

AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE TO WEALTH-BASED NAMES IN IGBO

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Abstract: Names are linguistic expressions, which reveal much about the bearer but also the culture where the bearer comes from. Considering that Igbo is a patriarchal society, this study aims at examining wealth-based first names, titles, and nicknames for males. The objectives are to explore wealth-based forms, structure, categorization, and meanings. A qualitative approach was adopted in carrying out the study, and primary data were sourced through interviews. Thirty adult men and women from different parts of the Igbo land were purposively sampled and interviewed. The researcher equally relied on her intuitive knowledge of the Igbo language. The Whorfian hypothesis was adopted for the analysis of this work. Findings reveal that most wealth-based names have wealth as the head of phrases or sentences which signifies the importance of wealth to the bearers. Semantically, the names reveal the Igbo philosophy about wealth. This study argues that though it may seem to the uninitiated that the Igbo value wealth above humans based on some of their wealth-based names, the fact is that they are more of name epithets. Additionally, the Igbo believe in acquiring wealth through diligence. They use their wealth to help their community. It is only when one's wealth is used in the right way that it is recognized by the community. The study recommends that the younger generation should take time to study and adapt to the Igbo balanced philosophy on wealth as revealed in the wealth-based names.

Keywords: names, wealth, Igbo, patriarchal society.

INTRODUCTION

THE IGBO PEOPLE ARE AN ETHNIC GROUP IN South Eastern Nigeria. They speak Igbo which includes various "Igboid" languages and dialects.¹ Among the Igbo, names are identity markers. A name identifies the bearer. Benjamin Okafo, for instance, argues that "names are inevitable. They are such an important and natural part of life that even animals, especially cats and dogs, are given names and they respond when called."² Referring to someone by his or her name is a way of showing him or her respect. Tracing the origin and functions of name, Nwagbara, also avers

that "naming is probably from the Judeo-Christian perspective, one of humanity's initial accomplishments and one which involved the collaboration of man and God."³

Names are very important in life. Names are used to maintain relationships for when one calls another by his or her name; it shows a mark of honor and respect. Calling someone by his or her name is a way of establishing the named personhood. Names, according to Ruth Finnegan, are often used to express ideas, aspirations, sorrows, or philosophical comments.⁴ His explanation shows clearly that names are an integral part of a language. Names communicate ideas.

On the importance of names, Derek Alderman cited by Otto Krogsæth, summarises that "naming is a powerful vehicle for promoting identification with the past and locating oneself within networks of memory."⁵ This assertion drives home a point. Names tell stories. A person can find out things that happened in the past through names. Ngozi Emeka-Nwobia, lends credence to the above assertion by noting that "people attach much importance to names because it reflects the people and reserves the originality of the people's languages."⁶ This explanation shows that one can through names understand a group of people, their language and values. The above argument equally stresses strongly, the relationship between language and society. R.A. Hudson posits that "sociolinguistics is the study of language in relation to society."⁷ Sociolinguistics studies the aspects of society, including cultural norms, expectations, context, the way language is used, and the effects of language use on society. Since names are expressed through language by society, it is very clear that names have to do with sociolinguistics. Austin ascertains that "the way we do things with words is functionally related to the culture of the society."⁸ Society expresses its culture through language. Naming is an integral part of a culture, which is expressed through language. Mphande, cited by O. Kòmóláfé, observes that "names are the most meaningful lexicon in the vocabulary of any language, and they are an important part of the language inventory."⁹

There is no end to the giving of names in many African societies, so a person can acquire a sizeable collection of names by the time he becomes an old man.¹⁰ Names are classified into different groups such as first names, pet names, nicknames, and surnames.¹¹ Several works have been done on names in different languages. Mary Seeman's work is a review of two important determinants of naming: the ethnic tradition of the family and the gender of the infant. She concluded that names bear the stamp of the namer's traditions and their hopes for the child. The work also asserts that a name affects the person who bears it.¹² Mandinda Mabuza, whose work is on personal names, throws more light on the effect of names on the bearer. He argues that when one faithfully follows the guidance of

one's name an inexplicable self-fulfillment is acquired. Self-fulfillment is possible only when one keeps away from all that is not in agreement with the predictions made by his or her name.¹³

Names are not without meanings in Igbo society. Discussing Igbo names, C. Nze, submits that "the name a child receives twenty-eight days ... after birth is...much more than a label or a mark of a personal identity."¹⁴ Names tell stories in Igbo society. Nze further explains that naming and names are exercises of art. Names express the inner feelings of the Igbo. The feelings are rooted in religious, social, and family upheavals.¹⁵ It is clear from the above explanation that one can access the Igbo language and culture through the Igbo names. Igbo names cannot be fully appreciated without adequate knowledge of the Igbo worldview.¹⁶

Several works have been done on names in the Igbo language, ranging from first names to pet names, nicknames, and surnames. The present work is on wealth-based names among the Igbo. At the time of this research work, the researcher could not access any comprehensive work on wealth-based names among the Igbo. The only available literature has to do with a compilation of Igbo names and a passive mention of some wealth-based names. This work, therefore, sets out to have an in-depth look at wealth-based names among the Igbo people of Nigeria to find out their forms, structure, categorization, and socio-cultural significance.

METHODOLOGY

The participant observation method was used in this study. The researcher is an Igbo, who grew up in the Igbo community where she had all but one of her academic qualifications. The researcher vividly recalls some firsts and nicknames that have to do with wealth in different Igbo communities where she ran her academic pursuit.

The researcher equally sourced secondary materials that have a compilation of some Igbo names and their meanings. The third method that was used for data collection is a face-to-face and telephone interviews. Thirty adult men and women were purposively sampled and interviewed. The interviewees are from different parts of the Igbo land. They were equally selected without recourse to educational background and occupation. The same set of questions was posed to the participants. The researcher tried to elicit from the interviewees, the Igbo belief in wealth, how the belief is expressed in names, both as personal, title, and nicknames, the effect of such names on the bearers and the Igbo society at large and finally, the attitude of the Igbo towards wealth as expressed in names both in the past and at present. The responses were carefully recorded. The wealth-based names which are in Igbo were translated into the English language. The data is organized under two headings. The

Whorfian hypothesis was used as the theoretical framework for the analyses.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, (SWH, hereafter) also known as Whorfianism argues that thoughts and behavior are determined or partially influenced by language. Benjamin Lee Whorf, a student of Edward Sapir, is seen as the primary proponent of the hypothesis. The focus of the theory is on the relationship between language, culture, and worldview. SWH, according to Ayo Olaoye argues that:

Language is not only socially bound, but culturally bound. Various societies view various aspects of culture differently in other words, a view of the universe differs from society to society. There is therefore an inter-relatedness between culture and worldview. And since language is the primary medium of cultural expression, the worldview and language are therefore inextricably interwoven.¹⁷

SWH has two versions. The strong and weak versions. The strong version, linguistic determinism, has it that language determines thought, and that linguistic category limit and determine cognitive categories. The weak version, linguistic relativism has it that linguistic category and usage influence thought and certain kinds of non-linguistic behavior.

Linguistic determinism has been widely criticized since it is virtually impossible to test one's worldview without using language. If one is to believe the strong version of linguistic determinism, one also has to agree that thought is not possible without language, which is impossible. Linguistic relativism emphasizes the potential to be influenced rather than unavoidably 'determined' by language. It equally assumes that language is influenced by its user's view of the world. The influence is not ascribed to language, but to the use within a language of one variety rather than another. This work adopts the weaker version of SWH which sees language as something that can affect the mind, thought, and reality. SWH is useful to this study which has to do with wealth-based names among the Igbo. Names reveal much about the culture of a given society, in this case, the Igbo society. Culture is expressed through language. It can therefore be said that society, language, and culture are entwined, and this relationship is the focal point of SWH. The adoption of the weaker version of SWH which is linguistic relativism is because the Igbo believe in the power of names, hence, the saying *aha onye na-edu ya* 'one's name guides him/her'. To the Igbo, one's behavior is affected by his name. It follows that wealth-based names affect both those who were given the names as

their first names, those who adopted it as name epithet and the Igbo society at large.

THE CONCEPT OF WEALTH IN IGBO SOCIETY

One of the major attributes of the Igbo is hard work. The Igbo believe that "*onye chuo, o rie* (when one works, he eats)." For the Igbo man, "*aka aja aja na-ebute ọnyị mmanụ mmanụ* (a person who soils his or her hands with sand will harvest food)." Monday Ọnụkawa, posits that "the Igbo ... recognise that it is a virtue to be prosperous and great, and prosperity in the Igbo culture, is a product of hard work and patience."¹⁸ The Igbo do not just acquire wealth for selfish purposes. In this regard, Ebeogu, cited by Ọnụkawa explains:

an acquired wealth, is not appreciated if used essentially for selfish ends, hence the man of wealth in the Igbo traditional culture is also known as *Akụruoṣiṣi* 'Let the wealth be felt at home' an *Omenuko* 'He who feeds the community in times of scarcity', or an *Ọchịrịozo* 'He who undertakes to cater for many people'. It can easily be guessed why this class of people could become very powerful in the society. They are highly respected because of their drive, intelligence, resourcefulness, and philosophy.¹⁹

Ebeogu's explanation is one of the most revealing. It summarises the purpose of wealth among the Igbo and the benefits both to the one who acquired the wealth and the entire community.

Akụ na Ụba 'Wealth and Prosperity' are the key words in making reference to the wealthy among the Igbo. Also, Chinedum Ọfomata, explains "*Akụnauba na-akwawaputa ihe idị na gbanyuụ. Nke a putara na ihe ndị ọzọ na-achọ achọ nwere ebe o juputara* (Wealth and prosperity show a state of one having a surplus. It means that some have an overflow of what others lack)."²⁰ *Akụnauba* in the traditional Igbo society refers to a man's family – wives and children – his large expanse of land and cash crops. *Ego* 'Money' in reference to wealth is a recent development among the Igbo. It entered the Igbo vocabulary as a result of contact with the Europeans who do their transactions with money. The above explanation is expedient because the wealth-based names to be discussed are names that have to do with *akụ*, *uba* and *ego* "wealth, prosperity and money." Ọnụmajuru, remarks that "Igbo name is a story, a book or a dictionary itself."²¹ The wealth-based names as part of the Igbo story, book and dictionary will tell a documented story and explain the Igbo worldview on wealth.

Men of great honor take titles among the Igbo. Their title names tell the stories of their achievements. Nicknames are also powerful among the

Igbo. Nicknames in Igbo are secondary cultural labels, which can eventually become the nexus of the person's identity.²² Like title names, the individual or society may choose a name for the person. In most situations where an individual chose his title or nickname, such a one uses the opportunity to tell his own story the way that befits him, express his aspirations and boost his ego if need be. Nze asserts that:

Often times adults take up names to describe and signify their new circumstances of life. This adoption of names obtains mainly for the purpose of title-taking and individuals employ such adopted names as manifestative of their life history and of the accomplishments.²³

It is worth noting that a person has the right to accept or reject a nickname from the society, especially when such a name has a negative undertone. In most situations of rejection of names, one's superiors may persist in calling such a one by such names especially when the name has to do with the referent's negative personal attributes. The persistence in calling such a name among the Igbo is not a result of hatred. It is rather based on the belief that such name-calling will make the person feel bad and rethink his character which will lead to a positive change. The following section is an analysis of wealth-based names. The analysis is divided into two sections: wealth-based first names and title/nicknames.

ANALYSIS OF WEALTH-BASED FIRST NAMES

The names below are in sentence forms which shows indeed that they tell stories. It will be observed that in all but two of the names (see list of the entire names below), wealth appears at the sentence-initial, showing its importance both to the giver of the name and the society they belong to.

1. Ụba + ụ + ike
Prosperity + is + power
Prosperity is power.

2. Akụchi
 Akụ + chi
Wealth + personal/guardian spirit
Wealth from (one's) guardian spirit.

3. Akụudo
 Akụ + udo
Wealth + peace

Peaceful wealth

4. Ụbaabụnike

Ụba + a + bụ + n + ike
 Prosperity + NEG + is + Aux + force.
 Wealth is not by force.

5. Ndụkaakụ

Ndụ + ka + akụ
 Life + greater + wealth
 Life is worth more than wealth.

The first name on the list highlights the advantage of wealth, which is power. The Igbo man values *uba* which may come in two forms: *uba mmadu* (human prosperity) that is, numerical strength or *uba ihe enweentwe* (material prosperity). The two go hand in hand most of the time. It is numerical strength that brings about material prosperity. More hands on the farms are expected to bring in more harvest. The second name traces the source of wealth to one's guardian spirit. The place of *chi* in the Igbo worldview cannot be overemphasized. The Igbo believe that one's guardian spirit has all it takes to bestow or deny one wealth. The person who gave the name acknowledges the place of *chi* in his wealth. The third name describes the nature of wealth which is a peaceful one. However, the fourth name on the list is a warning that wealth is not by force. All that society expects from an individual is hard work for wealth does not come by force. The last name on the list shows that the Igbo place premium on life over wealth.

WEALTH-BASED TITLE / NICKNAMES

A look at the wealth-based title and nicknames show that fifty-three, which constitute 71% of the names have wealth, money and prosperity at the sentence-initial, showing the value placed on wealth by the individuals and the society at large. The remaining twenty-two names, making up 29% of the names have wealth either in the sentence medial or final (see list 2 for complete details of names under this section).

The stories as revealed in titles and nicknames are subdivided into ten categories. The categories are the following:

1. Benefits of wealth,
2. Measure of wealth,
3. Prayer for wealth,
4. Ideology on wealth,

5. Setbacks of wealth,
6. Limitations of wealth,
7. Things valued above wealth,
8. Sources of wealth,
9. Age and wealth, and
10. Mockery of wealth

Benefits of Wealth

1. Akurienne/ Akuhienne (umunna eribe ife)
 Akụ + rie/hie + nne
 Wealth + grow + big
 When there is great wealth (the towns' men will enjoy the wealth)
2. Akuzuoora (ilo anaa)
 Akụ + zuo + ora
 Wealth + reach-suff + the masses
 When wealth is evenly distributed in society (enmity goes).
3. Akunaesiobiike
 Akụ + na-esi + obi + ike
 Wealth + Aux make + heart + confidence.
 Wealth makes one confident.
4. Akugabazie (ihe na-achọ imebi emebi)
 Akụ + agbazie
 Wealth + PREF – mend
 Wealth has mended (what would have spoilt)
5. Akubuenwata (Ọ dị ka okenye)
 Akụ + bue + nwata
 Wealth + make big suff + child.
 When wealth makes a child big (He looks like an adult)

The names (1-5) in this category enumerate the advantages of wealth both to the individual and to the community. The advantages include confidence, enjoyment, speedy growth, friendship, and restructuring. For instance, the first name on the list states clearly that when there is great wealth, the kinsmen also reap the dividends. Name 2 serves as a follow-up, by stating that enmity vanishes when wealth is evenly distributed in society. The position is based on the belief that unequal distribution of wealth breeds envy, strife, and enmity. The eighth name shows that wealth makes one confident. One is very sure of sorting out his challenges

and those of the community when he has wealth. Name 4 highlights the power of wealth to restructure what is on the verge of damage. The name shows that wealth has the power to reform situations. The last name in this category points to the fact that wealth can make a young person look like an adult. Wealth can transform the physical appearance of a younger person in some cases by making him look very big and robust and in some other cases by his sitting with older ones and contributing to moving society forward.

MEASURE OR QUANTITY OF WEALTH

1. Akwagwagwu
 Akw + agwu
 Wealth + NEG-finish
 Inexhaustible wealth
2. Akunyili
 Akw + nyili
 Wealth + inexhaustible
 Inexhaustible wealth
3. Eseluenuego
 Eselu + enu + ego
 1st PER.SG-pick-SUFF+ top + money
 One whose money can never be exhausted.
4. Akwafulanya
 Akw + afulu + anya
 Wealth + PRO - see - SUFF + eyes.
 Visible wealth
5. Ezeego
 Eze + ego
 King + money
 Money king

The above names give an insight into different measures of wealth which include surplus, inexhaustible and visible wealth. Names 1 to 3 elucidate wealth as inexhaustible. While the bearers of names 1 and 2 state clearly that their wealth cannot be entirely consumed or used up, the bearer of the third name says the same but in a different way. For name 3, the bearer uses only a little out of his immeasurable wealth to sort out issues. Name 4 illuminates the fact that the bearer's wealth is unlimited, and

the evidence is there for people to see. The last name under this category illuminates the fact that the bearer's wealth is limitless hence the referent as a money king.

PRAYER FOR WEALTH

1. Akumam

Akụ + ma + m
Wealth + know + 1st PER.SG.
May wealth come my way.

2. Akukwe (batara m)

Akụ + kwe
Wealth + agree.
May wealth agree (to come to me)

3. Akubata

Akụ + bata
Wealth + enter SUFF
Wealth come in

4. Akụ/Egoakọnam

Akụ/Ego + akọna + m
Wealth/Money + NEG-Scarce-SUFF + 1st PER.SG.
May I not lack wealth/money

5. Akumefuna

Akụ + m + efuna
Wealth + 1st PER.SG. + NEG-lost-SUF
May my wealth not get lost

Names under this category are pleas from the bearers to be favored with wealth. Names 1 - 3 underscore a state of insufficiency, hence the plea to be favored with wealth. Name 4 brings to the fore that the bearer already has wealth but prays that he sustains what he has. Name 5, *Akumefuna*, doubles up both as a prayer for the conservation of one's wealth and also as a mockery for a miser.

IGBO IDEOLOGY ON WEALTH

1. Akunaeruteerute

Akụ + na- + erute
 Wealth + Aux. + PREF-reach-SUFF
 Wealth rotates

2. Akụenwebe

Akụ + enwe + be
 Wealth + NEG. own + home
 Wealth has no permanent abode

3. Ezudebeego

Ezu + debe + ego
 PRE-all + keep + money
 It is not everyone that has money

4. Ekejiụba

Eke + ji + ụba
 Destiny + hold + prosperity
 Destiny determines one's prosperity

5. Egodịnogwu

Ego + dī + n' +ogwu
 Money + is + Aux + thorn
 Money is found among thorns

The Igbo believe that wealth rotates. It has no permanent abode. The belief is expressed in names 1 and 2. The Igbo admit that it is not everyone that has money as name 3 elucidates. The Igbo believe also that one's destiny is a determinant of how wealthy the person will be as seen in name 4. Finally, name 5 is a warning that one needs to tread carefully while searching for money because it is in thorns.

SETBACKS OF WEALTH

1. Akụbuokwu

Akụ + bu + okwu
 Wealth + carry + conflict
 One's wealth may be a source of trouble for him

2. Ụbanaeseokwu

Ụba + na-ese+ okwu
 Prosperity + Aux.bring + conflict
 Prosperity brings conflict.

3. Akụbuiro

Akụ + bu + iro
 Wealth + carry + enmity
 Wealth brings one's enemies.

Names 1 to 3 roll out the disadvantages of wealth. Wealth sometimes brings in trouble, conflict, and enmity. The setback of wealth is bi-dimensional. There is always strife when the wealthy look down on the poor except the case is handled maturely. For instance, Chinua Achebe, who captures the Igbo society before the advent of the white man, observes thus:

Everybody at the kindred meeting took sides with Osugo when Okonkwo called him a woman. The oldest man present said sternly that those whose palm kernels were cracked for them by a benevolent spirit should not forget to be humble. Okonkwo said he was sorry for what he had said, and the meeting continued.²⁴

The above excerpt portrays Okonkwo as rich and proud. His looking down on the poor, Osugo, would have brought in serious conflict if not for the intervention of the oldest man in the meeting. There is bound to be a clash of interests whenever the rich treat the poor with contempt. The situation is almost the same when the poor show no respect to the rich. It is based on the above explanations that wealth is said to bring in strife.

LIMITATIONS OF WEALTH

1. Akụjejezi

Akụ + eje + ozi
 Wealth +NEG.go + errand
 Wealth does not run an errand for one.

2. Akụezumkpa

Akụ + ezu + mkpa
 Wealth + NEG.-cover + need
 Wealth does not solve all problems

3. Akụezuoke

Akụ + ezu + oke
 Wealth + NEG. reach + share
 Wealth does not reach everybody

4. Akụakandụ

Akụ + aka + ndụ
 Wealth + NEG- greater + life
 Wealth is not greater than life

5. Akụegbuonwụ

Akụ		+ egbu	+ onwụ
Wealth	+ PREF(NEG)	+ kill	+death
Wealth cannot stop death			

The limitations of wealth are enumerated in names 1-5. These include the inability to run an errand, solve every problem, satisfy every need and destroy death. The Igbo use the first three names on the list to sound a warning on limitations of wealth as well as stress the need for good human relationships. Even in the present dispensation where people hire labor, an Igbo will tell you that *orụ e goro ego bu orụ e goro ego* in other words, a laborer can never work to your satisfaction as your honest kinsmen would. Name 4 places longevity above wealth while the last name on the list upholds the need for one to be cautious for wealth does not kill death.

THINGS VALUED ABOVE WEALTH

1. Okwurieakụ (ma ya erina mmadụ)

Okwu	+ rie	+ akụ
Conflict	+ eat – SUFF	+ wealth
Let conflict consume wealth (but not a person)		

2. Mmadukaakụ

Mmadụ	+ ka	+ akụ
People	+ greater	+ wealth

3. Eziahakaego

Ezi	+ aha	+ ka	+ ego
Good	+name	+ greater	+ money

The above names show that the Igbo value good human relationships above wealth. Name 1 shows that the Igbo would rather trade their wealth to resolve a conflict in which there is a threat to human life. Value is placed on man rather than wealth in name 2. For name 3, a good name is placed above wealth.

SOURCES OF WEALTH

1. Akuchi/Chukwu

- | | | |
|--------|-------------------|----------|
| Akụ | + chi | / Chukwu |
| Wealth | + guardian spirit | / God |
2. Akụchikwadoro (nyịlị onye anyañfụ)
- | | | |
|--------|-------------------|----------------|
| Akụ | + chi | + kwadoro |
| Wealth | + guardian spirit | + support-SUFF |
- Wealth given by God (cannot be stopped by an envious person)
3. Akụnwadike
- | | | |
|--------|---------|------------|
| Akụ | + nwa | + dike |
| Wealth | + child | + powerful |
- The wealth of a powerful man's child
4. Akụnna
- | | |
|--------|----------|
| Akụ | + nna |
| Wealth | + father |
- Father's wealth
5. Akụnne
- | | |
|--------|----------|
| Akụ | + nne |
| Wealth | + mother |
- Mother's wealth

Bearers' sources of wealth are enumerated under this category. Name 1 traces the source of his wealth to his guardian spirit. Monday Onukawa, explains the place of *chi* in Igbo cosmology thus:

Chi is the Igbo 'personal life force, individualized providence, etc. It is a central point in the psychology, thought, and belief of the Igbo. For the Igbo, *Chi* is a very significant "essence of existence." They believe that *Chi* is responsible for existence, prosperity, success, failure and that it is indeed the sole controller of the entire life affairs of the people.²⁵

The above explanation summarizes the place of *chi* in the Igbo man's life. Name 2 builds on the same belief that the envious cannot destroy wealth from one's personal god. Names 3 to 5 trace the source of wealth to father and mother. The implication is that the parents gave them a good start, not that they boast about their parents' money. A man in the Igbo society is judged according to his worth and not the parents.'

AGE AND WEALTH

1. Akụnwata
 Akụ + nwata
 Wealth + child
 Child's wealth/wealth got at a young age
2. Nwajiakụ
 Nwa + ji + aku
 Child + hold + wealth
 A child that has wealth
3. Nwalupuoakụ
 Nwa + lupuo + akụ
 Child + burst + wealth
 When a child bursts upon wealth

For names 1 - 3, *nwa* / *nwata* in the context refers to youth. Interviewees reveal that bearers of such names made their wealth at their youthful age. The bearer of the first name under this category states clearly that his wealth was made in his youth. Name 2 establishes the same, that he is wealthy even as a youth. The last name on the list goes a bit further to establish the fact that the wealth he made in his youth is beneficial to others for when a child bursts wealth, it benefits his kinsmen.

MOCKERY OF WEALTH

1. Ọkpa(ego) ataaja
 Ọkpa (ego) + ata + aja
 One who gathers (money) + PREF-eat + sand
 One who gathers money but hardly spends it/stingy per son/miser
2. Akụbuụzọ
 Akụ + bu + ụzọ
 Wealth + carry + first
 One who places wealth first
3. Akụatuegwu
 Akụ + atụ + egwu
 Wealth + PREF-carry + fear
 Spend thrift
4. Akụbụlụonụ

Akụ	+ burūlụ	+ ọnụ
Wealth	+ is Pst SUFF	+ mouth
If wealth were just by word of the mouth		

Names 1- 4, which form the last category has much more to do with society. The names are given by society to people as a result of their character and attitude towards wealth. It has been stated earlier that most of those who are referred to by such names reject it, but they are still called by such names, especially by their superiors. Name 1 refers to a miser. The referent has money but makes a mockery of himself and his money in that he puts in much effort to make the money but finds it difficult to spend it on himself not to think of society. Name 2 mocks someone who places undue value on wealth. Name 3 refers to a spendthrift while the last name on the list makes a mockery of a person who boasts much about money but has little or nothing. Society uses names in this category to mock extremists on the issue of money.

DISCUSSION

The data is a rich source of information on wealth among the Igbo. The Igbo philosophy on wealth is expressed through the names. Explanations from an oral interview with Hilary Enendu show that 'semantically, wealth-based first names mostly have to do with the Igbo traditional wealth – human beings, and not necessarily material wealth as it literally appears.'²⁶ The Igbo has it that *onye nwere mmadu ka onye nwere ego* (He that has human/people surpasses the person that has only money). The value is on human beings not necessarily on materials things, hence *Uba* in the names *Ubaka*, *Ubabuike* and *Ubaabunike* talk about numerical or human increase and not materialism.

It was also revealed through an oral interview with Chinedu Afamefuna, that 'first names tell stories about the families and circumstances surrounding the birth of the child'.²⁷ He further gave an illustration with the name *Egobuike* was said to be given to the bearer because money sorted a major challenge in the family at the time the child was born. From the above meanings, it is very clear that materialism is far from the meanings of the wealth-based first names.

On the data that has to do with the title and nicknames, names predicated on a measure of wealth top the list by 23%, followed by names that enumerate the advantages of wealth which constitute 21%. The point is clear. The Igbo do not only appreciate the value of wealth but have a strong belief that it is good for one to have an overflow of wealth in order to solve not only one's personal problems but the community's own. The Igbo are not acquainted with begging; therefore, every Igbo aspires to ac-

quire his àkù by dint of persistent diligence.²⁸ Every Igbo man's assiduity to get wealth is often misconstrued as materialism but it is not so. Isichei, cited by Ebo Ùbahakwe discloses that "even in such a callous business as warfare, the hired warriors in pre-literate Igbo society maintain that they fought for glory and not for pay."²⁹ Ùbahakwe, argues that "as modern history and our recent experiences would confirm, a materialist would fight to the last man provided that last man is he!"³⁰ The explanations clarify the issue of materialism among the Igbo.

SWH argues that language can affect the mind, thought and reality. Wealth-based names affect the mind of the Igbo, and they have proof. For instance, based on the advantages of wealth and the measure of wealth as revealed in names, the Igbo achieve great feat in that the names spur them to work extra hard to make wealth. Onwùbiko, posits that:

The spirit of enterprise has ensured that just forty years after the fratricidal civil war, the people of the southeast have literally rebuilt their cities, towns and villages devastated by that war without any external assistance or financial lifeline... nowhere in the world have a people been able to rebuild their destroyed homelands after warfare without external help.³¹

The above assertion summarises the industriousness of the Igbo man and explains better, what he does with his wealth.

Data reveals that there are more wealth-based titles and nicknames than first names. First names account for only 17% of the entire data while titles and nicknames comprise the remaining 83%. The present result falls in line with Ebo Ùbahakwe's findings.³² His work on Igbo personal names reveals names that have to do with material assets as second to the last on the list, accounting for only 1.67% of the entire names. The point is that the Igbo man's life is not centred on wealth as many assume. If it were so, first names which serve as windows through which one can view the people's culture would have revealed so. Adiele Afigbo, clarifies that "Igbo society placed a high premium on hard work and so not only valued the hard worker but held him up for admiration."³³ The Igbo encourage and appreciate hard work. They are not interested in materialism but in achievements. The lop-sidedness in the names points the Igbo child to the fact that he needs to work extra hard to achieve something in life and only then can he tell his own story in his chosen style. The Igbo belief in individual hard work is further strengthened by the question *a mụlụ onye na ego?* (Was anyone born with money?) One may argue at this point that some people are born into wealthy families hence the names *Akunnne* and *Akunna* (father's and mother's wealth). This study reveals the aforementioned names as ones that trace the foundation on which the bearers of the

names built their wealth and not necessarily that the wealth the bearers enjoy is exclusively their parents as the names literally suggest.

The Igbo believe that wealth has no permanent abode, in other words, no one should boast or lament about it. They equally admit that money is a necessity hence the aphorism *Nwoke kpata ego, o rie ufoḍu, o debe ufoḍu* 'If a man earns money, let him spend some and keep some.' This is not to say that they do not admit the poor among them. The names under the plea to be favored with money buttress the fact that even the poor desire to be financially independent. Nwachukwu-Agbada gives an insight:

The Igbo person by nature hates to be insulted on account of his or her poverty or low status in life, for it is believed that surplus or penury is written on one's palm by providence (akaraka). One Igbo proverb rhetorically asks: *O kọ m ọny uwa i juru chi m ajuju?* (You who insult me because i am poor, did you try to find out from my guardian spirit why I am made that way?).³⁴

The Igbo does everything positively possible to be free from poverty. They do not only plead to be favored with wealth but do the necessary consultations before residing to fate. Chinua Achebe, who unfolds the Igbo way of life before the advent of the white man tells of Unoka, who went to consult *Agbara* because of his poor yield. The answer from Chika, the priestess has it thus:

You have offended neither the gods nor your fathers. And when a man is at peace with his gods and his ancestors, his harvest will be good or bad according to the strength of his arm. You...are known in all the clan for the weakness of your matchet and your hoe...Go home and work like a man.³⁵

Unoka had earlier been described as in his days as "lazy and improvident ...quite incapable of thinking about tomorrow."³⁶ Unoka's nature did not stop him from doing the necessary consultation. His poverty was because of his laziness. The Igbo understand and acknowledge the place of gods, one's ancestors, his personal god and hard work when it comes to wealth. When the aforementioned is in place and the person is still poor, such is usually excused thus: *O mebere ma chi ekweghi, ụmụnna atala ya ụta* (Let no one blame a hard worker who is not favored by *chi*.) The emphasis here is the person's personal god. It implies that the person is not destined to be rich. What the Igbo abhor is laziness. A traditional Igbo man fits into agriculture, trade, or manufacturing industry. Afigbo asserts that "each of these three main provinces of economic activity played an important part in the survival of the Igbo as a group and in determining the character and

quality of their culture, even of their religion and cosmology."³⁷ Ofofemata throws more light on why the Igbo abhor laziness by noting that:

Ha ekwenyeghi n'ino nkiti. Ha kwenyesiri ike na mmadu ga-agba mbọ nke oma tupu o kpata ihe o ga-eri. Na onye noro nkiti, agwu eg-buo ya. O bu nkwenye di otu a kpata ndi Igbo ji buru ndi na-arusi oru ike ma burukwa ndi e ji igba mbọ n'uzo puru icha were mara (They do not believe in idleness. They strongly believe that one has to work very hard before s/he gets what s/he will eat. That if one is idle, s/he will die of hunger. It is based on this belief that the Igbo are very hardworking, and they are known for their hard work).³⁸

The Igbo philosophy on wealth is balanced. They admit clearly, what wealth cannot do. Despite the advantages of wealth, the Igbo sounds a warning on human relationships as wealth cannot solve every challenge a man has nor can it destroy death. The Igbo value good name above wealth, hence the name *Eziahakaego* (good name is better than money). The Igbo equally care to know the source of one's wealth, which accounts for some people making reference to their source in the names they bear such as *Akuchi*, *Akunne* and *Akunna*.

The age at which one acquires wealth matters to the Igbo. For the Igbo, *kama nwoke ga-abu a ma ama a machaghi amacha, nwoke too ka uga laa n'ike* (Instead of a man to be inconsequential let him, like the *Uga palm*, grow fast and depart).³⁹ The emphasis here is on hard work at one's youth and not one living a complacent stress-free life with the view that such a risk-free way of life will make him live longer. The Igbo see wealth as what one needs to get at a youthful age when he still has the strength, so as to make an impact in the society. They encourage hard work with the saying that: *nwata kwochaa aka, o soro ogaranya rie nri* (if a child washed his hands, he would dine with the nobles). For a child to dine with the real nobles of the land, he must follow the right path in his acquisition of wealth. It is here argued that the wealth-based names affect the bearers to continue to work harder to maintain their names. It also encourages the younger ones to work hard so as to tell their own stories. This falls in line with the SWH.

The last set of names summarises the Igbo people's view of wealth. Wealth is meant to be utilized in solving problems, and not be given undue preference. Wealth should also be used judiciously. Finally, the Igbo acknowledge the place of hard work and destiny in wealth making and not just one boasting about wealth that he does not have.

One must admit that there are always exceptions to rules. Some Igbo still go against the Igbo philosophy of making wealth through the right and peaceful means. The Igbo society sees one who acquires wealth through illegal means as *ajọ nwa si owere ba nne ya afo* (An evil child who

came into the world mischievously). The person's money is referred to as *ego oku* (hot money) or *ego obara* (blood money), if the money is gained through rituals. It is only the likes of such a person that hail and share in his money, for the Igbo admit that *o di ka o di kpoba, o dika o di egolu, a nọkọọ ka a ha eri udele, a tọtuo ngiga* that is, (birds of the same feather flock together).

CONCLUSION

This study delved into wealth-based names among the Igbo. The general stereotype is that the Igbo have a strong passion for wealth. The study reveals that hard work is what every Igbo man advocates so as to contribute meaningfully to the society. The study also reveals that the Igbo advocate one making wealth at a younger age. Room is equally given to a hard worker whose *chi* does not bestow the favor of wealth on. The place of *chi* in wealth-making serves as a check for every Igbo man to do his part by working hard and leaving the outcome of his hard work to his *chi* who has the final decision.

The limitations of wealth are established in the names. The Igbo philosophies on how wealth should be handled are well expressed in the names. The study argues that the Igbo have a well-balanced philosophy on wealth. There are changes in society concerning wealth-making through dubious means. The changes are global and not peculiar to the Igbo. The younger generation should use wealth-based names as referent points in their pursuit in life as names affect perception.

WEALTH-BASED FIRST NAMES

1. Egobuike
Money is power
2. Akubuike
Wealth is power
3. Ubabuike
Prosperity is power
4. Ubaka
Prosperity is greater/supreme
5. Ubadjire
Prosperity is certain
6. Akubuude
Wealth carries fame
7. Akubueze
Wealth is king
8. Akunna
Father's wealth

9. Akuchi
Wealth from (one's) guardian spirit
10. Akudinobi
Wealth is in the homestead
11. Akudo
Peaceful wealth
12. Ubaabunike
Wealth is not by force
13. Akubunwa
Wealth is not a child.
14. Ndukauba
Life is greater than prosperity.
15. Ndukaaku
Life is worth more than wealth.

WEALTH-BASED TITLE AND NICKNAMES

1. Akurienne/ Akuhienne (umunna eribe ife)
When there is great wealth (the towns' men will enjoy the wealth)
2. Akuzuoora (ilo anaa)
When wealth is evenly distributed in the society (enmity goes).
3. Akunaesiobiike
Wealth makes one confident.
4. Akubuko
Wealth is pride/ makes one proud.
5. Akujuobi
Wealth makes one's heart to be at rest.
6. Akubugwu
Wealth brings prestige.
7. Akuburu
Wealth is advantageous.
8. Akubuenwata (O di ka okenye)
When wealth makes a child big (He looks like an adult)
9. Akuluonno (a malu onye kpatara ya)
When wealth reaches the home (the owner is known)
10. Akubummadu
Wealth makes a person.
11. Akugbazie (ihe na-acho imebi emebi)
Wealth has mended (what would have spoilt)
12. Akunaebunwa
Wealth makes a child great.
13. Akuchieze
When wealth is crowned king
14. Akupuome (e libe ife)

- When wealth sprouts (people will enjoy it)
15. Akubundu
Wealth makes one live good life (comfortable)
 16. Akuoha
Public wealth
 17. Akumia
Wealth has flourished.
 18. Akurighiri
Wealth acquired gradually.
 19. Akujijeabia
Wealth that walks in slowly
 20. Akunyi
Inexhaustible wealth
 21. Akuafuluanya
Visible wealth
 22. Akugwuagwu
Inexhaustible wealth
 23. Akurika
Surplus wealth
 24. Akakalia
Surplus wealth
 25. Omenukoku
One who feeds the community during scarcity.
 26. Ezeego
Money king
 27. Eseluenuego
One whose money can never be exhausted.
 28. Omeego
One who produces and spreads money.
 29. Iteego
Pot of money
 30. Akanaemeego
Producer of money
 31. Ikpoaku
Heap of wealth
 32. Akuko
Wealth + PRE-scarce
 33. Ezeerisiaku
The king's wealth is inexhaustible.
 34. Akumam
May wealth come my way.
 35. Akukwe (batara m)
May wealth agree (to come to me)
 36. Akubata
Wealth come in.

37. Akụ/Egoakọnam
May I not lack wealth/ money?
38. Akụmefuna
May my wealth not get lost.
39. Nwarieakụ
Let my child inherit my wealth.
40. Akụbụrụiche (o nweghị onye ga-atụ m ya)
If wealth were stone, (no one would throw it at me).
41. Akụnaeeruteerute
Wealth rotates.
42. Akụenwebe
Wealth has no permanent abode.
43. Okwubanego (ogbenye eselụ ọnụ)
When money is the subject of discussion (the poor makes no contribution)
44. Ọkụtalụ(akụ)kwe
One who made wealth and owns up he/she did.
45. Ekejiụba
Destiny determines one's prosperity.
46. Igbonaefuruakụ
The Igbo (the world) get lost in search for wealth.
47. Akụkwesiri
Wealth befits.
48. Ezudebeego
It is not everyone that has money.
49. Anaeriakụ (akụ ana abia)
When wealth is being consumed (it continues to come)
50. Mbaanaabaraego
To reprimand money (reprimand for money)
51. Egodinogwu
Money is found among thorns.
52. Akụbuokwu
One's wealth may be a source of trouble for him.
53. Ụbanaeseokwu
Prosperity brings conflict.
54. Akụbuiro
Wealth brings one enemy.
55. Akụjeoji
Wealth does not run an errand for one.
56. Akụezumkpa
Wealth does not solve all problems.
57. Akụezuoke
Wealth does not reach everybody.
58. Akụakandụ
Wealth is not greater than life.

59. Akuegbuonwu
Wealth cannot stop death.
60. Okwurieaku (ma ya erina mmadu)
Let conflict consume wealth (but not a person)
61. Eziahakaego
Good name is better than money.
62. Mmadukaaku
A human being is supreme over wealth.
63. Akuchi/Chukwu
Wealth from the guardian spirit/God
64. Akunwadike
The wealth of a powerful man's child
65. Akunne
Mother's wealth
66. Akunna
Father's wealth
67. Akuchikwadoro (nyili onye anyafu)
Wealth given by God (cannot be stopped by an envious person)
68. Ubasinachi
Prosperity is from one's guardian spirit.
69. Akunwata
Child's wealth/wealth got at a young age.
70. Nwalupuoaku
When a child bursts upon wealth
71. Nwajiaku
A child that has wealth
72. Okpa(ego) ataaja
One who gathers money but hardly spends it/stingy person/miser
73. Akubuuzo
One who places wealth first.
74. Akutatuegwu
Spend thrift
75. Akubulunu
If wealth were just by word of the mouth

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