

**MA AFA CULTURAL FESTIVAL PERFORMANCE IN ELUGWU EZIKE,  
ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA.**

**BY**

**AGBAJI, ROSELINE CHINYERE**

**PG/MA/15/76792**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POST GRADUATE  
STUDIES IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF  
MASTERS DEGREE IN LITERATURE AND STYLISTICS.**

**JULY, 2018**

**APPROVAL PAGE**

This dissertation has been approved for the Department of Linguistics, Igbo and Other Nigerian Languages, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

---

Prof. C.N. Okebalama

Supervisor

---

Dr.C.N. Okoro

External Examiner

---

Prof. C.U Agbedo

Head of Department

---

Prof. M.N.Okoro

Dean of Faculty.

## CERTIFICATION

Agbaji, Roseline Chinyere, a post graduate student in the Department of Linguistics, Igbo and Other Nigerian Languages, University of Nigeria, Nsukka with Registration Number PG/MA/15/76792 has satisfactorily completed the requirements necessary for the award of degree of M.A in Literature and Stylistics. The work embodied in this dissertation is original and has not been submitted in part or full for any diploma or degree of this or any other university.

---

Agbaji, Roseline chinyere  
PG/MA/15/76792

---

Prof. C.N. Okebalama  
Supervisor

## **DEDICATION**

To my dear husband, Williams Onyebuchi, our children, Rotimi, Nzubechukwu, Chimdiuto, May this work be a living proof to them that diligence, patience and prayers always stand out as the best virtues in life.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I acknowledge God almighty for his special grace upon me through the period of this study. I appreciate him for the strength and sound health he provided me thorough the entire period of this research and dissertation writing. I am most grateful to my supervisor, Professor Chibiko Ndubisi Okebalama, who among all odds, took it upon himself to see that this dissertation became a reality. His guidance advice, constructive suggestions and support at different stages of the writing made this work a possibility.

I am most indebted to Prof. C.U Agbedo, The Head of Department of Linguistics, Igbo and other Nigeria Languages, for his fatherly care and encouragements that have led me to this point in my academic pursuit thank you for being an inspiration to my life and may you continue to find favour before God.

I am also grateful to my other lecturers, Prof. B.M Mba, Prof. R.I. Okorji, Dr. Mrs. E.E. Mba, Dr. J.O Uguru, Dr. S.E. Ikeokwu, Dr. O. Babarinde, Dr. C.E. Okeke, Dr. E. Ihedigbo, Dr. Igbeaku for their time to time encouragements that drew my attention to critical concerns.

I would also like to thank my parents late DSP Feederick Ugwu Agbaji and my mother Mrs. Regina Oyibo Agbaji who continued to support me even after the demise of my father. To all my siblings, I appreciate your concern and understanding. I wish to appreciate Dr. Onu, John who inspired me into this programme, may the good lord increase your level in Jesus name.

My classmates, I appreciate you all. Also in the list are my research assistance, namely: Mr. Adonu Idoko, *Onyishi* Ezenwaonu Igwe, Elder Odo nwa Oyiga and Agu Enwe Ezeocha, I am most grateful for their commitment that brought the whole work into its present form. And to my typist, I wonder what would have happened to this work without the magic fingers of Ugwu, Sarah Chinasa the computer lady who patiently typed out this work. I appreciate your effort.

Finally, thanks to all whose names do not appear here; yet did imperatively contribute to the final completion of this work. To God be the glory for all things

Agbaji, Roseline Chinyere.

## ABSTRACT

This study evaluates *Ma fa* Festival performance with particular reference to Elugwu Ezike. The main objective of the study is to highlight the elements of drama and examine the rituals in the festival, trace the history of the festival and show the impact of westernization on the performance of *Ma afa* festival in Elugwu Ezike. Infra-cultural model in Folklore analysis developed by Alembe which is an aspect of ethnopoetic theory is used in the analysis of data. The methodology employed for this study was fieldwork oriented. It involved participatory observation of the festivals, interviews, documentary analysis, audios, pictures as well as library materials were all used. Chapter one provides the general background to the study. It examines the research problem, research aim and objectives, purpose of the study, the scope and limitation of the study. Chapter two reviews related literatures, theoretical framework and summary of the literatures reviewed. Chapter three presents the various methodologies employed in the study. Chapter four deals with the data presentation and analysis of the three stages of rituals involved in the festival: *Ogọ nne*, *Ogo nna*, *Ogọ chi*, the dramatic elements embedded in the festival such as plot, characters, audience, and setting and the negative impacts of Westernisation on the performance of *Ma afa* festival in recent times. The findings of the study reveal that *Ma afa* is an annual festival that is used to venerate the ancestors of the land with new yams and other items. Therefore, the study suggests that there is urgent need for documentation of this cultural festival to avert its going into extinction.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Approval Page	i
Certification	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgments	iv
Abstract	v
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b>	
1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Statement of problem	7
1.3 Purpose of the Study	8
1.4 Research Questions	9
1.5 Significance of the Study	9
1.6 Scope of the Study	10
1.7 Limitations of the Study	10
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b>	
2.1 Conceptual Definitions	12
2.1.1 Ancestors	12
2.1.2 Culture	14
2.1.3 Deities	17
2.1.4 Drama	19
2.1.5 Festival	22
2.1.6 Performance	23
2.1.7 Ritual	26
2.2 Theoretical Studies	27
2.2.1 Evolutionist Theory	28
2.2.2 Relativist School Theory	30
2.2.3 Contextual Approach	35

2.2.4	Ethnopoetic theory	36
2.2.5	Formalist Approach	39
2.2.6	Functionalist theory	40
2.2.7	Structural approach.	41
2.3	Empirical Studies	42
2.4	Summary of Reviewed Literature	50
2.5	Theoretical Framework	50
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b>		
	Research Methodology	53
3.1	Research Design	53
3.2	Area of the Study	54
3.3	Population of the Study	54
3.4	Sample and Sampling Technique	55
3.5	Research Instrument	55
3.6	Validation of Instrument	56
3.7	Method of Data Collection	56
3.8	Research Instrument	57
3.9	Method of Data Analysis	58
<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b>		
4.1	Data presentation and analysis	61
4.2	Structure of the Festival	63
4.3	The Masquerade Outing/ <i>Egbeochala/ma ilata n' iba</i>	64
4.4	Analysis of some rituals in <i>ma afa</i> festival Ogonne/Ogochi	74
4.5	Ogonna	79
4.6	Elements of Drama in <i>Maafa</i> cultural Festival performance.	82
4.6.1	Plot	83
4.6.2	Characters	85
4.6.3	Dialogue and Language	87



4.6.4 Spectacle	89
4.6.5 Music/Song.	90
4.6.6 Dance	93
4.6.7. Costumes, Make-up and Properties	95
4.6.8. Rhythm	97
4.6.9 Arena of Event (setting).	98
4.7. 0 Audience	99
4.7.1 The negative Impact of Westernization on <i>Ma-afa</i> cultural festival performance in Elugwu Ezike	100
<b>CHAPTER FIVE</b>	
Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations	105
5. Introduction	105
5.1 Summary of Research Findings	106
5.2 Conclusions	108
5.3 Recommendations for further study	109
REFERENCES	110
APPENDIX I	116
APPENDIX II	118
APPENDIX III	125
INTERVIEWS	136

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.2 Background to the Study

Over the centuries, history has shown that certain days or periods in the life of man have been set aside either to commemorate, ritually celebrate or reenact certain events or seasons believed to be significant to man and his community. Such days or periods generally have religious or ritual significance, which usually result in celebrations. These celebrations include sacred communal meals and it is from such meals that the idea of feasts or festival developed. Festivals are therefore celebrations involving eating or drinking or both in connection to specific kind of rites. Such rites include sacrificial rites, seasonal rites or commemorative observances or rites celebrating some recorded victories. Festivals such as *Ma afa*, include not only feasting but also, dramatic and artistic displays. Depending on the central purpose of a festival, the celebration may be solemn or merry and festive. Having originated from man's religious and historical past, these festivals are significantly rich in cultural values of the community. Festivals in this work are taken to mean dramas of their kind. It is pertinent to note here that the question of whether festival is drama or not should no longer arise because most references to the origin of drama have been the festivals of Dionysus, a Greek god and Osiris an Egyptian god. This is evident from the fact that in Egypt a ritual known as: "Abydos passion play" was performed from about 2500-550 BC enacting the death rites of the mythical figure Osiris.

Also recognizing the masquerade festival, there are however, certain dramatic and quasi-dramatic phenomena to be found in West Africa that many are of great interest in themselves. Particularly, perhaps the celebrated masquerade, of southern Nigeria. There are abundant manifestations of theatrical and dramatic elements that are embedded in traditional performances of the people in all societies of the world. These elements of drama abound in traditional festivals, rituals, dances, songs, ceremonies, recitals, music, drumming, praise songs, incantations, and other traditional creative displays. These elements of drama are drawn from ever robust traditional heritages and are vital in the cultural development of a people.

However, Ogunbiyi (1981) points to the speculative origins of African traditional drama. Apart from the origin, which is largely linked to the struggle between the early African man and nature, the facts today have become profoundly, enormous on the existence of African drama.

Africa as a continent, over the years, has endured the epistemological and empirical restraints of the West. This has ranged from philosophy through other fields of study in humanities and into oral literature. The imperialists ensured that standards set through their 'systematic' processes became a universal syndrome, thereby denying the existence of rich and robust traditionally indigenous dramatic aesthetics in Africa. This generated reaction to the western hegemony in Africa and also led to domination and suppression of the cultural and traditional consciousness of Africans. African traditional drama over the years has received varying views from both Western and African literary critics. Scholars like, Ruth Finnegan (1970), Oyin Ogunba (1978), M.J.C Echeruo (1981), Ossie Enekwe (1981), Wole Soyinka (1986) have viewed African traditional drama

differently. Much of what is embedded in the view by Western-based Scholars on this subject has been dismissive of the fact of the existence of dramatic content in African traditional performances. Afro-centric writers started responding literarily in order to salvage the continent from collapse. This is in line with the submission by Mazrui (1996) who postulates that though the interplay of Africa's indigenous cultures with Western civilization which had political and economic ramifications in fact, the final analysis. Shows that the central process of the peoples' heritage has been cultural and civilizational. Hence, there is need to give more attention to African traditional drama in the face of this civilizational challenge. Africa remains a continent to be deconstructed in order to salvage it from degradation of its traditional institutions, which once gave it life. This requires a deep understanding of its traditional festival drama which captures the indestructible worldview of Africa which is to a large extent different from those of other continents of the world.

Kafewo (2005) posits that festivals and rituals, as the greatest artistic institutions of Africa, have a strong religious base and that most are attached to supernatural beings or deified ancestors. This shows clearly how transcendental traditional African drama is in its form and content. And, obviously, one cannot subject it to the strict cannons or parameters of Western drama. This becomes clear that there is therefore need for an African cannon that should capture the essence of traditional African drama.

Asante (1996) contends that a discussion of an African canon ought to involve four issues: cosmological, axiological, epistemological and aesthetic in nature. 'Cosmological' involves the drama of life and death which engages metaphysical dimensions. 'Epistemological' issue looks at what constitute knowledge in Africa;

‘axiological’ is the value of truth, while ‘aesthetic’ question explores seven aspects which are polyrhythm, polycentrism, dimensional, repetition, curvilinear, epic-memory and wholism. This goes in line with what has been postulated by Wainaina (2002) on the need to avoid atomism in discussing African mythology. It should be looked at as a whole. These are the bases for a proposed African canon of traditional drama. At a time when humanity drifts towards the compression of the frontiers of the world and the intensification of its consciousness as a whole which is synonymous with a senerio in which there is contestation of ideas, ideologies and philosophies. African dramatic festivals cannot be left out to suffer against the backdrop of established dramatic norms in the world.

However, Ogunba (1978) observes that there has developed in the continent in the last few years a conscious interest in the past, in dance festival, and in ritual ethnic groups. This has been directed towards understanding the nature, function and aesthetic values of indigenous dramatic practice, an appraisal which transcends turning such knowledge into an instrument for racial pride. This is not enough as the real substances are disappearing, thereby putting the traditions on a declining trend. “to build the case properly, it is important to capture the opinion of the West about traditional African indigenous festival drama. Olaniyan (2007) reminds us that African performance traditions entered the orbit of European discourse and through language supplied operational terms ‘festival’, ‘ritual’ and ‘drama’ primarily, as negative examples. He continues by positing that this entrance was marked by condemnation, inferiorization, and general disregard. It was asserted by Western scholars and their African cohorts that blacks had no traditions of drama indigenous to them or had traditions which when

phenomena to be found in African traditional festivals compared with European and Asian versions are mere 'proto-dramatic' or quasi-dramatic".

The view above has been well echoed in Ruth Finnegan's work which she argues that how far one can speak of indigenous drama in Africa is not an easy question (Finnegan 1970), Wole Soyinka (1976), Oyin Ogunba (1978), J.P. Clark (1981), M.J.C. Echeruo (1981), Ossie Enekwe (1981), Abiola Irele (1990) and Kalu Uka (2002). This view received support of African-European trained scholars who now belong to the evolutionary school of African drama. The above view has been countered by Afrocentric scholars who assert that African drama is fully dramatic and should not be judged strictly by using Western literary and aesthetic canons which were actually Aristotelian in nature.

However, Africa has continued to face daunting challenges of the decline in the attention given to indigenous oral performances that should be the comparative advantage in today's globalized world. Right from the period of colonialism, Africans have become increasingly attached to the education and values of European culture, thereby simultaneously alienating themselves from traditional values in traditional African performances and customs. These western influences have resulted in the decline of some oral performances, which were before now, regarded as channels for moral value acquisition, instruction, stability and cultural development of the people in Africa. For example, in Elugwu Ezike, performances such as *Ma afa*, *Egbachukwu*, and *Egba Omabe*, are gradually threatened out of existence. Now it has become evident that what we are witnessing is not evolution or rise of traditional performance modes rather a wholesale supplanting of these indigenous forms with the metropolitan performance poetics of the West and the Middle East (Nwaozuzu, 2009). This has been signposted by

changes championed by the advancement of technology, religion and modernity which are the attendant features of imperial symbols in Africa. Today, the significance and structure of traditional performances are markedly changed. The indigenous aesthetic features have been eroded to a large extent as a consequence of infiltration, imposition, distortion, disconnection and also as a result of lack of its documentation. The people of Elugwu Ezike have refused to learn and propagate the philosophy of the oral art of *Ma afa* which is an annual festival and to carry on with what their fathers and fore-fathers started. For instance, the emergence and advancement of the movie industry in Nigeria and Africa at large, which would have served to advance and propagate Africa's indigenous aesthetics, is not doing so. Again, the lack luster attitudes of parents and their children today, on dramatic issues of traditional extraction, are gradually and systematically forcing dependence on traditional performances to diminish. This is a picture that depicts the same discounting character of a modern youth of Elugwu Ezike towards traditional oral performances. There is therefore need to analyze the festival from a theatrical point of view in order to draw more attention to its vitality and potentials for other artistic productions. The study has paid attention to rituals and dramatic elements in *Ma afa* festival which comprises dance, music/song, setting/arena, costumes, character, spectacle, rhythm, etc. The researcher has identified and analyzed these dramatic elements in order to give relevance to them.

*Ma afa* festival is one of the festivals celebrated annually in Elugwu Ezike culture. It is normally celebrated between the months of July-August in different communities in Elugwu Ezike to welcome the new yam. The festival is properly known as *Ēgba Onwa Ishii* and *Onwa Esaa* as the case may be according to the Igbo calendar.

To the people of Elugwu Ezike, *Ma afa* is a sacred festival through which the entire people of the land express utmost appreciation to their ancestors and deities for guidance and protection granted to them from the beginning of the year through the end. They also acknowledge the ancestors for the new yam, as they celebrate the arrival of new yams. During *Ma afa* festival, many rituals are performed. The main objective of this study is to contribute towards the understanding and appreciation of Elugwu Ezike cultural values through the analysis of Elugwu Ezike traditional cultural festival '*Ma afa*'. This study covers four main areas. They are: an attempt to trace the history of *Ma afa* festival, examining the rituals associated with the festival in order to bring out their cultural values, highlighting the dramatic elements in the ceremony in order to bring out the artistic qualities, and the impact of modernization and Western life style on the performance of this festival. *Ma afa* festival is an oral tradition that is meant to be transmitted orally from generation to generation. This dramatic performance is fast disappearing in Elugwu Ezike. The need for documenting, analyzing and encouraging the youths to go into the rituals and dramatic performances of *Ma afa* festival so as to ensure continuity of this festival in Elugwu Ezike motivated the move into this research.

## **1.2 Statement of Problem**

African traditional dramatic festivals which are supposed to be one of the pillars of unique and artistic production in Africa have not been well appreciated and understood. Their dramatic status has been challenged by Western cultural and anthropological scholars with their African sympathizers. Despite the rich dramatic elements of traditional African festivals, have suffered from total or partial denial because they have been subjected to strict assessment using Western dramatic cannons. There is therefore



need for African canons that should look at issues of cosmology, epistemology, axiology and aesthetics, in order to give primacy to traditional African theatre within a complex world of today.

Consequently, these denial and lack of clear understanding of the unique existence of viable traditional drama in Africa have been aggravated by issues arising from the terrain of indeterminant in artistic production today. These issues which include syncretism, consumerism and impact of new media have further affected the prominence of traditional African drama which ought to be the pride of Africa. This implies that at this stage, what is gained or lost about *Ma afa* cultural festival performance as a result of the present state of indeterminacy and the complex scenario of artistic productions is not known.

Hence this study is an attempt at tracing the history, analyzing the rituals and dramatic aspects of *Ma afa* festival of *Elugwu Ezike* people of Igbo Eze North Local Government Area as a way of restoring and preserving their historical and cultural glory.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The specific objectives of this study are to:

- i. attempt to trace the history of *Ma afa*;
- ii. examine the rituals associated with *Ma afa* festival performance;
- iii. highlight the elements of drama in *Ma afa* cultural festival performance; and
- iv. examine the negative impact of Westernisation on *Ma afa* cultural festival performance of Elugwu Ezike Igbo people.

## 1.4 Research Questions

The study is guided by the following questions:

- i. What is the origin of *Ma afa* festival performance?
- ii. To what extent are rituals associated with *Ma afa* cultural festival performance in Elugwu Ezike Igbo?
- iii. What are the elements of drama in *Ma afa* cultural festival performance in Elugwu Ezike Igbo?
- iv. What negative impact do Westernisation have on the tradition of *Ma afa* cultural festival performance in Elugwu Ezike?

## 1.5 Significance of the Study

This study falls under the oral performances of the Elugwu Ezike Igbo people and its of great significance for so many reasons:

The study will help to keep our memories fresh about the seemingly forgotten importance of *Maafa* festival.

The study will equally help in sensitizing the youths on the importance of the rituals associated with this festival so they could consider *Ma afa* festival as an art form that should be appreciated and have confidence in the good aspects of their cultural values as basis for sustaining and unifying the society.

The study also reveals the existing dramatic elements embedded in the festival of *Ma afa* in Elugwu Ezike and how they add aesthetic values and artistic qualities to traditional African dramatic festival.

The study also has interesting implications in documenting the rituals and elements of drama associated with the *Ma afa* dramatic festival performance in Elugwu Ezike Igbo for future generation to read so that this knowledge is not lost completely.

The study also provides the basis for adopting an aspect of ethno poetic theory known as infra-cultural model of oral analysis developed by Alembe (2002) for the analysis of this study as well as the justification for the use of oral interview, tape recorder camera and unstructured questionnaire as methods of data collection.

The study will also serve as a research aid to future researchers who will want to investigate other cultural aspects of the Elugwu Ezike Igbo people.

### **1.6 Scope of the study**

The study is primarily focused on the analysis of rituals and dramatic elements in *Ma afa* cultural festival performance of Elugwu Ezike Igbo. The study is restricted to *Ma afa* cultural festival performance of Elugwu Ezike Igbo. The history, structure, rituals and elements of drama in the festival were assessed.

Also discussed is the negative impact of westernisation on the performances of *Ma afa* cultural festival performance and in doing this we must rely on existing literature to make a successful study.

### **1.7 Limitations of the study**

The researcher had a problem of lack of mutual cooperation from the informants especially on issues that pertain to secrecy. In this study, some of the respondents were not cooperative; some were suspicious of the aim of the research while some of them

thought it was a waste of time undergoing such educational exercise. They were afraid to disclose some facts about the myths that surround the festival, for fear of divulging secrets. This resulted to charging money exorbitantly to release some pieces of information. To counter this problem, the informants were made to understand the danger that looms if this aspect of the culture is not documented.

The use of electronic equipments such as photo camera and cassette recorder in most occasions, frightened the respondents. Photo camera was used to capture the paralinguistic features of the festival performance while the cassette recorder was used to capture almost all the information the respondents were supplying to the researcher. To counter this problem, of the use of electronic equipment, the researcher explained to the informants that the purpose of using the electronic gadgets was to enable the researcher capture most of the information they were supplying to the researcher and nothing more. Despite all these setbacks, considerable data were elicited and analysed in this study. Though the research period was hectic, time consuming and expensive, it was worth the while.

## CHAPTER TWO

The review of relevant and related literature for this study is presented under the following sub-headings.

2.1 Culture, Deities, Drama, Festival performance and Ritual.

2.2 Theoretical Studies.

2.3 Empirical Studies.

2.4 Summary of Reviewed Literature.

2.5 Theoretical Framework.

### **2.1 Conceptual Definitions.**

This is the section that gives explanations to the above listed concepts to aid proper understanding of their meanings as they are used in the study. They are: Ancestors, culture, deities, drama, festival, performance and Ritual.

#### **2.1.1 Ancestors**

Next in rank to the deities in Igbo ontological existence are the ancestors. They occupy the lowest rung of the ladder in the Igbo spiritual hierarchy but enjoy intimate relationship with the living more than any other spiritual beings.

Idowu (1973:179) states that ancestors are departed spirits who stand in peculiarly close relation to the tribe or the family: the life of the former has been derived from him and because he is still in existence, his favour or disfavor has therefore a sharply focused

relation to it and is more urgently to be sought or avoided. This observation is quite revealing about ancestors and their relationship with the living. Thus conceived, it reveals the ancestors are spirits of the dead who were at a time living members of the family. They are the progenitors from whom the living derives their being. This explains the close link or bond between the living and the ancestors.

In Elugwu Ezike, there are ancestral shrines in every family and during *Ma afa* period, on the day of *Ogọ nna* and *Ogọ nne*, they worship their ancestors at their shrines, sacrifices of chickens foods, kolanuts and libations of palm wine are offered to appreciate these ancestors and to make their bond with the living stronger. This is why Nwala (1985:19) observes that:

The ancestors act as intermediaries between their living children and the deities. They help to protect their living to ensure that no harm is done to them. In times of difficulties or sicknesses you hear the Igbo man calling on their dead fathers and saying “*nna anyi Ekwela*” our father, do not allow this to happen.

The tendency to ‘worship’ ancestors because of their relationship with the living is there. Though scholars (Mbiti; 1969); Idowu (1973); and Iwuagwu (1997) argue in favour of ancestral veneration as against worship, it is notable that religion at its earliest stage among (the primitives) was described as ancestor worship. The ancestors according to: Ugwu and Ugwueye (2004:16) are

“the pristine men and women who originated a clan or ethnic group and provide people their identity. They consist of the founders of the clan; they include the head of the tribe, following the order of primogeniture. They form a chain through which the links of the forces of the elders in the community exercise their vitalizing influence on the living generated”.

From the above, it can be seen that ancestors, though they are no more sharing in the earthly life, are constantly in daily communication with the living.

According to this view, ancestors stand in peculiarly close relation to the tribe, the clan or the family as the life giving force, controlling and organizing the living members of their lineage. The ancestors occupy a pride of place in the Igbo traditional worldview and enjoy close relationship with the Supreme Being.

In the light of the foregoing, Aligwekwe (1991) observes that the ancestors are deceased members of the community, who during their life had lived good lives and subsequently after their death had gone to the land of the dead. The ancestors had a duty to look after their families and lineages which lived still in this world and protect them from evil. Therefore, the Elugwu Ezike man sees it as a point of duty to sustain this relationship through regular sacrifice and worship, which failure to do so will lead to starving the ancestors and incurring their wrath. In this study, ancestors are the dead relatives of the people who were once living and later died but the people believe that their ancestors still lives in the spiritual realm and stand as the advocates of the living to the deities and the supreme God '*Chineke*'.

### **2.1.2 Culture**

The term culture has severally and widely been defined by both scholars of social sciences and arts. Upon all the controversies arising from these definitions and the applications of the concept, most importantly, is that similarities have been noticed, that is, culture has society and man central to its conceptualization. Ordinarily, the word culture means the way of life of a people found within an identifiable geographical entity. But to some scholars, it means more than this. These scholars look at it from the way

people behave and that is why they see it as either civilized or primitive. Others see culture to mean the higher things of the mind such as art, literature, music and painting.

In their attempt to reconceptualize what culture means, Sule Bello and Yakubu Nasidi broadly define what culture means by incorporating other scholars' view. They first see culture as; "the way of life of a people". Secondly, they took a look at Malinowski's idea of culture where:

Culture is partly human, partly spiritual and partly material. In its humanistic aspect, culture consists of ideas, values, knowledge, philosophy, laws, morals and so no. In its spiritual aspect, it consists of system of belief and religions in its material aspects, it practices consists of artifacts and consumer goods, made by man as opposed to things found in nature. Culture is a distinguishing factor between man and man.

Sule Bello & Yakubu Nasidi also took a look at the stand of the Nigerian National policy on culture: where culture is defined as:

The totality of the way of life, evolved by a people in their attempt, to meet the challenge of living in their environment, which gives order and meaning to their social, political, economic, aesthetic and religious norms and modes of organization, thus distinguishing a people from their neighbours.

Sule Bello & Yakubu Nasidi enumerated the characteristic of culture as comprising:

Material, institutional, philosophical and creative aspects. The material, aspect has to do with artifact in its broadest form (namely: tools, clothing, food, medicine, utensils, housing, etc.) the institutional deals with the political, social, legal and economic structure erected to help achieve material and spiritual objectives, while the philosophical is concerned with ideas, beliefs and values; the creative concern of a people's literature ( oral or written) as well as their visual and performing arts which are normally moulded by, as well as help to mould other aspect of culture.



This is an attempt to look at culture as the manifestations of all that man is and does within an environment to merit being seen as a way of life of a people. To Odetola and Ademola (1985), culture means:

Configuration of learned and shared patterns of behaviour and of understanding concerning the meanings and values, of things, ideas emotions and actions. It is in general, the learned portion of human behavior, the way of thinking, feeling and doing these thing that man in his own capacity has developed as part of his environment.

Although this view is not as explicit as in the works of Sule Bello and Yakubu Nasidi, the fact still remains that man and his activities in his immediate surroundings have been defined. However, what Odetola and Ademola did, tend to restrict the researcher when discussing what culture means. The fact that in its precise and concise form of definition, culture is said to be the totality of the ways of life of a people, this way of life must be seen as all the activities of man whether, political, social, religious or economic, not minding how “crude” they may be, are still part of this way of life that is central to the definition of culture. Chris Jenks in his book *Culture* sees:

Culture as symbolic, the learned ideational aspect of human society. A collective noun used to define that realm of human beings which marked its ontology off from the sphere of the natural.

No apparent difference has been noticed in the course of the review. However, differences in the conceptualization of culture most often found in its usage (application) where sometimes it becomes ethical and spiritual thus expressing an ideal human perfection.

If viewed entirely from this perspective, it tends to conflict with those views about culture which emphasize particularity and stress difference in the way in which men find meanings and values in their lives which at the end seeks perfection itself.

In this study, culture means the way of life of a people found within an identifiable entity. What is significant about this way of life of a people is that it represents the expressive means of people to understand their existence, enhancing continuity and relationship.

### **2.1.3 Deities**

The deities are gods and goddesses of the land. In practical life situations, they are closer and more real to humans than the Supreme Being. They form a crowded pantheon in Igbo Ontology.

There is hardly any aspect of life of the Igbo without a patron deity (Ejizu 1999). As natural manifestations of the unseen God is the universe, deities make divine realities tangible to man by bringing God to the realm of culture. Therefore, natural phenomena such as lakes, rivers, streams, rocks, hills, mountains, caves, grooves and strange trees are deified (Nwoga 1984).

Metuh (1985) observes that;

The Igbo deities form the great circle of non human spirits who come next to God in the ontological hierarchy and are believed to be agents helping Him to shepherd different sections of his creation...the deities are more often conceived in terms of the services they render to man (82).

This conception lends credence to the fact that religious experience and expression are products of one's or group's environment. Here, the socio-political environment is the basis of conception, understanding of and approach to the expression of supreme Deity and his relationship with his subordinate deities of the Igbo. Deities are

at the centre of human activities and are approached for the services which they render on behalf of God. This is why Echekwube (2005) asserts:

That these divinities seem to overshadow him in the daily affairs of the African and shrines are built unto them for their worship do not in the least underrate this basic understanding of God's prominent position in the cosmogonic views of the African. These divinities are merely departmental gods, performing the roles He has assigned to them. Normally, the African goes through the king's attendants to him whenever he or she has a presentation to make. (P.96).

It is pertinent to observe that in Elugwu Ezike, all the autonomous communities have their own deities and as such take into cognizance their respective positions in the life of the people. Such deities are identified as follows: Ogrute ụlọ Umuopu and Umuida have Ènwè Ézèòchá as their arch deity. Amufie (Álùm), Imufu (Òhè), Okata (Òmèdí), Okpo (Òkó), Onicha Elugwu Ezike (Ídènyì Ézugwù), Amube (Ògelèmùnyì), Aguibeje (Óbúlèfú) Ugbaike (Ìyìákpá) Umuachi (Láláwù deity). Olido (Ídènyì) Amachalla, (Ínyámá deity) Ikpamodo (Íyì Ógwù Deity), Igbelle (Nnéhòchá), Uroshi (Óbànzé), All these arch deities are in charge of all other gods within their jurisdiction. During *Ma afa*, celebrations, these deities are venerated for the need for self protection, preservation, desire for congruity, increased food production, fertility and to solve other life's problems. The people of Elugwu Ezike annually solicit the aid of these deities through performance of several rituals in diverse ways to get their assistance and get their problems solved both individually and collectively. In this study, deities denote a supernatural being, like gods and goddesses that are worshiped by the people who believe they control or exert force over some aspect of the world. They are viewed as messengers of the supreme God who through them the people's blessings come from God.

#### 2.1.4 Drama

If what is fundamental to drama is imitation and the art of impersonation occasioned by the use of costumes, and if man is known to have involved himself in the act, throughout ages, therefore drama can be as old as man.

What is central to the definition of drama the accounts for the rise of drama. The search into the communal life of man which is surrounded by religious, ritual and mythical ceremonies/festivals also give credence to the nature and rise of drama. If drama then is imitation and that it is as old as man, the origin, nature, definition and the application of this term, drama should no longer be a subject of controversy. This is true because man existed in every part of the world virtually at the same time. If for the fact that the linguistic genealogy of the word “drama” is traced to the Greek, therefore, the origin and nature of drama must be of Greek tradition. The analogy then is misleading in its content and context. Since it is a fact that imitation is central to the meaning of drama that man has involved himself in this act throughout ages and that if drama of the Greek tradition is linked to the festival of Dionysus, then drama is everywhere as Oscar Brockett (1998) p.1 maintains:

Theatrical and dramatic elements are present in every society, no matter how complex or unsophisticated it is. These, elements are as evident in our own, political campaigns, parades, sport events, religious services, and ceremonies of primitive people.

He also maintained that the most persistent theory about the origin of theatre (drama) is that it developed from myth and ritual.

Oscar Brockett (1999) argues in the same line with Echeruo in Ogunbiyi (1981) edited work that every society has drama when he cited J.P Clark in “Aspects of Nigerian drama” saying:

The origin of Nigeria drama lies where they have been found among other people of the earth, deep in the past of the race. We believe that as the roots of European drama go back to the Egyptian Osiris and Greek Dionysius, so are the origins of the Nigeria drama likely to be found in the early religious and magical ceremonies and festivals of the people of the country.

Echeruo however, argues further that, Igbo drama cannot evolve until myth is freed from the ritual in which it is buried, therefore, there is a limit to which Igbo festivals can be classified as drama.

Here, Echeruo’s rejection to accept Africa traditional festival as drama seems to contradict what is his major concern in citing J.P Clark. We are made to understand that his quarrel is that the presence of myth and ritual in a festival need to be reconsidered because it makes drama sacred and that it should be built into “proper plot” and allowed to develop as the Greeks have developed. But the argument seems to be unrealistic, especially, when the question why the comparison with Greek concept of drama is asked. Since Greek drama evolved the way it did because of Greek tradition and because Africa has a history and culture/tradition peculiar to it, African drama should be allowed to grow as such.

What we are saying is that the classical Greek drama should not be used as a paradigm for every dramatic development.

Finnegan (1970) and M.M. Mahood (1974) have also maintained the same position like Echeruo in viewing the existence and validity of African drama in their

various capacities. They have questioned the dramatic import of what is called African drama while Ruth Finnegan sees African drama as quasi-dramatic phenomena". Mahood regards it as "predrama which remains unpurified" Finnegan and Mahood's views are Euro-centric.

This attitude of Euro-American scholars on the origin, nature and content of African drama is what Awoonor (1996) decried in his work. "*The Beast of the Earth: A survey of the History Culture and Literature of African South of Sahara* when he said:

The history of Africa has been the subject of fierce speculation, debate, and discussion over the past few decades. Africa once loomed in the imaginings of European and other scholars, travelers, romantics and adventurers as a land of darkness, of mysterious tribes engaged in frightful orgies, of primitive and raw instincts such as cannibalism, of dark sinister practices in voodoo and sorcery, of wild and untamable animals and people.

It is unfortunate that African literature-drama, culture and history are still open to this supposition and indeed continue to suffer from this misunderstanding and prejudice that have resulted from this parochial racist scholarship. Banham and Wakes (1976) claim that:

The nature of the contemporary theatre in Africa can only be fully understood in the context of its historical roots. The modern playwrights of Africa, the concert parties, and the operas have much of their origins in the ritual drama of the past... Given this, we should be aware that it has developed in recent years under diverse influences, but equally, its basic Africanness is reasserting itself. It with some confidence, be claimed that theatre in Africa, today is more alive, more assertive than its counterpart in Europe or America.

Banham and Wakes' bold assertion speak for itself where denial of the presence of "real" drama in Africa is rife, Banham and Wake are boldly placing it above what Europe or America has because of its total composition, that is, its functional nature-

servicing a purpose within communities. The strength, vigour and relevance of this purpose lie in its performance and acceptability in the African cultural context. In the context of this study, drama means festivals, ritual performance and the ceremonies pertaining to the belief system of the Elugwu Ezike people and all over Africa because it can be defined by the elements of presentation like actors, impersonators, characters, plot, dance, music, mime, gesture, dialogue, costume, make up and props even the time/place setting.

### **2.1.5 Festival**

Among the Igbo, there are various festivals and anniversaries of installations of traditional rulers. In a community, there would be up to four festivals that are celebrated annually. Festivals are mostly celebrated at the time of plenty.

Mbiti (1977) observes that through festivals, the life of the community is renewed; people are entertained and their intentions find an outlet. It can, therefore, be noted that a cultural festival such as *Ma afa* is an oral dramatic performance of the people of Elugwu Ezike. In the context of this study, festival is an event which shows symbolic expression of people's religion, social, political and artistic life. It is an occasion to show and disseminate the culture of the community. It is a solemn period set apart by the people to commemorate important events in the life of the community.

(Ogunba 1978) the life of a community can be renewed through festival. Ogunba (1978) further stresses that festival is an integral, dynamic part of the culture of an unalienated African, an occasion to which he responds spontaneously to societal and cultural yearnings. He further states that festival is the only known institution which has the means of coordinating almost all the art forms of a community.

Elemi (1980) observes that festival is a way of life for the Africans. This way of life is an essential attitude that is lived; it is a part and parcel of man's inner being and it is not possible to analyze it completely. Each important festival lasts for a considerable time. Each has a story or myth to perform and each makes use of its own peculiar style in the realization of the story. Thus, in the process, the arts of costuming, masking, drumming, chanting and dancing are utilized in a manner not totally dissimilar to their usage in dramatic tradition.

Festivals as Okwori (1987:8) rightly postulates "are periods when in most traditional and contemporary societies are performed in religious ritualistic and ceremonial way".

### **2.1.6 Performance**

Performance is a term that is utilized in several fields of human endeavour. The term has made its way into the critical artistic analysis of indigenous traditions, and cuts across different continents ranging from Africa, Asia, the South Pacific and native America, as well as Western Europe and America. The study of performance has become germane because it is a word that has come to subsume all manner of art forms within drama and theatre. After a dramatic show, dance, music, operatic display, or poetic rendition among others, the spectator might say-"It was a good performance." This is because performance involves expressions through actions.

The study of performance in theatre today has assumed some new relevance because of the persistent need for quality and fruitfulness of action that is being exhibited on stage or on the set. The critical appeal of human taste is consistently on the rise



thereby making the artists to step up their performance in order to meet up with fastidious in spectators' tastes.

'Performance' is a term that is difficult to define as identified by Embu (2011). Yet it has left doors wide for several fields. But theatre and drama arrived to enter those doors quite early. This is due to its relevance and connection with the arts. This is confirmed by Carlson (1996, p.1) when he opines that:

The term 'performance' has become extremely popular in recent years in a wide range of activities in the arts, literature, and in the social sciences. As its popularity and usage has grown, so has a complex body of writing about performance attempting to analyze and understand just what sort of human activity it is.

The popularity of performance studies in humanities is due to the rise of relevance to such fields that have adopted it. For some fields, they have adopted the term in order to avoid the major problem of nomenclature (Okpewho, 2003). Performance is that spectacular activity that catches the attention of the spectator because of its importance to him/her. Performance in theatre studies has its integrity, and hinges on an idiom of its own. This distinguishes it from the literate arts, such as the novel or Western poetry. This fits the artistic credo within which the *Ma afa* festival theatre is bound.

According to Fortier (1997, p.4)

Unlike drama, theatre is not words on a page. Theatre is performance, though often the performance of a drama text, and entails not only words but space, actors, props, audience and the complex relations among these elements.

Although defined from the Western sense of the word, 'theatre', it has still captured what is conspicuously lacking, in the sense of performance in other fields in humanities. The dividing line is between strong actions that are persuasive and appealing in performance,

as opposed to weak actions that appeal to the reader in a different way. People would mostly want to watch live actions than read of the same on the pages of a book.

In oral performance, the text is important because the art form relies on it but there is need to maintain a balance between the text and the context. Context is in itself the action which is adored and revered by the natives of a particular traditional practice. Malinowski (as cited in Okpewho, 2003), emphasizes the need to ensure this balance between the text and the context of the practice. In his words:

If the step of balancing between text and context is not done properly, the artiste will only be presenting a mutilated bit of reality (Okpewho, 2003). It is important to realize that, to avoid the sweeping statements of Malinowski, there is need for an empirical approach to the study of performance. This is because artistic traditions are not the same globally. The *Ma afa* performance, to some extent, agrees with the need of this balance since it deals with strongly worded dialogue and dance. *Ma afa* attains the qualification which, Okpewho (2003) believes, combines the two qualities of pleasing the audience through the medium of the words and images that words aptly combined can create. In Okpewho's words:

... they share certain architectonic tendencies and affects: the fitting description, the portraiture of a character that is true to life or at least to peculiar ideals of the World, within which the character operates, and various other creative tricks and devices (p,1).

For *Ma afa*, the ideal is that of continuity of a circle dictated by the world view of the Elugwu Ezike which is performed through music and dance. In *Ma afa* the distinction between oral literary arts is difficult to ascertain. The two have come to be together. The movement of the body cannot be separated from the mytho-poetic renditions that capture

the essence of the moment of the festival, and the range of personal experiences of the performers.

### **2.1.7 Ritual**

Rituals are what man indulges in, in a bid to inter-relate with various spheres of life in harmonious and fruitful manner. Through ritual, man says something about his inner religious awareness, his vision and beliefs. Ritual is also a process of re-enacting the deeds of the gods.

Brockett (1998:5) posits that “rituals are believed to emerge from the attempts of non-literate man to grapple with the problem of their environment, nature and their experience. This incline that man discovered that some of his acts, which he embarked on gave him confidence, courage and assurance about his social and psychological endeavours. Therefore, he decided that such actions be repeated from time to time. This was how rituals emerged. Most rituals are religious and so held sacred. Rituals provide information and reduce fear and anxiety by making people believe that whatever decree that has been uttered has been affected or shall be fulfilled. Rituals are dependent upon some belief systems for their meaning to complete and great rituals are patterned after myths.

Ritual performances are African people’s means of expressing their relationships with their maker by worshipping at the shrines of various deities. The performances involve praying with kolanuts. In doing this, the ritual performers thank God for keeping them alive, enabling them achieve many successes like begetting children, good health and bumper harvests. Okodo (2009:84-85) states that rituals begin with a signification of

purity and well being by administering the white clay (Nzu). Many rituals are performed during *Ma-afa* festival.

Kyriakidis (2007) defines “ritual” as a set of actions performed mainly for the symbolic value. It may be presented by the traditions of a community. The term ritual usually refers to actions which are stylized, excluding actions which are arbitrarily chosen by the performers. Rituals provide information and reduce anxiety by making people believe that what has been described has been affected or will be fulfilled.

In this study, ritual is used to denote a body of custom specifically associated with religious performance, but more generally as any non-instinctive predictable actions or series of actions that cannot be justified by rational means. It is also a body of ceremonies or customary act. Ritual performances are mostly based on belief in mystical powers and which by nature can be seen as manifestations of the religious or social life of the people. The elaborate nature of rituals associated with a festival makes it possible for us to have some variations in ceremonies from different parts of the world. Their performances and functions differ from culture to culture, and their content, which normally deals with the dramatic festivals, may sometimes vary depending on the individual community’s perception of the concept of traditional dramatic festival.

## **2.2 Theoretical Studies**

Theories aid researchers to know what to ask, that is the right data to collect and how to interpret the responses. Theories provide not only a guide to empirical research but also expand as well as help us to understand the contextual and spatial scope of such research.

Haralambos (2000) sees theories as a set of ideas, which provide explanation for something. Theories of oral literature are not based on the origin of a society alone or look into the societal limits only; it cuts across the developmental stages of the society in question and such theories include the evolution, relativists theories, formalist, functionalist theories, structural and infra-cultural theories as seen in this present study.

### **2.2.1 Evolutionist Theory**

The evolutions are the exponents of the non-existence of Igbo traditional drama. The leading proponents of evolution theory are Ruth Finnegan, George Prazer, Echeruo, Kalu Uka among others.

Finnegan (1970) does not see anything special Afro-centric drama. She posits that “drama in Africa is not typically a wide spread or a developed form, because of the absence of linguistic contents, plot, represented interaction of several characters, specialized scenery and so on]”. She further stresses that what African have are “certain dramatic and quasi-dramatic phenomena”. Her stand on this issue is motivated by the fact that she does not believe that an element of literature can vary in form and structure depending on certain exigencies.

Echeruo is of the same view with Finnegan. According to Echeruo (1973:21), “festival myth will become drama only through selection, elaboration, re-interpretation of its significant aspects”. This shows that without the elaboration of the re-interpretation of myth, there can be no drama. He explains that there is no drama or theatre in traditional Igbo culture, rather what can be seen is what he argues as genres or

elements of drama. These dramatic elements can be found in Igbo which involves rituals and festivals.

Echeruo analyzes three festivals from Umunumu, Mbano and Aku Nsukka, Enugu State. These festivals re-enact the return of the ancestors, they can be called dramatic, for they re-enact the return of the ancestors, they can be called dramatic, for they re-enact myths but they do lack other elements of drama. There are no props and sets, no clear-cut stage and action takes place all over the village. There is no unity of space and time. A well-made play concentrates action within two or three hours, which enables the re-enactment of action of one hundred years in just a short period, but the traditional Igbo re-enactment spans over days. *Ma afa* festival in Elugwu Ezike spans through a number of 28 days. There is no stage. If we take this as theatre, then, church services should be regarded as drama. He further opines that “the mask performance is drama only to the extent that its mime element carries with them a narrative plot”. His approach is determined by his interest in myth criticism. He thinks that myth or story, which he considers synonymous with plot, is the essence of drama. His basic thesis is that the Igbo have no drama because the Igbo myth is subsumed in ritual. He concludes by suggesting that drama can evolve from such re-enacting when a creative artist separates the action from the myth and focuses the attention on those that form the rituals. For instance, one can take the visiting of the ancestors and create a play out of it for re-enacting on the stage obeying the rules of drama.

The weak points of this approach to oral literature are that, oral literature collections were influenced with misconceptions that the materials collected were survival of the earlier stages of human development. The strength of this approach shows

that the evolutionists believe that the originally of a culture festival is a communal consciousness and group authorship.

### **2.2.2 Relativist School Theory**

The relativist school of thought negates the view of the evolutionary school of thought and contends that there is actually traditional drama in Africa. This school of thought asserts that if the dramatic performances of Greek classical culture originated from ritual performances in honour of their gods Dionysus and Apollon, then, the ritual performances of the Igbo gods and all other gods in African is also a dramatic performance. As the Greeks are entertained with religious ritual performances in their land, so are Africans entertained with the ritual performances of African gods, the Elugwu Ezike people inclusive. This is why Obiechina (1978:3) compares *Odo* and *Omabe* festivals in Nsukka to the Greek Dionysian and Apollonian festivals. Obiechina belongs to the relativist school of thought and holds the view that *Odo* and *Omabe* communal performances are dramatic.

Enekwe (1981:50) shares the same view with Obiechina. He posits that “it is wrong to demand that Igbo should develop a form similar to the Greeks”. He concludes that there is no need for us to keep talking of Igbo drama when its aura is already all over Igbo land”. He believes that drama is relative, that every society has its text, what it regards as drama. If the Europeans like to go to theatre and stay for two hours, it is their business. For the Igbo, their drama takes place over days and re-enacts actions of years. He argues that certain kinds of dance such as masquerades constitute Igbo drama. African traditional drama is also total because it combines many art forms such as music, poetry,

dance, acting, miming, mask, painting, singing, dialogue etc. he holds the view that from the point of view of African theatre, which has ritual concerns drama, creates or affirms mode of familiar and communal life. He cites Odo festival of Nsukka as an example of ritual drama. Nzewi (1979) equally observes “theatre in Igbo drama as liquid theatre, which flows from place to place. Whichever reaches your position, you watch it. In a society when there is leisure, no technology drama can take place over a coming period unlike society without leisure. Nkala (1990:7) supports the existence of African traditional drama. When he observed that traditional African drama exists and the battle line is whether what exists as African play can pass the test of Euro-centric minds. He argues that Igbo festivals and rituals as well as certain kinds of dances such as masquerades constitute Igbo drama”.

They believe that if you access certain performances especially *Mmonwu*, the relativists view are not only maintained but that *Mmonwu* performance satisfies the evolutionists. There are *Mmonwu* that represent the world of man and spirits. There are also divine characters. They, through acting provide short impressionists view of the Igbo cosmos.

In *Mm̄onwu*, we have the most symbolic and powerful costumes that can be found in any traditional performance. In *Mmonwu*, there is dialogue and *asusu Mm̄onwu* which is a specialized type of language. There mime and action accompanied by music. These satisfy all the conditions of the evolutionist theory. The relativists on the other hand hold the view that the Igbo have drama. It is true that certain performances contain dramatic or elements of drama. These include: festival, ritual ceremonies and dances. We can describe them as the context of drama as festivals are occasions when dramatic



performances take place. Other kinds can be best described as drama. Also, certain kinds of dances like social dances are dramatic but there are dances that have features of the opera.

Okebalama (1991:1) notes “drama is a re-enactment of life” He states further that “the Igbo find it convenient to express their feelings through such recreational activities as rituals, myths, legends, folktales, ceremonies, festivals and masquerade plays. All these constitute drama”. He moves on to say that Igbo drama is episodic, has arena (theatre in-the-round), communal, periodic, sacred and profane, collective effervescence and a lot of money is spent during festivity.

Ogunbiyi (1981) Suggest that the social and moral life in African traditional societies could be seen to be organized around festive manifestations, which fulfill the function of social and moral control as well as provide entertainment and diversions. The ceremonies are therefore important as indicators of group interest and values, and various aspects of social life”. Ogunbiyi (1984:40) is of the view that the origin of Nigeria theatre and drama (traditional drama) lies in the numerous traditional, religious and functional rituals to be found practically in every Nigerian society.

Ogunba (1978) asserts that the term “Traditional festival is an indigenous cultural Relativist institution, a form of art nurtured on the African soil over the centuries and which therefore, developed distinctive features whose techniques are sometimes totally different from the borrowed, now practiced by many of our contemporary artists”. In other words, a festival is an integral dynamic part of the culture of an unalienated African, an occasion to which they respond simultaneously. Thus, in our ability to portray

the image of Drama in Africa, Traditional festivals are staged from time to time. He further emphasized that, in a town of modest size, say twenty thousand inhabitants, there may be as many as ten to fifteen festivals in a year's cycle of ceremonies. Such ceremonies are woven around diverse beings and physical phenomena ranging from powerful gods and goddesses to hills and water spirits and the generality of illustrious ancestors.

Elemi (1980) in his study, Observe

“festival is a way of life of the Africans. This way of life is an essential attitude that is lived; it is a part and parcel of man's inner being and it is not possible to analyze it completely. This system and practice can be identified in what people say, do in their rite at festivals, births, initiations, secret societies, oaths, explicable incidents and other ways. There are many occasions where festivals add to the grandure of both personal and communal rites”.

“Festival for individuals and families may accompany birth, initiation, marriages and funerals” (Mbiti 1977). Judging from this perspective, in the life of communities, there are harvest festivals, victory festivals, boat regatta festivals, Hunting and fishing festivals. For instance in Nigeria, there are different types of festivals and masquerades to mark the return of the spirits to human societies and to celebrate or renew the fertility of the people and fields and *Ma afa* festival is inclusive.

Mbiti (1977) in his work states that

“African like to celebrate life”. These include; new yam festivals, occasions like birth of a child, naming ceremonies, circumcision and other initiation ceremonies, marriages, funerals, praying for rain and others. He further explained that many of these rituals are performed on family basis while others are observed by the whole community. This has a lot of religious implications and through their observances; religious ideas are perpetuated and passed on to the next generation”.

However, Ogunba (1978) in his work *Theatre in Africa* asserts that “artistic institutions of traditional Africans, is the only institution which has the framework that can coordinate virtually all the art forms of a community”. Each important traditional festival lasts for a considerable time which may be three, seven, nine or sixteen days. A month, or even three months each tends to have a myth to perform and each make use of its own peculiar style in the dramatic realization of the story. In the process, the arts of costuming, masking, drumming, chanting and several others are utilized in a manner not totally dissimilar to their usage in dramatic traditions.

Rotimi (1981:77) avers that “some African ceremonies reveal instances of imitation either of an experience in life or of behaviour patterns of some power. Others merely re-present certain powers without the mimetic impulse to recreate the ways and details of those powers”. Many other authorities agree with Rotimi (1981).

Enekwe (1981:151) is not left out among those that observe drama in traditional ritual performances. He says:

“Elsewhere, I argue against Echeruo’s opinion that myth is the soul of drama, pointing out that drama does not have to evolve from myth, and that it contains elements of myth, the myth is not used for itself but rather, for social restructuring”.

Therefore, ritual performances are aspects of drama when the sacredness is removed, that is entertainment, correction of societal ills, education of the people and portrayal of the culture of the environment. Ogunsanya (1992) asserts that “Festivals are occasions where people remember their ancestors or give thanks to their gods”. Amankulor (1981) in his study about Ekpe Festival as religious, ritual and dance drama posits that Ekpe festival among the Igbos of Eastern Nigeria have characters whose archetypal parallels could be

found in the primordial era. Amid songs rendered by the chorus, arena staging is characteristically African. The performance pace with particular input from the audience. This theory is relevant to the present study in the sense that the relativist have been able to counter the Eurocentric idea of non-existence of African traditional drama because it has almost all the dramatic elements in any performance and it also shows that festival is evolution of drama.

### **2.2.3 Contextual Approach.**

The theory of contextualism was propounded by Clifford Geertz (n.d) but Annis and David (1978) gave this theory a boost when they described contextualism as a collection of views in philosophy, which emphasizes the context. Contextual approach goes back to the nineteenth and early twentieth century where scholars asked to what extent literary texts were rooted in the historical, political, economical, philosophical, religious, etc. contexts of their production. While after the Second World War, contextual approaches, especially the Marxist tradition were initially regarded as outdated, they had a major come back over the last two decades in approaches like new historicism, cultural materialism and cultural studies.

Contextualism as a theory, tries to describe a collection of views in philosophy which deals on the context in which a particular action or expression occurs and it argues that in most instances, the expression or action, can only be understood relative to that context as Annis and David (1978) emphasize. Contextualists hold the view that African dramas have their integrity and impact and realization only within the scope and arena of their performance, which is done on specific occasion. Malinowski (1914) makes an apt

observation about contextualism which is appropriate. He states that the text, of course, is extremely important, but without the context, it remains lifeless and irrelevant. He goes further to say that the whole nature of the performance, the voice and the mimicry, the stimulus and the response of the audience means as much to the natives as the text and that the performance has to be placed in its proper time setting-the hour of the day and the season. Nketia (1974) notes that it is important to keep in mind the actual context or situation in which particular texts are used because style, form, subject matter and meaning are also governed by this. This approach is relevant to this study because festivals are context based. Therefore, *Ma afa* cultural festival can only be meaningful and relevant in the course of its performance.

#### **2.2.4 Ethnopoetic Theory.**

The term ethnopoetic was first coined in the late 1960s by Jerome Rotherberg (1969) who sought better means of translating oral poetics, especially those of Native American culture. Ethnopoetic focuses on the aesthetic and poetic structuring of oral art. Anttonen (1994:113) contends that:

Ethnopoetic methodology and theoretical foundations lie in pragmatics, phenomenology, sociolinguistics, ethno-methodological conversation analysis, the ethnography of speaking and the performance approach in American Folklore studies.

One branch of ethnopoetic approach developed by Dell Hymes (1982) is based on the idea that works of verbal art are subtle organizations of lines and verses. Hymes further observes that these expressions are founded upon a socially constituted poetic structure that is prosecuted both in the organisation of experience as well as in the organization of reports on that experience. According to Hymes (1982), the lines are not

only poetic, but also a kind of rhetoric of action in that they embody an implicit cultural schema for the organisation of experience. In Tedlock's (1983) ethnopoetics approach, emphasis is placed on the patterning of the poem, which must also be shown in the transcription. Proponents of ethnopoetics analyse texts in their original language and context to discover how individual elements function within the cultural performance of that text. Ethnopoetic approach stresses that aural qualities in performance are central to the organization of speech. In the words of Mills (1991:25), "...they convey to the listener a sense of the relative importance of propositions and their connections with each other, which are essential aspects of meaning"

**Features of Dell Hymes' (1982) ethnopoetic approach. Dell Hymes' ethnopoetic approach has the following features:**

- I. According to Anttonen (1994:114), in ethnopoetic approach, emphasis is based on the notion that many things in narratives revolve around a pattern number or a sacred number or some multiples of it.
- II. Hymes' ethnopoetic approach also focuses on the stylistics and grammatical features in order to find the formal poetic structure of a text, the underlying rhetorical form in this text (Anttonen, 1994:115).
- III. Hymes' ethnopoetic approach employs a structural method and is an application of the elementary principle of structural linguistics. It is based on pragmatic study of language, in which signs and texts are studied in terms of the relationship between a sign and its user and it is this approach that distinguishes ethnopoetics, from formalism and structuralism (Anttonen, 116).

- IV. In Hymes' ethnopoetic approach, texts analysed are available only as written documents. Hymes and his followers do not lay emphasis on observing and recording of life performances, as is the case with Tedlock and his followers.

#### **Features of Tedlock's (1983) Ethnopoetic Approach.**

According to Tedlock's ethnopoetic approach, emphasis is placed on oral nature of texts and the dependence of the organization of texts upon lines. He further notes that the transcription of texts is based on two factors, namely:

- I. the text arrangement is in two lines according to pauses in the oral performance. Each new pause indicates the end of one line and the beginning of another; and
- II. The transcription showing the variation in pitch, volume, vowel length and presenting the text as it was heard in performance (Anttonen, 1994:114).

Tedlock's ethnopoetic approach places emphasis on fieldwork. This means that all materials studied must have been collected and transcribed by the researcher. Anttonen and Harvilahti also contributed immensely to the ethnopoetic perspective in Finland. Harvilahti (2001:67) lays emphasis on ethnopoetic substrates, culture specific meanings contained in oral texts. These substrates serve as culture specific mental models representing a network of specific multi-level ethnocultural characteristics of each particular tradition.

The strength in this two approaches is that they emphasize inter related dimensions of ethnopoetics which cumulatively provide a richer analytical framework. While Hymes emphasizes written texts, Tedlocks concentrates on orally performed texts. Tedlock stresses the need for fieldwork to provide a basis for rich

interaction between the researcher and the study community and the interpretation of oral texts. But the two lines of thoughts on ethnopoetic converge in looking for meaning, whether the texts are written or oral. Even Harvilahti's emphasis on culture specific interpretation of texts, still points to the need to look for meaning within the perceptions of the study community (Harvilahti 2001:67). This approach is relevant to the present study because it will help to bring the researcher and the study community together so that the researcher could get a first hand information about the festival under study so that the interpretation and analysis of the work could be made easy and original that makes the festival relevant in the context of African traditional drama.

### **2.2.5 Formalist Approach**

Formalism is an approach propounded by Russian formalists. These Russian formalists are of two groups: The Moscow linguistic circle and the Petersburg Group (Wales, 1989). The Russian formalists include Viktor Shklovsky, and Vladimir Propp and Roman Jakobson who was considerably occupied by literature especially the poetic form. This approach simply concentrates on the form of a work. It is also known as aesthetic, ontological or textual critical approach. The formalistic approach does not focus on the relationship between the work and the society or between the work and psychological disposition of the writer. It evaluates art for art's sake. This approach looks at the aesthetic (beauty) values and quality of the work as it is and the ability of the work to achieve its goal or deliver its message. The formalists were inspired by de Saussure on the symbolic movement. This approach primarily does the following: examines the structure and meaning of the word being reviewed, seeks the meaning of everything –



pattern, elements, style and format in the various parts of the work are relevant to the whole and vice versa. The formalist strongly believes in form since it is form that makes something to be valuable and for this reason, form is quite indispensable for one to understand the work of art.

This theory is relevant to the present study because it seeks to showcase the aesthetic quality of the festival in view by exposing the dramatic elements embedded in the festival.

### **2.2.6 Functionalist Theory**

The functionalists perspective, also called functionalism is one of the major theoretical perspectives in sociology. As a school of thought, it emerged in the twentieth century. Bronislaw Malinowski and A.R. Radcliff-Brown had the greatest influence on the development of functionalism. The functionalist theory contends that literature is and ought to be relevant to the society that has given birth to it as well as nurtures it. The theory which is psychological in nature examines mental processes and how they relate to human behaviour. By so doing, literature plays a major role in effecting and affecting social and intellectual changes within the community. In this way, literature becomes a potential weapon used to bring about enduring positive changes in the community that engenders it. Finnegan (1977) states that the role of literature can either reflect the society or uphold its status quo. The functionalists also believe that any cultural phenomenon that does not have any use in the society will not endure. The functionalist theory is relevant in this study because it deals with festival (African drama) as an aspect of literature that brings about positive changes and fulfils positive functions in the people because the

festival (Ma afa) brings the people of the land closer to the gods of the land annually through the performance of rituals during the festival celebration.

### **2.2.7 Structural Approach.**

The term structuralism was first coined by psychologist Edward B. Tichner (1917). Structuralism is a theory of human kind in which all elements of human culture, including literature, are thought to be parts of a system of signs. According to Eagleton (1999), structuralism represents an attempt to rethink everything in terms of linguistics. Ferdinand de Saussure in his course in General linguistics (1974) argues that the underlying system of conventions should be the object of study for linguistics. De Saussure further sees language as a system of signs: that the sign is the basic unit of meaning: and the sign comprises the signifier and the signified (the mental concept). For de Saussure, according to Bello-Kano (2002), the sign is arbitrary, therefore, the relationship between the signifier and the signified is only a matter of convention.

In summary, structural approach is the idea that culture and society are developed through individual building blocks. Vladimir Prop, a Russian applies structuralism to Russian folktales and discovers that there are thirty one models in Russian folktales which are termed functions of *dramatis personae*. Some examples of the models identified by him are abstention, interdiction, violation, villainy, mediation, beginning counter action, departure, etc. He finds out that the stages are in sequence and follow such sequence in an orderly manner. He states that any stage which does not come as at when due in its sequence will remain missing in the whole folktale. When this model was applied to Igbo folktales, it was found to fit into the model. This theory is relevant to the

present study because it will aid the researcher to understand the systems and levels of the organizations of the various stages in the festival and from there, determine the aesthetic and cultural implications of the organization. Therefore, it will explain the reason why different cultures that perform festival have methods of performance.

### **2.3 Empirical Studies**

Ododo (2001) conducted a study on the theatrical aesthetics and functional values of Ekuechi Masquerade Ensemble of the Ebira people in Nigeria. The study aims at exploring the festival's dynamics of artistic theatre elements in a pure festive performance setting and the functional relevance to the Ebira people. The methodology, he used was oral interview and participant observation in the field work for the collection of data. After the analysis of data collected in the field, the study reveals that the festival performs the same function and evokes similar response to what literate drama does in the Western tradition. It also reveals that Ekuechi festival is filled with integration of poetry, chants, mimicry, mime, dance, song, music, drumming, make-up, costume and significant cultural symbols. Ododo (2001) relates to the present study in the sense that both studies look at festival and both explore the dramatic elements in the festivals. But the present study differs because it goes further to investigate the impact on modernization on the performance of *Ma afa* cultural festival performance. Both studies make use of interview and participant observations in the collection of data.

Ezenne (2005) studied Globalization and culture in the twenty first century: A study of *Nkadioka Igbu-ichi* cultural festival in Neni town, Anambra state, Nigeria. The objective of the study is to understand the cultural dynamics of the contemporary world

with reference to African cultural festivals especially the *Nkadioka Igbu-ichi* festival. The study had no research design but the method of data collection was interview and participant observations. Then, the findings of the study reveal that cultural festivals are resistant to the pressures of globalization especially the *Nkadioka Igbu-ichi* festival.

Ezenne's (2005) study is similar to the present study because both studies dealt extensively on Igbo festivals but differ in objectives of the studies. Ezenne (2005) aimed at understanding the cultural dynamics of the contemporary world with reference to *Nkadioka* festival in the 21<sup>st</sup> century while the present study aimed at examining the rituals and highlighting the dramatic elements in the *Ma afa* cultural festival of Elugwu Ezike. Both studies employed similar methods of data collection which were oral interview and participant observations.

Odunko (2006) studied the Dramatic Elements of *Ogugochi* festival of Imezi Owa Ezeagu, Nigeria. The Objective of the study is to examine the structure and the dramatic elements in the festival. The researcher made use of interview and participant observation in eliciting information from the respondents. The findings of the study reveal that *Ogugochi* festival is an episodic drama which begins from performing rituals to personal gods, and end with masquerade display and initiation of new members into the masquerade cult. The festival promotes communal relationship as it brings the people together annually. Odunko's (2006) study and the present study look alike because both deal on festival of different kinds. They also look alike in the mode of celebration as both have ritual performances and masquerade outings and dramatic elements embedded in the festivals. Also both studies made use of interview and participant observation to elicit information from the respondents during field work. Odunko, had no theoretical frame

work in the study while the present study used infra-cultural model for its data analysis. Both works reviewed similar theories like evolutionist and relativist theories in their analyses.

Acquah (2011) studied the impact of African religious beliefs and cultural values on Christian-Muslim relations in Ghana from 1920 through the present. A case study of Nkusukum- Ekum F1 Enyan area of the Central Region in Ghana. The aim of the study is to examine the impact of the traditional religious beliefs and cultural practices (with their underlying values) on the religious pluralistic context of this M Fantse traditional area in Ghana, particularly on Christian- Muslim relations. The methods employed for data collection in this study were oral interview and participant observations. The findings of the study show that, although a larger percentage of the indigenous populations are converts to Christianity and Islam, it is the indigenous beliefs and values, which mainly serve as the mediation for their religious and cultural expressions. Thus, this indigenous influence has enhanced harmonious relationship among members of Christianity and Islam in the area. This study is relevant to the present study in the sense that both studies discuss the impact of religion on the indigenous cultural practices of the study areas. Both studies use the same methods for data collection which are oral interview and participant observations. The findings of the study differ in the sense that in previous study, Christianity and Muslim religions impacted negatively on the cultural practice of the people of Elugwu Ezike because the religion have succeeded in reducing the population of the participants in *Ma afa* cultural festivals in recent times.

Ademiju (2012), in his study of *Ladeoko* festival of Isona ward in Ilesha, Nigeria, aimed at examining the aesthetics of the festival. The findings of the study reveal that *Ladeoko*

festival is a festival that brings the people of the land both home and abroad together for the celebration of the festival. The festival is choreo-musical performance which is flavoured with dramatic aesthetics. The study reveals that the myth of the community is retold with breath of freshness and the presence of the gods and ancestors of the people manifest in peculiar stages of events through this festival. The study employs the methods of interview and participant observation for the collection of data. This study is relevant to the present study, because both are dealing on traditional festivals. Both study also employed the methods of interview and participant observation in collection of data.

Obah (2013) investigated the Ukwani folk media performances: the recapitulation of the people's world view. The objectives of the study are to ascertain if folk media practices are still relevant in this era; to ascertain if the festival tradition of the people should be regenerated, and to find out if the use of folk media is relevant to the people's cosmology and world view. The research design adopted for the study was historical research design. The theoretical frame work on which the study was hinged upon was collaborative performance theory. The study also employed the method of oral interview because the researcher was not a part of the Egwu Amala group. The findings of the study reveal that Ukwani folk media are still relevant as to the people of Ukwuani as it portrays the people's traditions which are the means of transmission of age-old values, the contextual manifestations and interpretations of the universe. Obah's (2013) study and the present one are similar because both discussed festival performances with different cultural perspectives and used oral interview for data collection but they differ because the present study allowed the researcher to be a participant observer while Obah (2013) was a non-participant observer.

Matthias (2014) carried out a research on the socio-religious significance of *Ikoró* and *Ekpe* festivals in Akwete, Ndoki community of Abia state, Nigeria. The main objective of this work was to examine the socio-political, economic and religious significance of these festivals and the effect of modernization on them. The research design adopted for the study was descriptive type. The methods for data collection in the study were oral interview and participant observations with focused group discussions. The findings of the study show that *Ikoró* and *Ekpe* festivals play vital roles in the social, political, economic and religious sustenance of the community's life. It was also revealed that modernization has altered most of the cultural ritual practices during the festivals due to religious and global influences. Mathias (2014) is similar to the present study in the sense that both examined festivals. They also adopted descriptive research designs and employed oral interview and participant observations for their methods of data collections. But both studies differ in their findings. While the present study dwelt on the negative impact of Westernization on the festival, Mathias (2014) reveal the positive impact of modernization on the festivals studied and this make the difference.

Akurugu (2015) studied Elements of drama in Ghanaian Traditional Festivals: A case study of *Foek* festival among the Builsa people of the upper East Region of Ghana. The aim of the study is to showcase the elements of drama in *Foek* festival in order to counter the Euro-centric notion that there is non-existence of African drama. The study employed the methods of interviews, participant observation and the aid of a research assistant who is proficient in the dialect of the people for data collection. The findings of the study reveal that *Foek* festival has basically established the fact that African performances during cultural festivals have all the qualities of drama as spelt out in Aristotle's "The

Poetic”. Therefore, the study has effectively set aside the notion by some literary scholars that Africa has no well developed drama. Akurugu’s (2015) study and the present study share the same view as both studied festivals. They also share similar views in the choice of interview and participant observations as their methods of data collections. They also share similar views in outlining the same elements of drama in both festivals and this counters the views of the Euro-centric scholars that Africa has no well developed traditional drama as the festivals studied were dramatic.

Ojo (2015) evaluated the dramatic aesthetics of *Emidin* and *Igbo* festivals of Omuokekiti. The study aims at evaluating the dramatic aesthetics of *Emidin* and *Igbo* festivals of Omuokekiti. The study employs interview and participant observations in the method of data collection. The findings of the study reveal that Omuokekiti festivals produces pleasure, relief and entertainment and expresses the values and beliefs of the people and promotes the culture of the people. The study went further to reveal that the *Emidin* and *Igbo* festivals performances are filled with artistic and dramatic elements with performative features of space/setting, spectacle, costumes, make-up, music, dance, plot, which characterize these festivals. Ojo’s (2015) work is similar to the present study as the afore-mentioned dramatic elements are all present in *Ma afa* cultural festival which is our present study but differs in the area of rituals involved and the mode of performance.

Omoko (2016) carried out a study on the dramatic and poetic contents of the *Idju* festival of the Agbarha-Ame people of Warri in Delta area of Nigeria. The paper examines the dramatic and poetic contents of the festival. The study also made use of interviews and participant observations as the methods of data collection. The finding of



the study reveals that like other festivals in Africa, the *Idju* festival possesses credible elements of drama and poetry such as dance, impersonation, possession of rituals, spectacles, costumes, spectators, dialogue, songs, mime, gesture, incantations, tempo and other paralinguistic techniques, all aimed at uplifting the excitement of the audience. The study reveals further that Agbarha-Ame dramaturgy is made up of groups of traditional and performing arts in a cultural milieu that contains mimetic impersonation either of human actions or of spiritual essence. Omoke (2016) is similar to the present study in the sense that both share the same features of dramatic elements in their festivals, they share the same method of observations to elicit information from their respondents.

Yamma (2016) studied the dramatic and theatrical aesthetics of *Izara* traditional initiation festival of Amo people of North Central, Nigeria. The study employs the analytical binoculars of performance theory, myth/archetypal as well as structuralists/semiotic frameworks to describe and analyze the festival. The study adopted a qualitative research approach and the use of participant observation and interview for data collection. The findings of the study reveal that there are abundance of drama and theatrical aesthetics in *Izara* Festival of the Amo people of the North Central of Nigeria. These aesthetics are music/song, characters, dialogue, props, conflict, costume, spectacles, rhythm, suspense, plot, audience, flashback, imagery and setting. Yamma (2016) and the present study are similar in the sense that both dealt on festivals but differ in types of festival. Yamma (2016) worked on *Izara* festival while the present study dwelt on *Ma afa* festival. Both studies are similar because both have dramatic elements as aforementioned. Both studies use the same methods of interview and participant observations for data collection.

Nwanna (2017) investigated managing masquerades festivals for tourism and economic gains: a study of Mmanwu festival in Anambra state, Nigeria. The study aimed at digging up the hidden treasures of Anambra state tradition in Nigeria and presenting its aesthetics and economic potentials to the global theatre landscape. To realize this objective, the study adopted Descriptive and Qualitative Research Approach and also employed field work. In it, interviews and participant observations were used as the methods for data collection and these enabled the researcher the access to snap photographs of some practical demonstrations of some participating masquerades during the festival. The findings of the study show that there is a significant awareness of Tourism entrepreneurs about carnivals and contemporary cultural festivals in other parts of the world. This is because, it was revealed that, there are too many treasures hidden in the cultural festivals especially *Mmanwu* festival and this was the reason behind the affirmation of the respondents that there is need to modify masquerades festivals in Anambra state by organization of seminars, workshops and orientation exercises so that the danger for abandoning traditional masquerade festivals in a stagnant stage that may lead to its extinction could be averted. Nwanna (2017) is in line with the present study because both discusses Igbo festivals but differ in the sense that the present study discusses *Ma afa* cultural festival in Elugwu Ezike, while Nwanna (2017), discusses *Mmanwu* festival in Anambra state. The studies are also similar in the areas of designs which are descriptive research designs and also in the methods of data collections as interviews and participant observations, are employed.

## 2.4 Summary of Reviewed Literature

The literatures related to the study like evolution theory, relativist theory, functionalism, formalism, structuralism and infra-cultural were reviewed. In order to identify gaps to be filled by the current study. The gap is that of tracing the history of *Ma afa* festival, highlighting the dramatic elements, examining the various rituals in the festival and highlighting the impact of Westernisation on *Ma afa* festival performance which has not received the needed attention.

An aspect of ethnopoetic theory known as infra-cultural model of folklore analysis as expounded by Alembi (2002) was discussed in detail and a justification was established as to why it is a relevant anchor to this study. There are, however, some reviewed studies by some scholars on different festivals which however show some marked differences in the mode of performance between festivals from other neighbouring communities from that of Elugwu Ezike. In short, the festivals are all the same all over the world, but the method or modes performance are not the same. They vary from community to community, country to country and from continent to continent. The dramatic elements, rituals, impacts of Westernisation on the performances will continue to motivate researchers to produce works of this nature. These are gaps in the study of *Ma afa* festival performance that this research seeks to fill.

## 2.5 Theoretical Framework

In developing this dissertation, this study is anchored on an aspect of ethnopoetic theory known as infra-cultural model in folklore and analysis. This strand of ethnopoetics is developed by Alembi (2002) for research into folklore. The infra-cultural model of folklore analysis combines elements for two strands of ethnopoetics developed

by Dell Hymes (1982) and Tedlock (1983). The term infra-cultural model is used in this dissertation to mean interpretation of words and actions within specific cultural contexts. This in essence means that the meanings of words and action can only be located within the perceptions of the study community. This model seeks to bring together the researcher and the study community in a reflective process to gather information on *Ma afa* cultural festival performance in Elugwu Ezike community and interpret it together as partners. This entry by the researcher into the rhythm of life of Elugwu Ezike community acts as a good basis to learn and experience their beliefs and expectations.

Thus, instead of concentrating on Hyme's strand of ethno poetics which lays emphasis on the written text or Tedlock which emphasizes living discourse, the infra-cultural model lays emphasis on the performance, the oral text and the written text. The key elements of infra-cultural model are that it demands an insider analysis and interpretation of works of art in a given reality of a community and interpretation of oral performance pieces in their cultural context. It also examines oral performance beyond mere concern with stylistics in order to elucidate the theme of the study. It equally emphasizes the researcher's deep involvement in dialogue and interaction in order to understand the underlying issues surrounding a performance such as *Ma afa* cultural festival performance in a community. It assigns meaning to oral performance based on the cultural traditions of the performers of a given genre of oral art. Infra-cultural model is relevant to this study because it lays emphasis on insider analysis and interpretation of oral performances as well as the researcher's deep involvement in the oral performance in their cultural context.

This theory is a relevant analytical framework for this study because it brings the researcher closer to the study community as it entails the deep involvement in dialogue and interaction in order to understand the structural and underlying issues surrounding *Ma afa* festival and Elugwu Ezike community. Therefore, the researcher has to participate in the festival performance in order to gain insight for first hand information about the *Ma afa* festival as it serves, as an appropriate platform to have discussions with the informants during the performance.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Research Methodology

This chapter discusses the research methodology under the following subheadings: research design, area of study, population, instrument for data collection, validation of instrument, method of data collection, and method of data analysis.

#### 3.1 Research Design

The design adopted in this study is a descriptive survey type. According to Gav (2005), “descriptive research survey is a process of collecting data in order to answer the questions that concern the present status of the subject matter under study.”Nworgu (2006) posits that a descriptive research survey is a design that aims at collecting data and describing in a systematic manner the characteristic features or facts about a given population. In a descriptive research survey type, a group of people or item is studied by collecting data on a few people and or items considered to be a representative of the entire group. A descriptive research survey reports events the way they are. This type of research design attempts to describe such things as possible behaviours, attitudes, values and characteristics of a phenomenon. Descriptive research design is relevant to the present study because it is undertaken in order to describe the characteristics of the variables of interest in a situation such as *Ma afa* cultural festival performance in Elugwu Ezike Igbo. The research methodology of this work is based on analysis of data and interview which are gathered and showing relevant pictures of places taken during the festival.

The data gathered and analysed include different people both men and women, old and young who came for the festival.

### **3.2 Area of the Study**

The area of the study is oral literature (drama) with major focus on the analysis of rituals and elements of drama in *Ma afa* cultural festival performance in Elugwu Ezike Igbo.

Geographically, the area of the study is Elugwu Ezike culture area. It comprises of four clans which are: Ezodo, Itodo, Eṣoḍo and Ozzi. Ezodo clan comprises two communities which are Uda and Uroshi. Itodo clan consists of six communities which are Amufie, Amachala, Oḷido, Imufu, Igbele and Ikpuiga. Eṣoḍo clan has seven communities namely, Aji, Uṃuagama, Uṃuogbo Agu, Uṃuogbo Inyi, Uṃuogboulo and Ufodo. The clan of Umuozi comprises the following communities: Inyi, Ugbaike, Okpo, Amala, Isiugwu, Uṃuida, Ogurute, Ezilo, Oḷata, Onicha Elugwu, Igogoro, Ikpamodo, Uṃuopu Agu, Mkpamte, Owere Eze, Umachi, Amube, Ogbodu and Agubeje, Umuopu, Umuopu Umueze.

### **3.3 Population of the Study**

The target population for the study includes all indigenes of Elugwu Ezike culture area. The accessible populations were indigenes randomly selected from the four clans of Elugwu Ezike culture area. These clans are Eṣoḍo, Ezodo, Umuitodo and Ozzi. The researcher combined enquiry and self selection techniques to elicit information from the informants. The informants were selected based on age and experience. Simple random sampling technique was used to select indigenes from each.

### **3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique**

A total of eighteen informants were selected randomly from the thirty eight communities that made up Elugwu Ezike. A simple random sampling technique was used for the present study. The researcher combined enquiry and self-selection sampling techniques to seek information from the informants. In selecting the informants, age and experience was taken into consideration. Some were chosen for the historical perspective they could provide. The degree of competence of the informants is fifty (50) years and above. Other informants are chosen according to their special knowledge concerning the festival under study. The remaining informants are laymen capable of providing knowledgeable evaluation of *Ma afa* festival in Elugwu Ezike who were interviewed. Then, a total number of four respondents were interviewed during the performance.

### **3.5 Research Instrument**

During the Field work, some research instruments were used. They include tape recorders, stationaries, camera and batteries. The tape recorder was used to record the interview conducted. The recorded interview was transcribed and translated into English. The camera was used to take some photographs which were taken in the course of the festival celebration. The researcher conducted the interview with the aid of unstructured questionnaire.



### **3.6 Validation of Instrument**

Two experts in oral Igbo literature were consulted to validate the questions the researcher used, in the course of the interview exercise.

### **3.7 Method of Data Collection**

For the purpose of this work, the researcher adopted two methods which were library work and field work.

#### **i. Library Work**

Library work was done before the actual field work. This is necessary because it helps the researcher to gain access to study some critical books, dissertations, theses and articles on festivals. This provided advanced information on festivals in Igbo land.

#### **ii. Field work**

Much of the materials used in this study were collected from the field work in which the researcher travelled to some communities in Elugwu Ezike and collected information about *Ma afa* festival performance. The information were collected from some indigenes who are versed in the history, culture and traditions of Elugwu Ezike. The researcher made use of face to face interview and participant observation to gather authentic information about *Ma afa* festival performance from the respondents in the field.

### 3.8 Research Instrument

Oral interview and unstructured questionnaire constituted the instrument for data collection. The researcher carefully framed the questions in such a way that the interviewee can easily understand what information is being sought for. The unstructured questionnaire is used in this study because this is the form of questionnaire that does not provide any response options the respondents. Only the questions pertinent to the problem are asked and the respondents supplied their responses in their own words and in the manner they deem fit. (The sample of the unstructured questionnaire is provided below:

The Informants were asked the following questions:

1. What is *Ma afa*?
2. How did this *Ma afa* festival originate?
3. How, when and where is the date of this festival announced?
4. What are the things done in preparation to this festival?
5. What are the major foods used in the celebration of *Ma afa*?
6. Are there any forms of rituals associated to *Ma afa* festival?
7. Who performs the rituals?
8. Why are these rituals performed?
9. How are they performed?
10. What are the items used during the ritual performances?
11. How long does this festival last?
12. Why is *Ma afa* festival performed annually?

13. Are there masquerade performances during the festival?
14. Are there any musical and dance performances in the celebration?
15. What are the roles of *Onyishi*, *Agu Enwe*, *Umu Enwe*, etc?
16. What is the attitude of the community towards attendance and participation in *Ma afa* festival in recent times?
17. How does Westernisation influence the performance of *Ma afa* festival in terms of religion, education, migration, etc?
18. How do you assess the future of the Elugwu Ezike *Ma afa* festival performance?
19. What do you suggest could be done to preserve the quality of *Ma afa* festival celebration in Elugwu Ezike?
20. Do you have any additional comments about the festival?

### **3.9 Method of Data Analysis**

After assembling the data gathered from the respondents during the field work the researcher made efforts to critically read and identify information as presented in the festival. The data collected from the field work were transcribed from the tape and translated into English. The notes taken during the recording sessions (interviews) as well as the observations were analysed to identify the rituals and dramatic elements of the work under study. The analysis is based on the rituals associated with the festival and the dramatic elements embedded in the festival using an aspect of ethno poetic theory known as infra-cultural model of oral performances. In applying the infra-cultural model of oral performances, the researcher participated in *Ma afa* festival performances to enable her to observe live performances of *Ma afa* festival as a method of studying Elugwu Ezike

festival in its essential form. These live performances were recorded on audio cassettes, and pictures taken at such instances. Some of the pictures taken were scanned and incorporated into the dissertation in order to provide evidence on certain aspects of *Ma afa* festival performance in Elugwu Ezike.



**An**  
**interview session with Mr. Odo nwa Oyiga and the researcher**

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.1 Data presentation and analysis

The origin and practice of *Ma afa* cultural festival performance.

In many communities all over Africa, cultural practices such as *Odivira* festival among the Ewe of Ghana, *Egungun* festival among the Yoruba, *Argungun* fishing festival among the Hausa, *Odo* or *Ekpe* festivals among the Igbo in Nigeria are either expressions of the communities' historical past or their socio-religious belief systems. Their origins are either found in myths relating to stories of existence or activities that are supposed to be of significance to human beings. This means that most of such festivals or ceremonies are woven around diverse beings and physical phenomena, ranging from powerful gods and or goddesses, to the generality of illustrious ancestors and this is why some writers always associate festivals, especially of African origin to rituals.

It is important therefore, to clarify the meaning of the term cultural festival, since most people assume it to be either an orgy of merriment or a string of weird, primitive sacrifices and dances. Far from the truth is this assumption, because these cultural festivals are of great political, economic, socio-cultural and or religious significance.

Idegu (1988) observes that:

The social and moral life in African traditional societies should be seen to be organized around festive manifestations, which fulfill the functions of social and moral control as well as provide entertainment and diversion. These ceremonies are therefore important as indicators of group interest and values and various aspects of social life.

*Ma afa* festival can be seen as one of that kind of festival that is done yearly which helps to evoke much of the history of a community; Elugwu Ezike. The festival did not

originate as a practice that has no linkage to some learned behaviour of a people-the Elugwu Ezike people. It is derived from the people's belief in the existence of their powerful ancestors and deities.

*Ma* is a word that means 'spirit' and 'masquerade' according to the belief of the Elugwu Ezike man. It is a sacred word in the life of the people because it denotes the presence of the ancestors, gods and goddesses as well as deities in the form of a masquerade.

*Afa* is a word that means 'year'. This shows that *Ma afa* is a coinage of two separate words. *Ma afa* is a cultural festival that is believed to have originated from the belief of the Elugwu Ezike man that their ancestors, gods and goddesses, through various deities of the land, visit the people in a special way annually to bless the people and the people in turn see it as a period worthy to give honour and glory to their ancestors and to thank them for their protection and for making them prosperous during the year. It provides opportunities for all and sundry, their relations, in-laws and friends to come together and share with one another, thereby strengthening the socio-economic and political unity of Elugwu Ezike people.

In the words of *Agu Ogrute*::

*Ma afa* festival is a noble venture, which calls for the worthy participation of every Elugwu Ezike person because through it, the principles of rule of law, and group solidarity, political stability and the development of individual talents, charity, and homeage hospitality are effectively developed.

Through this festival, the chain of continuity that is the past, the present and the future is maintained. *Ma afa* cultural festival is also an enduring appendage in honour of

a great progenitor who is Elugwu Ezike Oba. The claims of Elugwu Ezike people on why they practice this festival therefore cannot be underestimated for at least; during the festival, the community is renewed, re-invigorated and reactivated through the entertainment, jubilation and interactions which the festival provides.

#### **4.2 Structure of the Festival**

The preparation for *ma afa* begins immediately the moon of the sixth or seventh months (*onwa ishi* and *onwa esaa*) of the Igbo calendar is sighted in the sky. It is the prerogative of the *onyeishi* (the traditional ruler of Elugwu Ezike and other traditional rulers to announce the date of the festival. This is done by summoning the elders in council, *ndi ji odatu* (chiefs) to a meeting at his palace, on a particular *Afo* market day. It is in this meeting that the duration and date for the festival are decided. The duration is usually between 4-28 days as the case may be. Once a date is agreed upon, it is first announced in the palace and later in the town.

It is used to mark a period of peace and harmony. Immediately after fixing the festival date, a proclamation prohibiting fighting, quarrelling, demanding debts, summoning one another before the elders and burial ceremonies are made. Anyone having a grievance against another has to wait until the end of the festival before taking action. The purpose of this is to ensure peace and harmony during the festival. The festival fosters unity, re-union and interactions.

On hearing of the festival date, home-feeling will be aroused among Elugwu Ezike sons and daughters living outside Elugwu Ezike land. Families will happily be expecting the arrival of their sons and daughters and when any arrives, a loud ovation



rends the air welcoming them. Those, whose people have not arrived, will continue to expect them. The period is full of happiness generally as merriments will continue until end of the festive period.

Few days after the announcement of the festival's date, the date for the clearing of road paths, village squares, market squares, shrines, bushes, tree branches which are over grown are trimmed to desirable shapes and sizes, is announced according to the desire of each community in Elugwu Ezike. Filled with the enthusiasm of the announcement of *Maafa* festival, the youths in the community start clearing all the part ways and roads in the village. Every shrine in Elugwu Ezike that is generally owned are tidied up and decorated with new earthen ware pressed upon a clay mound made at the middle of the roads. The over grown plants are trimmed and decorated with a special type of rope from the bush, known as palm fronds. The earthen ware pots represent the mouth through which the gods gulp down the sprinkled wine during the worship. The worshippers beautify their respective shrines with different colourful (clothes of blue, black, white, red, colours etc. Some buy cowries *Ashakpa* and weave them to these clothes and use them to decorate their shrines. After this, comes the day for outing of the masquerades to show the arrival of the ancestors because the paths they will tread have already been cleared of bush, thorns and unwanted tree branches that may cause obstruction on their way to commune with the people of each kindred and community. The ancestors feature in the form of masquerades (*ma*).

#### **4.3 The Masquerade Outing/*Egbeochala/ma ilata n' iba***

*Ma* is a sacred institution of masquerades that appear at certain seasons, festivals, burials and a few grand occasions in Elugwu Ezike.

*Mmanwu* is a traditional masquerade of the Igbo people of Nigeria. The word *Mmanwu* literally translates to the “spirit of the dead”. Masks are worn to re-incarnate the “spirits of the dead” in the community. By wearing the mask, the masquerade or performer is believed to have spiritual powers that are conducted through the mask. Igbo masquerades perform both ritual and entertainment functions. Igbo masquerade tradition is patterned after the people’s belief system and cosmology; masquerades also form a link between the living and the dead. Often time dead ancestors will visit their living relations in form of masquerades. These masquerades transform the spirit and make them visible to the living.

The identity of the masker is usually kept secret and he is referred to as the dead even when one knows his identity. Masquerades act as the main source of entertainment and agent for the enforcement of communal law and discipline.

Udenta (2002), says that it is common among *Ndi Igbo* of Nigeria. It is so cloaked in secrecy that only the males that have been initiated, usually between the ages of seven and above are members, yet it is not a secret society. Even as I write about this aspect of Elugwu Ezike culture, I have to be extremely careful not to reveal the “secret” to women or the uninitiated males who may become fascinated with it just because they can read and write. The secrecy is so judiciously, jealously and deeply entrenched by indoctrination that it has not been heard of any case of an initiated person divulging the group’s “secrets”.

The Elugwu Ezike man is very proud of ‘*Ma*’ (mmanwu) anyone or foreigner who offends the ‘*Ma*’ (Mmanwu) has as well offended the whole community and is calling for an unimaginable punishment or retribution. In another sense, ‘*Ma*’ can simply mean the spiritual being, the greatness, uniqueness and valour of a gentleman. To refer to an Elugwu Ezike man as “*Ma*” is to accord him these qualities.

The idea of ‘*Ma*’ (Mmanwu), as suggested by Ezenwaonu Igwe the eldest man in my village, “is spirit representing the dead”. It implies a concretization of dead ancestor. In Elugwu Ezike, after the clearing of bushes on the road paths is over, some few days before the *Ma afa* festival proper, many masquerade troupe out on *Orie* market day to the market square to display and entertain the people. Different Masquerades like *Akpacha/Kpakpawuru*, *Oshagenyi*, *Ajija*, *Mgbedike*, *Okpolompi*, *Agele*, *Ejiogbene*, etc. These masquerades visit people’s houses, especially the houses of the eldest man in the community and the traditional elders in council dancing and receiving money and other gifts. In Amufie community, the masquerades compete with one another and whoever wins will go home with a gift of cow or ram depending on the prize that is kept for the winner of the year in the masquerade competition and the criteria for winning are the best and the most expensively decorated masquerade amongst the rest. Last year (2017), the most expensively decorated masquerade went home with a cow. In Ogrute, the masquerade outing is known as *Egbeocheali* day.

Below are pictures of some masquerades that feature during *Ma afa* festival.



*Kpakwuru* and *Oshageyi* masquerades and some spectators watching them perform at the market square in Umuopu



*Oshageyi* masquerade performing at the market square in Ūmujida





*Qerënyj ma*



*Ajulaka Qmabé masquerade*





*Ejiogbene* masquerade performing at the market square





*Agele* masquerade performing in the midst of the audience at the market square in Ogurute



*Egbeochala masquerade of Ogurute community*

After the coming out of these masquerades, the elders will sit together and perform the ritual for *Igbomaaya* (calming the fierceness of the masquerades) when this is achieved, the masquerades will cease to emerge. Then, few days later, the festival celebration commences proper with the first which is *Ogonne/Ogochi*.

#### **4.4 Analysis of some rituals in *Ma afa* festival *Ogonne/Ogochi***

The *Ogonne/Ogochi* day comes up on 4<sup>th</sup> day after *Egbeocheala* (outing of the masquerade). This is the day in which every indigene of the land of Elugwu Ezike worship the spirits of their dead mothers. The items for the ritual sacrifices include: A nanny goat, for those who are well to do, or a hen for others, yams, kolanuts and palm-wine. Married women, whose mothers have died, carry these items to their father's or eldest brother's house. The eldest male in the family collects these items from them, coupled with the items of the other males in the family who descend from the same mother, and beckons on the spirit of their dead mother to come and receive their sacrifices and supplications. Everyone involved in this form of worship must be bare footed as the ground is sacred at the moment of worship. The eldest male in the family will break a kolanut and will split the kolanuts on the ground bit by bit as he supplicates on behalf of the family members involved and all will respond *Isee* (Amen) in agreement. Then, he provides the she-goat for the sacrifice as the eldest male and slaughters it on the shrine. Then, he slaughters other hens brought by other sons and married women from the same mother. After slaughtering these animals, the blood will be sprinkled on the shrines and some quantity of the palm wine be poured as libation on the shrine also. Then, the

yams will be taken to the kitchen by the wife of the eldest male in the house to be cooked and pounded. The goats and hens will also be cooked. When the food and meats are ready, the entire people present will be beckoned on to come back to the shrine and the meal will be shared to all. The *Okpara* (eldest male/son in the family) will take a ball of the pounded yam and pray with it and place it on the family shrine for the spirit of their dead mother to come and eat, then he cuts a piece of the cooked meats and also pray with it and place it on the shrine. Then, the merriment starts as the eating and drinking take over the whole place. Then, singing and dancing ensued accompanied with drumming.

Songs are essential part of African festivals through which message is communicated. The subject matters of these songs centre on events and concerns of the members of the community. These songs deal with everyday life or with traditions, belief and customs of the society. Okpewho (1975:58), in discussing the cultural significance of song, observes that songs have meant all kind of things to all manner of people at different stages of their cultural history. During the performance of these rituals, spectators, comprising visitors and family relations of individual performers crowd the arena to watch and cheer them on while others play different roles such as clapping of hands, drumming and singing. This is so because the festival is not only celebrated for its aesthetic displays but also serves as means of preserving the cultural heritage of the people. It is against this background that Echeruo (1981) contends that “drama ritual manifestation is very specifically communal in character”. He notes further that more “than any of the other arts, (drama) requires a group audience at all stages of enactment; quite often, in fact, it demands the participation of the audience in the action of song” (1973 76-77 & 80). During this celebration, the Elugwu Ezike people in other parts of

Nigeria and in Diaspora, make efforts to attend the ceremony, thereby making the *Ma afa festival* a platform for family and cultural re-union of the people. Songs as earlier stated, are essential part of African festivals through which message is communicated. The subject matters of these songs centre on events and concerns of the members of the community. These songs deal with everyday life or with traditions, belief and customs of the society. Okpewho (1975:58) in discussing the cultural significance of song, observes that songs have meant all kind of things to all manner of people at different stages of their cultural history.

### **Usoro Agaba**

#### Ezike version

1. Lead singer-Anyi emeere usoro o
- Chorus-ka anyi mere usoro Agaba
- Lead singer- ka anyi mere usoro
- Chorus-ka anyi mere usoro Agaba

#### English Version

- Lead singer-we have started performing
- Chorus- we are performing the action of the great one.
- Lead singer-let's perform the action
- Chorus- we are performing the action of the great one.

### **Anyi bu Ajaka**

#### Ezike version

1. Lead singer-Anyi bu ajaka
- Chorus – Anyi shi ne alu vuru ogwu
- Lead singer- N sigu ne anyi bu Ajaka o
- Chorus –Anyi shi ne alu vuru ogwu

#### English Version

- Lead singer- We are little palm trees
- Chorus – we were brave from the onset
- Lead singer- I say we are little palm trees
- Chorus – We were brave from the onset

The first song here describes the rituals performed to appease the ancestors and to show that these rituals and sacrifices are performed from time immemorial by only the brave ones in the land.

The first and second songs imply that the rituals and sacrifices performed are done in honour of their great ancestors.

### **Omeyimerə**

Ezike version

English Version

1. Lead singer omeyimerə, omeyimerə

Lead singer –surely, surely

Chorus- Omeyimerə Agwo enyigi  
ngala omeyimeri

Chorus- surely, the snake must climb the  
tree.

Lead singer- omeyimerə omeyimerə

Lead singer –surely, surely

Chorus- Omeyimerə agwo enyigi ngala  
omeyimerə

Chorus- surely, the snake must climb the  
tree.

This song implies that no matter what the situation may turn out to be, what must be must be. The gods of the land will always bless the people no matter the obstacles in the land and the people of the land will continue to prosper no matter the threatening setbacks. Following is the *Ogochi* ritual performance, through which Elugwu Ezike indigenes thank their personal gods for protecting their lives throughout the period of the last *Ma afa* celebration to the present day celebration. Those who are well to do kill rams or goats to appease their *chi* while others kill cocks. In Ogrute, Umuopu and Umuida communities, the *Enwe Ezeocha* initiates go to *Onu Apoolisa* (The sacred forest of *Enwe Ezeocha* deity to worship the deity as their personal (*chi*). They appease this deity with cows, goats, rams and cocks. Those who made different forms of vows in the past *Ma afa*



celebration before the deity also endeavour to redeem their vows or face the wrath of the deity; *Enwe Ezeocha*. They appease the deity because petitions of progress in businesses, fertility of the land and childbearing were all answered and granted. According to one of the informants, Odo Oyiga, the personal *Chi* of the Elugwu Ezike man provides the needs of the people.



***Ogonne* ritual performance at a family shrine**



#### ***Ogochi* ritual performance**

#### **4.5 *Ogonna***

The next ritual is the *Ogonna* ritual performance. It is performed a day after the *Ogonne/Ogochi* ritual performance day. The *Ogonna* day is the period when the spirits of the dead fathers of the people of Elugwu Ezike are appeased with sacrifices of rams/he-goats or cocks as the case may be. The married women, travel from their husbands' houses with the following items to their fathers' houses to appease the spirits of their late fathers, with cocks, he-goats/rams, tubers of yam, kolanuts and a kegs of palm wine. The male children of each family also come to their father's compound with the same items. The eldest son in the family collects these items, before the shrine of their fore-fathers, pray with a lobe of kolanut, pour libation of palm wine and slaughter the he-



goats/rams/ cocks and sprinkle their blood on the shrine as he beckons on their ancestors to come and receive the appeasement and bless the people in abundance. The slaughtered animals and the yams are taken away by the women who in turn cook and bring them back to the ritual arena. The eldest man takes some quantity of pounded yam, dips it in the soup and throws same to the shrine and on the ground for the ancestors to feed on. He also takes the hearts of the animals and throws them out for the ancestors to feed on as well. Then, the entire food is served out for all to eat and enjoy the meat which is also served and taken according to seniority. Then, the following songs could be heard as dancing ensued.

### **Ikaraga**

Ezike version

English version

Lead singer: Ikaraga ikaraga

Lead singer: A brave man a brave man

Chorus: Ikaraga merə usoro agaba

Chorus: A brave man performs the rituals for the great deity.

Lead singer: Ikaraga ikaraga

Lead singer: A brave man a brave man

Chorus: Ikaraga merə usoro agaba

Chorus: A brave man performs the rituals for the great deity.

The palm-wine is shared and all drink to satisfaction as merriment continues.

This accounts for why Enekwe (1981:50) believes that “drama flourishes best in a community which has satisfactorily transformed ritual into celebration and converted the mythic structure of action from the religious and priestly to the secular plane” As he notes further “Greek and similar societies, drama, as festival, reinforces common values, shared bonds and common taboos. It re-established links with the past and compels the living to participate in hilarity and comradeship

of a communal happening. The ritual performances outlined above, though distinct from drama in its actual context as indeed Echeruo notes, give us a sense of a religious ritual incorporating impersonation as well as spectacle which is the hallmark of the *Ma afa* festival.

Soyinka's (1986) comments are very instructive on the issues of the place of ritual in traditional drama. Although Soyinka believes that drama must be associated with the environment that gave birth to it, he contends that the history of theatrical professionalism in Nigeria, and elsewhere can be found in funeral rites and rituals. He cites the case of funeral rites that were associated with the burial rituals of the Oyo king as constitutive of theatrical engagement in traditional culture.



*Ogonna* ritual performance

According to him, “what started out-probably-as a ritualistic ruse to effect the funeral obsequies of an Oyo king had, by the midcentury (19<sup>th</sup>), evolved into a theatrical form in substance and practice” (1986:191). In other words, drama and ritual possess certain performance features, though distinct, that add to the spectacle and aesthetic grandeur of traditional theat. Soyinka’s assessment of the theatrical nuances that characterized the dramatic aesthetics of the plays of Hubert Ogunde, Kola Ogunmola, and Duro Ladipo shows that rituals played significant roles in their development. According to him, “rituals appeared with greater frequency and masquerades *chi* became a frequent feature-often, it must be added, as gratuitous insertions (1986:202). (sic)

These rituals are performed to strengthen the efficacy of the ancestral spirits. No wonder, the defaulters in the land are caught by these ancestral spirits and until the land is appeased with the stipulated items, the defaulters remain guilty and afflicted with strange sickness or madness from the gods.

#### **4.6 Elements of Drama in *Ma afa* cultural Festival performance.**

Aristotle deserves to be acknowledged in this study because of the fact, that he first laid the foundation on the elements of drama in his *Poetics* right from 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. Aristotle was the first philosopher to distinguish between literary genres. He was the first to shed a major light on the human condition. Within this treatise, *Poetics*, he outlined the six elements of a good tragedy which include: plot, character, thought, diction, song and spectacle. This treatise has informed many of the dramatic traditions of the West. We acknowledge the fact that it was Aristotle who brought these elements out and gave them some perspectives and relevance in dramatic dramaturgical discourse. However, in as much as his discussion on elements of tragedy

or drama has informed this study, we have deployed the elements in a way appropriate to Africa. This is based on the contextual dissimilarity which African drama has when compared with Western mode of drama. While aspects of ritual performance which are seen as undramatic in the West. In this study, they are part and parcel of what constitute beauty in African traditional drama cannot be freed of its story because it has to conform to Western cannons of drama. In this analysis, we have referred to the *Poetics* previously in order to contrast Aristotle's view with the one in Africa.

From the foregoing, the philosophy, structure and process involved in the revered traditional practice of *Ma afa* cultural festival is made clear. This structure is seen in the typology (stages and types), and the strict ritualistic processes that must be followed. The next step involves identifying and analyzing the unique dramatic elements of *Ma afa* cultural festival in order to appreciate it as a form of drama and theatre different from that of Western World. This is one of the major thrusts of the study.

#### **4.6.1 Plot**

Plot comprises the events that make up a story or drama, particularly as these events relate to one another in a pattern, or in a sequence, as they also relate to each other through cause and effect. The plot of a drama contributes enormously to the thematic development of the story, and the emphasis mostly falls on causality. Categories of plot include episodic, major, and character plots (Madden, 2009). The Aristotelian concept of tragedy goes through a number of aspects, which indicate a framework of plot in the classical sense. Tragedy starts with exposition (*Hermatia*) where background information is given about the drama. Then, there is rising action (*Peripeteia*) and it goes up to the climax, condescending through a series of falling actions, and

finally, the resolution of conflict – denouement. In this *Ma afa* cultural festival, there are the aspects of exposition, progression and purgation of emotions. The performers usually divulge issues about themselves that lead them to tears or laughter. Plot of *Ma afa* is an element that is developed and has capacity for further development. So much importance has been accorded to plot by literary artists, critics, scholars and teachers of drama. This is why Aristotle (1997) places so much primacy on discussing plot, which combines, language, character, thought (with logic inclusive), and action, to arrange a story. According to Aristotle (1997, P.28):

It is therefore evident that the unraveling of the plot, no less than the complication, must arise out of the plot itself, it must not be brought by the Deus ex machina-as in the medea, or in the return of the Greeks in the Iliad. The deus ex machine should be employed only for events external to the drama.

*Poetics* as the foremost Western dramatic theory, was written to prepare drama that is individualistic and not communal. This is evident in the above words. *Ma afa* as a dramatic cultural festival performance is controlled by the gods and their medium personae for the benefit of the Elugwu Ezike community. Actions, and how they are arranged, are geared towards the re-invigoration of the test between humans and cosmic powers. This is why the arrangements of events during *Ma afa* festival are relatively stable or consistent. How *Ma afa* starts, its middle and the end are not a secret to the Elugwu Ezike people, but it is imperative and expedient to view the plot in two ways during the *Ma afa* festival. The first way to view it is to acknowledge the general arrangements of *Ma afa* festival activities. This begins from sighting the moon, through the preparations to the masquerade outing and the rituals involved in the festival.

The other way to see it is to recognize the events within a particular performance of *Ma afa*, *Ogochi* ritual performance for example. Broadly speaking, we can say that a single performance of rituals in *Ma afa* festival provides a sub-plot to the earlier view, but can become

a full story on its own. *Ogochi* for instance has a beginning, middle and end. The same is applicable to the grand finale of *Ogonna*. Crow (1983) sees plot as the dramatic story telling. This implies that the story is told through the arrangement of some spectacular actions which includes prayers/incantations/chants. One realizes that the life of the *Ma afa* performers is tied to the intervention of their ancestors and deities. Every other chant he/she gives during this performance also indicates ancestors and deities in it Even if it comes in the form of lamenting, which they do a lot in *Ma afa* performance, the performers cry out for help from their ancestors and deities.

By and large, the chants and lamentations by the performers at the different stages of the performance build the actions logically to the grand finale of *Ogonna*. This has been relatively stable in practice. Relative because more people of Elugwu Ezike are springing up and there is need for the people to witness the performance in the neighbourhood. The plot of *Ma afa* will continue to develop as a result of the virtualization phenomenon affecting traditional African festivals. This will lead to an increase in the number of people who witness *Ma afa* cultural festival performance. If villages like Ogrute, Umuopu, Umuida, and Ufodo, witness *Ma afa* performance, then it means there can be further development of *Ma afa* plot.

#### **4.6.2 Characters**

Characters are the persons in drama about whom the story is told. A character is that part which an actor recreates. No drama can exist without the presence of characters. They are the mediums through which the audience gets the issues, ideas, excitement, messages and logic of a story. These characters play the serious or humorous scenes of a story. Characters can be round or flat, major or minor (Tannes 1995). In Western dramatic style, the opinions of dramatists are

carried and sustained by the major characters within the drama. Characters are people in drama with aggregate attributes and idiosyncrasies. Drama of life and artistic drama are run by human beings who exhibit these attitudes and attributes enshroud in vicissitudes. For proper verisimilitude, characters in *Ma afa* cultural festival performance include the ancestors, active performers, traditional council members, and to be fair to the situation at hand, the spectators that are people of Elugwu Ezike. Thus fair enumeration is hinged on the fact that the performance is communal and the space is fluid.

Traditional African drama cannot be outside the belief system of the people. In traditional communities, one cannot separate ritual performance from religion; they are inseparable. Soyinka (1986) introduced spirits and deities as characters because of the nature of Yoruba traditional life and their worldview. It is not out of place to identify *Enwe Ezeocha*, *Lalawu*, *Akpalocho*, etc.... .. as ancestral heroes of Elugwu Ezike land. A lot of performers mention their names during *Ma afa* festival performance. We can confidently categorize them as the supernatural characters who plead to *Ezeiteoke Abiamaura*, *Eriji Obele* (God) during *Ma afa* festival on behalf of the Elugwu Ezike people. It is believed in Elugwu Ezike land that to prove that ancestors live close to humans the elder in the house during each meal, would throw out food and palm wine on the floor or at the entrance of the house for the ancestor to consume. Active performers of *Ma afa* like the males and member of the traditional council with the head, (onyishi) play the role of a medium. They are medium personae. The male performers are cautioned not to have sexual relations with their spouses because of the sacredness of the period and their being. They are channels through which supplications and thanks reach out to cosmic powers. They are also channels through which instructions and blessings come down from cosmic powers. This is reminiscent of the Greek *Deus ex machina* (Aristotle, 1997). But in this

case, the presence of cosmic powers in the life of the community and their theatre is permanent. In Greek mythology and theatre, they only intervene when human beings cannot settle their conflicts.

The audience joins in the performance from time to time. Their motivation is partly for the entertainment it provides and majorly for the essence of it. These spectators could be former active performers that have become ‘good’ Christians now, or they are awaiting the miracle of a male child in the family. In 2017 *Ma afa* festival in Ogrute, Something extraordinary happened. A young man who refused to be initiated into *umu Enwe* (*Enwe Ezeocha*’s intitiates) showed up on the *Ogochi* day. He appeared in full costumes of the active performers and performed with them. He was heard lamenting and dancing in a spectacular manner to the amazement of the people.

#### **4.6.3 Dialogue and Language**

One of the salient elements of drama is language, which is the avenue of communication between the writer and the audience and between a performer and the audience. A performance becomes identifiable through signs and codes that are deciphered by spectators during a performance. These signs and codes usually fall within the cognitive parameters of a spectator. This is why drama relies on the resources of everyday communication like gesture, facial expressions and speech. However, language in drama is used in a creative way that is often embellished.

Aristotle (1997), in his treatise and one of the most influential books in Western civilization, *Poetics*, draws our attention to the essence of dialogue, which is tied to language. Though he rates plot above speech and diction, he still acknowledges them as basic elements of



drama. Dialogue- the conversation and speeches are in form of songs during *Ma afa*. Except the moments when the conversation is between the members of the traditional council, and the performers, or the eldest man and the initiates after the *Ogochi* feast; dialogue is usually in music form. The male performer dances and sings close to his wife, sisters or mother in-law conversing in music about their sadness or joy. But this depends on their proficiency in everyday language, and the language of performance of *Ma afa*. Ngugi (1986) argues that language is not just a means of communication but a carrier of culture. The sublime beauty of *Ma afa* dramatic practice lies in its usage of language and dialogue. Nowadays, these quintessential elements or aspect are disappearing because of the erosion of Elugwu Ezike's linguistic content, that words from alien languages like Igala and Idoma are integrated into the *Ma afa* song. The choice of words used by a performer during his stanzas determines the beauty of his/her presentation. Languages and dialogue delivered by characters move the plot and action along, provide exposition and define the distinct performers. It plays the same function in *Ma afa* festival. However, the dialogue in *Ma afa* supersedes usual interpersonal communication and advances to a supernatural level. This is in the sense that, through the performers'/community's conversation with the ancestors. This means that dialogue is both horizontal and vertical in nature, during *Ma afa* dramatic performance. It is pertinent to note that performers at *Ma afa* do not perform at the same level. The knowledge of Elugwu Ezike dialect is not same for everyone. Some performers are more proficient in it than others. In a traditional festival theatre of Africa, language is not a barrier to profound universality of music, but a cohesive dimension and clarification or that, with a fully dependent art form, which we label music. Language reverts in religious rituals and rites, like those of *Ma afa*, to its pristine existence, eschewing the sterile limits of particularization. In

traditional African theatre, as Soyinka (1986) has argued, language is still the embryo of thoughts and music where myth is their daily companion, for their language is mythopoeia.

During an interview with one of the respondents at Umuida, Enwe Ojobo, he said that his highly attractive and creative speech in music during *Ma afa*, made a woman fall in love with him and marry him. During that particular performance, a lot of spectators thronged to listen to his conversation with his mother-in-law dancing next to him. That was when the woman fell in love with him, leading to marriage. His art and quality of his voice, as well as his vivid description of his situations in life added up to his spectacular performance. This shows how presentational and imitative *Ma afa* traditional drama is. The actions may not be syllogistic or elaborate, like one would find in Western drama, but stylized.

Language in *Ma afa* is one of the major sustainers of the traditional performance. A spectator feels the difference whenever a performer uses a different language in the course of performing, even if it is just mere interjection of Igala or Idoma words or phrases. They know that whatever the supplication or lamentation, it has to be spoken in Elugwu Ezike dialect. This has been the case over the generations.

#### **4.6.4 Spectacle**

Spectacle in theatre involves aspects of scenery, costumes, and special effects in production. This concerns visual elements of performance created for the dramatic event. Spectacle is one of the attributes/qualities that have placed art, especially theatre above any other human activity. It encompasses the qualities by which the playwright creates the world and atmosphere of the play for the audience's eye. Crow (1983) calls it the 'larger than life' element in every dramatic production. There is a preponderance of it in *Ma afa* festival performance.

Spectacle can be seen here as something exhibited to view as unusual, notable, or entertaining. We are referring to the eye-catching aspects of *Ma afa* performance and the objects of curiosity or contempt in the performance. From the opening ceremony at *Onuñmuada* where the masquerades pass through, where it is believed that our ancestors emerge to relieve the people's supplications and petitions through the masquerades, one realizes that he/she is ushered into the spectacular aspects of *Ma afa* cultural festival performance.

A spectator watching these masquerades during *Ma afa* performance is taken out of the ordinary by the dance movements and the use of properties like whips, brooms, cutlasses, cocks, life lizards and clay pots with flames of fire in them on the head of the masquerades. These are not seen in everyday life, so they baffle the spectators.

During the *Ogonna*, the extra-ordinary drums, *Ekwe* and rattles are brought out and they are used to hit their likes in Ogrute community. When spectators, probably, hear that these drums are made of human skin, they marvel. They also watch the players beat the drums against one another without rings or wrist-watches, and ask why and how?. They are told that the drum will break if it is beaten with anything else like sticks. It is also said the drama cries like a human being when beaten/played by a person from another clan.

#### **4.6.5 Music/Song.**

Music is key element in drama. Music to *Ma afa* is a key artistic substance that encompasses all elements such as dialogue, rhythm, tempo and character's thematic pre-occupations. Music in *Ma afa* can stand out on its own because it is consummately operatic. Almost all the words are sung except if the eldest man in the family or clan wants to address the performers through speech. There could also be intervals at which the performance is stopped

abruptly by the officials to remind themselves of one procedure or another. A performance of a festival whose stages and procedures have only been committed to memory without documentation exposes the limit of human memory.

Music making is an activity. With dramatic orientation, music has augmented the beauty of most existing dramas. Aristotle (1997) identifies three instincts in human nature: imitation, harmony and rhythm. Music of *Ma afa* thrives in harmony, rhythm and the performer's ability to accurately draw from his/her pool of memory the lyrics of the songs he/she sings

*Ma afa* songs have the same chorus to it which all performers attune to. From one response of a chorus to another, are the different songs of lamentation that form the stanzas of the performance. Their songs and stanzas are those of lamentation and reflection. It is generally known in Elugwu Ezike as *Egwuogwu* with call and response. A lot of what the performers say in their songs elicit a lot of philosophical meanings, mixed with pity, sorrow and joy. A performer can decide to mention the names of all the dead people in his family and all the good works they did. He/she thanks the ancestors in control of Elugwu Ezike land, who are Ugwuanyi Agama Ododo Ijike and Ndinna (ancestors) for all the good works in their life.

Music in *Ma afa* does not corroborate other aesthetic elements of the performance. It is what Soyinka (1986, p.366) calls "the embodiment of the tragic spirit". Soyinka argues strongly that:

The European concept of music does not fully illuminate the relationship of music to ritual and drama among the Yoruba. We are inhibited even by recognition of a universality of concepts in the European initiative grasp of the emotions of the will.

*Ma afa* music, like that of the Yoruba, goes beyond the satisfaction of the emotions and will of the performer. *Ma afa* music stakes to the world of the Elugwu Ezike people the invisible ladder

to the lofty stages of the dwelling God and the ancestors. This cosmic interaction between the Elugwu Ezike people and their ancestors is enabled through music. The performers do this through their myth poetic and experiential stanzas of music. This is performed to the amusement or awe of the audience. *Ma afa* music pulls together the communal spirit and philosophy of the Elugwu Ezike people, in seeking help from the ancestors for future challenges, as community and as individuals. The nature of *Ma afa* music is intensive. The nature of its language and poetry is highly charged, symbolic and therapeutic. This is evident in the multiplicity of blessings experienced by the community. People get physical, spiritual and traditional healing when the gods come to fight against malevolent spirits. Through *Ma afa* music, the confusion and maze in the land are cleared. To the Elugwu Ezike people, *Ma afa* music is phenomenal, purifying and re-affirming fundamental component of their life as a people. Ordinarily, people do not divulge their secrets before an audience, but the *Ma afa* festival enables this to herald a better future. It gives the premise for showing respect to the ancestral spirits which are believed to help the living solve the problems they encounter in everyday life. People offer prayers to these ancestors in the hope that they will be blessed with success in marriage, farming and child bearing.

Of serious importance are the musical instruments used during *Maafa* festival. From the beginning of the festival to the grand finale, there are regular musical instruments that are used, and they fall within three of the musical instrument classification namely: Membranophones, acrophones, and idiophones.

Membranophonic instruments are those that produce sound primarily by way of a vibrating stretched membrane, such as drums. Membranophonic instruments are from animal skin, treated and stretched over the hollow of a carved wood, or metal, (*Abia/Ida*) and pot drum

(Idu). This drum is beaten by the drummers during the festival. A special group that performs the Okanga music may also be invited during the celebration and sometimes, the young and old in the performance can also beat the Okanga music.

The main drum is used by the lead drummer while the supporting or auxiliary drummers have the small drums.

There are also aerophonic and diaphonic instruments used during *Ma afa* festival. Aerophonic instruments are instruments whose tones are produced by a vibrating column of air. In the pipe organ, the column of air is set into vibration by mechanical means. The only aerophonic instrument is *osu* (Fulte). This is used to herald or usher in the traditional royal council. It is used by middle-aged or aged individuals.

Idiophones are instruments that create sounds primarily by the whole instrument vibrating; this is without the use of strings or membranes. Idiophone instruments which are self-sounding instruments when struck, scrubbed, shaken or hit with other objects on their bodies, include, long metal gong (orumunyi) and small wooden gourds (*Chaka chaka, or Ishaka.*) With all these instruments used to create loud symphony, the song/music leader's voice has to be heard above it, for performance during the dance.

#### **4.6.6 DANCE**

If an Elugwu Ezike person says *egwu*, he or she refers to three activities: dance, song and play. These activities are all dramatic and theatrical in form and content.

Dance is undoubtedly one of the key aesthetics in the festival because of its expressive qualities. In *Ma afa*, as in many traditional African communities, drumming and dancing go *pari*

*passu*. It is a source of joy to all the Elugwu Ezike people. Wherever boys and girls are in Africa, there is dancing. Dance in *Ma afa* celebration is an expression of joy and delight for the fact that the ancestors have arrived to grant the people of the land bountiful harvest, fruitfulness on the part of procreation, progress in business, open doors in marriages, etc. This is why Akporobaro (2012) makes it clear that songs, dance and drumming, are the purest and commonest forms of emotional, psychological, and social entertainment in the African world and in all cultures. Songs, dance and some forms of drumming, which generate rhythmic movements, often go hand in hand, in a complex mutual enhancement and aesthetic communication. The beauty of dance during *Ma afa*, depends on its music, and *vice versa*.

*Ma afa* dance formation is cyclical and involves active performers and the audience. This is due to the fluid nature of the conceptions of theatre space in African which is in circles around the performers, and is able to drift in and out of the performance. The audience either closes in or fans out depending on the space required for performance during the dance.

*Ma afa* dance is dimensional and polycentric in the sense that all parts of the body are used in the dance. There is a lot of foot dance and the body movements that are passionate. These movements are uniquely scintillating to the men who dance to the rhythm of drums and music. The movements express valour, courage and thanksgiving. It is noted by Avorgbedor (2003), that man is ontologically an expressive being, and both actions and reactions consequently permeate modes of life and living.

Drama and theatre hinge on visible and spectacular actions that are comprehensive and have causality (cause and effect). *Ma afa* dance possesses these qualities and even goes beyond that. Movement is a visible expression of a state of mind. The dance transcends mere social

activity; it is done in appreciation to God and the ancestors for their benevolence. The dance movement is replete with symbolism and image. The sheathed cutlass (*Awabata*) is shaken and raised high in the air by the male performers to symbolize victory and thanksgiving to God and the ancestors for their grace. *Ma afa* is a coinage of two words *Ma* (spirits, ancestors, masquerade) and *afa* (yearly so the awabata is shaken in thanksgiving to the gods for granting victory to the living). The movements and pictures derived are images of warriors of Elugwu Ezike land. The women raise their hands to the air also in thanksgiving for bounty. They shake their waists and clap their hands in appreciation to the gods as part of the performances in the festival.

By this movement, tensions, struggles and aspirations are expressed. This is because dance, according to Bakare (2008), is “a language which encompasses geographical locations, biological temperaments, religious beliefs, political and historical experiences, social practices and economic peculiarities of people”. And so, *Maafa* dance can be described as both ritual and social. It is ritualistic because it is borne out of the ritual/religious festival of expressing a yearly appreciation to the gods in Elugwu Ezike land. And social because there is so much funfair, interaction, and community participation by people who are appeasing the gods with food items, drinks, musics and dances as well as other important items meant for the celebration and for beautification of the shrine such as *odo*; yellow local powder, *awo*; coloured feather, *Ike ekwa* ;coloured piece of cloth, and *Osikiji*;dark blue cloured piece of cloth. (sic)

#### **4.6.7. Costumes, Make-up and Properties**

Costumes, make-up and properties are essential factures of a dramatic production. The use of costume is not merely to clad the body of an actor. The actor moves and speaks in the



costume before spectators. In the same vein, make-up does more than just decorate the face or body of an actor or performer. These two have essential socio-cultural significance and are central to the aesthetic value of a performance. Properties that are used during a performance also have essence that supersedes mere profanity and goes metaphysical. These properties are symbolic and contribute significantly to the artistic display of the performer.

The uniqueness of *Ma afa* within the axis of the festival theatre in Africa is majorly because the costumes, make-up and properties are symbolic and contribute significantly to the artistic display of the performer. These dramatic elements aid in pointing to the philosophy, struggles with both nature and the environment, and the metaphysical link of the Elugwu Ezike people to powers within their cosmos. These costumes, make-up, and their usage are combined in nature.

Utoh-Ezeajugh (2006, p.33) describes costume and make-up as:

“...the visual elements in any African performance. They are the effects used to transform a dancer, singer, drummer, bride, groom and any other performer or participant in any of the numerous festivals, into the image or character they are to portray. Before costumes and make-up developed into specialized arts in the theatre, they existed in the African society and played similar roles in the life of the people as they do in the theatre. They constitute an essential part of the people’s heritage”.

These qualities and functions of costumes and make-up are true, but in *Maafa*, they also provide what Asigbo (2013, p.3) calls ‘Spiritual fortification’. The costumes that members of the traditional ruling council performers wear are identified by the gods and ancestors. These men make use of palm fronds which they tie on their left leg to show their sacredness and preparation to enter the altar to worship the gods. The *Agu* (Priest) wears the animal skin which is gotten from the ram slaughtered to coincide with the blood spilled on the altar during sacrifices. This blood of the white ram bind the gods to the land of Elugwu Ezike. This is why it is proper to

infer that, what costume is to a masquerade, is the same to a performer during *Ma afa*. This is also why Ododo (2015), instead of naming the Ekuechi performer with a different name, he names him “facekuerade”. The reason being that the two performers (Masquerade and facekuerade), have the same attributes except that one lacks a mask.

In *Ma afa* festival performance, costumes, make-ups and properties are materials that have been created to suit the purpose of the performance. These sacred regalia are only used for *Ma afa* festival performance, except *òpù* (Local trumpet made from animal horn). That is used in other performances like on *ufu* day (Day of worshipping the deities), especially in Ogrute, Imufu and other places who go up to the shrine once in 28 days to worship the gods. Masquerades also make use of heavy costumes and masks which are beautifully decorated.

#### **4.6.8. Rhythm**

Rhythm can be defined as the timing and pace of drama, and also refers to the beats or tempo of the performance. In drama, rhythm must be altered, regardless of the drama’s length, and it corresponds to the emotional state of the performers.

The categories of rhythm in drama fit the atmosphere of the *Ma afa*. These categories are as follows:

- Rhythm in exchange of dialogue between performers during singing and dancing. This happens a lot during *Ma afa* as performers continuously sing to lament to each other the happenings in their lives.

- Rhythm in the movement of a performer; this is seen in his/her dance steps, which are synchronized.
- Rhythm in the lyrics of *Ma afa* performers.
- Rhythm in the repetition of words and phrases during *Ma afa* performance
- Rhythm in the repetition of words and phrases during *Ma afa* performance.
- Rhythm in the non-vocal sounds made by *Ma afa* performers like rattling of the waist rattles worn by the priest.

It is important to realize that these categories of rhythm in *Ma afa* make the pattern to be multidimensional. It also adds to the beauty of the performance as it gives viewers a sense of variety and roundness.

Rhythm is the movement or procedure with uniform or patterned recurrence of a beat, accent, or the likes. In music, it is pattern of regular or irregular pulse caused by the occurrence of strong and weak melodic and harmonic beats. In *Ma afa*, it is multidimensional rhythmic patterns that dictate dramatic intensity. *Ma afa* music and dance are the fulcra of the performance's rhythmic patterns. The dance is uniform; the chorus which springs with it has some parts that harmonize to give the piquant symphony. The corroboration by the performers' different stanzas add to the complexity of *Ma afa* rhythms. It is not now a matter of double rhythm but perhaps a triple or more of such rhythms that are understood by the Elugwu Ezike people within the length and breadth of their cosmological life.

#### **4.6.9 Arena of Event (setting).**

The Arena of *Ma afa* performance is both physical and metaphysical. It is physical because it is a geographical setting within the landscape of Elugwu Ezike. On the other hand, it

is metaphysical because it goes beyond the physical space on which the event takes place, to the spiritual realm. The performance either takes place near the house of a chief or in the house of the eldest man in the family. This is the physical designation of the arena. During the masquerade outing, they converge in the central market square of village to perform before the existing audience to watch them display their magical powers in diverse forms.

The arena of *Ma afa* becomes metaphysical setting because it is a microcosm of the entire universe of the Elugwu Ezike people. The atmosphere is charged because of the presence of the supper-performers, the ancestors and above all, God. They are believed to come down and intermingle with the Elugwu Ezike people. This is why, in the course of the performance; some performers get possessed by an inspiration from the gods, reminiscent of the muse of the Greeks. A performer woos the ancestors down to dwell with the people through his lamentable lyrics. These ‘super actors’ can only meet the people at an arena designated for the performance. This confirms the saying that ‘belief is worth more than one hundred interests’

#### **4.7.0 Audience**

Audience, as one of the basic components of theatre, is active in *Ma afa*. Usually a performance is a direct delivery to the audience. The audience is often involved in the actualization and recreation of a performance. The artiste is usually receptive to the audience’s reactions, expectations, and cultural assumptions. Unlike the writer, the performer in *Ma afa* has the audience at the moment of creation that reacts to the performance.

Just like most traditional African festivals, the audience is a participating one, and its part of the community of the active performers. Members of the audience come and go at will depending on force of spontaneity wrought by the tempo, rhythm and inspiration experienced by

the audience. The scenario is fluid. The performance is for all present at the arena. Without audience participation, the beauty of *Ma afa* is lost; there is no performance.

It is as a result of the audience that *Ma afa* becomes profoundly interactive. The audience must join in the dance and also say the chorus. Some members of the audience also perform with some member of the traditional council. The level of participation of the audience forces the active performers to heighten their level of performance. All of them are aware of the essence of the festival, which can only be realized through a profound participation that is not slipshod or slovenly. The audience knows that every performance of *Ma afa* has to fulfill a high level of expectation. This is why the audience participates to ensure the success of the performance. At times, the only way to differentiate the audience and the performers is through costumes and properties that are used.

#### **4.7.1 The negative Impact of Westernization on *Ma-afa* cultural festival performance in Elugwu Ezike**

There are some external influences in the form of Christianity, Islamism and Education/Migration which have brought negative influences on the performance and appreciation of *Ma afa* festival in Elugwu Ezike.

Christianity and Islamic religions have negatively affected *Ma afa* festival performances in Elugwu Ezike. Some of the indigenes of Elugwu Ezike who take part in *Ma afa* festival performance have discontinued due to their new found faith in Islam and Christianity. This has reduced the number of the performers during the festival. This is because both Christian and Moslem religions are antagonistic to the practices and the art of *Ma afa* festival performance in Elugwu Ezike. According to Sofola (1973:13), “the white missionaries deliberately imposed the

Western culture upon the traditional cultures. They condemned African customs and traditions. Traditional worshippers are seen and named 'heathens' and 'back ward people', thereby relegating African religion and traditional performances to the background". The arrival of Christianity and Islam, contributes to the gradual decline in the participation of traditional religion and the performances in Elugwu Ezike. Many people in the town consented to Islam or Christianity and alienate themselves from the traditional rites, rituals, beliefs and performances. The converts also prevented members of their families from identifying with the traditional religions and performances.

According to Adonu Idoko, an elder from Imufu community, like every other community, Islam and Christianity came into Elugwu Ezike with education, and indoctrinated youths with religious dogmas through education. Therefore, there may not be any educated youth who would to part from religious dogma to traditional religion, thereby leaving traditional religion in the hand of old illiterates and their non-schooled children. At present, it is very difficult to get youth joining most of the traditional performances, rather they prefer to be in audience. If this situation is allowed to continue, all knowledge about traditional beliefs, customs and traditions of the town may be lost.

The establishment of Western schools affect the active participation of the indigenous performances. In Elugwu Ezike, the Christians established several schools like Macglade Secondary School and others while the Muslims established centre for Islamic Education and Development. The encroachment of this foreign mode of education made many people to see festivals and other indigenous traditions as things of the past and outdated activities. The rate at which the elites travel abroad for studies, mostly in the United Kingdom and the United States of America keep increasing in thousands every year. The foreign educated members of the elite are

undoubtedly carriers of new ways, new culture and new ideas, which make them hate and criticize African cultural practices more.

Migration is another factor which affects the traditional arts and performances tremendously in Elugwu Ezike. This is as a result of technological advancement and the search for better living conditions. Most people leave the villages for the cities for reasons like Western education white-collar jobs and businesses. These make the people, most especially the youths to forget about their oral traditions and lead to the subsequent decline in these traditional performances. Some talented and active performers of most of these indigenous activities also leave the village for the cities in search of greener pastures that can help them create more wealth and enjoy life better in the society, as most of the oral arts cannot give them what they need.

Modernity has contributed extensively to the life pattern of Elugwu Ezike people. Individuals are now adopting new ways of life in order to fit into the new pattern of living. Basically, there is nothing new about cultures changing, running into the other. Culture means, cultivation while changes and renewals are inherent parts of it. Though globalization and modernity have a huge effect on our cultural practices, Norberg (2003:11) is of the view that:

If we try to freeze certain cultural patterns, in time and highlight them as distinctively American or Thai or French or Swedish or Brazillian or Nigerian, they cease to be culture. They cease to be a living part of us and instead become museum relics and folklore.

The essential western definition of culture identifies with a cultural transformation that is generated by the clash of culture. The process of modernization for instance allows two different cultures to either co-exist or create a dynamic or transformation to a new and third type of culture. There will be conflict between the two cultures. This is what the western culture has done to African cultural practices, whereby only a few struggle to survive. However, the

dynamic state of culture simply indicates a coexistence of two different cultures. This coexistence does not translate either identity in this case. It is an acculturation of identity which Elugwu Ezike people and Africans at large should strongly resist.

The effects modernism has on traditional practices in Nigeria are significant and ever increasing, though some of these changes have reduced the traditional potency of most of the indigenous practices. The many forms of modernity, as noted by scholars all over the world, are hidden in economics, technology, culture, social, politics, and environment. In the area of economy and commerce, business minded individuals, companies and organizations see the festival period as a good time to market their products, in that, a lot of people from different places will grace the occasion.

Modern technologies and electronic gadgets have tremendous negative impact on the festivals in Elugwu Ezike town.

According to Giwa (2002): 44. Introduction of sophisticated machines such as television, video, radio, cd, camera etc made people prefer to spend their leisure time watching these gadgets rather than listening or watching the live performance.

It is worthy of note that, watching the performance live as it happens adds to its aesthetic because the audience in some cases are deeply involved and augment the performer. This keeps the performance very lively and indeed interesting. Finnegan (1970) is of the view that audience participation in a performance insinuates itself through questions, exclamations, laughter and comments from the audience. This feature of the audience actively participating in oral performance has gradually declined in recent years. People can watch some performances from the comfort of their rooms through live transmission of the performances by the media crew.



Ihekweazu (1985) is of the view that:

The same technology which relegates traditional culture into the background is trying to reactivate it artificially for purely decorative purpose. Traditions that are dying in the villages are perpetuated on the television screen.

Also, some urban settlers who normally travel to the village to watch and participate in the indigenous performances no longer do so, because they can get the video coverage of such performances and watch in the comfort of their homes. With this, the face to face aspect of performance is lost. Thus, the mood, the feeling and their infections are non-existent.

With the advancement in technology and communication infrastructures, the world enters into a new dawn, an integrated world of states melting into nations and nations into modern or global community. These advancements also affect everything about culture, such as languages, foods, behaviours, clothes, lifestyles, artistic works and so on.

Most of the people in the modern world rely mostly on the modern life style and tradition rather than their indigenous and past traditions. In order to prevent these oral traditions from being totally lost, it is necessary and important for the people most especially the literate or educated elites to encourage the indigenous art and its continuity in the society. This is because if oral traditions are lost we are also lost for our oral traditions are part of us.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

#### 5. Introduction

This chapter summarizes the findings of the study and covers the conclusion. The chapter emphasizes the abundance of drama and theatre in traditional African festival. Lastly, the chapter makes some recommendations on how to improve the practice of *Ma afa* to benefit its communities and the outer world.

This research aimed at an attempt to trace the history of *Ma afa* festival, highlight the elements of drama, examine the rituals associated with the festival and the impact of modernization on the performance of Elugwu Ezike *Ma afa* festival performance.

#### Four main research questions were:

1. What is the origin of *Ma afa*’?
2. What are the dramatic elements of drama in *Ma afa* festival?
3. To what extent are rituals associated with *Ma afa*?
4. What are the negative impacts of Westernization on the celebration of *Ma afa* festival performance in Elugwu Ezike?

The study was undertaken in Elugwu Ezike Igbo in Igbo Eze North Local Government Area of Enugu state. The main research methods used were face to face interviews, participant observation and content analysis. Apart from participating in the festival performance, information about the festival were also collected by using audio tape recorders.

## 5.1 Summary of Research Findings

This study reveals that *Ma afa* cultural festival in Elugwu Ezike is as old as the town itself and is deeply rooted in myths and beliefs of the people. The festival is performed annually to venerate the ancestors of the land. The festival is always celebrated in the months of July and August and as it is properly known to be *Egba ọnwa Ishi and Ọnwa esaa* of the Igbo calendar months. The study further reveals that numerous deities in each of the 36 communities in Elugwu Ezike are appeased annually during this festival with yams, kolanuts, palmwine, cocks/hens, goats, rams, cows, etc.

The study also reveals that there is abundance of elements of drama embedded in *Ma afa* festival such as: plot, character, dialogue, dance, music/song, costume, make-up, properties, rhythm, audience, and setting. These dramatic elements do not have to tally with the western specifications of drama and theatre.

Another finding of the study is that the dramatic elements and rituals in *Ma afa* cultural festival are connected to the ontology and cosmology of the Elugwu Ezike people. They form part of what defines their identity and ascendancy of ideals. The people believe in it and so it is religious to them. The study confirms the role of rituals in the performance as the basis of the dramatic elements embedded in the festival. The study achieves this by closely examining the different stages of the performance within the festival from the beginning to the grand finale with the aid of the infracultural theory recommended as the anchor of the study.

The study also reveals and presents how westernization through Christianity, Islam, education, and migration has influenced the peoples' participation in the festival. The study also reveals that the duration of the festival performance varies in the town. This is because

Ogrute which comprises of Umuida, Umuopu and Ogrute-ulo celebrates *Ma afa* festival first in the month of July which is *Onwa ishi* in the Igbo calendar months while other communities in Elugwu Ezike celebrate *Ma afa* festival in the month of August which also is *Onwa esaa* according to the Igbo calendar months.

It is also clear that in Ogrute communities, *Ma afa* festival lasts for the period of one month while in the other communities in Elugwu Ezike, the festival spans through the period of three days.

The study also reveals that each of the thirty six communities in Elugwu Ezike worships their individual deities at the festive period because each community sees these deities as the gods in charge of each community and it is only through appeasing the ancestors that these gods could be reached.

The study also reveals that the ancestors visit the people through different kinds of masquerades that feature some days before the main festival day to clear the way for the deities. *Ma afa*, according to the study has been found to be a medium through which the people transcends to the higher powers of *Ezeitoke Abiamaura* (God almighty) through the ancestors, through the deities to tap blessings of children, good health, protection from enemies, and bountiful harvests.

The study also reveals that *Ma afa* festival promotes peace, mutual cooperation, unity and re-union among the Elugwu Ezike people.

## 5.2 Conclusions

Efforts have been made from the preceding chapters to trace the history of *Ma afa* festival, highlight the dramatic elements in the festival, examine the extent rituals are involved in the festival and to show the impact of westernisation on the performance of *Ma afa* festival. In order to carry out his study and achieve the aforementioned objectives, some research instruments were used, namely face to face interviews, participant observation and assessment of documented data.

Based on the above mentioned findings, we arrived at the conclusion that:

*Ma afa* is a festival that is deeply rooted in the myths of the people of Elugwu Ezike. *Ma afa* is a ritualistic tradition of the people of Elugwu Ezike. The elements of drama embedded in the festival confirm that there are dramas and theatres in *Ma afa* festival performances of Elugwu Ezike people and in other traditional African festivals of sub-Saharan Africa. Every society has its own dramatic forms that are indigenous to it. In the Western world, drama depends on concrete textual traditions. But in Africa, the traditional mode is typically oral, kinaesthetic and fluid, allowing for multi-level participation. Therefore, *Ma afa* is a drama.

The performance of *Ma afa* festival aids towards the maintenance of ordered relationships, unity, cohesion, continuity and progress in Elugwu Ezike land. This is why a breach in the procedures and social codes of the festival comes with sanctions.

*Ma afa* has witnessed changes and mutations as a result of its exposure to forces occasioned by the undetermined terrain in arts. Forces such as Westernisation, have inadvertently presented the need to explore *Ma afa* festival to be utilized in building suspenseful plots in drama and films.

### 5.3 Recommendations for further study

This study concentrated on the dramatic elements and rituals embedded in *Ma afa* festival performance. There are however, areas that have not been explored. Hence, the recommendations:

- i. a further research into the linguistic aspects of *Ma afa* because of the centrality of language to the practice. Without the language, there would not be any practice like *Ma afa* festival in Elugwu Ezike;
- ii. that a comparative study be carried out between *Ma afa* festival and other festivals in Elugwu Ezike land like *Omabe*, *Inyama* festival and so on to confirm the presence and abundance of dramatic and theatrical elements in those festivals; it can also be compared to other festivals in Nigeria or Africa to ascertain the similarities and differences in performance dynamics; and
- iii. that scholars such as historians, anthropologists, sociologists, folklorists and philosophers, can explore *Ma afa* festival to aid in spreading information about the festival and its importance to Elugwu Ezike land and beyond.

## REFERENCES

- Acquah, F. (2011). The impact of African Religious beliefs and cultural values on Christian-Muslim relations in Ghana from 1920 through the present. An unpublished *Ph.D Thesis* in Theology, university of Exerter, Ghana.
- Ademiju, B. O. (2012). The aesthetics of Ladeoko festival of Isona ward in lleha, Nigeria. *Ibadan Journal of Humanities Studies*. 2 (1), 21-22.
- Akurugu, M. (2015). Elements of Drama in Ghananian Traditional Festivals: A case study of the FEOK Festival among the Builsa people of the upper East Region of Ghana. An unpublished *Ph.D. Thesis*, Department of languages and liberal studies, Tamale, polythetic, P.O. Box 3 E/E Tamale: Ghana.
- Alembi, E. (2002). *The construction of Abanyole Perception of death through oral funeral Poetry*. *Ph.D Thesis*, Department of Folklore, University of Helsinki, Finland.
- Aligwekwe, P. (1991). *The continuity of traditional values in the African society: The Igbo of Nigeria*. Owerri: Totan.
- Amankulor, J. (1981). Ekpe festival as religious ritual' and dance drama. In Y. Ogunbiyi (Ed). *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book*. Barth: The Pitman Press.
- Annis & David (1978) A contextual theory of epistemic justification *American philosophical quarterly*, 15, 213-219.
- Anthonen, P. (1994). Ethno poetic analysis and finish oral verse. In A.L. Siikala, and S. Vakimo, (Eds). *Songs beyond the Kalevala: Transformation of oral poetry* (pp13-18). Tampere publishing ltd.
- Aristotle (1997). *Poetics* (Dover thrift Edition, Unabridged). New York: Dover publications Inc.
- Asante, K.M. (1996): The principle issues in afro centric inquiry. In Asante K.M. & Abarry A.S. (Eds), *African intellectual heritage*. Philadelphia. Temple University Press, 256-261.
- Asigbo, A. (2013). Oral performance as therapy: The example of perry-como Okoye. In O. Okagbue (Ed). *African performance review*. London: Adous and Abbey, 74-79.
- Avorgbedor, D. (2003). The presentation, transmission and realization of song texts: A psycho-musical Approach in Okpewho I. (Ed). *The oral performance in Africa*. Ibadan: Spectrum, 208.
- Awolawu, J.O & Dopemu, P.A. (1979). *West African traditional religion*: Ibadan: Onibonoje Press.
- Awoonor, K. (1996). *The Beast of the Earth*. A Survey of the History, culture and literature of Africa, South of the Sahara. Anchor Books. New York.
- Bakare, O. (2008). The contemporary choreographer in Nigeria: A realistic culture preserver or a harmful distortionist. In Yerima A, Bakare O. & Udoka A. (Eds) *Critical Perspective on dance in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Kraft Books, 64.

- Banham, M & Wakes, C. (1976) *Africa theatre today*. Pitman London.
- Bello-Kano; I. (2002). The structure of authorship: The philosophy of genetic structuralism. *FAIS Journal of humanities*, 2 (2) 235.276.
- Brockett, O.G. (1998). *History of Theatre: Allyn and Bacon Inc. Nostan. p.1.*
- Carlson, M. (1996). *Performance: A critical introduction*. London: Routledge.
- Clark, J.P. (1966). Aspects of Nigerian drama in *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A critical Source book* Ogunbiyi, Y. (Ed). Bath: The Pitman press.
- Crow, B. (1983). *Studying drama*. Essex: Longman.
- De Saussure, F. (1974). *Course in general linguistics*. London: Fontana/Collins.
- Durkeim, E. (1961). *The elementary forms of the religious life*. Trans, Joseph ward Swain, New York: Colilier Books.
- Eagleton, T. (1999). *Literary theory: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell publishing.
- Echekwube, A.O. (2005). *The basic principles of African no italics philosophy in M. Dukor Lagos: Essence Library. African philosophy and pathology of Godhood and traditionalism.*
- Echeruo, M. (1973). "The Dramatic Limits of Igbo Ritual" *Research in African Literature* Vol. 4. No.1 P.21.
- Echeruo, M.J.C. (1981). The Dramatic Limits of Igbo Rituals. In Y. Ogunbiyi (Ed) *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria, A critical source Book*, Lagos: The pitman Press.
- Eliade, M. (1981). *The sacred and profane*. New York Brace and World Inc.
- Embu, R. (2011). *The changing form of Masking Art in Eggon theatre of Nasarawa state*. A ph.D Thesis Submitted to the department of theatre arts, University of Ibadan.
- Enekwe, O. (1981). *Myth, Ritual and drama in Igbo land in Drama and Theatre in Nigeria*. In Y. Ogunbiyi (Ed), *A Critical source Book*. Lagos: Nigeria Magazine.
- Ezenne, D. (2005). *Globalization and culture in the Twenty first century: A study of Nkadioka Igbu-ichi cultural festival*. University, zaria.
- Finnegan, R. (1970). *Oral literature in Africa*. London: Oxford University Press Ltd.
- Finnegan, R. (1977). *Oral poetry in its nature, significance and social context*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Firth, R. (1969). *Essays on social Organization and values*. London: the Athlone Press Ltd.
- Frederickson, I. (1980). *The New encyclopedia Britannica, Maropedia: Chicago Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc, Vol.7.*



- Forntier, M. (1997). *Theatre theory*. London: Routledge.
- Gav. L. R. (2005). *Educational research competences for analysis and application in Upper Saddle Rivers*. New Jersey Per Entiei Hall Inc. and Simon Schuster Company.
- Giwa (2002). *Kuhuno the Art of Storytelling Among the people of Jabba land of southern Kaduna*: Kaduna State.
- Gold Schmidt, W. (1966). *Comparative Functionalism: An essay in Anthropological theory*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Haralambos, H.M. (2002). *Sociology: Themes and perspectives* (5<sup>th</sup> Ed). London: Collins Education.
- Haryilahti, L. (2001). Substrates and registers: Trends in ethnocultural research. In U. Wolf-knuts, and A. Kaivola-Bregenboj, (Eds). *Pathways*. 4 (1), (866-92).
- Hymes, D. (1982). Narrative form as a grammar of experience: Native American and a Glimpse of English *Journal of Education* 164 (2); 121-125.
- Idegu, E.U. (1988). The Socio-cultural Significance of Ogani festival Among the Igala People. *Unpublished M.A., Dissertation*, Post graduate school A.B.U. Zaria.
- Idowu, E.B. (1973). *African traditional religion*. A definition. London: SCM press.
- Ihekweazu, E. (1985). *Reading in African Humanities*: Enugu: Fourth Dimension publisher
- Iwuagwu, A.O. (1997). *African traditional religion: A student Handbook*. Owerri: Ager.
- Jenks, Chris (1993) *Culture* Routledge, London.
- Kafewo, A.S. (2005). Understanding Nigerian History and culture through its theatre and drama' in S.A. Ajayi (Ed). *African culture and Civilization*. Ibadan: Attantis, 197-210.
- Kalu, O.U. (2003). The embattled gods. Christianization of Igboland. Lagos: Minaji.
- Kyriakidis, E. (2007). *The Archeology of ritual*. Costen institute of archeology, UCLA publications.
- Leach, E. (1976). *Culture and communication*. Cambridge: Cambridge, University Press.
- Madden, David (2009). *Plot. Microsoft Encarta (DVD)*> Redmond WA: Microsoft corporation, 2008.
- Mahood, M. (1974). *Drama in new-born states*. Paris. Presence Africaine
- Malinowski, B. (1914). *Myths in primitive psychology, magic science and other science*. New York: Free press.
- Malinowski, B. (1954). *Magic, science and religion*. New York: Double day Anchor Books.

- Mathias, B. (2014). Socio-Religious significance of Ikoro and Ekpe Festivals in Akwete Ndoki community of Abia state, Nigeria in *international journal of social science and Humanity*, vol. 4, No5, sept. 2014.
- Mazrui, A. (1996). 'Africa's tripartite heritage: Towards cultural synthesis. In M.K Asante and A.S Abarry (Eds) *African intellectual heritage*. Philadelphia: Temple University press, 201-217.
- Metuh, E.I. (1985). *African Religion in Western Conceptual Schemes: The problem of interpretation*. Ibadan: Claverianum press.
- Mbiti, J.S. (1969). *African religion and philosophy*. London: Heinemann.
- Mbiti, J.S. (1977). *Introduction to African religion* London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd.
- Mills, M. (1991) *Rhetorics and politics in Afghan traditional Story-telling*. Philadelphia: Philadelphia press ltd.
- Ngugi, W.T. (1986) *Decolonizing the mind: The politics of languages in African literature*. London: Heinemann.
- Nkala, N.O. (1990). Traditional African grammar An Ancestral Deformity). In M.C Nsofor (Ed). *Ugo Magazine* 7, 15.
- Nketia, J. (1974). *The music of Africa*. New York: W.W. Notary.
- Norberg (2003). In defense of Global Capitalism: Sweden: Cato Institution.
- Nwala, T.U. (1985). *Igbo philosophy*: Lagos: Litramed.
- Nwankwo, C. (1977). Igu aro: Festival of traditional drama at Nri. Odinani: *Journal of the Qdinani Museum, Nri, Anambra State of Nigeria*.
- Nwanna, C. (2017). "Managing Masquerade festivals for tourism and economic gains: A study of Mmanwu festival in Anambra state. *A Journal Sociology and Anthropology*: Nnamdi Azikiwe university Awka 5 (7): 556-561.
- Nwoga, D. (1984). *The Supreme God as a stranger in Igbo Religious though*. MBAISE: Hawk Press.
- Nworgu, B.G. (2006). *Education Research: Basic issues and Methodology*. (enlarged edition) Nsukka: University Trust Publishers.
- Nzewi, M. (197). *Music, dance, drama and the stage in Nigeria*. (Ed) In Y. Ogunbiyi (Ed).
- Obah, A. (2013). Ukwuani folk media performances: The recapitulation of the people's world view. An unpublished *M.A. Dissertation* Department of theater and film studies. University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Obiechina, E. (1973). *Literature: traditional and Modern. The Nsukka Environment*. Enugu: Forth Dimension Publisher.

- Odetola, T.O & Ademola. A (1985) *sociology: An introductory Africa Text macmillan*; Ibadan.
- Ododo, Enessi Sunday (2015). *Facekuerade theatre: a performance model from Ebira-Ekuechi: Maidugri: Sonta.*
- Ododo, S.O. (2001). Theatrical aesthetics and Functional valves of Ekuechi Masquerade ensemble of the Ebira people in Nigeria, *In African study monograph 22 (1)*, 10-14.
- Odunko, A.N. (2006). The dramatic elements in Ogugo chi festival in Ezeaagu L.G.A. In Enugwu state. A *M.A. Dissertation*. Dept. of Linguistics. Igbo and other Nigeria. Languages. Nsukka.
- Ogunba, O. (1978) Introduction in Ogunba and A. Irele (Eds) *Theatre in Africa*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.
- Ojo, M. O. (2012). Oro cult: The traditional way of political administration, judiciary system and religious clergy among the pre-colonial Yoruba natives of Nigeria. *Journal of international Social Research*. 5. (53) 1-
- Ojo, O.O. (2015). An evaluation of the dramatic aesthetics of Emidim and Igbo festivals of Omuooke ekiti. An unpublished *M.A dissertation*, Deparetment of English and Literary Studies, facultuy of Arts, Ahmedu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria.
- Okebalama, C.N. (2015). *Introduction to Igbo Oral Literature*. Mimeograph for Undergraduate Students, University of Nigeria Nsukka.
- Okodo, I. (2009). New Yam Festival: The general Prayers of Igbo People of Nigeria. *Essence Interdisciplinary and International Journal of Philosophy*
- Okpewho (1975) . *The Epic in Africa*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Okpewho, I. (1983). *Myth in Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Okpewho, I. (2003). Introduction: the study of performance. In Okpewho I. (Ed). *The oral performance in Africa*. Ibadan: Spectrum books limited, 1-3.
- Okwori, J. (1987). *The Performer of African Society*. A Paper presented at English Department Seminar, A.B.U. Zaria.
- Olaniyan, T. (2007). Festivals, rituals and drama in Africa: In T. Olaniyan and A. Quayson (Eds), *African literature: An anthology of criticisms and theory*, Victoria: Blackwell publishing, 353-363.
- Omoko, P.E. (2016). "The dramatic and poetic contents of the Idju Festival of the Agbarha-Ame people of Warri, Delta state, Nigeria" in *Institute of African studies*, carlegon university (Ottawa, Canada) vol. 5.
- Omosule, S.O. (2009). Art and resolution: A case study of conflicts in indigenous scripts. *LASU Journal of Humanities* 6 (1), 18-20.
- Oscar G. Brockett (1998) *History of theatre*. Allyn and Bacon. Inc. Nostan.

- Radcliff – Brown, A.R. (2011). *The Structure and Function in Primitive Society* Charleston: Biblio Bazaar.
- Robertson, R. (1992). *Globalization: Social theory and global culture*: London: sage.
- Rotimi, O. (1981). The drama in African ritual display. In Y. Ogunbiyi (Ed) *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical source book* Lagos: Nigeria Magazine, 77:80.
- Sofola, J.A. (1973). *African culture and the African personality Nigeria*: African Recourses publishers Co.
- Sule Bello & Nasidi, Y. (1991) (Ed). *Culture economy and national development*. NCAC, Lagos.
- Tanne, Fran. A. (1995). *Basic drama projects*. Kansas: Clark publishers Inc.
- Tawio, O. (1967). *An introduction to West African Literature*. Australia; Thomas Nelson.
- Tedlock, D. (1983). *The Spoken word and the work of interpretation*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Tickner, E. (1912). The psychological concept of clearness. *Psychological review*, 24, 43-61.
- Udenta (2002). *The Bridge: Linking the Ancient and the Modern*. Enugu, Evuda Publishing Company.
- Ugonna, N. (1981). *Standardizing Igbo festivals*. Nigeria Magazine! No. 136.
- Ugwu C.O.T. & Ugwueye, L.E. (2004). *African traditional religion: A prolegomenon*. Lagos: Merit Press.
- Utoh-Ezeajuh, T. (2006). Social culture trends in theatrical costumes and make-up; Designing the Egedege dancer of south east Nigeria. In Abong .C. *creative Artist. A journal of theatre and media studies*. Awka; valid publication, Vol. (1) 89-93.
- Wainaina, M. (2002). *The words of Kikuyu mythology: A structure analysis*, A PhD Thesis submitted to Kenyatta University Nairobi.
- Wales, K. (1989). *A dictionary of stylistics*. London: Longman Group.

**APPENDIX I****Questionnaire For the Respondents**

**Name:**

**Age:**

**Occupation**

**Home Town**

**Gender**

Number of years spent in participation in the festival

1. What is *Ma afa* Festival?
2. How did this *Ma afa* festival originate?
3. How, when and where is the date of this festival announced?
4. What are the preparations done towards the festival?
5. What type of food do you cook during *Ma afa* festival?
6. Are there any form of rituals associated to the festival?
7. Who performs the rituals
8. Why are these rituals performed.
9. How are they performed.
10. What are the items used in these rituals
11. How many days do this festival last
12. Why is *ma-afa* an annual festival?

13. Are there masquerade performance during the festival, if yes why? Where? Who are the audience
14. Are there any musical and dance performances?
15. What is the role of *onyishi, Agu Enwe, ume enwe*
16. What is the community's attitude towards the attendance and participation in Ma afa festival?
17. Does Christianity, Islam Education, etc have any influence on the performance of Ma afa festival?
18. How do you access the future of the Elugwu Ezike *Ma fa* festival performance infuture?
19. What do you think can be done to preserve the quality of *Ma afa* festival performance in Elugwu Ezike?
20. Do you have any additional comments that you would like to make on the performance of *Ma-afa* festival?

## APPENDIX II

	<p>Gịni bụ eha gə? What is your name?</p>	<p>Eha m bụ Urama Godwin. My name is Urama Godwin.</p>
	<p>I Də afọ ole? What is your age? ị bụ onye wenə? Where do you come from? Gịni be ị na-arə? What is your occupation?</p>	<p>A da m afọ iri asaa na ise I am seventy-five years old. A bụ m onye ogrute-ulo I am a native of ogrute-ulo A na m e nyi nkwu, ekwete manya. I am a palm wine tapper.</p>
	<p>Gịni bụ ẹgba <i>Ma afa</i>?  What is <i>Ma afa festival</i>?</p>	<p>Egba <u>Ma afa</u> bụ ẹgba anyị na –eri kee mgbafa ile anyị ji ekile ndi nna mụrụ anyị n’ ihe niile he na-emenụ anyị. Ọ bụ emume iri ji ofu. <u>Ma afa</u> festival is an annual festival in which we venerate our ancestors and thank them for all the abundant blessings they shower on us in years past it is our new yam festival celebration?</p>
	<p>Gede kee e shi amata nẹ <i>Ma afa</i> eruo?  How is the date of the festival fixed?</p>	<p>Kẹẹ eshi amata nẹ <i>ma afa</i> e ruo bụ ọ bụrụ nẹ ọnwá ishi eshe n’ igwe, ne ndi ọgẹrẹnyị eje be onyishi je e bo ẹgba. Hẹ lata, nẹ hẹ akani anyi kee e bụrụ Ẹgba When the moon of sixth Igbo calendar month is sighted in the sky, all the elders in council converge at the onyishi? Place to fix the date for the festival celebrate, Then, they will pass the message across it others at home.</p>
	<p>Nkwadobe da aga bẹ unu na-eme gbasara ya ?</p>	<p>ọ bụrụ ne ebo ẹgba be onyishi, ne mkpozi wa ma ajo mụọga ọọ bọ ụzọ ne okporo ile ya bụ ọọbọ okporo <i>ma afa</i>. umu ikorobia ile na-afuta</p>

	<p>What are the preparations done towards the festival?</p>	<p>abọ ya bụ ụzọ onye afutagə, ekwerə ihe oha karə.</p> <p>After the date of the festival have been fixed, the young men in the community move out in their numbers to clear all the footh paths where the town crier have announced the date for clearing of all roads. Whoever does not participate in the clearing is fined accordingly.</p>
6	<p>Gede ke e shi eme egba <i>ma afa</i> nya?</p> <p>How is this festival performal</p>	<p>Ọ bụrụ nẹ ma latacharə n’ iba lachime, nẹ ẹgba ọgonne nẹ chi na-evu ụzọ. Ụmụda, ụmụopu ne ogrute ụlọ bụ ndi na- agọ <i>ma afa</i> nẹ ọnwa ishi, ndi Ọzọ ile bụ ne ọnwa ẹsaa be hẹ na-agọ nke hẹ. Ụbọchi anyi na-agọ nne ne chi, njomu bụ be ji na-elute gallon nkwa ọcha tar ə ata, ọji, ji ọfuu anyi ji asụ utara ji, nnekwu ụkọ, njikom hẹzẹ bụ homu, anyi ile bụ ne be nna mụrụ anyi bẹ anyi na-ezute. Ndi nne na mụrụ na-emegbe, mane ndi nne he di iche ne me iche iche. ụbọchi ọgonna bụ homu n’ ihe di iche bụ ne ọ bụ oke ọkọkọ be anyi ji agọ nna ma ọ bụ mppi gbar ẹ agba.</p> <p>After the masquerade outing, comes the ọgonne/ogochi, of course only ụmụida, ụmụopu and ogrute ụlọ celebrates <i>Ma afa</i> at ọnwa isii (the Igbo sixth calendar month) while others celebrate theirs in the seventh Igbo (ọnwa esaa) calendar month. The married women/men, visit their father’s house with items for sacrifices like New yams, hen,</p>



		kolaunts, palm wine or she goat a as the case may be. The same applies to the men on ọgonna day, they all present he goats/ cocks, palm wine, new yams and kolaunts.
	Onye na-ago <i>ma nya</i> ?  Who performs the rituals?	Onyeke mbu (ọkpara) na-ago ọhọ, gbụọ ihe a na-egbụ ọnụ ọgwụ, ne ngwuri egwu e bido rue mgbe e shicher ọ nri rie nẹ ngwuri egwu ebido rue nẹ chi abọọ  The eldest man in the family performs the rituals and after the sacrifices have been made, we all eat, sing and dance till dawn.
	Gini/kpatar ọ unu ji ago <i>ma afa</i> nẹ ọnwa ishii?  Why do you celebrate Ma afa on separate mouth from other communities?	Ogrute- ụlọ, ụmuopu ne ụmụida bụ ndi ogrute, bụ Enwe Ezeocha nna he bụ he na- ago nọ ọnwa ishi mụọ gi ne ọ bụ he bụ Enwe Eze ocha muku. Me ke eshi ago Ener di iche, mụọ gi ne wme Enwe na- eje n'ọnụ akpolisa avuta ọgwụ he ji emelwp Emwe He gọchar a Enwe, ne ishi ebule he jira gọọ Enwe a daa bọchi ukwu afuga ihe. Me ndi ọzọ aniga eme họmụ.  The reason is that Ogrvte-ụlọ, Umuopu and Umuida are all descindants of a deity called Enwe Eze ocha and the manner in which Enwe Ezeocha is venerated is peculiar from others. The Enwe initiates go into the Akpolisa forest to gathe roots and herbs used in appeasement of Enwe Eze ocha and when they return with the herbs and roots they kill a giant white ram on Enwe Ezeocha's shrine and take the head

		spiced with the roots out on the restriction of movement day other communities do not do lide wise.
	<p>Mkpuru ụbọchi ole bi ọọgọ <i>Ma afa</i> na ewo nẹ ọgurutẹ-ụlọ?</p> <p>How long does the festival last in ogwurute ụlọ?</p>	<p>A bia ne ogurute-ụlọ, Umuopu nẹ Umuida, <i>Ma afa</i> na-ewo ogologo oge, A na-eji mkpuru ụbọchi esatọ eme emume <i>ma afa</i>, worə izu esaa kome Enwe uko ne mgbaye ụzọ Enwe.</p> <p>In ogrute ụlọ, Umuopu and Umuda communities, the celebrations last for eight days while a whole month is kept solemn for Enwe Eze ọcha. Therefore, the celebration last longer in these three communities.</p>

	<p>Gede kee ọha obodo shi (Elugwu Ezike) shi afuta egba <i>Ma afa</i> ma ọ bụ ke he shi adọyina <i>Ma afa</i> ukwu?</p> <p>What is the community's attitude towards attendance and participation during <i>Ma afa</i> celebration?</p>	<p>ọtụtụ mmadụ na-esonye ne emume egba <i>Ma afa</i> ma ne ụfọdụ alataghi ụlọ mụọ gi ne he ebidome uka, ufokụ bụ enweghi efe mọgi ọomụ ọrụ, ne agum ekwu kwọ, ụfọdụ bụ ne ije tera eka. Ya bụ ne e shidiga ike ne ma afa ahọ nwa.</p> <p>Many people participates in <i>Ma afa</i> festival but some were not able to attend due to their new found faith in Christianity and islam, some who migrated to the urban areas for greener pastures could not return due to distance, some are under apprenticeship while others are restricted by their pursuit for Education. So the number of participants this year is reduced.</p>
--	--	--

	<p>Kedu ke I shi afuta ọnọdu <i>Ma afa</i> aga nẹ odinfu?</p> <p>How do you assess <i>Ma afa</i> performance in future?</p>	<p>E wọrụ ye ba nịa, nẹ nsogbụ ja adi ne ọdinifu, kama ne ihe m mara bụ nẹ omenala anyi ekpokogə ekpoko tee uwa kpoo. Ya bụ nẹ <i>ma afa</i> də jeere tee ọ họrụ onye na n’elugwu ezike, ne a gə agoriri <i>Ma afa</i>.</p> <p>I am afraid that if the number of participants continue to decline yearly, I sense danger in future but I strongly believe that our custom and tradition will never die. Even if it remains one person in Elugwu Ezike, <i>Ma afa</i> festival must flourish.</p>
12	Inwera ihe ọzọ I na-ekwu?	<p>Ihe ọzọ m n’ekwu bụ ne ndi ọcha e woru uka kpome anyi n’alə, hẹ woru uka ndi Kristi ne nke ndi alakuba, agum ekwukwọ, awamenye, ọfụ ọzọ ije woru ga na-aya anyi omealə anyi nọbụ Ala Elugwu Ezike ekwego gə kẹẹ omenala anyi kpoo. mụọgi ne omenala di uka bia abialeghi. Ya bụ nẹ <i>ma afa</i> diə jeere.</p>

	Do you have any other comment?	Yes, another thing I have to say is that westernization have come in form of Christianity, islam Education and migration to silence away our custom and tradition but the land of Elugwu Ezike will not allow that to happen because before westernization, we have our tradition to keep therefore <i>Ma afa</i> will continue to flourish.
--	--------------------------------	--

## APPENDIX III

## RESPONSES TO QUESTIONARE BY ADONU IDOKO

Gini bu ẹha gi? What is your name?	Eha m bụ Adonu Idoko. My name is Adonu Idoko.
Onye wenə bẹ ị bụ? Where do you come from?	A bụ m onye imufu. I am from imufu.
Afa ole bụ I dā? How old are you?	A dā , <i>Ma afa</i> iri ne ishi ne ise I am 65 years old.
I ga-adā afa ole nẹ oori ẹgba ma afa? For how long have you participated in <i>Ma afa</i> colebuation?	E bido ri m oori ẹgba ma afa mgbe a mụrụ m. I starded celebrating <i>Ma-afa</i> festival right from my Birth.
Gini bụ ẹgba <i>ma afa</i> ?  What is <i>Ma afa</i> festival?	Ẹgba ma afa bụ mgbe ndi Elugwu Ezike ji echete nna nna hẹ, hẹ nẹ ekile hẹ mọgụ ndu, nwa, nri nẹ ihe dā oyi hẹ nẹ enwete n'eka nna hẹ. <i>Ma afa</i> festival is a period in Elugwu Ezike when the people of the land celebrate their ancestors and gods of the land for life which they have given them.
Gede ke <i>Ma afa</i> shiri bido?	<i>Ma afa</i> bidorə mgbe Elugwu Ezike bidorə mọgụ nẹ ọ bụ omenala Ezike be ọ bụ ne a jə

	<p>How did <i>Ma afa</i> originate?</p>	<p>ago nna.</p> <p><i>Ma afa</i> is surrounded by the myths of the land because it started when the land of Elugwu Ezike began.</p>
	<p>Gede kee eshi e bu egba ya bu <i>ma afa</i> ne wena be a na-anọ ebụ egba ya bu <i>ma afa</i>?</p> <p>How when and where is the date of this festival announced?</p>	<p>Ọ bụrụ ne ọnwá ẹsaa e she n'igwe, ne ndi ọgerenyi e je ne be onyishi je bo egba mgbe ọ ja abụ, ne mkpozi e woru ọzọ gbasaaare mbe eyile.</p> <p>Immediately the moon of the seventh month in the Igbo calendar is sighted in the sky (August) then, the elders will converge at the eldest man's house and fix the date and the Nkpozi will spread the good news of the date.</p>
	<p>Gede kee e she a kwado muogụ egba ma afa nya a?</p> <p>What are the preparations done for the festival?</p>	<p>Anyi nụ ma egba, ne ọha ile e nweme ụyọ, ụmụ ịkorobia ndi ike kwu n'obu, e kpoliri ụma ne ọgụ bido sichare, bọre mbe ile, gbrshire oshishi gbaruru agbaru. muo gi ne ndi nna nna anyi jabia be eri egba e sote kogh ụzọ ga-adigi oyi.</p> <p>Immediately the date is announced, the entire community is filled with enthusiasm and the young men in the land carry their hoes and cutlass and clear every bushy paths, cut down</p>

		out grown tree branches. This is because the expected ancestors and gods of the land will not tread on bushy paths.
	Udiri Nri di aga be e ji eri egba <i>Ma afa</i> ?	Utara ji bu nri e ji eri egba <i>Ma afa</i> .
	What type of food do you cook during <i>Ma afa</i> celebration?	Pounded yam is the food cooked during the festival celebration.
	O nwere <i>ma</i> a na-ago ne mgbe ma afa?	E e eha ya bu Ma afa, ya bu ne a na-ago <i>ma ne</i> afa. A na-ago Nna,nne, chi di ke ne be anyi, bu imufu, anyi na-ago ogwu oluwa anyi, tee <i>ohe ma shiri</i> anyi ne ma ozọ ile so anyi.
	Are there any form of rituals associated to the festival?	Yes, since the name of the festival is <i>Ma afa</i> , many deities are appeased through rituals in the celebration even our ancestors are all appeased through the performance of these rituals.
	Onye bu o di ni o o go o ihe a na-ago?	Onye o di ni o o go o ma a na-ago bu okpara ne ezi ne ulo.
	Who performs the rituals?	It is the duty of the eldest man in the family to perform the rituals.



	<p>Gini kpatara e ji ago ni ma a na-ago?</p> <p>Why are these rituals performed?</p>	<p>Ihe kpatari e ji ago <i>Ma afa</i> ago bu ne oshite ne o o goo ya bu <i>ma</i> bu anyi shi ariọ ndi nna anyi nwe anyi aririọ ke he nye na anyi eka, gbayani anyi njo anyi mere ne kwa gbome ni anyi mkpa anyi riọri he di ke o nye anyi ogologo ndu, nwa, nri ne ihe enwe enwe.</p> <p>We perform the rituals because it is the only medium through which we can reach our ancestors through different deities to beg for forgiveness of sins, productivity in terms of child bearing, long life and prosperity and bountiful harvest.</p>
	<p>Gede kee e shi a go ma nya ile?</p>	<p>Kee e shi ago ya bu ma bu ne oruo mgbe a na-ago nne ne nna, ne chi, Njiomu liri ji ne egoru ji, o oko, moo bu ewu oji ne mmanya nkwocha je ne be nna he, mgbe he ruru, onye bu okpara je anari he oruo ogwu cheere njikom ke ne vute nke he, mgbe ohaile vute cheere ihe e ji ago ogwu ne onye bu okpara e wolire oji wa ya, woru ibe oji goore ohọ si:</p> <p>Ezeiteoke abiam a ura bia ata oji Ndi ya ne ya bu n'elu, Ndi ne eje ni o zi bu n'uwa Ndi bu ne munyi eje ozi, ndi no ne uwa eje ozi, Elugwu</p>

	<p>How are the rituals performed?</p>	<p>Ezike nna mụrụ anyi bia taa oji,,  Ala imufu bia taa oji. Nene ohe nne muru oha  bia taa oji. Ndi nna nna anyi bia taa oji. Ndi ne  mụrụ anyi bia taa oji. Ihe ile so anyi bia ta oji.  Biko nụ ihe ji egbu anyi abiakwutele anyi. Njọ  kwuru n’ifu, anyi kwuru n’azu, njọ kwuru  n’ifu. unu bie nụ anyi ụzọ ogologo ndu ne aru  ike, nwa, aku nu uba, nri anyi kọrụ mere  amashi amashi mgbe o jiri o ji gọ chari oho ,  ndi ile nọ mbọ omụ ja asi iseee.....  Nwosha ne o vuru mmanya wọ n’elu ogwu, o  jiri o okọ me obu ewu gbuo n’elu akpete ogwu  wure chrə Meyi ye n’elu akpete ogwu</p> <p>The ritual process begins when the married  women travel to their father’s house with items  for sacrifice like kolamuts, yams palm wine,  he/she goat, cock/he goat to their father’s  compound, then the eldest man will collect  those items of sacrifice from them and wait for  the male children to assemble theirs when all  sacrificial items are ready, the eldest man takes  a kolanut and spits it, then, he uses the kolanut</p>
--	---------------------------------------	--

		<p>and prays in front of the shrine, bkonning on almighty God, all the astral spirits, spirits of the land and beneath gods of the land, our ancestors, everything that we belong to come and chew kolanuts. We beg for forgiveness of sins, longlife and protection, wealth fertility of land for bountiful harvest, production of children and every good things of life, then, all those around will answer I <i>See</i> (Amen). Then, he takes some quantity of palm wine and pour libation on the shrine. After that is done, he takes the cocks/hens/she goats/he goats/he goats and slaughters them on the shrine sprinkling the blood on the shrine as he bekones on the ancestors and gods of the land to come and accept their sacrifices.</p>
	<p>Gede ihe I ji agọ ma nya?</p>	<p>Mbọshị a na-agọ nne/chi, njikọm ne-evute ji, nnekwu ọọkọ, Mmanya Nkwuelu, ọjị mane ụfọdu ẹka di, na-ego nne ewu gbara agba.</p> <p>Njiomu bu be ji ne ego nnekwu ọọkọ/nne ewu, ọjị, ji ọfụụ enọ gbara agba, garọn nkwa elu.</p> <p>Ọkpara n'onwe ye ne egote Nne ewu, mba ji enọ gbara agba, garọn nkwa elu, odo, awọ, ike</p>

	<p>What are the items for the rituals?</p>	<p>ekwa, nshi egbe, eka igwe ne oji. mbooshi a na-ago nna, Njiomu nwere ji na-egote oke ooko, mba ji ofuu eno, oji ne garon manya.njikonu na-egot oke ewu, maba ji ofuu eno, ekpuru oji eno, ne garonu nkwu ela.</p> <p>The items for the rituals are: on the day of <i>ogonne/ogochi</i>, married women, go to the eldest man in the family with the following sacrificial items to perform the <i>ogonne/ogochi</i>, rituals: four tubers of new yam up palm wine while the men also do same. on <i>ogonna</i> day, the women present a cock or a he/goat, four tubers of new yams, four kolanuts and a gallon up palm wine so also with the men in the family.</p>
	<p>Mkpuru ubochi ole be a na-ago <i>Ma afa</i> nya?</p> <p>How many days do this festival last?</p>	<p>Mkpuru ubo chi eto be a na-ago ya bu <i>Ma afa</i> ne be anyi mkpuru ubochi nke mbu bu a na-ago nna ne ihe ile no be ye ne eche imufu nche.</p> <p>The festival lasts for just three days, the first day is <i>ogonne</i> and <i>ogochi</i>, the second day is the rituals for <i>ogonna</i> while on the third day,</p>

		the onyishi (eldest man) performs the sacrifices for the rituals to venerate all the deities and ancestors of the land.
	Gini bẹ <i>Ma afa</i> buna ẹgba mgbafa?  Why is Ma afa an annual festival?	<i>Ma afa</i> bụ ugboro na nẹ mgba <i>afa</i> be a na-ago ya mọgụ ne ọ bụ ihe e shi ne gbo gbo gbo mera, e ji emekwo ọgwụ nna nna anyi ya nọ anyi, mgbe anyi ji ekile hẹ ekile, nẹ mgbe anyi ji aririọ mọgə nwa, ogologo ndu ne akunuuba.  <i>Ma afa</i> is an annual festival because this is how it has been from time immemorial, it's a period of veneration of our ancestors and deities of the land, a period when we seek, blessings of the fruit of the womb, fertility of land, long life and prosperity.
	O nwere kee <i>ma</i> na-afuta nẹ mgbe a na-ago <i>ma afa</i> ?	E e, I na-ajụ ajụ ma na alata n'iba ne mgbe mafa nọ bụ ne, ma afa kwuru n'ifu be ma ji afuta. Ma lata n'iba, ne ọ na-afuure ne n'ashu azi ashua, ndi madu na e je ekiri enya, esogeri ma di niche niche dike, kpakpawu, ọ ọkpọlọmpi, Eji ogene Ajulaka ọmabe. A nọ mkpụr ụ ụbọchi enọ, ne egbome he aya me ọ ga-bọchi orie be ma na-agbaare chidome ne he

	<p>Are there masquerade performances?</p>	<p>ala n'iba ya bu ne e bo egba ma afa.</p> <p>Yes there is, the masquerades troop out in their numbers before the date of <i>Ma afa</i>, they visit market squares to display while the audience cheer and clap for them during their display. Masquerades like <i>kpakpawu</i>, <i>Ajija</i>, <i>oshagenyi</i>, <i>ajulaka omabe</i>, <i>Ejiogbene</i> and <i>okpolompi</i> come out to display. The presence of the masquerades assures us of the presence of the ancestors who have come to enjoy their venarations during the <i>ma afa</i> celebrations. Few days later, the elders will calm the masquerades down and they will no longer feature daily but in every orie market day till they are gone back to the spirit world were they come from.</p>
	<p>O nwerə egwu e ji ago <i>Ma afa</i>?</p> <p>Are there any musical and dance performances?</p>	<p>È È Egwuokanga te egwu ogwu di niche niche be e ji a go <i>ma afa</i>-a gəərə, e teere.</p> <p>Yes there are musical and dance performances. The music are <i>okanga</i> and <i>Egwuogwu</i> music, the people dance as they are sung.</p>

	<p>Umu ikorobia nẹ ụmụ mgboto hẹ nwera mmashi nẹ o o gọ <i>Ma afa</i>?</p> <p>Do the youths show interest in the celebration of <i>Ma afa</i>?</p>	<p>Ndi umu nwosha e newchegə ezigbo mmashi nẹ o o gọ ma afa moḡu ne he na-afuta I gọ ma afa di ke ihe ga-adighi oyi moḡu uka.</p> <p>Youths of today show less interest in <i>Ma afa</i> celebration because they see it as going against their new found daith in Christianity.</p>
	<p>O nwera ke ụka nwoua shi emetute o oḡo <i>Ma afa</i>?</p> <p>Does christainity or islam have any influence on the performance of <i>Ma afa</i>?</p>	<p>Ke ụka shi emetute o oḡo <i>Ma afa</i> bu ne ndi bidora uka ofuu, a neegi esonye ne oo ne usoro di nẹ <i>Ma afa</i> te ndi ụka alakuba.</p> <p>Yes, Christianity and islam have influenced the number of participants in <i>Ma afa</i>?</p>
	<p>Kedu ke ishi afuta onodu <i>Ma afa</i> nẹ odinifu?</p> <p>How do you access the future performance of <i>Ma afa</i> festival?</p>	<p>A na m afuta nẹ <i>Ma afa</i> ekpokogə, ekpo gbo gboo.</p> <p>I believe that <i>Ma afa</i> festival celebration can never cease in life because, tradition of the people can never stop to exist.</p>
	<p>I nwere ihe ozọ I ne ekwu gbasara onodu <i>Ma afa</i>?</p>	<p>Ihe ozọ m nwera mu ne ekwu bu ne o di m oyi ke ndi be anyi kuzire umu anyi ke e e shi eme usoro ma afa n'ulo ekwukwo, ke umu anyi</p>

	Do you have any other comments?	nweere mmashi ne osonye ne o omee usoro mgba afa nya.  My only comment is that, I wish our teachers could include both education and teaching of our culture and tradition in our schools so that <i>Ma afa</i> festival could flourish.
--	---------------------------------	--



### INTERVIEWS

N	Name	Sex	Age	Occupation	Village	Date
1.	Odo nwa oyiga	M	75	Palm-wine tapper	Ogrute ulo	6/7/2017
2	Adonu Idoko	M	65	Trader	Imufu	12/7/2017
3	Festus Ugwuanyi	M	80	Farmer	Uda	13/7/2017
4	Enwe Ojobo	M	56	Trader	Umuida	13/7/2017
5	Nweeja Azegba Onoja	F	66	Trader	Igogoro	13/7/2017
6	Ugwuanyi Oyiboja	F	60	Trader	Amube	14/7/2017
7	Itodo Ogonnaja	M	60 yrs	Herbalist	Onicha Elugwu Ezike	14/7/2017
8	Augustine Olijio	M	78 yrs	Agu Enwe Ezeocha	Umuopu	15/7/2017
9	Abuguja Ugwu	M	68 yrs	Retired teacher	okata	05/8/2017
10	Omale Ossaija	M	70 yrs	Herbalist	Amaja	16/8/2017
11	Celestine Ezenwa Onyeke	M	60 yrs	Trader	Okpo	16/8/2017
12	Cyril Ezeja	M	56yrs	Carver	Umagama	18/8/2017
13	Nwaba Damian	M	50 yrs	Teacher	Ikpamodo	18/8/2017
14	Eze Nwa Omeke	M	60 yrs	Farmer	Umuachi	18/8/2017
15	Eya Boniface	M	70 yrs	Retired headmistress	Ikpu iga	19/8/2017
16	Ugwu Mercy	F	68 yrs	Retired teacher	Amachalla	19/8/2017
17	Chiekwe Eze	F	58 yrs	Herbalist	Isiugwu	20/8/2017
18	Jonathan Ossai	M	72yrs	Retired teacher	Aguibeje	20/8/2017
19	Ezenwaonu igwe	M	110 yrs	Eldest man in Ogrute (2017-2018)	Ogrute	22/8/2017