

The Utilisation and Role of Osanyin Deity in Crime Management in Iseyin Town, Nigeria

¹Usman Adekunle Ojedokun & ²Emmanuel Abiodun Ogundipe

¹Department of Sociology, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

²Institute for the Environment and Sustainability, College of Arts and Sciences, Miami University

Corresponding Author's E-mail Address: uaojedokun@gmail.com

Abstract

Informal crime control measure remains a popular and major crime management strategy in most rural communities in Nigeria. Osanyin is among the major deities often involved in the resolution of crime-related matters. Although the curative power of Osanyin deity has been well-documented in the literature, there is paucity of scholarly research on its roles in crime management. Against this background, this study examined the utilisation and role of Osanyin deity in crime management in Iseyin Town, Nigeria. The study was exploratory and cross-sectional in design. Rational choice theory was employed as the theoretical framework. Data were principally generated through key-informant and in-depth interview methods. Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were employed for the selection of five custodians of Osanyin deity and 35 patrons. Findings revealed that Osanyin deity was recognised as playing important roles in the maintenance of law and order in Iseyin town. The promptness ascribed to the deity in resolving criminal cases was the major factor accounting for its patronage. Also, the deity was mainly consulted to resolve cases bordering on property theft. The emergence of some fake custodians in recent times is casting doubts on the ability of Osanyin deity to effectively handle criminal matters.

Keywords: Osanyin deity, Crime management, Crime, Iseyin, Nigeria

Introduction

Crime management constitutes a major priority for most human societies. The importance attached to the management of crime is due to the fact that its occurrence is a major threat to societal stability and social order. Across many African communities, the belief that certain metaphysical and spiritual forces are co-existing with the human population is firmly entrenched [1, 12, 3]. Among the Yoruba people of South Western Nigeria, Osanyin is a highly respected deity credited with divine power to heal people by teaching its custodian, the *Olosanyin*, the appropriate leaves, herbs or roots to use for this particular purpose [25]. Although the curative power of Osanyin deity has been well-documented in the literature [4, 26], there is paucity of scholarly research as regards the role it plays in crime management.

Crime is a serious problem in Nigeria [15, 11]. The prevalence of different forms of crime, such as theft, armed robbery, rape, kidnapping, ritual killing, amongst others has called into question the effectiveness of the dominant and constitutionally recognised formal crime management strategies in the country. Today, the traditional or informal crime control mechanism, which constituted the bedrock of social control in pre-colonial Nigeria, remains largely untapped and essentially under-utilised. Thus, the control of crime in Nigeria has remained elusive as a result of the ineffective security apparatus that solely relies on the English-based official system of justice that is expensive, time-wasting, and in some cases, insensitive to the traditional and indigenous values and beliefs system of the people [23].

Despite the fact that the informal crime control measure has been largely relegated to the background in the scheme of things, it is still popular and remains a major crime management strategy for most rural communities in Nigeria [15, 18]. Osanyin is among the deities that are often involved in the resolution of crime-related matters. Typically, when a crime has been committed, Osanyin is usually invoked, through its custodian(s), to use its supernatural knowledge of divination to detect the perpetrator (s). The *Olosanyin* (custodian) is the one who

worships and communicates with the Osanyin; and he is able to attain this spiritually-backed position having performed certain rites and undergone some supernatural trainings. Thus, the *Olosanyin* is a "seer" who acts as an intermediary between Osanyin deity and other members of the society [25]. Indeed, the belief in the supernatural power of this deity was so strong to the extent that its service was utilised in some courts of law in the early colonial days in some places in South-Western Nigeria to determine the innocence or guilt of an accused person [25].

Generally, African traditional customs and practices emphasise the existing close connections between the empirical world and the cosmos [1]. African occult, according to Comaroff and Comaroff [6], embodies a set of normative convictions about moral order, social value, and material equity that provides a matter-of-fact repertoire of "first cause" explanations in the face of human misfortune or natural catastrophe. Typically, it tends to be regarded, indigenously, as species of practical activity whose principles of operation, while not transparent to all, are regularly deployed by those with the necessary power and knowledge [6]. Similarly, Okafo [16] contends that the native African ideas and models of law and justice are best suited for social control in African societies. Equally, Nwolise [14] submits that spiritual intelligence was not only the hub of security in the pre-colonial Africa, but also served as a mechanism for dispute settlement and conflict resolution, social control maintenance, justice administration, peace engineering, crime bursting, the resolution of mysterious deaths and crimes, and for the restoration of social harmony. Also, Ajayi and Aderinto [15] observe that the utility of the traditional and indigenous social control mechanisms has been remarkable and appear to satisfy Nigerians' yens for inexpensive, more rapid and culturally relevant justice and social order. Although some studies have been conducted on the involvement of some local deities and community oracles in crime control and management in different parts of Nigeria [19, 27], little empirical information exists on the utilisation of Osanyin deity for this purpose. Thus, this study was conceived to fill this lacuna. Its major objective was to investigate the utilisation and role of Osanyin deity in crime management in Iseyin town, Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Rational choice theory provided the theoretical backbone for this study. The basic premise of this theory is that the aggregate social behaviour results from the behaviour of individual actors, each of whom is making their individual decisions. The theory focuses on actors. It sees actors as being purposive and having intentionality - actors have ends and goals toward which their actions are aimed [24]. According to the theory, individuals must anticipate the outcomes of the alternative courses of action and calculate that which will be best for them. Hence, rational individuals choose the alternative that is likely to give them the greatest satisfaction [10, 5, 6]. Therefore, the rational agent is assumed to take account of the available information, the probabilities of events, and the potential costs and benefits in determining preferences, and to act consistently in choosing the self-determined best choice of action. At its core, rational choice theory opines that when making a decision, people first weigh the likely positive benefits against the likely negative consequences, and then base their choice on what they think will ultimately benefit them the most [6]. Of particular importance to this theory is the fact that an action is undertaken to achieve objectives that are consistent with an actor's preference hierarchy [24]. The values and utilities attached to local deities and oracles in the traditional post-colonial Nigerian communities may strongly influence the kind of justice system, whether formal or informal, that is likely to be utilised for the purpose of crime management.

Research Setting and Study Population

Iseyin Town was the area selected for this study. Iseyin is a prominent town in Oyo State in South Western Nigeria. It is the headquarters of Iseyin Local Government Council. The town is fondly regarded as the 'Home of *Aso-oke*' in reference to the booming homegrown local textile production that is a popular vocation among the youths in the area. The population size of the town was estimated to be about 302, 990 in 2006 (National Population Commission 2006). The choice of Iseyin was predicated on the fact that Osanyin deity is still being actively involved in the management of some criminal matters in the town. The custodians of Osanyin deity in Iseyin town and their patrons (both females and males) constituted the study population.

Methodology

This study adopted the exploratory and cross-sectional design. Iseyin town was purposively selected because of the previously specified reason. Some of the locations covered in the town were: Isalu, Irawote, Itan, Ogunbado, Oja-Oba, Oke-Aro, Olokooyo, and Oremoje. Similarly, the purposive sampling technique was utilised in the selection of the custodians of Osanyin deity, while some of their patrons were chosen through the combination of purposive and snowball methods. With regard to the collection of data, 5 key informant interviews (KII) were conducted with custodians of Osanyin deity. In addition, 35 in-depth interviews (IDI) were held with patrons of the deity. All the interviews were conducted in Yoruba language. It is important to point out that the custodians of the deity played a vital role in facilitating the participation of some of their patrons in the study. At the analysis stage, the generated data were first translated from Yoruba language to English language. Thereafter, they were processed through content analysis and ethnographic summaries, which involved a careful transcription and detailed description and interpretation of the tape-recorded data.

Results and Discussion

This section discusses the major findings that were established in this study. The discourse is logically presented to facilitate an easy comprehension and understanding of the narratives. Specifically, the discourse considered the following sub-themes: the pathways to becoming the custodian of Osanyin deity; the role of Osanyin deity in crime management in Iseyin town; the factors sustaining the utilisation of Osanyin deity in crime management in Iseyin town; the types of criminal cases being handled by the custodians of Osanyin deity; the efficiency and effectiveness of Osanyin deity in crime management in Iseyin town; as well as the challenges associated with the utilization of Osanyin deity for crime management.

Pathways to Becoming the Custodian of Osanyin Deity

Osanyin is a supernatural deity that cannot be found in the custody of an ordinary human being who lacks the necessary spiritual knowledge and metaphysical facts that can be used not only to communicate with it but to also invoke it. Hence, information was sought on how the custodians of Osanyin in Iseyin town gained access to the deity. Generally, all the custodians involved in this study claimed to have inherited their Osanyins from a male member of their respective families, who was also a custodian of the deity in his lifetime. In one of the interviews conducted, a respondent stated thus:

I inherited it (Osanyin deity) from my brother, who was the immediate past custodian. Prior to that time, I used to visit my brother, and I fell in love with the way it (Osanyin deity) used to provide answers to people's enquiries. When the time was right, I was initiated and made to pass through certain spiritual rites. For instance, I was given some concoctions to eat, and some incisions known as '*isitit*' were made on my two ears so as to enable me communicate effectively with the Osanyin (KII/Custodian of Osanyin Deity/Isalu Area/Iseyin Town).

Similarly, another respondent stated thus:

My father bequeathed it (Osanyin deity) to me before passing on to the great beyond. One day, my father was working on his farm when he discovered it (Osanyin deity). He went to inform the community elders about the incident, and they advised him on what to do about it before he could bring it home. One cannot just bring home something (Osanyin) like that unless necessary sacrifices were made. After making the sacrifices, my father brought it home (Osanyin), and he automatically became its custodian. I inherited it from him after he passed away (KII/Custodian of Osanyin Deity/Olokooyo Area/Iseyin Town).

In the words of another:

My father owned it (Osanyin deity), and I inherited it when he died. My father was very popular and well-known for his spiritual power when he was alive. If you are from this town (Iseyin), you should know him, or you must have heard about his power. In fact, people used to call him 'Egbeji' (great priest) (KI/Custodian of Osanyin Deity/Itan Area/Iseyin Town).

It can be inferred from these narratives that the process of becoming the custodian of Osanyin deity is essentially in two major ways. It could either be through inheritance or through spiritual visitation. Some Osanyin custodians directly inherited the deity from their male relatives, while others who did not have the deity in their lineage initially were chosen by the Osanyin itself, through mystical visitation to them. It can also be deduced from this finding that the pathway to becoming a custodian of Osanyin deity, whether through inheritance or spiritual visitation is not a simple and straightforward process. Rather, it usually involves the undergoing of series of spiritual rites of passage and ritual sacrifices because the ability to be able to communicate with the deity involves certain spiritual endowment and fortification. Oke [17] has also observed that the priest in charge of most community deities in Nigeria often undergo some rigorous spiritual exercises. In addition, these findings equally indicate that there is a gender dimension to becoming a custodian of the Osanyin deity. It is only males that are usually charged with the responsibility of keeping custody of the deity. This finding is in support of Sobó's [25] observation that it is only a male that can become an *Olosanyin* (the custodian of Osanyin deity).

The Role of Osanyin Deity in Crime Management in Iseyin Town

Generally, crime resolution is among the major core areas for which Osanyin deity is usually consulted in some rural communities in South Western Nigeria [25]. Therefore, information was sought on the role of the deity in crime management in Iseyin town. Most of the interviewees opined that Osanyin plays important roles in the resolution of some crime-related matters in their town. For instance, an interviewee said:

Osanyin is a very wise deity. He knows how to deal with criminals. Whenever it is invoked to catch a criminal terrorising the community, it will not attack the culprit directly the way other deities, such as Sango, Ogun or Osoosi, normally do. Rather, it (Osanyin deity) would instruct its custodian on the necessary sacrifices to be made to be able to weaken the power of the culprit, especially if he or she is suspected to be using metaphysical power. Once that is done, the targeted criminal would be caught and arrested. This reminds me of the case of one Ajimati, a notorious robber who was caught in 2001 with the help of the Osanyin deity after terrorising this town (Iseyin) for several months. See, many police officers who are close to traditionalists have successfully conducted their criminal investigations by consulting the Osanyin deity (IDI/Patron of Osanyin Custodian/Isalu Area/Iseyin Town).

Another respondent stated thus:

In this town (Iseyin), the role of the deity is well-known to many of us. Apart from the fact it is the chief herbal doctor among all the Yoruba deities, many people also do consult its custodians to resolve criminal matters. It is a highly knowledgeable deity which people do confidently rely upon to identify culprit(s) (IDI/Patron of Osanyin Custodian/Oja-Oba Market/Iseyin Town).

A key informant described the role of Osanyin deity in crime fighting this way:

If a crime occurs somewhere in this community, and such a case is brought to us, we usually implored the suspected perpetrator(s) before invoking the deity. If after that, they refused to confess, we would then invoke the Osanyin. The deity can never lie, except if the priest in charge tells lies. For instance, if five people are brought here as suspects in a crime, the Osanyin can accurately identify the culprit(s) among them. If the culprit confesses, we would reprimand him and then look for a way to resolve the

matter. But if nobody confesses, the Osanyin would then say that the culprit would go blind or lame after leaving this place. And whatever it says will surely happen. So these are the strategies we normally use Osanyin to curb crimes in our community here (KII/Custodian of Osanyin Deity/Ladogan Area/Iseyin Town).

Another key-informant described its role this way:

It (Osanyin deity) helps to curb some nefarious activities in the community. For instance, a few years ago, an incident occurred a few years ago in this town in which an aggrieved individual destroyed another person's farm. They came to meet me, and I consulted the Osanyin. It (Osanyin deity) revealed the identity of the culprit to us, and the person was eventually nabbed. The issue was later resolved peacefully. Since then, that particular individual has desisted from indulging in anti-social activities (KII/Custodian of Osanyin Deity/Ekunle Area/Iseyin Town).

It has been established from these findings that some residents of Iseyin Town believed that Osanyin deity plays an important role in the maintenance of law and order in the community. Specifically, if a criminal is believed to be using mystical power to commit crimes, Osanyin deity is usually consulted to employ its spiritual knowledge of herbs and roots to recommend the effective way to weaken the culprit's power which would eventually lead to his or her arrest. Similarly, Osanyin deity is usually consulted to reveal the identity of the culprit(s) whenever a crime has been committed, and the suspect(s) vehemently denies the allegation. Many studies have also revealed that despite the influence of social change, many rural communities in Nigeria still utilize traditional methods to resolve certain criminal matters [27, 20]. Furthermore, as established in this finding, the fact that some personnel of the Nigeria Police Force also do consult the Osanyin deity to achieve a breakthrough in some criminal investigations is a pointer to the fact that there is an adoption of the traditional or informal approach in the handling of some criminal cases by some agents of the formal social control apparatus. The implication of this is that, regardless of their socioeconomic profile (i.e., level of education, religious affiliation and occupation), some people's belief in the ability of Osanyin deity to effectively resolve criminal cases is still very strong.

Factors Sustaining the Utilisation of Osanyin Deity in Crime Management in Iseyin Town

Although colonialism and the influence of foreign religions have significantly modified the social structure and social relationships in many communities in Nigeria [22, 21, 9] certain traditional cultural practices are still alive and resilient. Hence, the factors sustaining the utilisation of Osanyin deity in the management of criminal cases were investigated. It was discovered that many people in Iseyin town still rely on the spiritual power of the Osanyin to resolve criminal matters owing to the fact that their previous experiences with the deity was considered positive. A response that was typical of the majority of the respondents was captured in the words of one of the interviewees:

The reason why some of us still consult the Osanyin deity is because we want to have the correct information and facts about something hidden. Unlike what obtains in the Church or Mosque, if you want a fast and quick result, you should consult Osanyin deity. Whoever consults the Osanyin and gets the desired results would still want to go and go. He or she would even be the one telling other people about its efficacy (IDI/Patron of Osanyin Custodian/Ogunbado Area/Iseyin Town).

A key informant also said:

Though the rate at which people do come to consult the Osanyin to resolve criminal matter has reduced because we now have a police station in this town (Iseyin) where people can report their cases to law enforcement officers for resolution. However, a large number of people still come to us because they believe in tradition, and are aware

of the fact that Osanyin is a deity that does not tell lies (KII/Osanyin Custodian/Itan Area/Iseyin Town).

In the words of another custodian of Osanyin deity:

Though people do not come to consult in large number as it was in the olden days, however, we still have people that still do come to consult us because they believe in traditions and they are well aware that Osanyin is a deity that does not tell lies. In fact, some people do consult Osanyin to help predict the fate and fortune of their newborns (KII/Osanyin Custodian/Isalu Area/Iseyin town).

Similarly, another respondent opined thus:

The reason they (patrons) still come to us is basically because it (Osanyin) says everything concerning a given matter as it is. It does not mince words even if someone is not happy with its revelations. People come to us because they are aware that Osanyin deity does not make mistakes (KII/Custodian of Osanyin Deity/Koso Area/Iseyin Town).

It is evident from these submissions that the belief in the power of the Osanyin deity to promptly resolve a criminal case is the main reason why some people still prefer to patronise its custodians over the other available alternatives, such as reporting to personnel of the Nigeria Police Force or seeking spiritual help from a Christian or Islamic prophet. The implication of this finding is that the patrons of the Osanyin deity are result-oriented individuals who based their decision on the envisaged probable outcomes. Equally, this result validates one of the propositions of the rational choice theory, which posits that actors have ends and goals toward which their actions are aimed. Furthermore, the continual patronage of the Osanyin deity by some people despite the influence of social change indicates that its patrons are likely to be getting the desired results from it.

Types of Criminal Cases Being Handled by Custodians of Osanyin Deity in Iseyin Town

To further understand the pattern in the utilisation of Osanyin deity in crime management in Iseyin Town, information was sought on the types of criminal cases for which patrons usually consult its custodians. Most of the respondents submitted that the custodians of Osanyin deity are typically consulted for the purpose of resolving criminal cases bordering on property theft. In one of the interviews conducted, a respondent had this to say:

Hmm.... unlike what obtained in the olden days when the deity (Osanyin) was usually consulted to resolve most criminal cases, we generally rely on it and its custodian these days to handle cases of property theft involving phones, clothes, money, motorcycle, jewelries etc (IDI/Patron of Osanyin Custodian/Oja-Oba Area/Iseyin Town).

Similarly, another respondent viewed it this way:

Osanyin deity mostly handles theft of items like phones, money, motorcycle, and other personal belongings, but at times it is employed to identify witches and wizards who inflict harms on other members of the community (IDI/Patron of Osanyin Deity/Oja-Oba Market/Iseyin Town).

Another respondent opined thus:

Though the Osanyin mostly handle cases of property theft, however, the deity is sometimes involved in solving cases of kidnapping and vehicle theft (IDI/Patron of Osanyin Deity/Oja-Oba Market/Iseyin Town).

It can be deduced from these findings that the patrons of the Olosanyins (custodians) were strategic with regard to the types of criminal cases for which they usually solicit the services of Osanyin deity to resolve. Although the deity seems to be largely involved in property crimes, nonetheless, its service is occasionally sought to resolve crimes that are suspected to have spiritual undertone, especially those bordering on allegation of using witchcraft or wizardry to inflict harms on other members of the community. The implication of these findings is that patrons of Osanyin deity in Iseyin town recognised the utilities and limitations of both the formal and informal agents of social control in the post-colonial Nigerian society. Hence, they are combining the two options to resolve criminal matters. Although while it is difficult for the *Olosanyins* (custodians) to handle serious criminal cases like murder and rape in the contemporary Nigerian society, however, they are aiding their patrons to recover stolen properties like money, motorcycles, jewelries, and other personal belongings. Also, the ability of the Osanyin deity to resolve cases involving the use of mystical power (witchcraft or wizardry) to harm others which may be difficult to handle by the Police are easily managed through the assistance of Osanyin deity. These findings support a key submission of the rational choice theory, which states that an action is undertaken to achieve the objectives that are consistent with an actor's preference hierarchy.

Efficiency and Effectiveness of Osanyin Deity in Crime Management in Iseyin Town

To assess the efficacy and effectiveness of Osanyin deity in crime management in Iseyin Town, information was sought from the interviewees on whether they are usually satisfied after utilising the services of the custodian of the deity to resolve criminal matters. Findings showed that respondents generally expressed mixed opinions as regards the efficiency of Osanyin deity in the identification of culprit(s) in criminal cases. For instance, one of them said:

Aah, it (Osanyin) is still efficient oo. Even law enforcement officers do consult them (Osanyin custodians). Presently, I have an elder brother, who is a policeman. Occasionally, he comes home (Iseyin town) to consult the Osanyin concerning his job (IDI/Patron of Osanyin Deity/Oke-Ola Area/Iseyin Town).

Another interviewee also observed thus:

Yes, Osanyin has been very useful in Iseyin Town in various ways. Most importantly, it is helping us in the aspect of crime management and in the control of infant mortality (KII/Custodian of Osanyin Deity/Oremoje Area/Iseyin Town).

However, some of the respondents claimed that the utilisation of the services of Osaanyin custodians in resolving criminal matters sometimes do not yield satisfactory outcomes. For instance, an interviewee stated thus:

From my personal experience, if I want to assess the performance of the Osanyin deity, I will say it is not accurate or efficient. There was a time my money was stolen; and I was advised to consult the *Olosanyin*. I did as I was told, but my enquiry from the Osanyin that I consulted was not fruitful. The deity failed to tell me the person(s) who stole the money. But what I was made to understand later was that it was possible that the culprit(s) had gone to some other places to seek for spiritual protection, and that the fault might not necessarily lie with the deity (IDI/Patron of Osanyin Deity/Oja Oba market/Iseyin Town).

From the submissions of these respondents, it can be inferred that though many of the patrons of Osanyin in Iseyin Town believed in the ability of the deity to resolve criminal matters. However, there are some patrons who expressed dissatisfaction with the outcome of its utilisation based on their previous experiences. These mixed opinions of the respondents can be explained as emanating from the fact that a number of fraudsters have started operating fake Osanyin shrines with the sole purpose of duping patrons. Thus, respondents who are dissatisfied with the revelations of Osanyin deity concerning criminal matters are more likely to have fallen to

the antics of fake Osanyin custodians. Sobo [25] has equally observed that there are some people who are employing fake Osanyins to dupe people by using a whistling device to imitate the sound of the deity.

Challenges Associated with the Utilisation of Osanyin Deity for Crime Management

Social change has had tremendous impact on the basic social institutions in Nigeria [17, 9]. Therefore, it was deemed imperative to investigate if there are challenges that are associated with the utilisation of this informal social control mechanism (Osanyin deity) for the management of crime in the contemporary Iseyin town. Nearly all the key informants interviewed confirmed that they usually contend with some challenges when rendering their services. One of the custodians mentioned thus:

Sometimes ago, a certain woman stole a sum of money belonging to one of her neighbours. We asked the Osanyin, and it identified the woman as the culprit. Although the woman later released the stolen money, she has stopped greeting me since that incident happened. That is the first challenge. Another challenge is that anywhere the power of the deity is employed, thieves usually find it difficult to operate. And if thieves found it very difficult to operate somewhere, the person stopping them automatically becomes their enemy. So this has made me become an enemy to thieves because I do not allow them to carry on their evil work effectively (KII/Custodian of Osanyin Deity/Kofo Area/Iseyin Town).

Another key-informant described the situation this way:

One of the challenges that we (custodians) is our harassment by police officials. For instance, a robbery incident happened recently in this vicinity. When the case was brought here, the Osanyin commanded me to tell them that they should pacify a stranger amongst them to return the item he stole. When the person heard, he went to invite the police claiming that I have defamed him. That is part of the challenges. However, he was later exposed to have actually stolen the money involved (KII/Custodian of Osanyin Deity/Isalu Area/Iseyin Town).

Similarly, a custodian stated:

There are some challenges we do face in the course of rendering our service. In some cases, after identifying a culprit in a theft incident, the parties involved would then go and settle their case amicably. Then, after one week, we will see policemen on our house entrance. The accused would come with police officers to arrest us that we have wrongly accused them of theft. And you know the government does not believe in traditionalists. This is usually a big issue (KII/Custodian of Osanyin Deity/Itan Area/Iseyin Town).

In the opinion of another:

A major challenge is that there are many fake Osanyin custodians everywhere now. Fraudulent people do use it as a means for their livelihood. Some people could claim they inherited it (Osanyin) from their parents, and they usually defraud people through this process. So, people who fell victim of their fraudulent act always believe that it is Osanyin custodians that are generally fake (KII/Custodian of Osanyin Deity/Irawote Area/Iseyin Town).

The above narratives indicated that the utilisation of Osanyin deity for crime management in the contemporary time is not challenges-free. Specifically, the three major obstacles identified by the key-informants as confronting the adoption of this informal crime control mechanism for the purpose of crime resolution were the tendency

for the outcome of the consultation to breed bad-blood between them and the alleged culprits, being accused and arrested for defamation of character, and the emergence of fake custodians whose activities are casting doubt in the efficacy of the deity. The implication of this finding is that the involvement of Osanyin deity in crime management in Iseyin town is gradually being usurped by the power of the agents of formal social control. This finding corroborates the submission of Okafo [9] that government policies and programs in many postcolonial African countries routinely contradict the Native African viewpoint. Similarly, Cunnen [8] has equally observed that Europeans during the colonial period employed the criminal justice system as a key colonial tool to dismantle and de-legitimise the social institutions and political aspiration of indigenous people. Furthermore, the advent of fake custodians of Osanyin is also contributing to the diminishing of the legitimacy attached to the deity. This trend was also established by Sobo [25].

Conclusion

This study investigated the utilisation and role of Osanyin deity in Iseyin town, South Western Nigeria. Findings revealed that despite the influence of social change in the major social institutions in Nigeria, some people still rely on some traditional deities to resolve certain criminal matters. In Iseyin town, the patrons of Osanyin believed that the deity is not highly knowledgeable and capable of deploying its spiritual power to identify culprits in criminal cases, but it can also recommend result-oriented strategies through which a criminal(s) can be apprehended. Generally, the custodians of Osanyin deity usually handled criminal cases bordering on property theft, and crimes involving the use of mystical power to harm community members. Also, the utilisation of Osanyin deity has nothing to do with the people's social class, as different categories of people, including law enforcement agents usually patronise its custodians. Although there is a strong belief in the power of Osanyin deity, the emergence of some fake custodians in recent times is casting doubt in the mind of some patrons as regards its utility to effectively manage criminal matters. Regardless of this challenge, the role being played by Osanyin deity in crime management in Iseyin town and some rural communities in South Western Nigeria cannot be overlooked.

References

1. Adetunji, Felix. A. 2013. "Security from the Perspectives of Religious Experience and Expression." *Journal of Educational Research and Behavioural Sciences* 2 (10): 154-160.
2. Ajayi, Johnson. O. and Aderinto, Adeyinka. 2008. "Crime Wave and Public Confidence in Oodua People's Congress in Lagos, Nigeria." *African Journal for the Psychological Study of Social Issues* 22 (2): 260-281.
3. Awolalu, J. Omosade, and Dopamu, P. Adelumo. 1979. *West African Traditional Religion*. Ibadan: Onibonoje Press & Book Industries.
4. Borokini, Temitope. I. and Lawal, Ibrahim. O. 2014. "Traditional Medicine Practices among the Yoruba People of Nigeria: A Historical Perspective." *Journal of Medicinal Plants Studies*, 2 (6): 20-33.
5. Carling, Alan. H. 1992. *Social Divisions*. London: Verso.
6. Coleman, James. 1973. *The Mathematics of Collective Action*. London: Heinemann.
7. Comaroff, Jean, and Comaroff, John. 2004. "Policing Culture, Cultural Policing: Law and Social Order in Postcolonial South Africa." *Law & Social Inquiry* (4): 513-545.
8. Cuneen, Chris. 2000. *Restorative Justice and the Politics of Decolonisation*. Paper presented to the Fourth International Conference on Restorative Justice for Juveniles, Institute of Criminology, University of Tubingen, Germany, 1-4 October, 2000.

9. Fadipe, Nathaniel. A. 1970. *The Sociology of the Yoruba*. Ibadan University Press.
10. Heath, Anthony. 1976. *Rational Choice and Social Exchange*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
11. Ikoh, Moses. U. 2013. "The Interface of Formal and Informal Policing Structures in Calabar Metropolis: Implication for Community Policing in Nigeria." *Journal of Power, Politics, and Governance* 1(1): 46-58.
12. Mbiti, John. S. 1990. *African Religions and Philosophy*. Nairobi: East African Education Publishers.
13. National Population Commission of Nigeria. 2006. *National Population Census*. Abuja: Nigeria.
14. Nwolise, Osisioma. B. C., 2014. *Is Physical Security Alone Enough for the Survival, Progress, and Happiness of Man? An Inaugural Lecture Delivered at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria on 20 February 2014*.
15. Ojedokun, Usman A. and Aderinto, Adeyinka. A. 2015. "Highway Informal Policing in Kajola Local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria." *Police Journal: Theory, Practice, and Principles*, 88 (3): 251-262.
16. Okafor, Nonso. 2006. "Relevance of African Traditional Jurisprudence on Control, Justice, and Law: A Critique of the Igbo Experience." *African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies* 2 (1): 36-62.
17. Oke, Ezekiel. A. 1984. *An Introduction to Social Anthropology*. Macmillan Press.
18. Okeke, Victor. O. S., 2013. "Community Policing, Vigilante Security Apparatus and Security Challenges in Nigeria: A Lesson from Britain and Igbo Traditional Society of Nigeria." *British Journal of Arts and Social Sciences* 4 (2): 306-323.
19. Okunola, Rashidi. A. and Dada, M. Ojo. 2012. "Oro Cult: The Traditional Way of Political Administration, Judiciary System and Religious Cleansing among the Pre-Colonial Yoruba Natives of Nigeria." *The Journal of International Social Research*, 5 (23): 19-26.
20. Okunola, Rashidi. A. and Ikuomola, Adediran. D. 2012. "Festival of Curses: A Traditional Crime Control Method in Edo state-Nigeria." *Issues in Ethnology and Anthropology* 7 (1): 85-106.
21. Otite, Onigu. and Ogionwo, William. 2014. *An Introduction to Sociological Studies (Second Edition)*. HEBN Publishers Plc.
22. Owoeye, I. Omotayo. 2012. "Socialization and Social Change." In *Peoples and Cultures of Nigeria*, eds. A. S. Jegede, O. A. Olutayo, O. O. Omololu, and B. E. Owumi, 385-393. SAMLAD Press.
23. Owumi, Bernard. E. and Ajayi, Johnson. O. 2013. "Traditional Values, Beliefs, and Reliance on Indigenous Resources for Crime Control in Modern Southwest Nigeria." *African Research Review* 7 (1): 73-94.
24. Ritzer, George. 2008. *Sociological Theory (7th Edition)*. McGraw-Hill International Edition.
25. Sobo, Abayomi. O. 2001. *Osanyin/Ossaim the Yoruba Deity of Healing in Nigeria and Brazil: A Comparative Study*. Durham Theses, Durham University. Retrieved February 5, 2016, from <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/4514/>.
26. Soumonni, E. 2012. "Disease, Religion, and Medicine: Smallpox in Nineteenth-Century Benin." *Historia, Ciencias, Saude*, (19): 35-45.
27. Tade, Oludayo. and Olaitan, Faisol. 2015. "Traditional Structures of Crime Control in Lagos, Nigeria." *African Security Review*, DOI: 10.1080/10246029.2015.1023325.