) among all the sub-tribes in Owerri Igbo Division, Chukwu is known as "ChukwuOkeAbiama", (maker of everything) in order to distinguish Him from the personal chi.

6. *Ngene*: This deity is associated with river or streams (Arinze, 1970: 14)

7. *Amadioha* is the god of thunder and lightning. He is seen as the wrathful messenger of the Supreme God who sends him in the form of thunder to punish evildoers. Oaths are sworn by him and his priests curse suspected persons by him. Most villages of each lineage possess a shrine of this god (Metuh, 1981:64, Arinze, 1970:16).

8. Ancestors and *Ala/Ala*, according to Meek (1950:25) is regarded as the owner of men, whether alive or dead. The cult of ancestors is, therefore, closely associated with that of the Earth goddess who is Queen of the Underworld. *Ala* is the leader of the ancestors who are buried in her womb; the dead fathers, who are regarded as symbols of peace, unity and prosperity in the family; and are, together with *Ala*, the protectors of traditional laws and customs. Every breach of custom is punished otherwise the spirits of the ancestors and *Ala* will plague the society (Metuh, 1981:96 and Arinze, 1970:15).

9. *Ikenga* is a minor deity, which is associated with good fortune, success, ability and the strength of a man's right arm. It is represented by carved wooden figure of a man with ram's horns on his head and a matchet in one hand and human head in the other. (Ilogu, 1974:36).

10. *Ana/Ala/Ani* is the mainspring of the Igbo people's social life and, in many localities in Igboland, if anyone wishes to better his social position by taking a title, he must first secure her good offices (Meek, 1950: 25). Without her, according to Uchendu (1965:96) "life would be impossible for the Igbo, who attach much sentiment to the land (*Ana*). It is out of respect to the Earth goddess that the Igbo are ideologically opposed to the sale of land; and where there is a sale of land, *Ala* must be ritually pacified if the transaction is to be consummated." One can say that *Ala* is everything to the Igbo; they live on the land from which they get their food and in which they are buried when they die. The cult of *Ala* exists in every part of Igboland and her priests are very important members of their communities. Every village or village-

group has a priest of *Ala*. Many of the priests, according to Meek (1950:28), are chosen by divination from particular families and in a few groups the priest of the Earth goddess is said to be the "owner" of the group. The priest, in a family that has its own private cult of *Ala*, is the head of the family.

11. *Agwu* is a supernatural force, which is associated with medicine, divination and magic. It is always in need of servants or worshippers whom it chooses (Henderson, 1972:119, Uchendu, 1965:98).

12. *Udo* is one of those spirits who have shrines and priests. However, he does little good and so great harm that it is called "wicked" spirit. *Udo* is widespread in Iboland. No sane man wants to deal with them. Everyone is afraid of swearing falsely on them. They are sacrificed to only to appease them or to invite them to do harm to one's enemies. *Udo* is no respecter of persons, not even of his priest, when inflicting evil. There are children who are given names in honour of *Udo* (Arinze, 1970:14)

13. *Ogwugwu*: This is a female spirit connected with fertility, protection and the achieving of one's ambitions (Isichei, 1977:345; Arinze, 1970:77).

14. The Igbo have varied cult of the Sun. *Anyanwu*, the Igbo name for such a cult is worshipped as a deity of fortune, and the provident of wealth. The deity is prayed to for profit in the market and for good harvest (Onuh, 1992:24). *Anyanwu* is called the son of Chineke and sometimes his emanation. (Metuh, 1981: 41).

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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Appendix A

Presented below is the compressive summary Table of the ritual elements in Igbo Naming ceremony (*IbaNwaAfa*).

Table 2. Poster summary of the ritual elements in Igbo naming ceremony.

| Communities Studied: | Nri | Ihiala |
|---|---|---|
| Aim: | Celebration of the child's incorporation into human community (<i>umunna</i> community) and the breaking of the child's link from the prenatal world, hence a pragmatic and spiritual aim. | To officially mark the presentation of the child into his/her human <i>U</i> <i>umunna</i> family climaxed by giving him/her a name by which he/she is to be known and called and to break the child's invisible loyalty with the world of the unborn children. |
| Participants: | The child's <i>umunna</i> of all gender/age status. | The entire village group of all fender and age. |
| Ritual Key Components: | Prayer of worship, thanksgiving, supplication protection and support of the child then sacrifice and communal meal. | Same. |
| Who gives the name: | Father of the child. | Father of the child or eldest member of the child's <i>umunnawhere</i> the father of the child died before the child is born. |
| Location of the ceremony: | Father's compound. | Same. |
| Prayer Officiant: | The most senior elder of the community. | The surviving elder of the <i>umunna</i> community. |
| Utterances: | Prayer in form of blessings for the good things of life for the child, the parents and all present. | Same. |
| Participants responses at prayer intervals: | <i>Iseemeaning</i> , "indeed thus we say" as they knock their fist on the ground. | Same. |
| Animal used: | Cock | Same. |
| Mode of killing: | Slitting the throat. | Same. |
| Animal killed in order: | To supply shed blood. | To show that what they are celebrating is worth making a sacrifice of a cock |
| Ritual objects/items: | Kola nut, alligator pepper, cock, bottle of gin and gallons of local palm wine including soft drinks. | Same. |
| Time when conducted: | Twelve days (<i>izun'ato</i>) after the birth of the child. | Same. |
| Why Twelve days: | To give time for the mother of the child to heal and recover from the aftermath of childbirth so that she could participate fully in the naming ceremony process. | To give time to test if the child has really come to stay or will soon die to reconnect with his/her unborn peers and therefore needs no naming. |

Source: Researcher's representation.

Table 1. The list of significant names in their various categories and meanings.

| Column 1 | Column 2 | Column 3 | Column 4 | Column 5 |
|-------------|----------|--------------|-----------|-----------|
| Akukalia | Nwafor | Anaemeka | Amanna | Adigwe |
| Ego-di-ukwu | Nwakwo | Anele | Amaechina | Ebunilo |
| Echidime | Nweke | Chidi | Anene | Emenike |
| Ihenwaeme | Nwoye | Chukwudi | Adizue | Ejefenihu |
| Iruka | | Chinualumogu | Chioma | Ekwnife |
| Ijeoma | | Chinwe | chiekezie | Egbuna |
| Muorah | | Chukwudalu | Chiagorom | Ekwutosi |
| Nnanna | | Chukwuebuka | Chinemere | Nwakaku |
| Nkiruka | | Chukwuemeka | Chiedozie | Nwamaka |
| Obinna | | Chinyere | Osondu | Nwadiuto |
| Onwubiko | | Chikwe | Obiadi | Nnorom |

Table 1. Contd

| | | | |
|---------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|
| Osochiegbu | Chikwuo | Obialo | Nwatoka |
| Ozoechina | Chimto | Ositadimma | Nwabugwu |
| Orjiewulu | Chinelo | Iruka | Ochiabuto |
| Umeano/Umealo | Chima | Ndirika | Onuabuchi |
| Uzoma | Chikanelo | Nnuaku | Onwuamaeze |
| | Dioha | Nwanyibuife | Onwuamaegbu |
| | Ebubechukwu | Nnakee | Onwuzuluigbo |
| | Ngene | Nwando | Onyejelubechi |
| | Nnamani | Udeoku | Ikeanyionwu |
| | Nwanyanwu | Uzozie | Igwebuike |
| | Nwala | Uzoechina | |
| | Nwamuo | | |
| | Nwolisa | | |
| | Nebechi | | |
| | Nwachukwu | | |
| | Nkechi | | |
| | Nwigwe | | |
| | Onyekachukwu | | |
| | Ogechi | | |

Source: Researcher's representation.