Transition in African Traditional Dance Technique from Pre-Colonial Era to Modern Era of Contemporary Choreography: The Nigerian Experience

By

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Abstract
African traditional dances are testimonies of different unique artistic works of art as dance in African societies possess deeper meanings because it evolves with their development. However many dance styles and compositions had gone into extinction due to lack of documentation and research realities. The paper investigates the transition in Africa traditional Dance technique from pre-colonial to modern era in Nigeria. It adopts the quantitative research method, involving participant observation and content analysis of relevant previous studies. Major findings revealed that many foreign and indigenous practitioners of dance have contributed immensely to the development of dance. The paper conclude that dance choreography have come a long way in Nigeria with the influence from the western world and has evolve its own styles and technique, and recommends that concerted efforts should be put in place to document artistic dance and choreographic expressions in Nigeria, for preservation and tourism by scholars.

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Introduction
Culturally, dance is an integral part of the language and life of the African society; this is because dance practically dominates the socio-cultural life of the sub-Saharan African people (Wikipedia). The geographical space described as sub-Saharan Africa consists of nations that form the West African sub-region of the continent, and probably some countries in the Eastern Africa, but not too far from the Sahara Desert. In each of these nations, dance is an inseparable part of their cultural practices. This is because dance is seen as the overriding feature of Africans all over the world. Dance, to Africans, is a total way of life that is encapsulated in the submission of Primus (1994, p. 4) “Dance permeates the totality of African life; like a strong magic, a kind of spirit that turns the body, makes it vibrate and fly without wings”. The author further stated that African dance is an experience that is eternity captured that is; “an initiation, a belief, a voyage into before and beyond, men by strength, adroitness, agility and girls through agility, deployment of grace, and enhancement of beauty,” (Primus,1994). Also, most African traditional beliefs, held
sway until the era of slave trade, when Africans were dislocated from their social-cultural background and roots, but they took dance along with them because it was innate in them, (Wikipedia,p.5).

Tracing the historical narratives of slavery in African especially among the Blacks; Allen, (2013, p. 67) in her book ‘From slave ship to centre stage’ reports that Africans that were transported to the new world during the trans-Atlantic slave trade “often at the end of a gruesome day at the plantation would unwind and express themselves through dance.”. Asante (1994, p. 128) retreating the same point, humbly captures it by saying ‘African dance is the totality of African life, as their way of life is embedded in various traditional dances’. Nigeria is one of the sub-Saharan countries that have exhibited dance as a strong element which is also embedded in her cultural and traditional practices. The influence of dance in Nigeria cannot become extinct, as it affects almost every aspect of the people’s existence Therefore, dance can be said to be the most probable definition of the people’s cultural identity because dance takes pre-eminence as a pivotal mode of cultural identity all through the history of Africa, especially in Nigeria.

The Concept of Dance in Africa Pre and Post Slavery and Colonial Periods
Sequel to the erroneous perception of African dance during the slave trade era, the European culture and style of dance was imposed on Africans including Nigerians through mission schools during the colonial era (jstor.com). Thus, there was a considerable departure from African cultural dances to new form of dances, such as the Ballroom Dances; Waltz, Jazz, Twist, Tango and so on. Colonialism being a system of subjugation, subdued even dancers to the western style of dance, especially for social purposes. The development eroded some of the African cultural consciousness and cultural diversity because colonial administration was accommodated, what emerged eventually, according to Yerima (2016, p. 32) was a subtle “protective enclosure”. At the abolition of slavery, then come the incursions of the colonial rules in most societies and nations in Africa. Thereafter, the distance from the cultural settings and traditional background of the African slaves that were in the Diaspora affected the content of the African Dance.

Thereafter, various African nations became independent from their colonial masters which include majorly; Britain and France between 1950 and 1960 and some much later. Nigeria for example, got her independence in 1960 from Britain; with this independence came cultural renaissance, brought about by political independence leading to a renewed quest for cultural renewed taste for traditional performances. This development led to various explorations of modern dance and modern choreography forms. After the departure of the colonial masters, dance, music, and language became a unifying metaphor and dance, being a domineering element, had a unifying language, as postulated by Yerima, as follows:

"I discovered that the diversified cultural rhythm of the various musical instruments in performance evoked the same spiritual background in all
the Nigerian cultures. I found that apart from the dialect of the lyric of the songs, the colour of the costumes and make-up of the people, the passion for the expression of the various dances are the same’ (2016, p.35)

In all societies, man has always danced and will always dance because dance is innate in man. Dance, according to the New World Encyclopaedia (2019) “Dance is an indispensable and integral part of man’s life that reflects human identity and diversity, life styles, virtues, taboos and experiences of a people, which is embedded in their dances”. Dance means different things to different societies and the reason why the essence of dance is defined by many choreographers, historians and philosophers. In performance, Straw (1984,p.1) is of the opinion that “Dance is the art of precise, expressive and graceful human movement, traditionally, but not necessarily performed in accordance with mutual accomplishment”. This view is shared by Ugolo (2006, p 47) that “dancing developed as a natural expression of united feeling and action’.

Furthermore, Bakare (2006, p. 35) states that “dance also expresses the geographical location, religious belief, political and historical experience, biological, social practice and economic peculiarities of the people that own it”. Yerima (2016, p. 8) also posits that; “Dance is the bond, the link, the power beyond entertainment or identity” (8). Through exposition and change; African dance becomes a blend of both African and foreign dance steps, which ultimately birthed some of our contemporary dance choreographies, especially in musical dance videos.

So dance is natural to man. It is enjoyed in all ramifications, whether ritual or social. It is the mirror of the society. Ugolo (1992, p. 39) “The dance art in Nigeria is woven around the fabrics of the traditional societies with focus on the socio-political and economic relevance of the people that owns it”. This expresses dance in the Nigeria society as significant medium. It is a significant mode that borders directly on the totality of aspects of life of the people. That is, their cultural identity’. This is corroborated by keita (1994, p. 76) as he opines that ‘Unlike other forms of dance, African dance is not detached from the lives of the people, but a spontaneous emanation of the people that Translates everyday experience into movement’.

Therefore, the society affects the style of dance, as the theory (Wikipedia) supports that all traditional African dances can be traced to rituals, history, religion, animals, cults, wars and environment. The influence of the environment in dance creation is observed in most African dances. The Massai people of Kenya use the human voice to accompany their dance because they live in the rift valley area. Consequently, they do not have trees or animals to make drums. Therefore, they dance by jumping accompanied by chanting.(vam.ac.uk) However, there is a similar culture in Nigeria; most dances from the Northern part of Nigeria are basically hips and jumps due to their geographical location, as they live close to the desert. The Ijaw, Itshekri, and Urhobo tribes dance with their waist
more, to show the movement of water as riverside tribe. The origin of dance is ambiguous as it reflects different occurrences through choreographies of many decades.

The Concept of Choreography in Nigeria Context
Dance as a form in Nigeria has extended well beyond what had formerly been as dance before the 1960s, transiting and embracing an array of ideas and strategies borrowed from culture, music, and literature,(Reynolds and McCormick, 2007, p. 67) which are well showcased in various choreographies in Nigerian post-colonial era. Also, the themes from various social movements and activities serve as choreographic techniques. Dance in the post-colonial era in Nigeria had reached and sometimes passed certain boundaries in choreography and there was a return to emotion, storytelling, clever tricks, and a high level of skill, even athleticism in the composition of dance being created from the pre-colonial to the modern era

Though the term “Choreography” has been variously conceived by many a practitioner and scholar of its breeding art (Dance), its variation is seen in the use of language. The word “choreography” first appeared in the American English dictionary in the 1950s. Prior to this, various words were used to qualify the word “choreography” such as “ensembles staged by” and “dance staged by”. This was later followed by different definitions by practitioners and scholars. Thus, choreography according to Bakare (1994, p. 1) is a new concept in the vocabulary of world art came into prominence in the 20th century, as a “qualifying word for the art and science of creating and structuring movement of the human body in place and time to communicate ideas, messages or the creator’s intentions”. Humphrey supports that: ‘previously, dance was all composed instructively; or with the natural talent of the composer. Dance has done extraordinarily well for itself without theory by virtue of the efforts of gifted individuals. Invariably, choreography was once perceived as an art form that wholly elicited to intuitive prowess and natural tenet of certain categories of people, who explored the art efficiently without a credo of foundation.

This assertion holds that man had long been dancing before he knew the word to qualify the art of structuring dance. As a matter of fact, it consists mostly of directing the dance artiste in the steps they have to take, their posture and movement. Meanwhile, another assertion which illuminates the historical understanding of “choreography” is that of Humphrey, ‘Man has composed dances throughout the ages, from the earliest pre-historic era to the present times, but it was only in the nineteen thirties that theories of dance composition were developed and taught (16) Writing on the same trend, Minton (1997, p. 51) affirms that: ‘Choreography invites you to share the joys of creating in movement by discovering the infinite variety that can be found within the dance art form when movement is viewed as a medium for artistic expression.

Consequently, as a mean of preserving and promoting Nigerian traditional dance, her choreography materials are gotten from its traditional environment and traditional
elements peculiar to her environment. This is what Fonteyn (1979) refers to as “peasant origin” that makes one hesitant to call them present Nigerian dancers or modern dancers or contemporary dancers because their creative works are a fusion of western and original traditional influence. It is important to note that contemporary dance, though abstract in form, has its source in traditional format. However, Yerima (2006, p. 39), in evaluating the thought of Nigerian dancers says: ‘The traditional dancer started to think of how to move the dances beyond what his pre-fathers handed over to him in the earlier training sessions in the village’. That is, expatiating on the style and technique acquired over time and new ideas from the western world, especially the dance form.

Statement of the Problem
From oral tradition and literature, many dance composition among numerous African societies had gone into extinction due to lack of documentations and research activities leading to their preservation and continuity. Thus, dance techniques of choreography have not enjoyed the expected scholarship in Nigeria at least for now. In the contrary, the Western world have developed adequate information repository on the history of modern choreography and pioneers involved in its development coupled with academic study in various schools, institutes and colleges.

Hence, the need to explore approaches to document and research into African cultural practices especially, in relation to the dance genres. Therefore, the need to investigate transition in African traditional dance techniques from pre-colonial era to modern era of contemporary choreography: the Nigerian experience.

Purpose of the Study
The main purpose of this study is to investigate transition in African traditional dance techniques from pre-colonial era to modern era of contemporary choreography: the Nigerian experience. The specific objectives of the study are to:
1. Discuss the transitional antecedents in African traditional dance techniques?
2. Identify key players in transition of African traditional dance techniques?
3. Identify individual efforts that led to the transition of African traditional dance techniques in relation to Nigeria?
4. Identify collective events in the transition of African traditional dance techniques in relation to Nigeria?
5. Find out the mitigating factors to the development of African traditional dance techniques?

Methodology
The study adopted quantitative research method involving participants’ observation and content analysis of both primary and secondary data sources as in-depth studies of relevant previous studies were conducted. Also, thorough pre-views and content analysis
of selected dance films of African origin alongside other publications of images like prints and photographs were carried out for observations and analysis.

Analysis of Findings and Discussions
Finding arising from in-depth reviews of relevant studies as well as content analysis of selected dance films of African origin through pre-views alongside other publications of images like prints and photographs.

Some of the Transitional Antecedents in African Traditional Dance Techniques
One major catalyst to the transition in African dance practice is the European philosophy of Eros over Logos; mind over matter, spirit over flesh, affected African dance, as African dance was seen as too erotic and lacking spiritual affinity to Christianity (Wikipedia). Despite the influences of the religious powers of Christianity and Islam, the traditional African dance endured until between 1950-1960 and thereafter, when the colonial masters had to leave African countries and colonies (Wikipedia). Thereby, they left behind a legacy of irresistible foreign culture and lifestyle that changed people’s perception, thus resulting in a clash of cultures. The study of dance history in African helps practitioners and up-coming enthusiasts to understand how amazingly similar but yet, how marvellously different people of the past over the years help people of today of how dance has experienced development. Dance has thus, moved from being a ritual to becoming a social and theatrical performances (Encyclopaedia, 2020)

Thus, modern choreography in Nigeria came after independence when local artistes started imbibing the western form of entertainment; thus, the twist, the tango, waltz, and the operatic form, that gave birth to the opening and closing glee’s, Ogunbiyi (1981, p. 223). In the same vein, tradition is a potent force in dance, because choreographers / dancers either learn the craft from their predecessors or from past stories or event; it is generational. Thus, modern choreography became part of our understanding in the early 20th century as we embraced it, but it was first a product of revolution of the tradition of western theatrical dance and the reaction became a major focus as it gave a kind of freedom that allowed people to be individualistic in creation. (Encyclopaedia, 2015).

For example, in ballet, Duncan, (2001) was a strong pioneer of modern dance, who relied much on nature for her choreography. Duncan eventually influenced Martha Graham who later became a dancer with Ted Shaw and Ruth St. Denis Dance Company. Merce Cunningham, Paul Taylor, and several others, all belonged to different dance companies, Rudolf (2016). Thus, earlier contemporary and modern dance expressions of Martha Graham, Isadora Duncan and Mercy Cunningham form basis for most dance modelling techniques in Africa. Thus, many contemporary dancers and choreographers train and create using different contemporary dance techniques, and non-dance related practices such as palates, corporal mime, gymnastics, yoga, somatic practices such as Alexander’s technique, Sullivan’s technique, American contemporary techniques such as, Jose Limon
and Hawkins technique’s and the postmodern dance technique such as contact improvisation, and Cunningham technique, Legg (2011, p. 23)

But like the characteristics of many modern dance choreographers, they frequently rebelled against their predecessors by formulating a new and often antithetical system or style of their own (2012, p. 3) Transformational change is constant and dance like any other arts is constantly affected to produce new works that could be accepted or encounter controversy. Lucian, (2018, p.2) pointed out the change experienced by theatrical dance during the Roman period, which was subjected to discussion, because change is constant and it comes in different forms. ‘Trend could be undecided politically, socially and economically. So, dance changes through type of music, costumes, space, lighting equipment and all’. Sometimes dance experience limitations or collaboration for it to develop. It is of note that changes in age or period has enriched the dance vocabulary to develop, providing resources for meet generation of dancers. In this different age or period, there are great dance practitioners and choreographers that have changed the course of dance into unsuspected height of artistry; this was possible through the acceptance of change. One of the ways to excel as a dancer is accepting change, a new idea within the social milieu. That whatever makes a person move, and the movement develop into a new idea and keep going onward, should be seen as the right path to greatness.

With the advent of modern dance there was ideology swing with more focus on how to regain comfort of the cultural and political psyches while at the same time aping the west with its infections, just as there began an attempt by the young generation maintaining the tradition and coping with modernity (2015) The driving force was the commercial gain that dictated the shift towards any form of modern dance and the audience taste of western Aesthetics. The transition was smooth, as dancers/choreographers tried to protect the traditional aspect and respond to the audience for commercial gain. But no one could say precisely when we started breaking away from the old conventions and patterns of traditional choreography until the French Cultural Centre came to Nigeria with its modern form of dance known as “contemporary dance (2016)

In the modern period, the modern dance artiste’s response is reflected more in the choreographic mode of presentation and dance styles as it affects their immediate society. A work of art is either a reflection of the society that produces it or nothing; the society provides the materials for the artiste to be creative and productive. Idobor (2007, p.13) posits that “In building a society, promoting people, creating meaning and imagining possibilities, music connects the individual, to the society and the personal to the social”. Though, Idobor (2007, p. 18) used music to analyze the relevance of music in nation building and creativity, most choreographers and playwrights actualize the choreographic concepts in theatrical performances which are a reflection of their society.
Some of the Key Players in Transition of African Traditional Dance Techniques in relation to Nigerian

Historically, Hubert Ogunde is known as the father of contemporary theatre till today in Nigeria due to the influence of the Western style on his style of performance. In Steve’s opinion, quoting Clark, (1984) the contemporary dance style in Nigeria started with Hubert Ogunde, who was able to merge two cultures in his choreography. Also, between 1991-1992, Muyiwa Osinaike, a prolific dancer, started a new style of dance before the advent of the French dance experiment, his style was seen as absurd but some dancers like Abel Utuedor, Dayo Liadi, Mc Cypress, and Odey Anthony became his follower, James (2017). Muyiwa Osinaike’s style of dance was not popular at that time because he couldn’t define the new genre of dance due to lack of knowledge of the contemporary dance genre as they referred to the dance style as ‘stunt or madness’, James, (2017) emphasized that, even before the introduction of the contemporary dance, there were theatre/dance groups that had been using this new technique and style to move old traditional dances to modern traditional dance’ (68). Such groups were Anansa Play House (Bassey Effiong), Ori Olokun Theatre in Ife (Peggy Happer), University of Ibadan Masque (Esikinni Olusayin), Collective Artiste (Chuck Mike) Black Marbles (Muyiwa Osinaike) and Kakaki Performers (Ben Tomoloju), and many others good examples.

These Theatre /dance groups have engaged in modern traditional dances before the French workshop, which introduced the contemporary dance in Nigeria. Muyiwa and Felix Okolo were popular in the early 90s for using the modern traditional dances and were commended by Ogungbade (Guardian Newspaper, 1994, p. 10) with the latter stating that “Past theatre tradition and cultural ethnos in designing a non-aligned theatre concept would not suit the modernist expectation of a form that says much without speaking much”. “The overall objective of this device is to shut the actor so that the audience can have less to hear, but much to see, thereby able to think”.

To further buttress his point that Modern traditional dance had been in Nigeria, Ogungbade (1994) quoted Yerima, (2003, p.12) that ‘the arrival of the Saro (free slave from Sierra Leone) created a new class of “black white adulterated” was found to be acceptable to the new class of slaves or “been-tos”. The new elite class embraced the Waltz and the Foxtrot of the Europeans in order to evolve the highlife which was mainly a social dance with modern music. The highlife dance was mainly for the night clubs and parties in the cities. This assertion gives a crystal confirmation and with other theatrical productions such as ‘Footprint’ by Chuk Mike, Irara Alagbe and Edikankan and ‘Walking Stick’ by Felix Okolo, James (2017); which employed the service of Muyiwa Osinaike as choreographer to create ostentatious or exaggerated movements to compliment the directorial approach of Felix Okolo. Muyiwa Osinaike was discouraged because of the attitude of dancers who found it difficult to understand his technique, and the lack of discipline to endure. Furthermore, the 1960s saw the growth of postmodernism which veered towards simplicity, the beauty of small things; the beauty of “untrained body” and unsophisticated
movement, including the new dance trend in Nigeria (Wikipedia). The traditional dance gave way to modern dance such as the Waltz, the Ball room dances and the social dances became stylized as new styles such as Ena Ramo, Oleku, Syncro system (juju music dance), Disco and many other moves into the dance system, (Encyclopedia)

In the early 20th century some well-known choreographers, especially among the pioneers of contemporary dance, created their own technique and schools, e.g. Paul Taylor, Ruth St. Denis, Doris Humphrey, Mary Wigman, Francois Delsarte, Emile Jacques- Dalcroze, Rudolph Von Laban, Loie Fuller, Jose Limon and Marie Ramberts. Among them, Merce Cunningham is considered the first choreographer to develop an independent attitude towards modern dance style and defy the ideas that were established by it (Britannica). Thereafter, Cunningham established the new style, called contemporary dance. However, Isadora Duncan’s different dancing styles emerged and are closely linked to music, such as, jazz, rock and roll, and hip hop. Isadora Duncan’s achievement led her to be called “The Mother of Dance”; a moniker also shared by her successor; Martha Graham. Invariably, modern dance is synonymous to the great achievements of these two individuals; Isadora Duncan and Martha Graham who are considered to be forerunners of modern dance all over the world (Wikipedia)

Some Individual Efforts that Led to the Transition of African Traditional Dance Techniques in Relation to Nigeria

One of the key events leading to the involvement of individual practitioners in the transition of Nigeria theatre industry and dance profession is the establishment of the first professional companies in Nigeria by some indigenous actors. The three most successful among these individuals actors were; Hubert Ogunde, Duro Ladipo and Kola Ogunmola Ogunbiyi (1981, p. 295-333). They were all Yoruba natives who started work as teachers involved in African Christian Churches. Hubert Ogunde’s first production was “Garden of Eden”, Staged in Church of the Lord, in Lagos. The performance was followed in 1945 by a secular satire, “Strike and Hunger”. This success experience led to the formation of “The Concert party” which is a style borrowed from the British concert parties, staged domestic comedies and political satire between “Opening and closing glees” of songs and dances that are unrelated to the plot, Clark (1988, p. 156).

Again, the euphoria of Nigeria independence in 1960 brought with it an explosion of creativity in the urban arts geared towards new African forms, and a rejection of colonial influences. This resulted in a creative confidence in literary and popular theatre that was to be influential throughout Africa as travelling theatre, loosely known as ‘Yoruba theatre concert parties’ took to the road, Adedeji (1981, p. 221). Duro Ladipo created spectacular productions, dramatizing themes from Yoruba mythology and history. His trilogy on the history of the Kingdom of Oyo published in 1964 as three Yoruba plays are Oba Koso (the king did hang), Oba Moro (the king of ghosts), and Oba Waja (the king is dead) has the power and serenity of ancient Greek tragedy, Ogunyemi (1981, p. 333-350)
Again, in 1975, it became clear that Nigeria was going to host the Second World Black African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC), the problem of material selection and what dances to pick for Nigeria’s presentation came up. The procedure for selection was not as simple for the dance segment of the Nigerian presentations. Even when the dances to be presented were selected, Nigeria still needed a Choreographer to arrange and work on the selected dances, Arthur (1977, 30). What Nigeria did was to present various dance groups, show-casing once again her cultural diversity, but not organized and well-presented like the dances of the smaller African countries that had realized the value and importance of dance as a growing art form, the aesthetics of dance and the need for dance arrangement, especially when it is taken from its raw form, and local venue, to a new environment like the cosmopolitan Lagos. The breakthrough in Nigerian dance pragmatics and advanced choreographies actually started after the Second World Black African Festival of Arts and Culture, which started the need for cultural exchange in dance practices through shared ideas, Arthur (1977, p. 34)

Some of the Collective Events in the Transition of African Traditional Dance Techniques in Relation to Nigeria

A pioneer of black dance during the 1930s was Asadata Dafora and those who gained prominence during the 1940s are Katherine Dunham and Pearl Primus, both of whom were university-trained anthropologist as well as choreographer,(vam.ac.uk). For instance, Dunham made use of Caribbean and American black themes in a series of reviews that successfully combined anthropological research with Broadway flair. Primus’ repertoire extended from re-staging American rituals to Strange Fruit: a study of lynching in the south. Another major American contribution to the world of choreography has been made by black dancers, an amalgam of elements derived from jazz, modern dance, and the history and folklore of Africa, the Caribbean, the American south, and the metropolitan ghetto (vam.ac.uk). The transition of the concept of ‘dance’ to ‘choreography’ in Nigeria could be traced to the traditional dance/choreography which later became modern due to external influence experienced in early 20th century, as a continuity of western reaction to old convention on the technique of dance, Udoka (2016, p. 5). The result is a dance form of great energy that aims at both resisting oppression and comforting the afflicted.

The advent of the French Cultural Centre created an opportunity for the traditional dancer to move beyond what has been handed over to him by his forbearers. Initially, the contemporary dance in Nigeria started in 1994, when the French Cultural Center invited several dance troupes in South-west Nigeria, precisely Lagos, Ogun and Oyo. This brought a link and built a bridge between the traditional Nigeria dancer and the French contemporary dancer. A Workshop was organized under the supervision of French choreographers including Claude Brumachon and Benjamin Lamarche. This was done with the intention of taking the best Nigerian dancers to attend the “Conservatoire Itinerant De La Danse” (Itinerant Academy of Dance), with the primary aim of making it possible for international choreographic exchanges to develop in terms of educational methods.
The French Cultural Centre, on mutual interesting collaboration with the best, in terms of Nigerian dancers and troupes such as the following: National Troupe of Nigeria, Centre for Cultural Studies, Cultural Troupe at the University of Lagos (UNILAG), Ebony Cultural Group, Ijinle Cultural Groups, African Heritage and University of Nigeria, Obitun Dance Troupe, Ivory Ambassadors, The Black Marbles, Akins Productions, etc organized the classes and workshops. The workshop which had approximately 200 dancers only saw seven (7) finalists, including, Adedayo Liadi, Faith Benson, Abel Utuedor, Abdul Onibasa, Esther Olaniyan, Bayo Ogunrinde, and Abubakar Usman. The dance industry started to experience immediate change when the seven (Interview: 2005) finalists came back to Nigeria after their experience in France. In France, their needs were sufficiently taken care of, these included; Allowances for rehearsal, feeding, accommodation and honorarium. This was something that had never happened in the Nigerian dance industry prior to this time.

The development brought about establishment of professional dance troupe by federating units in each state of Nigeria. More specifically, the formation of the Art Council in Nigeria through the establishment of the National Festival of Arts and Culture after the civil war also contributed immensely, to the modern dance with special reference to the convocation of Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC ’77) and hosted by Nigeria at Lagos in 1977. Monuments were built as part of efforts to host the Tourism even in Lagos, Nigeria, notably the National Arts Theatre, Orile-Iganmu, Lagos, FESTAC Town in Amuwo-Odofin, Local Government Areas of Lagos State and Cultural Theatre, Mokola Hills in Ibadan. According to Arthur (1977), major fallouts of the FESTAC ’77 outing were; firstly the immediate packaging of a collection of dances under the name of “The Nigerian Cultural Troupe” from September to October 1977 for a foreign tour of nine countries. The contingent was led by Abdu Sule and the Artistic Director was Dan Awodoye, who was assisted by Peter Abilogwu, and Peter Badejo. Thus, the need to establish a troupe of dancers solely for dance performances was re-emphasized after the FESTAC ’77 event. Arthur (1977).

Moreover, Nigeria as a nation had signed many Cultural Agreements with other countries all over the world. Some of the cultural agreements needed practical exchanges of the national cultural troupes to perform in each country. Dancers were, therefore, needed to perfect this aspect of the agreements. Thirdly, for even exposure of dance traditions all over the country, ensembles of dancers were needed to learn to showcase the various dance traditions in Nigeria. Invariably, the position of the choreographer, or dance composer was needed to be developed. People like Christopher Olude, and Hubert Ogunde had on several occasions led Nigeria’s contingents abroad. But they went as leaders of their own groups and arrangers of the dance segments of the performances. Government officials like Edith Enem, Dan Awodoye, and Uyi Efeovokhan also saw the need to make their tasks of selecting materials for government performances easy by having a formal group, Adedeji (1981).
Interestingly, it was this type of ad-hoc arrangement that gave safe birth formally to the National Troupe of Nigeria. In 1988 Hubert Ogunde was again invited by the then Sole Administrator of Culture, Col. Tunde Akogun, to put a group together as Nigeria’s artistic contingent for the Commonwealth Games which was held at Edinburgh. It was reported (Clark, 1988) that Hubert Ogunde recruited the artistes for the production of his play, Ayawino (Destiny). Ogunde had been given a free hand by the government officials to select and prepare the production. Ogunde had expanded the content of the production to include dances from various tribes of the country. Because dance was a universal language and it cuts across the different ethnic languages, Hubert Ogunde made dance the centre piece and unifying element in the production, Ogunyemi (1981). Hubert Ogunde performed also the task of the Choreographer by designing, teaching, arranging and directing a number of dance works including the “hybrid dance” called ‘The Fishermen’s Dance’, which is still a dance classic in the National Troupe repertory. Ogunde trained musicians who could play the traditional instruments of most Nigerian tribes, and therefore created the actual music that went with such dances.

Some of the Militating Factors to the Development of African Traditional Dance Techniques
Some of the militating factors as highlighted by Bakare (2006, p. 4) include but not limited to these facts that:

“A whole generation of Africans is growing up without a sense of self-esteem, they are growing with the mentality that whatever is African is inferior; consequently, whatever is African is jettisoned, while whatever is Western is patronized without discrimination”. (4)

Furthermore, Bakare (2006) frowned at the total submission of dancers out of ignorance which he termed as second slavery. Therefore, while the Europeans and the Americans will no longer come to Africa with chains to enslave Africans, nor come with their jungle boots and helmets to colonize us, with the benefit of negative intelligence, they have come in a subtle way using culture, art especially dance/ musical entertainment, and media. The author again postulated that; they have repackaged their chains, jungle boots and helmets in bright and exciting colours called “pop, dancehall and contemporary dances” and we have embraced them and so we have danced our way back to slavery” (Bakare, 2006).

Conclusion
African traditional dances are testimonies of different unique artistic works of art. In Africa, the term choreography may have been ascribed the practices because of lack of documentation, but the term choreography has always been in existence in Africa and in Nigeria especially though, there are no documentations on when, how and who were responsible for those unique traditional dances. But unquestionably, someone or some people are responsible as custodians of the practice for the structuring and organization of
the dance techniques. To this end, the contemporary dance custodians and practitioners have contributed to the development of dance industry in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular.

**Recommendations**

Arising from the findings from this research, the researcher recommend as follows:

1. Concerted efforts should be put in place to document artistic dance and choreographic expressions among African societies and among the Nigerian ethnic nationalities for preservations and tourism.
2. There is the need for proper documentation of activities, development and the overall growth of the industry by scholars, ethnographers and postgraduate research with support from granting and funding agencies
3. African dance artistes and choreographers should continue to perform, by creating new African dance forms and identities with understanding of the new dance and choreographic genre of African origin.

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