

## USING THE ETHICS OF AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A JUST NIGERIAN STATE

ANAYO OSSAI (PhD)

Department Of Religion and Human Relations

Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria

[anayossai@gmail.com](mailto:anayossai@gmail.com) and [ayossai@yahoo.com](mailto:ayossai@yahoo.com)

+234806 069 0840, +234708 618 1781

### Abstract

*This paper studied the ethics of African traditional religion among Nigerians; and discovered the extent of the development in Nigerian traditional communities through the sources of the traditional religious ethics which includes Supreme Being, ancestors, divinities/deities and community. Today; development has been misinterpreted as only materialistic without the accord match of human character/ behaviour. African traditional religious ethics is a holistic one that recapitulate the spiritual life that considers very importantly the relationship between man and the spiritual beings; man, and the fellow man, the community and material development. The paper also argued that because African traditional religious ethics emphasis on human relationship with God and other spiritual beings, it is a religious one. The work established that the ethics is also evident in the sacredness of human life, love, peace, traditional leadership, and property ownership of both individual and communal, honesty, fairness and so on; these resulted to the just traditional African communities. It is the view of this paper that if Nigerians can reflect and put in practice the ethics of African traditional religion, the country can enjoy again a just Nigeria state.*

**Keywords:** Ethics, ATR, Development, Social Justice, Nigeria.

### Introduction

There is no doubt that superiority complex which influenced the colonial researchers suggested some of the errors in their presentations of African traditional religion and ethics. This can be seen from some of the colonial researchers like Talbot and Tempels. Talbot (1967) talked about worship in African traditional religion and said that "Among the Ibo, as with the ancient Egyptians also, the feminine, as well as the male genital organs are worshipped" (p.65). This is not true among the Igbo. In fact, Amechi (2005), reacted to that Talbot essay and wrote "The genital organs, particularly the female organs, are often subject of light-hearted jokes and derision among the Igbo." (p.vii). It is quite pertinent to state here that Igbo people in their practice of the traditional religion, worship only the supreme being (Chukwu), not even divinities, deities, ancestors and other super natural beings are worshipped, but venerated. So, it is misleading to say that Igbo worship genital organs.

In the same way, Tempels (1959) discussed about African ethics and wrote:

On the subject of theft, it is generally said that the African does not see the least wrong in it, that the only thing that matters is not to get caught. Lies and deceit, it is said, are, in African eyes indications of subtlety of mind, countenanced by

all moral assessment. They would not regard adultery as any infraction of morality.

According to Tempels above, evil can only matter in Africa when one is caught. Our argument on it is that it is not correct. We can therefore refer to Ossai's, (2014) work on adultery in Nsukka cultural area of Igboland, where he said "People of the area do not bother themselves with the faithfulness of their wives because if the wives misbehave in adulterous way, the sin is adjudged evil against the ancestors and therefore they (the ancestors) punish them" (p.68). Also, to show that Tempels' assertion does not reflect African ethics as claimed, we can look at Basden (1983):

Certain actions such as murder, theft, adultery are extreme offences against God as well as against man. The natives hold that in community such offences, a man is acting contrary to the will of God and the appropriate punishment will assuredly follow (P.216).

Another scholar whose view support that Africans are ethical is Metuh (1999):

There is a whole range of other *Ajo ihe*, evils, which are just concern of Chukwu, the deities and human society ... The Igbo believe that order and harmony in the world are the construct of God and are ruled by fixed laws. Good deeds bring order and attract peace, happiness and prosperity. Evil creates disorder and brings sufferings, misfortunate and death (p.144).

Like philosophy or religion, ethics has no one generally accepted definition. It has been defined by people in various ways and therefore many definitions. Among them are Omeregbe (2010) "Branch of philosophy which deals with the morality of human action" (p.3). Dzurgba (2014), "Ethics is a body of moral ideas. It is a theory of moral standards or principles. It is a theory of obligations or moral judgement" (p.112).

For the African people, there are actions which condemned as morally wrong, like, murder, theft, dishonesty, adultery, lies, forceful take of one's property and so on. There are other actions which the Africans consider as morally rights, like respect for human lives, respect to the supreme being, respect to divinities/deities/ancestors, hospitality, respect for elders, help to the needy/orphan/widow, obedience to the laws of the community and so on.

Among the thrusts of this paper are why and how do Africans judge certain behaviours wrong and right and what are the measures for this judgement? Is it individual or the community that decides the judgement of actions to be right or wrong?

### **Theoretical Framework**

Essay of this type is never fully predictive that can offer the certainty like other fields. For instance, physics follow the laws of motion and chemistry follows the rules of molecular reactions. But like diagnosis, a theory can anticipate what will happen or why it happened. In interpreting or writing about the ethics of religion, a theory could be used as that can give ideas, concepts, structures, identity, integration and general world view of the people and their religion.

In this paper, we looked at the “Theory of Religion as Cultural System” as propounded by Clifford Geertz. According to Pals (1996) explanation of this theory, he said “human cultural activities are quite unusual and distinctive things and that we will therefore get nowhere if we try to ‘explain’ them in the way scientists explain everything else” (p.233).

His argument in this theory is that we live in a complex society which anthropologists call “culture” and that the most important way we can understand this is religion; he said “if we wish to understand these cultural activities, one of the most important of which is certainly religion”(p.233). We agree with Geertz that religion is vital in the understanding of a people especially a cultural people like the core African people. Religion of the African sums everything about the Africans, their ideas, customs, attitude, symbols and the entire world view. This is why Mbiti made the popular saying that Africa is notoriously religious.

In view of the study of the people, Geertz preferred particular studies to general studies. What this mean is that, study of this type ought to be focused on a specific people and place(s) so that even if general conclusion or study can come, it can come from this particular study. This idea of particular style of study favours this paper because we are aware that many factors can contribute to the development of a just Nigerian state, but our choice of a particular factor - African traditional religion, and also a particular factor in African traditional religion “ethics” makes this study a specific one as proposed by Geertz’s theory.

It is understood that materialism is very important in human existence, but it is not the primary needs of man. Hegel claimed that material objects are secondary to the primary needs and that the ultimate reality is the “absolute spirit” - what the religious people call God. Pals (1996) noted this Hegel’s view thus:

He noticed absolute ideas like freedom, reason and goodness, and then feels he must “objectify” them by claiming they are really expressions of the absolute, of some ultimate spirit that supposedly operate as an invisible stage manager behind the scene of the world (p.140).

Relating this to the people of Africa, religion formed the foundation or the base for material objects or social life. Religion is the base for the people’s daily lives which shaped their life style – family, government, arts philosophy, sports, farming, fishery, development and ethics. Geertz also related ethics to world view, symbols and rituals where he said that each of them reinforce one another. This concept of Geertz was again expressed by Pals (1996):

In ritual, the moods and motivation of religious believers coincide with their world view in such a way that they powerfully reinforce each other ... in rituals, there occurs “a symbolic fusion of ethos and world view”; what people want to do and feel they should – their ethos – joins with their picture of the way the world actually is (p.245).

This expression reflects the ethics of African traditional religion. The African world view inspires the ethical perspectives of the people, and this ethical perspective in turn informs them that their world view is right. So, the blend of the ethical perspectives and the world view is symbolically expressed in the African traditional religious rituals.

In the traditional African understanding, there are beliefs, worldviews and other things that informed their ethical orientation, hence the sources of African traditional religious ethics.

### **Sources of African Traditional Religious Ethics**

The African traditional religious societies derive its ethics from Supreme Being, ancestors, divinities, deities, human beings and community. It is these sources that consciously and unconsciously forms, regulates and consolidates ethical beliefs and behaviour of the people in African traditional societies. It is these sources that forms the ethical behaviour that ensures and necessitates an ideal and just societies which Africans value.

**Supreme Being:** For the African people, the Supreme Being – God is the creator and owner of the traditional society and has the final say in everything. The people believe that the Supreme Being is the determinant of everything. The supernatural forces, like the deities, ancestors and even the unborn children, the physical being and other creatures exist because of the Supreme Being. It is this belief that makes the traditional religious worshippers to worship the Supreme Being through the veneration of the supernatural beings which therefore determine the moral or the ethical behaviour of the people. Metuh (1999) remarked this about the Igbo people and said that “Igbo morality is linked with ontological order set up by God and any infringement of the moral precepts disturbs the ontological order” (p.135).

Supreme being as source of ethics in African traditional religion can also be viewed from the people’s belief that God created moral knowledge and reasoning into man. Dzurgba (2014) noted this and wrote

In an African Traditional Society, the supreme God, called Olorun (Yoruba), Chukwu (Igbo), Aondo (Tiv) is the greatest source of morality. He created man’s moral characteristics which are knowledge, thinking, reasoning ... It is this context that Africans think of morality as being rooted in man’s heart (p.113).

It is this belief that the supreme being rooted morality in man’s heart and therefore demand ethical behaviour like justice, love, truth, hospitality, respect for human life, faithfulness and so on that make the people to avoid killing of human beings, stealing, falsehood, adultery, cheating of all kinds and many others which ensures just African societies.

**Ancestors:** In the African belief system, the ancestors occupy a very high position in the spiritual realm, where they can provide for the people and also punish offenders. The view of this paper is that the provision and punishment by the ancestors constitute ethical conduct that upholds the law and the customs of the people that ensure just traditional society.

Explaining the duties of the ancestors in maintaining law and order in the traditional Igbo society, Ossai (2014); noted: “In traditional Igbo society, the ancestors demand a high sense of respect for the traditional laws and customs hence react positively or negatively depending on the attribute and behaviour of the living.” (p.67). In this lime light, we therefore say that the traditional Africans drive ethical conduct from their respect to the ancestors who are believed to be the custodian of morality; and can equally provide for and punish the people in the traditional society.

**Divinities and Deities:** In the traditional African world view, the divinities derive their existence and have unique relationship with the Supreme Being. It is this view that makes the people to believe that the powers and authorities of the divinities to bless and punish people are derived from the supreme being. Quarcoopome (1987) held this fact when he wrote: "The positive response of the divinities to the problems and needs of the communities they serve is indicative of their reality and potency, as intermediaries between God and man" (p.73).

It is the same belief that is shown in the reverence attributed to the natural emblems like trees, rivers, rocks, mountains, hills, streams, grooves which these divinities and deities are believed to have manifested upon.

Divinities and deities have their different functions to perform in African societies which help them to maintain ethical behaviours in the societies. These divinities and deities perform some of these functions through the rules and regulations guiding the practices and relationships to them. Even some of the taboos related to these divinities and deities in African societies are also sources of African traditional religious ethics.

For instance, the observation of taboos, rules and regulations guiding the principles relating to divinities and deities are centered on good human relationship with one another whereby the spiritual are reflected upon with the main purpose of achieving a just society.

**Community:** Community for the African people is not just the physical geographical area inhabited by human beings alone. It is a community which includes the physical and the spiritual beings of the living, the dead and the yet unborn. Ejiuzu, (2008), highlighted this fact:

For the traditional African, community is much more than simply a social grouping of people bound together by reasons of natural and /or deep common interest and value. It is both a society as well as a unity of the visible and invisible world; the world of the physical living in on one hand, and the world of the ancestors and the souls of children yet to be born to the individual kin-group. (p.2).

For the Africans, to live is to be in harmony with the fellow members of the community, and to have peace is to ensure that everything is peaceful in the community. Mbiti (1969) clearly noted this about the African people and said "I am because we are, and since we are therefore I am. This is the cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of man" (Pp.108-109). It is in respect to this view that the Africans people draw their ethical behaviour from the community which encapsulates the physical and the spiritual world. For the people also, the behaviour of the living people causes the actions of the spiritual which influences the physical either positively or negatively. Africans believe that any evil by any person towards the fellow man is also evil against the spiritual which can disturb the peace in the invisible world and can result to the wrath of the gods.

The fact that the people conduct themselves morally to avoid committing evil against other members of the community which includes the physical and spiritual; and on the same hand to avert the wrath of the invisible forces which therefore maintain a just society explain our conviction in this study that community is a source of ethics in African traditional religion.

Ossai (2018) remarked on this, thus:

The people believe that the community includes the invisible and therefore anything that threatens the peace of the physical members of the community also threatens the peace of the invisible members. It is also in the belief system of the people that punishments for any evil does not only come from the visible members of the community, but also from the invisible (p.52).

### **African Traditional Religious Ethics**

It has been the impression of many scholars that African traditional ethics is a religious one; which means that the ethics of the traditional Africa is dependent on the African traditional religion. The supporters of this view affirm that morality is gummed to religion. However, there are other school of thought who disagree with this affirmation. Their claim is that there are people who live moral lives, but have no any religious belief or affiliations.

Among the supporters of the view that African ethics has nothing to do with African traditional religion is Wiredu (1983) who argued that morality among the Akan people of Ghana is not based on religion, but on human conduct. He said:

For the Akan, goodness is to be defined in terms of human well-being ... then is logically independent of God; so that even if there were no belief in God; there still would be rules of good conduct. It follows also and a *fortiori* that morality, as a set of rules of conduct, is for the Akan, logically independent of the minor deities (p.12).

Summer (1983) also held the same thought in the study of Ethiopian philosophy and stated this:

In spite of the long-established Christian influence in Ethiopia, the Ethiopian traditional morality is not a religious morality. It is not based on any kind of religious revelation, but on the natural light of reason, with conscience playing a central role (p.100).

Another group of scholars have views close to the above, but not exactly the same. They argue that ethics is not religious, but that religion or God or gods play vital role in ensuring or enforcing morality. Oluwole was one of them as noted by Omeregbe (2010) when he discussed Yoruba ethics:

Yoruba morality is not a religious morality, contrary to the general belief ... Their role therefore is not to make moral, but to apply the sanctions in cases where men are unable to do so. For the Yoruba, the gods are agents of moral sanction rather than authorities whose moral prescription man must obey (p.137).

In addition to his reflection on Oluwole's work on Yoruba morality, Omeregbe (2010) also supported the same view and said that:

Religion is not primarily concerned with morality; the direct object of religion is not morality but worship, adoration through rites, prayers etc. Religion deals with morality only indirectly as a necessary condition for true worship; but not as its primary concern. But the direct object of ethics is morality ... Many people who belong to various religions live immoral lives while many who have no religion live moral lives (p.7).

Omeregbe have two view points in his argument, first, that religion is concerned with worship, adoration and prayers and secondly, that some religious people live immoral lives, while somenon-religious people live moral lives.

This paper agrees that somebody who does not belong to any religion can live moral live towards fellow man and therefore be an ethical person. Now, our question is, was this possible in the traditional Africa?

It is pertinent to note that in the traditional African society before the advent of Christianity; it was very difficult to see anybody who does not belong to the traditional religion. Everybody belonged to the African traditional religion and had strong attachment to the philosophy, practices and the ethics which shaped their life style and ensured a just African society.

The assertion of Oluwale and Omeregbe above said that morality and ethics are not religious, but they admitted that religion is applied to morality for sanction and also that religion deals with morality as a custodian. This therefore indicates that ethics is not independent of religion, because it is the sanction and custodian which religion does is the bedrock of ethics.

In the discussion on Igbo ethics, Madu (1997) categorically stated the dependence of ethics on religion thus:

In Igbo thought pattern, the ethical code is summed up in the “omenala” (customs of the land). One interesting thing about “omenala” is that it encamps the religious and the secular, the spiritual and the material aspects of life. In other words, there is no line of demarcation between any of the above spheres; religion permeates all the fabrics of Igbo. So, there is an ontological dependence of morality on religion. Thus, in Igbo traditional life, the various deities are regarded as the guardian of moral (p.108).

In the African traditional religion, which this paper based its study, the division of ethics or morality from religion may not be possible because man’s ethical behaviour or moral action have its bearing on the religion.

### **African Traditional Religious Ethics and Development**

In Nigeria today, when it is said that someone is doing fine, the understanding of many people is that the person has become rich. He has houses in Abuja, Lagos, Port Harcourt, Enugu and that he has big and expensive SUVs and cars. When it is said that a community is doing fine, the understanding is that the community has light, tared road and pipe born water.

Schweitzer (1961) pointed out that civilization that is based on material things only is approach to calamity:

A civilization that develops only on its material side, and not in corresponding measure in the sphere of the spirit, is like a ship with defective steering gear which gets out of control at a constantly accelerating pace, and thereby heads for catastrophe. (p.20).

The above assertion is a reflection of Nigerian state today. Nigeria conception of development with only emphasis on materialism without attention to the spiritual lives is a problem. This has resulted to the ugly relationship between man and the supreme being, man and his fellow man which create a dishonorable, dishonest, unethical and evil-minded state of the nation. This has brought Nigerian nation to the present social, political, economic, security entanglement where human life that was highly sacred is now as cheap as life of a chicken which has resulted to the loss of the human dignity.

According to Onah (2017), in his lecture; “To Restore the Dignity of Man” he said:

When we talk of the dignity of the human person, we mean his singular worth, his excellence, his ontological value and status, that for which he deserves unconditional respect as person. By dignity of the human person, therefore, we mean that absolute or unconditional inner worth or value of a human being (p.4).

By Onah’s explanation, human dignity refers to the worth, excellence, value, status of which human deserve respect. Putting this in parallel with what we call development and value of human life in Nigeria today, one can therefore say, that development and human life in Nigeria is an epitome of indignity.

In African traditional religious society, what is development? Omeregbe (2010), said that the most aspect of development is the moral development:

The development of a country is primarily the development of the human dimension, that is, the development of human person. Now, the most important aspect in the development of the human person is the moral development. Moral maturity is a mark of human development, and it is the most important aspect of national development (p.147).

And Kanu (2015) with reference to Schumacher said that “development should not start with goods, but with the people, their education, organization and discipline. It is not all about money, profit and the number of industries” (p.331).

These above assertions explained that moral development is the most important aspect of human development which is in line with what is development in the core African traditional society.

We can therefore attempt to define development in African traditional society as; the ethical advancement of human person which focuses on the spiritual entities, where the enhancement of human relationship, maintenance and improvement of community consciousness is aimed to achieve harmonious relationship with the supra mundane.



Development in the traditional Africa is all-inclusive one which encapsulates the material and moral development as both of them contribute to the growth and welfare of the community and the people. In short, for the traditional Africa, the understanding is that it is the moral development that begets material development. This is because of their belief system, that; it is only the morally behaved persons that can maintain cordial relationship with the spiritual beings which can enable them to get favours from the gods like children, farm produce, money and other things that can make them contribute to the improvement of the community. This simply shows that the moral aspect of development is primary, while the material aspect is secondary.

This paper therefore argues that; if, the ethics of African traditional religion which propounds morality as the primary aspects of development is applied in Nigeria; evils like human killing, electoral manipulations, embezzlement of public fund, fraud, banditry, herders and farmers conflicts, rape, robbery and so on could copiously be curbed and therefore the secondary aspects of development like good governance which ensures security of lives and properties, good road, hospitals, productive education, rule of law, effective electoral process and so on can be achieved.

Secondly, it is the ethically developed human person that can morally apply and achieve the material development. For instance, have Nigerians ask questions why education in Nigeria is far from standard? Why hospital is nothing to write home about? Why judiciary is below standard? The simple answer to all these questions is because these sectors are being managed by people who did not meet up with the primary aspects of development; which is the ethical development.

The position of this paper is that if Nigeria can effectively apply African traditional style of development where ethical or moral development is pursued first, followed by the material development which is secondary, Nigeria will attain a just state.

### **Traditional Leadership as a sample for a just society: Igbo perspectives**

In the opinion of this paper, the perspective of Igbo traditional leadership is a democratic one where there is mechanism of universal participatory contribution by all aspects of the people with the belief in the supernatural where the Supreme Being is believed to occupy the highest position in the leadership hierarchy.

On this note therefore, we may disagree with some opinions who argue that there is no democracy in African leadership because, democracy in Africa has been in existence before the advent of colonial style of leadership. For instance, Igbo democracy is a representative one where the representatives come together and form an assembly within the town or community in which the major decisions that effects the people are taken.

This democratic government of the Igbo has been noted very early by Perham (1937), he said: "the Ibo group remains decentralized and sturdily democratic in the special African sense of the term" (pp.230-231).

Olisa (1971) also add to the view of the representative government in the Igbo traditional leadership and opined:

Leadership are exercised at the village group level by a closely structured council of elders who direct discussion and sum up decision in the assembly of the whole village group. At the sub-village level down to the extended family - the *okpara* (elders) of the based relevant unit is the leader and the leadership is based on being the eldest man as well as the keeper of *ofor* of the unit he leads (p.19).

Isichchei also held the same view as noted by Onuh (1992), “traditional Igbo government gave its citizens more real participation in decision-making than is possible in western- styled democracy” (p.39).

And it is important to note that what people assume as the main feature of the democracy which the colonial administrators brought to Nigeria is the “checks and balances” which checkmates the excessive use of powers and authority. Then, critical observation of Igbo leadership shows evidence of checks and balances. Kanu (2015) noted this and wrote that: “In the political administration of the Yoruba and Igbo traditional political systems, there were strong systems of checks and balances, and this is consistent with most social-political structure of ancient Africa” (p.323).

For instance, in Igboland, there is organized traditional leadership council in every community or town where there are representatives of every kindred known as Umunna by the eldest male. Then among the eldest males, the eldest among them remain the head and has the final approval or take final decision on every issue. However, despite this power of the eldest male to take decision, the members of this council of elders regulates and checkmates the powers of the eldest man be disagreeing with him if he takes any decision that does not go well with them.

Onuh (1992) explained how Igbo checkmate excessive use of powers which made impossible for the eldest to be dictator. He wrote: “Igbo exercise a sense of democracy. Therefore, even though the eldest man has the final say, he is by no means a dictator. On whatever level any matter is discussed, opportunity is given to all to freely air their views and contribute ideas” (p.78).

As we said earlier that the Supreme Being occupies the highest position in the hierarchy of Igbo leadership. The supreme God – Chukwu is the supreme king. Igbo regard the supreme God as the king of both the physical and spiritual worlds. Note the attribute of Chukwu as remarked by Dine (2007), thus:

Chukwu as the *Eze bi n’igwe ogodo ya na-akpu n’ala* (lit. God the great king in the heavens who lets the hemline of his kingly apparel touch the earth). *Ogodo ikpu n’ala* in this content is rich significance. It is a symbolic expression which shows that Chukwu’s heavenly kingship and splendour also extends to the earth. The word Eze implies ruler in the sense of complete control ... for the Igbo Chukwu is a supreme divine king and a just ruler.(p.17).

The above expression by Dine explained that Igbo traditional leadership has its derivation from the Supreme Being – God and also holds the belief that God’s leadership controls the

visible and the invisible. The last sentence by Dine above stated that the Supreme Being is the supreme king and a just ruler.

## Conclusion

This paper, from the discussion so far, believes that African traditional religious leadership which drives its source from the supreme God can be a sample of leadership for Nigeria to achieve a just state. We say this also because, according to Olisa, leadership is based on the oldest man who is equally the keeper of *ofo* of the people he leads. *Ofo* which according to Ejizu (1986) “Democratizes the spiritual bases of even the most secular matters even today. For its power represents the authority of the high God, Chineke channeled through image ancestors, *ndichie*.” (p.xiii). The reason why the holders of *ofo* strive to conduct themselves morally in their style of leadership is because of their belief that *ofo* represents the authority of the high God. And this results to a just leadership in the traditional Igbo society.

## References

- Achebe, C. (2008). *Arrow of God*. London: Heinemann
- Amadi, E. (2005). *Ethics in Nigeria culture*. Ibadan: Heinemann
- Basden, G.T. (1983). *Among the Ibos of Nigeria*. London: University Publishers
- Dine, G.G.U. (2007). *Traditional Leadership*. Enugu: SNAAP.
- Dzurgba, A.A. (2014). Ethics of African traditional religion. In E.A. Adeleowe (ed). *Perspectives in religious studies*: Vol.III (pp.122-126). Ibadan: HEBN.
- Ejizu, C. I. (2008). *Between religion and morality: Their inter-connection and Significance in public life*. Port-Harcourt. University of Port Harcourt.
- Ejizu, C.I. (1986). *Ofor: Igbo ritual symbol*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension.
- Igboke, P.M. (nd). *Plantanic philosophy in relation to national development*. Nsukka: University of Nigeria Nsukka.
- Isichei, E. (nd). *Igbo worlds*
- Madu, J.E. (1997). *Fundamentals of religious studies*. Calabar: Franedoh
- Mbiti, J.S. (1969). *African religion and philosophy*. Nairobi: Heinemann.
- Metuh, E. I. (1999). *God and man in African religion*. Enugu: SNAAP.
- Olisa, M.S.O. (1971). *Political culture and stability in Igbo society*. In *Conch, III*. Nsukka: University Press.
- Omergbe, J. (2010). *Ethics: A systematic and historical study*. Lagos: Joja.
- Onah, G.I. (2017). *University of Nigeria 57<sup>th</sup> founders' day lecture "To restore the dignity of man: Why and How?"* Nsukka: University of Nigeria.
- Onuh, C. O. (1992). *Christianity and the Igbo rites of passage: The prospects of Inculturation*. New York: PETER LANG
- Ossai, A. B. (2008). *African world-view as a tool for the peace in Nigeria: Studies* Igboland. *Icheke: A multi-Disciplinary Journal of the Faculty of Humanity*, 16, NO:3, 45-61
- Ossai, A.B. (2014). *Marital infidelity and traditional ritual cleansing in Nsukka Cultural of Igboland*. Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation submitted to the Department of Religion and Human Relations Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria.
- Pals, D.L. (1996). *Seven theories of religion*. New York: Oxford University.
- Perham, M. (1937). *Native administration in Nigeria*. London: Oxford University.
- Quarcoopome, T.N.O. (1987). *West Africa traditional religion*. Ibadan: African University

- Summwe, C. (1983). An ethical study of Ethiopian philosophy. In H. O. Odera and D. A. Wasola (eds.) *Philosophy and culture*. Kenya: Bookwise.
- Talbort, A. (1967). *Some Nigerian fertility cults*. New York:
- Tempels, P. (1959). *Bantu philosophy*. Paris: Presence Africaine.
- Wiredu, k. (1983). Morality and Religion in Akans Thought. In H. O. Odera and D. A. Wasola (eds.) *Philosophy and culture*. Kenya: Bookwise.