

Human Deified: The Case of Behavioural Relationship between Èṣù and Ìdòwú in Yoruba Beliefs

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Abstract

In Yoruba societies, names are associated with family, profession or occupation, religion among others. However, behaviours of an individual have not been established to be influenced by the behaviours of a deity. To date, individual behaviours such as Ìdòwú (a male or female child born after twins) have not been investigated as influenced by the behaviour of a divinity such as Èṣù (the divinity of justice), as undertaken in this study. That is, even though the Yoruba societies believe that Ìdòwú is troublesome, the causes of Ìdòwú's behaviours have not been investigated or validated. This study fills this gap. The study adopts an empirical approach based on interviews, participant observation, and textual reports: oríkì- panegyrics or praise poetry, proverbs and aphorisms, ofò- incantations. These methods are tools for accessing the behaviours under examination. Adopting code, a semiotic mode which concentrates on the channel through which sign is communicated. The outcome of the study reveals that there is synergy in the behaviours of Èṣù-divinity of justice in Ifá-divinity of wisdom and Ìdòwú. The behavioural relationships evolve as a result of profession, position, and sacrificial order, making Ìdòwú a deity. The work concludes that among the Yoruba, the mysteries surrounding some individuals' behaviours are influenced by the relationship an individual has with a divinity. This development has increased our knowledge of the scary and hazy behaviours of Ìdòwú and has solved the Yoruba ideological and philosophical problems behind the beliefs about these behaviours. This development has unravelled the reasons behind the scary behaviours of Ìdòwú among the Yoruba.

Keywords: Behavior, Culture, Èṣù, Ìbejì, Ìdòwú, Religion

Introduction

Among Africans, what controls an individual's behaviour is beyond physical (Ejizu, 2007). The implication of this statement is that there are both spiritual and physical components influencing and controlling some individual behaviours. Likewise, among the Yoruba, name is never taken for granted because of its influence on the individual patterns of life. The Yoruba believe that *orúkò ọmọ ní romọ*. That is, one's name is influenced by his or her behaviours. However, this study observes that behaviours are influenced not only by name but also by affiliation or closeness to divinity, beginning from pre-birth, birth, and post-birth periods and circumstances. Among the Yoruba communities, the reason behind some strange behaviours associated with Ìdòwú is hazy. The belief of the Yoruba is that, naturally, Ìdòwú is troublesome. The reason behind this belief is scary. Espousing the reason behind Ìdòwú's behaviours will increase the society's understanding for better co-existence not only between the Ìbejì but also to the society at large.

Understanding the knowledge and meaning of behavioural history cannot be established in a single or simple way. This is why Tatham and Wanchisen suggest that “the term behavioural history should be reserved for more specified use in order to avoid confusion” (1998: 241). The implication of this opinion is that the context of use of behavioural history varies, depending on the focus. That is, a scope of knowledge or approach will be inadequate to account for some patterns of behaviour exhibited by some individuals. This is the case in the present study where, behavioural history between *Èṣù*- the divinity of justice and execution and *Ìdòwú*: a male or female child born after *Ìbejì*¹ is investigated to be related.

To validate the relative effects of the character of divinity on an individual’s behaviours, it is relevant to investigate the behaviours of *Ìdòwú* in *Ìbejì* to *Èṣù* in *Ifá*. *Ìdòwú*’s name evolves as a result of his or her birth affiliation with *Ìbejì*. That is, without *Ìbejì*, *Ìdòwú*’s name cannot come into existence. Among the Yoruba, the *Ìbejì* related names are *Táyéwò*², *Kèhìndé*³, *Ìdòwú*⁴, *Àlàbá*⁵, *Ìdògbé*⁶. These names are all gender-neutral and arranged by birth from oldest to youngest. These names are strictly guided by birth history or circumstance. Abimbola succinctly says “the concept of existence transcends the time when the individual is on earth” (1975: 417). That is, individual behaviours are not limited or restricted to the birth (physical appearance of a child to the world), but also to prenatal and postnatal periods. It is established from this opinion that, in Yoruba belief, an individual journey starts from heaven as evinced from *Òtúá Méjì*⁷ chanted by Fakorede. An

¹ Twins

² Have a taste of life- first male or female child of twins’

³ last to come- born: male or female child of *Ìbejì*.

⁴ a male or female child born after *Ìbejì*

⁵ A male or female child born after *Ìdòwú*’

⁶ male or female child after *Àlàbá*

⁷ *Ifá lawo Ifá/Ifá* is the secret of *Ifá*

Ifá lawo ifá/opportunity is the secret of fortune

Kanrinkárin lawo àjáwọlẹ/Kanrinkárin is the secret of àjáwọlẹ

A díá fún ọ̀tálélẹ̀gbẹ̀rún èniyàn/cast divination for two thousand and sixty people

Tí wọn n t’òde ọ̀run bọ wá lé ayé/ that were coming from heaven to the earth.

Wọn ní wọn ó rúbọ ẹgbẹ̀gbaàwá/They were instructed to make sacrifice of two thousand each

Àtaṣọ ara wọn/including the cloths they put on

Àtàgbébọ adìẹ/and a grown up hen.

individual's journey to the world follows the routes of gates. From the *Ifá* corpus, it is affirmed that the individual's journey did not start from the time of birth, but from heaven, where the individual negotiates with his/her *orí*- head on one's mission to the world in the presence of *Olódùmarè*, the creator. The implication of these statements is that life experience, including behaviours, spans back to “the prenatal period, even the preconception experience of sperm and egg” (Lenski & Lenski, 1987, p. 33). This study observes that an individual's behaviour is influenced by various cultural and biological factors.

The pre-birth circumstance is observed to have a great influence on the behaviours of *Ìdòwú*. This is why the name can be predicted after the birth of *Ìbejì*. That is, the name is culturally enforced on the child after the *Ìbejì*. The parents are equally culturally bound to assign and ascribe the name to the child after *Ìbejì*.

Wón yọ egbègbaàwá fún wón láti fì sanwó oníbodè/They paid them two thousand each as a toll gate fee

Ìkíní nínú àwọn ọ̀tálélẹ̀gbẹ̀rún èniyàn/The first of the two thousand and sixty people

Wón ò rúbọ/They failed to pay for the sacrifice

Wón mọ̀nà an kọ̀rọ̀/They too to illegal route

Ọ̀nà kọ̀rọ̀ tí wón gbà/The illegal route they took to

Ọ̀gán gún wón lẹ̀sẹ̀/Thong pierce their legs

Àpáta kọ̀ wón lẹ̀sẹ̀/Rock barred them from having a smooth passage

Wón délé ayé/They got to the world

Wón n sùnkún páwọn ò rọ̀mọ̀ bí/They were crying for being barren

Wón ní kí wón tún owó ibodè san/They were instructed to repay for toll fee

Kí wón wá wẹ́rí wón lóríta/And should wash their heads at the three junctions' road

Wón wẹ́rí wón lóríta/They washed their heads at the three junctions' road

Ìgbà tí wón wá wẹ́rí wón tán/After they finished washing their heads

Wón wá n péwé kan n bẹ̀ ládúgbòwẹ̀/They said there is a leaf at Adúgbòwẹ̀

Ewé arábámbí ní/It is arábámbí leaf.

Èmi ò sàì bá wón bí o/I will join the productive being

Èmi ò sàì bá wón gbé pọ̀n/ I will be among those that will back child

Among the Yoruba, naming is unique, especially for *Ìbejì*-related names, in which *Ìdowú* plays a central role. A child is named on the naming day (seven, eight or nine days depending on the sex) among the Yoruba⁸. The names of *Ìbejì*, *Ìdowú*, and two children after him or her can be predicted before and after birth (as earlier explained). These names are celestial. Even though *Ìdowú*'s name is predictable, neither behaviours nor factors influencing the behaviours have been investigated or accounted for until the present time.

The behaviours of *Ìdowú* in contemporary time can be beclouded by looking to the past. That is, to understand the present behaviours of *Ìdowú*, cultural history of the past is necessary; since without the past there can be no present. This is imperative in order to make such validation a scientific one. This attempt will avail us to account for continuity in behaviours of the past with the present. (Lattal n.d). This opinion corroborates that present behaviours are influenced by the past⁹. This opinion shows that; names are trace elements to establish present behavioral patterns of some individuals based on past history. Investigating name and behaviours of *Ìdowú* will provide some additional cultural valuable accounts in Yoruba beliefs. That is, societies have cultural information and understanding around some behavioural traits of *Ìdowú* among the Yoruba. Therefore, this study is aimed to validate that human behavior in names such as *Ìdowú* is influenced by the behaviours and history of deity such as *Èṣù*. The objectives of this study are to establish the religious influence on human behaviours; to show that, *Ìdowú*'s behavior in *Ìbejì* myth and history is related to *Èṣù* and to establish that, as the history and behavioral relationships of *Èṣù* is to *Ifá* so it is to *Ìdowú*, in *Ìbejì*.

Methods

Two main types of behaviourism have been proposed: Methodological and radical behaviourism. While methodological behaviourism holds that behaviours should be accounted for by science and cognition, the radical approach prescribes reflection on the past in the present environment, which can have a positive or negative impact on an individual's behaviours. Some behaviours are a result of conditioning (Cherry 2022).

⁸ This is in the ancient period. However, every child, including *Ìbejì* is named on the eight day.

⁹ This is the case, where virtues such as bravery, humility and generosity are inflected and reflected on some individuals. These are believed to have been inherited from past generations. The case is observed in some sicknesses and diseases believed to be running in blood system of some individuals, the permanent treatment may be infeasible as such are inherited.

Radical behaviourism is well-suited to this study because it considers the past history and environment as factors influencing an individual's behaviour. That is, knowledge of present events is influenced by the past because the present is founded on the past. To corroborate this opinion, Peel writes that there is a need to rework the past in order to believe that the present is governed or controlled by the past (1984). The implication of these ideas in this study is that there is a need to re-examine and rework the past activities and behaviours of deities such as Èṣù in order to uncover hazy behaviours exhibited by some individuals, such as Ìdòwù, in contemporary times. An empirical approach, which is “strictly drawn from concretely empirical evidence, and therefore ‘verifiable’ evidence, is equally adopted. It is derived from the Greek word *empeirikos*, which means ‘experienced’” (QuestionPro Survey Software 2020:1-2). In this study, empirical evidence is drawn from various texts, including observations and experiences, to validate the claim that Ìdòwù's behavioural history is influenced by Èṣù. There are different types of methodologies associated with empirical research, such as Survey, Experimental, Correlational, Longitudinal, cross-sectional, Causal-Comparative, Observational, and direct interview, among others. However, case studies and observations in relation to Yoruba cultural contexts are adopted. This is a form of direct contact with elements under study. This is required in an anthropological-related study, where “Anthropologists look for the facts by observing the people carefully; they try to understand the themes of every behaviour” (Roy 2000 p. 686). This approach is used along interview method of data collection as,

Anthropologists supplement their ‘observation’ by the methods of ‘interview’.

The data is purely qualitative in nature. No other empirical study of society offers such a scope for in-depth observation and interviews. The collected data in anthropological fieldwork is completely free from statistical error, since anthropology is a science of a sensitive mind. All modern sciences are rooted in observation. Every scientist considers observation as the most important as well as primary factor. The scientific method of any discipline involves two stages:

- (i) Collection of data
- (ii) Analysis and interpretation of the data

The data for socio-cultural anthropology are collected in two ways
(Roy 2000: 687).

The two ways Roy reiterated above are grouped into textual and contextual. The text relates to relevant texts and contexts regarding data from the observation and interview. Observation method is validated as “the oldest method of scientific investigation” (Roy, 2000, p. 688).

This study adopts an intensive observation, which “denotes an in-depth observation on a small closed community” (Roy, 2000, p. 688). It is closely related to qualitative research (purely explanatory in nature), whereas the extensive uses the quantitative method. “The socio-cultural anthropologists prefer intensive observation or micro-level study” (Roy, 2000, p. 688). It is based on an intensive method in which generalisation is made. Interviews are conducted in a closed community. This approach will increase our knowledge of the behaviours of *Ìdòwú*, as “no incisive and objective discourse on Yoruba naming praxis could be lucidly expressed without recourse to the people’s ideology, the cosmos and its cosmology” (Ogunwale 2016 p. 23). Various Yoruba ideological and philosophical accounts in texts about *Ìdòwú* and *Èṣù*’s behaviours validate their relationships.

The case study of *Ìdòwú* and *Èṣù* is referenced for this study. The case study is aimed at finding “more information through carefully analyzing existing cases. Using the findings from the case study, conclusion can be drawn regarding the topic that is being studied” (OuestionPro Survey Software 2020: 6). Implication of this opinion in this study means, using *Ìdòwú* and *Èṣù* as the case study, generalization can be inferred that behaviours are influenced by one’s affiliation or connection to a deity.

The semiotic approach, which is the study of the science of signs, is adopted. Semiotics can be realised in two forms: a signifier of an individual. It focuses on human semiotics, which is adopted in the study because it centres on *Ìdòwú*. The second scope of semiotics is one that relates to the general science of signs (Petrilli & Ponzio, 2007). A name as a signifier denotes a person. This is because one is referred to by a name. On the other hand, a name is a universal thing relating to the behavioural system or patterns of an individual (Ogundeji, 1988). The two aspects pointed out by Ogundeji are relevant scopes or knowledge in understanding the behavioural patterns of life of *Ìdòwú* in relation to *Èṣù*; for the fact that psychologically, behaviour is associated with names, when such names are celestial, there seems to be a behavioural code influence of the invisibles (Pogoso & Akande, 2011). Name can be realised in various codes, where behavioural code is one.

Code is one of the semiotic elements relevant to unveiling the behavioural relationships of *Èṣù* and *Ìdòwú*, as the knowledge of semiology is mitigated by codes (Barthes 1964). Geoffrey & Short remind us that code helps in simplifying the understanding of communication. It is a means through which messages are channelled (1981). Irvine opines that “code is a learned rule or linking signs to their meanings” (2004). That is, code, such as behavioural code under examination in this study, is learnable in order to comprehend the meanings associated with it.

Relevant data on behavioural history surrounding *Ifá-Ìbejì/Ìdòwú* and *Ifá-Èṣù* are compared, so as to establish crisscrossing in their behaviours. By comparing or linking two things, including human beings or animals, one would eventually realise their relationship (Combs & Freedman, 1990). Among the Yoruba, relationships are based on resemblance, established by pairing two things or human beings. The value of a relationship can be in different forms- complexion, colour, history and behaviour. In this study, cultural terms and symbols are preserved by name to observe their cultural or indigenous flavours and to avoid misrepresentation and misinterpretation (Ilesanmi, 2004).

Results

This study established that, in a predominantly Yoruba society, *Ìdòwú* is a human deified. The deity's behavioural attributes of *Ìdòwú* were traced to have diffused from those of *Èṣù*. The behaviours were influenced by sacrifice, roles, and positions. As *Èṣù* negotiated sacrificial order in *Ifá* divination, so is *Ìdòwú*, who mitigated *Ìbejì* sacrifice. In the process of sacrifice, some behavioural traits were dispensed in both *Èṣù* and *Ìdòwú*. There was a crisscrossing of behaviours between *Èṣù* and *Ìdòwú* that made *Ìdòwú* a supernatural being being appeased in *Ìbejì* for some favours like *Èṣù* among the Yoruba divinities. The research outcome of the study revealed that the militancy behavior of *Ìdòwú* was influenced by policing roles shared from *Èṣù*. The policing and military roles influenced behaviours of both *Èṣù* and *Ìdòwú*. This is why *Èṣù* and *Ìdòwú* occupy central positions. This study accounted for the behaviours of *Ìdòwú*, which remained mysterious and erratic among the Yoruba. This result provided further insights into cultural behaviours arising beyond family background, profession and birth circumstance to individual affinity to a deity as inflected in *Ìdòwú*'s behaviours.

Discussions

Among the Yoruba, *oríkì*- panegyrics, which are a form of name, are a trace element to establish relationship through “their shared *Oríkì/Orílẹ̀* that these scattered groups recognise a relationship” (Barber 1991: 135). By this, the past, living or dead, is brought together as an indivisible entity through *oríkì*. *Oríkì* is a reliable, data-rich collection in which the past history and behaviours of all things (living and non-living) are stored and disseminated. Activities of the Yoruba deities such as *Èṣù*, *Ifá*, and *Ìbejì* are remembered in contemporary times through *oríkì*. *Oríkì Ìdòwú*-panegyrics or praise names of *Ìdòwú* and *Èṣù* as enshrined in the customs and culture of the Yoruba are relevant genres and texts that account for the behavioural patterns of *Ìdòwú* in relation to *Èṣù*. As a result, various texts relevant to this study are explored through observation and interviews. That is, analysis of this nature may exclude the use of numerical or statistical analysis.

Many cultural elements, such as history and professions (family and individual), are encapsulated in *oríkì*. Professions of *Èṣù* and *Ìdòwú* influence their behaviours among the other divinities and human beings. It is validated that “culture and behavior are closely related to each other and we can safely assume that an individual’s cultural and ethnic background has an important bearing on his or her personal and professional lives is heavily affected by the cultural values, beliefs and philosophies he is grown with” (BrainMass 2022: 1). This opinion reveals and reflects on the behaviours of *Èṣù*, believed to be influenced by his profession among his co-divinities and by extension among the Yoruba communities.

Èṣù is the universal policeman among the divinities and human-Beings in the culture of the Yoruba. His profession is policing among (within) the divinities and among the people (outsiders). Without him, effective communication between the divinities, the supernatural spirits, and human beings cannot be achieved. For example, the closeness of *Òrúnmìlà- Ifá* progenitor with *Èṣù* indicate that,

Òrẹ̀ ni Ifá àti Èṣù;/Ifá and Èṣù were friends;

Alágbára gidi ni wọn pẹ̀lú/They were powerful as well.

Ọ̀mì ni wọn jọ n ta lójó gbogbo/Their game is always a draw everyday

Wọn ti jọ mu 'lẹ̀ wọn kii da ara wọn/They have covenanted together they can't

disappoint each other

(Ilesanmi 1998: 21).

Èṣù plays an active role in the implementation of the divination order to the supplicant(s) or *Ifá* client(s). As a police Officer and law enforcement agent, he is to ensure that instructions or orders of divination sacrifice are duly carried out as instructed by the *Ifá* priest. *Èṣù* is regarded by some scholars as an errand officer to *Òrúnmìlà* (Adeoye, 1985). Because of his exclusive role as law enforcement officer, *Èṣù* is described as a “bailiff-” the one that *Òrúnmìlà* sent on an errand (Ajayi 2002: 43). Because of his profession, *Èṣù* almost always moves about with his *ògò* or *kóndó*- club, used to disarm and arrest the offenders. Daramola & Jeje point out that “bí èniyàn kò bá mú tí Èṣù kúrò, Èṣù yóò sọ ògò ijà rẹ lu ohun rere tí olúwa rẹ fẹ ẹ” (1967: 297). That is, if one does not satisfy *Èṣù* first, he will scatter the good things one has done with his club. As a result of this behaviour, the presence of *Èṣù* is regarded in all matters among human beings and the divinities (as earlier explained)¹⁰. Abimbola reminds us that substantial parts of the sacrifice in the course of *Ifá* divination are offered to *Èṣù*. This accounts for intimacy or closeness between *Ifá* and *Èṣù* (1976). Portion of sacrifice is given to *Èṣù* to gain his support to ensure success in whatever one does. That is, there is a derivational provision for *Èṣù* through *Ifá*.

Behaviours of *Èṣù* are described as diabolical, unpredictable and unstable. By the descriptions of these behaviours, *Èṣù* is regarded among the other deities as “trickster.” Abimbola opines that “the relationship between *Ifá* and another major god of the Yorùbá pantheon, *Èlégbárá*, demands some close scrutiny...*Èṣù* sometimes act as a friend of *Ifá* and sometimes as a tempter” (1976: 9). The unstable and unpredictable nature of *Èṣù* is evinced by his appellation of *aṣeburúkú-ṣe-rere* – a doer of good and bad. This perhaps suggests why he neither belongs to the right or left but rather at the center (as earlier indicated). The CenterPoint position (earlier described with *Èṣù* and *Ìdòwú*) influences his function of ‘checks and balances’ among the deities and human-beings. *Èṣù* is an individual regarded as *Aṣòtún-ṣòsì láì nítijú* (Daramola & Jeje, 1967, p. 299), that is, unstable to the left and right without shame. The general implication of *Èṣù*’s behaviours symbolises good, and the bad- no human being can be absolutely good or bad, but a mixture of both: good-bad behaviours.

One of the cultural elements of the relationship between *Ìbejì* and *Ìdòwú* is in birth position. Among the Yoruba, the position an individual occupies in a family, especially among siblings, accompanies some functional roles in Yoruba culture. This is why, sometimes, a name

¹⁰ *Èṣù* is recognized in all activities. In prayers to God, he is recognized and honored so as not to hinder or disrupt the process of the prayers.

differentiates a child's position within the family among the Yoruba. For example, a first male child is called *dáódù* and *àrẹ̀mọ*. He leads in family matters, including family meetings, the settlement of family disputes, and other issues. Likewise, a female firstborn is called *béjẹ̀rẹ̀* or *àrẹ̀mọ̀bìnrin* (Daramola & Jeje, 1967). Many factors contribute to the position one occupies, such as intelligence, maturity, age, and experience.

Position is one of the elements that relate *Èṣù* to *Ìdòwú*. On the one hand, it is observed that *Èṣù* takes the centre position of *opón-Ifá* - *Ifá* divination board. This is why every *opón-Ifá* must have an image of *Èṣù* at the centre. Abimbola reminds us that, “*Èṣù* is certainly the closest deity to *Ifá*. His watchful eyes dominate the *Ifá* divination process as it takes place inside the divining tray ... *Èṣù* is a neutral force in the universe who controls both the benevolent and the malevolent supernatural powers. He is the universal policeman without whom effective communication cannot be maintained between these two opposing powers of the universe” (1976: iii plate 10). On the other hand, the position of *Ìdòwú* among the five *Ìbejì* related names mentioned earlier is likewise at the middle or centre of the five *Ìbejì* family names- *Táyéwò*, *Kéyìndé*, *Ìdòwú*, *Àlàbá* and *Ìdògbé*. This illustration shows that both *Èṣù* and *Ìdòwú* share centre positions, which invariably influence their behaviours. The centre position allows you to see, move, and operate to the left and right in a balanced manner.

The Yorùbá believe that, wherever there is trouble, *Èṣù* must have been behind it. Adeoye succinctly says “*ìgbàgbò Yorùbá ni pé gbogbo ibi tí dàrúdàpò bá wà ní ayé yí ni Èṣù í wà*” (1985: 130). That is, Yorùbá believe that wherever there is trouble in this world, *Èṣù* must be behind it. The behavior of *Èṣù* represents duality in human behaviours. That is, he is being described as being generous and wicked. *Èṣù* represents the Yorùbá belief of *tibi-tire* - good-bad. “*Tibi-tire ni a dálé ayé*”, in which the world is founded. He performs the role of an arbiter, “supporting or opposing any power or being is dictated sometimes by his own whims and caprices, and sometimes by a genuine desire to punish offenders” (Ajayi 2009: 37). As *Èṣù* is unstable in character, he is equally unstable in a place or location. He usually moves around everywhere and at any time. This attitude might be a result of policing work. This is likely one of the reasons the shrine of *Èṣù* is mostly found outside: his works are mostly conducted there. *Ifá* sacrifice, which *Èṣù* is the controller, is mostly performed outdoors or outside: on the road or at crossroads, usually at three junctions of a road.

As earlier stated, individual and family histories are referenced from *oríkì*. Histories associated with the behaviours of *Ìdòwú* in relation to *Èṣù* are encapsulated and comprehended in his *oríkì*. It is validated in that:

Eni Ìdòwú pa l'Ọyọ a-pa-gbé/No one can challenge *Ìdòwú* for killing anybody in
Ọyọ
Eni tí ẹlẹkọ kò kì/No palp hawker ever attempted to hawk
Tí ẹlẹkọ kò gbọdọ polówó/without hailing *Ìdòwú*
A bi iwà gbèdè bí akọ sèbé/As temperamental as *Sèbé*
Èṣù léyìn Ìbejì.../Èṣù behind the twins
Ìdòwú a-rí-ẹjì-bá-rin/Ìdòwú an accomplice of twins
a-rí Ẹdun gbéra/The one that is lively in the presence of twins.

(Şowande & Fagbemi 1969: 54).

The *oríkì* above reveals the behaviours of *Ìdòwú*, who when he kills, cannot be prosecuted because of his work. As a result of the military nature of his work he or she is temperamental like *sèbé*- a black serpent.

It is observed by this study that the behaviours of *Èṣù* in *Ifá* divination system and among the divinities are related to the behaviours of *Ìdòwú* among the *Ìbejì* system in the cultural belief of the Yoruba. For example, *Èṣù*, as described earlier as a ‘trickster’, is here related to *Ìdòwú* who is aptly described by Adeoye as “omọ tí a bí lẹhìn ìbejì a máa ya bóóran, idí yí ni a sì ẹ máa níki Ìdòwú ní ‘Èṣù léyìn Ìbejì’” (1982: 10). Meaning that, a male or female child born after *Ìbejì* is described as stubborn¹¹. *Ìdòwú*’s behaviours are aptly coded in his panegyrics as *Èṣù léyìn Ìbejì* “devil behind the twins.” Here, the behaviour of *Ìdòwú* is used along with the name of *Èṣù*, who is earlier described as a diabolical, unpredictable and unstable individual. That is, he can best be described as a ‘trickster’ just like *Èṣù*. This study finds that *Ìdòwú* plays the role of *Èṣù* in the divination system; *Ìdòwú* is regarded as *Èṣù*, the Yorùbá trickster deity. Any rowdy behaviour the child displays is believed to be because of his or her connections with *Èṣù*. Words such as “Tricksters, Bailiffs and *Èṣù léyìn Ìbejì*” are behavioural code that relates *Ìdòwú* to *Èṣù*. The codes are known in *Èṣù*, which has diffused into *Ìdòwú*’s behavioural patterns. These codes are shared

¹¹ There is also the possibility that the birth of *Ìbejì* is serially. In this case, a child following the serial birth of *Ìbejì* is *Ìdòwú*. Both pairs of *Ìbejì* share the same birth with one *Ìdòwú*. Implication of this is that, perhaps, there are two births after serial birth of *Ìbejì*, only one is regarded as *Ìdòwú* and not that each pairs of *Ìbejì* has an associated *Ìdòwú*.

by *Ìdòwú* as a result of imitation of the behaviours of *Èṣù*. Understanding of these behavioural codes with *Ìdòwú*'s behaviours can be unravelled by the knowledge of the codes with *Èṣù*'s behaviours, who happens to be the originator of these behavioural codes. The relationships between these names (as a results of behavior of *Ìdòwú* and *Èṣù*) corroborates the opinion that “if a child is named after a named crook in the neighborhood, it is assumed that sooner or later in life the child will also become a crook or if a child is named after a progenitor with positive antecedents, it is expected that the child will also behave as such in his life cycle– hence the saying that *orúkọ a máa ro ni, àpèjé a sì máa rònìyàn* (“a person’s name directs his actions and behaviours”) (Adeniyi, 2017, p. 86). The names and behaviours attributed to *Èṣù* as evinced above are related to *Ìdòwú* behaviours because of the names' relationship with the progenitor- *Èṣù*.

The panegyrics of *Ìdòwú* reveal that:

Ìdòwú kì í ṣerú Ìbejì/Ìdòwú is not a slave to twins

*Ènìyàn tí kò gbón ni í pe Ìdòwú l'èrú Ìbejì/the ignorant will call Ìdòwú a slave to
the twins*

Ìbí kì í ju ìbí/no difference in birth situation

Bí a ti bí èrú l'a b'ómọ/both the slave and the child are born likewise

(Adeoye 1982: 47)

The above reveals that his/her relationship to the *Ìbejì*-twins is controversial, just as the relationship between *Ifá* and *Èṣù* described earlier. The last two lines in the above panegyrics of *Ìdòwú* show that *Ìdòwú* is a slave to the twins. Metaphorically, *Ìdòwú*'s panegyrics above show a master-slave relationship to the twins. It is observed from oral sources on *Ìdòwú*'s behaviour in relation to *Ìbejì* that:

Ìdòwú/Ìdòwú

Olùgbèjà Ìbejì/An advocator of Ìbejì

Kò sí kékeré ejò lẹ̀rọ̀ Ìdòwú/there is no child or little of Ìdòwú

Kò sọkùnrin, kò sóbìnrin Ìdòwú/There is no male or female Ìdòwú

Èkẹta-ni-ẹkẹta ọmọ/The third child is the third child

Ìdòwú/Ìdòwú

*A gbẹbọ Ìbejì d'óríta/The one that carries the twins' sacrifice
to the three crossroads*

Ìdòwú, ẹkẹta òrìṣà ọmọ/Ìdòwú the third divinity

(oral source from Esther Oyinloye)

As *Èṣù* is earlier presented as an errand person - servant or a “bailiff” in another context, so is *Ìdòwú*’s role in the twins’ sacrifice. *Ìdòwú* is believed to be “*erú ibejì*”- slave to the twins, that is, the one being sent on an errand by the twins. This is related to *Èṣù*, referred to as *Òrúnmìlà*’s bailiff, as in this case, *Ìdòwú* is a bailiff to the twins. Therefore, both *Èṣù* and *Ìdòwú* are related to *Ifá* (the originator of sacrifice) because they can both be described in terms of their spiritual roles, especially in sacrifice. Performance of some religious rites, such as sacrifice, also relates to the behaviours of *Èṣù* and *Ìdòwú*. It is established that,

àwọn iyá ní nṣe ètùtù náà fún àwọn ibejì. Ìdòwú ni àwọn iyá ibejì ó kókó ṣe ètùtù tirè, bí ó tilẹ̀ jẹ̀ pé iyá ibejì náà ṣẹ̀ṣẹ̀ bí ibejì ni. Ìdí tí wọn fì n júbà Ìdòwú nipé, nwọn ka Ìdòwú kún Èṣù léyìn ibejì. Àwa náà mò pé nínú gbogbo òrìṣà, Èṣù ni í kókó gba ẹbọ tirẹ̀ kí ó le jẹ̀ kí ẹbọ fín fún ẹlẹ̀bọ, kí ẹrù ó tó fun ẹlẹ̀rù. Léyìn tí nwọn bá bọ Ìdòwú tán, ni nwọn ó wá fún àwọn ibejì ní jìjẹ àti mímu tí wọn.

(Daramola & Jeje 1967: 280).

The mothers of twins do perform sacrifices for them. The sacrifice of *Ìdowú* is performed first, even though the mother of twins just gave birth to them. *Ìdòwú* is honoured this way because he or she is believed to be the *Èṣù* behind the twins. We all know that, of all the divinities, *Èṣù* sacrifice is offered first, so as to allow the sacrifice to be acceptable. It is after *Ìdòwú* has been worshipped that food and drinks can be offered to the twins.

Sacrifice is a religious rite that reflects and connects *Ìdòwú* to *Èṣù* as stated that:

Èmi náà máa n ṣe orò ibejì nítorí àwọn ibejì máa n bínú.... àfì kí n dé ojù irèbí wọn. Tí mo bá débè, ma a ra obì àbàtà olójú méréin lọ, wọn á bá mi fì wò ó kí wọn le mọ nnkan tí ẹlẹ̀dàà àwọn ọmọ yẹn fẹ̀, a sì gbọdò fún wọn ní nnkan náà.

(Lawal 2014: 32)

I do worship *ibejì* deity as well, because the twins do get annoyed at times...I do visit their shrine with cola-nuts of four lobes to inquire what their destinies desire through divination. And, we must provide whatever they demanded.

Before the advent of foreign religions among the Yoruba communities, their beliefs were anchored in indigenous religions. Yoruba believe that *Ìbejì* is a divinity. *Ìdòwú* has been the closest child to *Ìbejì*. The closeness has made *Ìdòwú* susceptible to influence (from pre-birth, birth, and post-birth

periods) by the belief in *Ìbejì*. That is, the influence of the supernatural beings, such as divinities, is discernible on the individual to whom they are related.

One can establish a nexus in the implementation order of sacrifice between *Èṣù* and *Ìdòwú*. The character of *Ìdòwú* influences his/her behaviour in relation to the *Ifá* divination system. *Ìdòwú*'s sacrifice is performed before the twins' sacrifice, even when *Ìdòwú* is yet to be born after the birth of the twins. The Yorùbá belief recognises the spiritual presence of the individual before physical birth (Adeoye, 1985). This is in tandem with the earlier proposition that behaviours are predicted at the pre-birth stage, or even before conception. It is observed that *Ifá* sacrifice is incomplete without *Èṣù*, as the association of *Èṣù* with *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* is premised on *ẹ̀bọ*- sacrifice (as explained earlier). Likewise, twins' sacrifice cannot be complete without *Ìdòwú*'s direct or indirect recognition or acknowledgement. *Ìdòwú* is an intermediary that mediates the *ẹ̀bọ-ìbejì* – twin's sacrifice, from the physical to the spiritual world. Sacrifice connects the behaviours of *Ìbejì* to *Ìdòwú* in contemporary time, as earlier validated

Like *Èṣù*, one of the histories surrounding *Ìdòwú*'s behaviours is that he moves around from one place to another with weapons. In other words, s/he has no permanent place of residence. This attitude makes him/her be described as a 'traveller.' "*Ìdòwú jẹ ọmọ lile, ó sì tún jẹ arinrin-àjò*" (Sowande & Fagbemi 1969: 52). That is, *Ìdòwú* is stubborn and a traveler. This behaviour is believed to have equally informed why *Ìdòwú*'s sacrifice is performed outside the house of the family of the *Ìbejì*. This is closely related to the shrine of *Èṣù*, mostly located outside, in front of the house of the *Ifá* priest. Sowande & Fagbemi remind that, "*bí wọn bá maa se ètùtù fún Ìbejì, nwọn yíò se ti Kẹhíndé àti Táíwò sínú ilé, nwọn yíò se ti Ìdòwú sí ita*" (1969: 54). That is, the sacrifice to the twins- *Kẹhíndé* and *Táíwò* must be performed inside the house, that of *Ìdòwú* must be outside. It is noticed that, while *Ifá* sacrifice is sometimes performed inside the house, that of *Èṣù* is performed outside. This is as a result of the agreement reached between *Èṣù* and *Ọ̀rúnmìlà*. Adeoye reports that, "*Àgbó Ọ̀dàrà wá sọ fún Ọ̀rúnmìlà pé òun yóò maa gbé ọ̀dò rẹ, sùgbón, òun kò ní gbé inú ilé pẹlú rẹ*" (1985: 21). That is, *Àgbó Ọ̀dàrà*- another name for *Èṣù*, then told *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* that he will live with him, but he will not live inside with him. *Èṣù*'s image of worship and sacrifice is conducted outside on an image like laterite, which is more possible outside. As *Èṣù* is an accomplice of *Ifá*, so is *Ìdòwú* to *Ìbejì*.

In furtherance of the troublesome behaviour of *Ìdòwú* in relation to his profession, like *Èṣù*, *Ìdòwú* is described as:

Ìdòwú r'óta túfò Jàkùmò/Ìdòwú kills an animal, Jàkùmò.

Jàkùmò tí Ìdòwú ta tí kò kú/Jàkùmò that Ìdòwú shoot at and doesn't die

ota Ìdòwú kò ba ni/ It is likely that the bullet eluded it.

(Adeoye 1982: 47)

From *Ìdòwú's* panegyrics above, one is able to describe *Ìdòwú* as one who is always fully armed, just like *Èṣù*. Perhaps, his militant behaviour resulted in killings; no one can challenge his or her actions by arrest or prosecution. As *Èṣù* moves around with *kóndó*- club, as described above, so also is *Ìdòwú*, who moves around with guns. This provides us with cultural information on why *Ìdòwú's* behaviours are described as encoded in his panegyrics. We have the understanding of why (despite his or her troublesome behaviour, which may sometimes be inimical to society's peace) he or she cannot be prosecuted for demeanour. This is because his master has cultural licenses which are extended to *Ìdòwú*, an imitator.

The behavioural descriptions of *Ìdòwú* above show that he/she is a shooter. In addition, like *Èṣù*, *Ìdòwú* has immunity in whatever he/she does. The behavioural code of *Èṣù*, when extended to *Ìdòwú*, affirms the belief that the present is influenced by the past. Remembrance of *Èṣù* by *Ìdòwú's* behaviours “reinforces the belief that the dead are alive and have an interest in the affairs of the living” (Amponsah, 1977, p. 108). However, historical and behavioural codes of *Èṣù* and *Ìdòwú*, as evinced through the panegyric code, are prominent in a typical Yoruba community. That is, even though the behavioural code of *Ìdòwú* was more prominent in the past, the fact remains that the behaviours are preserved in *oríkì*. And, the behaviours of *Ìdòwú* being presently investigated are prominent and discernible with *Ìdòwú*. *Oríkì* provides us with historical banks or cultural warehouses within which the behaviours of *Ìdòwú* in relation to *Èṣù* are evinced. What is being canvassed is that the present events, including behaviours, are influenced by factors beyond an individual's control. It is spiritual knowledge codified in Yoruba religion, such as *Ifá* and culture, that can unmask the intrinsic behaviours inherent in some individual names that have religious connections, as referenced by *Ìdòwú*

In an interview with Mrs Esther Oyeronkẹ, she affirms that *Ìdòwú*, her daughter, *Ìdòwú Aminat Oyinloye*, is very rowdy and stubborn in her behaviour and that she, most of the time, accompanies the twins as much as possible. She also fought (physically or verbally) for the twins when she was younger. She likewise resembles the twins in complexion and stature.

In the opinion of Awawu Akinola (as a mother of *Ìdòwú*), Akeem *Ìdòwú* Akinolá, is described as a very troublesome person, even as a man and an elderly person presently. He is fond of shouting when he talks. He sometimes challenges his opponent to a physical fight. The wife says she tolerates her husband's behaviour most of the time to avoid a quarrel that could lead to a third-party settlement. She, however, reiterates that, even though her husband (*Ìdòwú*) is troublesome, he will hardly be involved in an unjust case. In addition, he hates cheating himself or others around him. He takes up a just cause when he sees that someone has been offended, even when he is not invited to intervene.

While Mrs Oyinloye is unaware of any connection between *Ìdòwú*'s behaviours and the *Ìbeji*, Mrs Akinola is of the opinion that she knew some of *Ìdòwú*'s attitudes were associated with the relationship he has with the *Ìbeji*. When asked how she was aware of this? She said she has a series of experiences with them, as she hails from a family with many *Ìdòwú*. The same with her husband's family, where two sisters and a brother among her seven siblings have three *Ìdòwú*; meaning they have three sets of *Ìbeji*.

The observation of the behaviours of *Ìdòwú* across the Yoruba communities establishes that there is no marginal difference between the behaviours of *Ìdòwú* (male) and (female), as indicated above. This may likewise be informed by the non-gender-bound nature associated with the name. It is observed that the death of one or both *Ìbeji* doesn't affect *Ìdòwú*'s behaviours.

It is observed that, in contemporary Yoruba societies, the behaviours of *Ìdòwú* remain unchanged, even when he or she is not generally or culturally called by the name. At present, when Christianity and Islam are rooted among the Yoruba, these religions have no influence on changing the culturally induced beliefs about the behaviours of *Ìdòwú*. This is because the circumstances surrounding the name (the birth of *Ìbeji*) remain unchanged. There is a blood relationship that cannot be altered, which is transfused among the twins and *Ìdòwú*. The names, including behaviours, are inherited from deities and therefore divine. *Ìdòwú* belongs a name (such as the Yoruba deities) of a child or children born in "a particular circumstance or way different from the normal" (Faloju & Fadairo, 2017, p. 138).

Evidence from oral traditions and texts reveals that the behaviours of *Ìdòwú* have been greatly influenced by the birth (blood) relationship he or she has with the *Ìbeji*. Some *Ìdòwú*'s of behaviours have been found to be linked to the behaviours of *Èṣù* in *Ifá*. This suggests that there

is likely to be a kinship relationship between Èṣù and Ìdòwú as exists between Ifá and Ìbejì in Yoruba cosmology, which makes Ìdòwú a divinised being.

Even in the physical presence of Èṣù, the spiritual or behavioural attributes are discernible. This is because African and Yoruba beliefs hold that the dead spirits are alive, thereby indirectly influencing the activities of the living. The degree of influence ranges from individual, family and towns or villages. Their presence is felt in the behaviours of individuals' names. Awolalu further reminds that ancestors and divinities are "the immediate intermediaries between men and the 'totally' supersensible world" (1979: 64). Behaviours of divinities such as Èṣù are presently exhibited in the behaviours of humans such as Ìdòwú. This establishes that the Yoruba do invest some attributes of divinities in human beings – human deified. Even though Ìdòwú is not among the popular Yoruba deities, his or her behaviours are related to one- Èṣù. It is validated that "some specific practices, beliefs and behaviours are shared" (Roy, 2000, p. 660). This study establishes that an individual's "shared" behaviours are not limited to human beings but also extend to supernatural beings. The product of this is cultural diffusion, which is "the spread of culture from one individual to another" (Roy, 2000, p. 660). The implication of these statements is that spiritual and physical components are inseparable.

Abimbola reminds us that, in a predominantly Yoruba society, the control agents on everything, including human beings, are "both natural and supernatural that operate in the Yorùbá society. Broadly speaking, these forces are four in number, namely the gods, the ancestors, witches and other supernatural powers, and human beings" (1976: 37). This opinion implies that human behaviours are sometimes influenced by the visible and invisible forces. The behaviours of Ìdòwú as a human (visible) are influenced by Èṣù (the invisible), he or she is related to.

Investigating and navigating through this study validates that in Yoruba societies, some individual behaviours, as exhibited by Ìdòwú can only be explained by relationships with deities. That is, the behavioural history of some individuals can be evinced from the influence of spiritual beings. The new perception or proposal in this study suggests that not only names but also the behaviours of celestial names can be predicted before or at birth.

Conclusion

This study concludes that, even though there are some celestial names- *orúkò àmúntòrunwá* with associated *oríkì*- panegyrics such as *Òjó, Àiná, Ìlòrí* among others, these names are not influenced

by their behaviours on the one hand and on the other hand, they are not being behaviorally influenced by another divinity such as *Ìdòwú* with *Èṣù*. Likewise, other celestial names are not regulated by the activities of other children, as *Ìdòwú* is related to *Ìbejì*. Among the Yoruba, behaviours of deities are attributed to human beings. This is validated by the influence of *Èṣù* on *Ìdòwú*'s behaviours. The behaviour of *Èṣù* is imitated by *Ìdòwú* as “behaviours are mostly learnt through imitation” (Roy, 2000, p. 660). As the closeness of *Èṣù* to *Ifá* accounts for his behaviours (positively or negatively), likewise, his behaviours are proportionally related to the behaviours of *Ìdòwú*, who is also the closest individual to the twins. Even though *Ìdòwú* is named among *Ìbejì* related names, it is the characters or behaviours of *Èṣù* in *Ifá* divination that are exhibited in his or her life. Metaphorically, the behaviour of *Ìdòwú* is a telescope of the behaviour of *Èṣù*. This study validates the view that factors responsible for some human behaviours can be traced to an individual's relationship with a deity.

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