

Efficacy of Traditional Healthcare Delivery System in Mbembe Society of Obubra Local Government Area, Cross River State-Nigeria

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Abstract - This study examines the Efficacy of Traditional Healthcare Delivery System in Mbembe Society of Obubra Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria. The problem statement is drawn from the insufficiency of orthodox or government healthcare facilities in the area which unavoidably leaves the citizens on the mercies of traditional healthcare providers. Objectives of the study are considered along basic areas which guide the literature review. The methodology highlighted the design of the study, area of the study, population of the study, methods of data collection and Analysis. The study adopted the survey research designed and the cross sectional survey research. Population sampling was achieved through a multi stage sampling procedure. The questionnaire instrument was employed for primary data collection, while other surrogate measures were achieved through biophysical data capturing. Data analysis was done using hypothesis testing, regression analysis and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Following the result from various indications the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate hypothesis was accepted connoting significant variation in traditional healthcare delivery system with the modern healthcare delivery system. The work recommends among others that traditional healthcare system should be evenly or randomly spread in favour of the spatial location of Mbembe people in the area and increase presence of biomedical therapy to effectively combat contemporary imbalances.

Keywords: Diseases, Efficacy, Traditional, Healthcare System, Imbalances.

1. Introduction

Traditional Healthcare Delivery System is simply adopted to take away diseases. Within the African traditional context in this case, Mbembe society, it is the traditional manipulation or strategies put in place by one or more Witchdoctors, Herbalists or Soothsayers to free a diseased individual from his/her imbalances. It is also a term adopted to harmonize disagreeing families, repair relationships, clean

societal misfortunes and restore growth, order and peace to the society. [7], asserts that it refers to all the methods that are employed for the cure and prevention of diseases and the protection and prevention of lives and property from powerful forces of nature that are believed to pervade the environment. Efficacy of traditional healthcare system therefore considers the workability of the various items, methods and strategies employed by the Mbembe people of Obubra to restore physical, mental and psychological wellbeing of the citizenry, stabilize family cordial relationships, relationship between the living and the dead, God and man.

Globally, human life is contingent upon good health. This is why efforts are made by humans aimed at providing good healthcare system to either prevent illness from occurring or cure when it happened. [1], aligned with this position and argues that, numerous countries have enunciated healthcare policies geared toward the maintenance and improvement of the health status of their population. This is borne out of the realization that good healthcare is paramount for the wellbeing of the citizens and subsequently for the socio-economic development of the various societies. Being healthy or the absence of diseases is itself a panacea to human and material growth since only the sound minds initiate ideas that can favourably shape and reshape the world. Prior to the invention of bio-medical system, traditional therapy was the only available, tried and trusted system. [4], informs somewhere that in the ancient empire of Greece, herbal medicine was also predominant in curing various degrees of human diseases. Since Africa is the cradle of human existence [12], and human existence and diseases are inseparable twins, it is in all logic to deduce that man from time immemorial has been involved in the quest to provide healthcare system capable to achieve good health and longevity.

Contemporary South Africa and Ghana are among African countries with massive records on the patronage of traditional healthcare delivery system. Though traditional system exists side by side with the highly institutionalized orthodox medicine in South Africa. [10], holds the opinion that about 80% of South Africans who were inflicted with

various diseases were cured through the traditional therapy. In the same vein, [11], in his “Herbal Medicine and Children” asserts that, notwithstanding the increasing use of modern medicine in Ghana, herbal medicine is also hugely patronized and many confirmed of relying on it for their healthcare. Nigeria situation is not different from her sister countries of South Africa and Ghana.

The aftermath of colonization presented a dual system of healthcare delivery-the officially recognized orthodox system and what [1], again refers to as barely tolerated traditional system. The traditional system cut across cultures and forms integral part of any given culture wherein a particular medicine or plant is found. At the centre of the practice are leaders who claimed to combine both the spiritual and physical natures. They are called different names: Babalawo in Yoruba, Dibia in Igbo, Boka in Hausa and Obongha’ng in Mbembe. Mbembe society relies extensively on traditional healthcare delivery system as solution to her numerous health challenges now. This has justified this research with the responsibility to unravel the efficacy of traditional methods and/or recommend scientific innovation was necessary for a more effective and efficient healthcare delivery system in the study area.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Bio-medical facilities provided by the government and non-governmental agencies to effectively address the frequent outbreak of diseases and high mortality in traditional Mbembe society are grossly inadequate. Consequently, the population depends on traditional healthcare delivery system available to them as remedy to their health and similar life challenges. Moreso, there exit a strong belief system that only traditional healthcare system can “holistically heal” their physical and spiritual imbalances. This study is therefore committed to investigating the identified acclaimed problems and advance possible solutions necessary.

1.2 Justification of the study

The proposed study is significant in various ways which include the following;

- The study will create awareness on the citizens that; not all ailments or societal imbalances are products of the supernatural realm. Rather, human hygiene and improper dietary practices can most commonly result to wide spread diseases, mortality and destruction of property.
- Provide needed data to government and other agencies to urgently increase their healthcare delivery presence in the study area to forestall mortality sequence.
- The study will also provide the government and other concerned bodies with the correct value of Mbembe

traditional/herbal properties (healthcare system) and the need to encourage the system through financial grants and academic researches instead of distrust and irrational condemnations.

- The study will further unravel and suggest yeanning avenues to regulate unethical and unwholesome traditional healthcare practitioners from further mal-application of the system to instill sanity and creditability in the practice.
- Finally, the work will bring to the fore the possible areas of synergy between orthodox and Mbembe traditional healthcare delivery system for ultimate output and the good of posterity.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The study has the following objectives

- To investigate into the veracity or otherwise of the widely acclaimed causal factors of ill health and social imbalances in Mbembe traditional society of Obubra Local Government Area.
- Take detail examination of the traditional healthcare delivery system in Mbembe, Obubra.
- Evaluate the efficacy or otherwise of Mbembe traditional healthcare delivery system based on available data.
- Recommend where necessary the careful synergy between the official (orthodox) and Mbembe traditional healthcare delivery system.

1.4 Research question

- 1) Does traditional healthcare delivery system have any advantage over modern system in Mbembe society?
- 2) To what extend does spiritual forces cause diseases in Mbembe society?
- 3) To what extent is traditional healthcare delivery system more effective in curing disease in Mbembe society?
- 4) Does traditional healthcare delivery system give holistic healing in Mbembe society?

2. Literature Review

African view of diseases differs considerably from that of the western world which is the antonym of good health on a particular individual. Among Africans, ill health goes beyond the physical wellbeing of individual. It embraces the psychological, mental, spiritual, social and cultural defections of the individual, family members and the entire society. This brief review focuses on acclaimed causes of ill health in Africa, patronage of traditional healthcare delivery system and efficacy of traditional healthcare delivery system among Africans. In Africa, ill health and misfortunes are believed to come to man through various sources which include evil

spirits, witches, taboos and ancestors. No ill health or misfortune has natural occurrence. Since ill health has metaphysical connotation it requires more than physical expertise or skills to treat.

The supernatural realm is thus supreme in providing and maintaining the welfare and health concern of humans. [6], agreed with this assertion and asserts that diagnosis of diseases in an African Traditional Healing System is a twofold event. Firstly, the organic or physical cause of the sickness has to be established by careful examination and questioning by the medicine man; and secondly, by using the findings as complementary to a divination of the spiritual or mystical causes of the illness. No sane and modest witchdoctor in Africa will ever attempt or commence any healing process without first consulting the spirit world. Accessing the realm of the spirit through incantation, invocation, divination or/and other forms before initiating healing process properly shows respect and acknowledgment of the transcendence of the other worldly over the affair of humans. With this, it is hoped that the benevolent occupants of the “Supreme” world will graciously grant man’s appeals in the form of healing, victory, order, prosperity and so on and so forth.

African view that ill-health has spiritual causation is predicated on the belief that people have evil powers and envy others who they regard as arch opponents or enemies to become sick as a way of punishing them [15]. They do this to either disable their enemies and keep them inactive or outrightly kill them to clear the way for the supposedly offended to succeed. This also justifies the position of [14] that certain illnesses like bareness, infertility, attacks by dangerous animals and bites by dangerous snakes. Persistent headache and repeated miscarriages which defy scientific treatment can be transmitted through witchcraft and unforeseen forces. Furthermore, unethical behaviours such as disobedience to taboos and ancestors are grievous aberrations and can also attract punishment through illness or misfortune. Taboos in Africa are things or ways of life that are forbidden by a community or a group of people [9].

[13] also agrees somewhere that moral behaviours manifest and enhance one’s life force, but disloyal behaviours towards tradition passed on by the ancestors will weaken the life force. These can therefore lead to punishment from the ancestors or spirits in the form of diseases and misfortune.

2.1 Patronage of traditional healthcare delivery system

Patronage of traditional healthcare practice all over the world and African continent in particular has been very robust. It was however not rosy in the decades of colonization when most African countries were under the government of foreign overlords. [8], re-counting the era of colonialism in Ghana

states that the practice of traditional medicine (healthcare) was stigmatized and discouraged by both colonial authorities and religious missionaries. In spite of the derogatory policies from foreign authorities, traditional healthcare systems continued to thrive.

[5], quoted World Health Organization (WHO) that 80% of the emerging world’s population relies on traditional medicine for therapy. Similarly, according to [3], traditional medicine and healing provide healthcare services to the larger population of many African countries including Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa and Ghana. [1], also commenting on patronage of traditional healthcare system states that traditional medicine (healthcare) has endeared itself to the people especially in the rural areas who lack access to western medicinal practice. Traditional healthcare is very popular because the practice takes full account of the socio-cultural background of the people. All over Africa and beyond the borders of the continent, traditional healthcare practice is enjoying high patronage and existing side-by-side with official or bio-medical healthcare system in very many cultures.

2.2 Efficacy of traditional healthcare delivery system

The traditional healthcare system has been adjudged by clients as being efficacious which is why the system enjoys high degree of patronage. [1], reveals that, in Africa, traditional healthcare system has helped in promoting the dramatic decline in mortality, increase in life expectancy and eradication of small pox. [2], quoted Shaikh and Hatches that “Herbal therapies have shown remarkable success in healing acute as well as chronic diseases”. Providing his own views [2] states further that traditional healthcare system provides more effective treatment to certain health problems such as; boils, tuberculosis, stroke, arthritis, epilepsy; asthma, infertility, henna, hypertension, diabetes, mental illness and disease prevention as well as for the ageing population where modern medicine has either failed to produce equally good result or has simply ignored the need for systematic attention and research. The high acceptability of traditional healthcare delivery system particularly among Africans is therefore not unconnected with many avoidable factors which include drought of modern medical facilities and cultural beliefs. This further justifies our study to ascertain the basis in our study area.

2.3 Summary of review

The review revealed acclaimed causes of diseases, misfortunes and disagreements emanating from the spirit world thus making it mandatory for the source to be involved in any process to ameliorate ailing conditions. According to the review, this further guarantees the efficacy of traditional healthcare delivery system since the modern or western

healthcare system is limited to the physical world only. The massive patronage of traditional healthcare practice by Africans is also attributed to the very strong belief that traditional healthcare heals holistically devoid of undue encumbrances.

3. Study Methodology

The basic frameworks of the methodology are as follows:

3.1 Research area

The study area is Mbembe in Obubra Local Government Area stretching from Ijeghe-Orangha at the boundary with Yala Local Government Area through Imabana-Ochokwo to Onyadama at the borders with Yakurr Local Government Area. The area further stretches to Ogar Agbor at the borders of Obubra and Ikom Local Government Area. There is homogeneity in language and culture with quite insignificant variations here and there. There is also high acceptance and patronage of traditional healthcare delivery system among the population despite the "sparing" availability of modern healthcare delivery system in the area.

3.2 Study population

The overall universe for this study comprises traditional witchdoctors (Herbalists, Diviners, Native doctors, Traditional midwives and other such practitioners) and their clients with a near blend literacy characteristic, economic status, social recognition and cultural attributes.

3.3 Sampling method

The first approach delineate the area into three: (i) Osopong (ii) Adun and (iii) Okum. The Osopong axis will comprise communities from Ijeghe-Orangha at the border with Yala Local government area of Cross River State down to Imabana-Ochokwu. Adun cluster refers to communities from Onyadama to Ofatura, while Okum cluster comprised of communities of Apiapum through Edondon to Ogar Agbor village at the border with Ikom local government area. Finally, from each cluster, 30 traditional medicine men/women and 20 clients were selected on the basis of their professionalism and past experiences. Thus the total sampled population was hundred and fifty (150) persons.

3.4 Instruments for data collection

The Instruments employed for the field data collection include personal (one-on-one) interview and questionnaire.

3.5 Method of data collection

Traditional medical practitioners' professional information was inferred with the aid of the questionnaire through personal interview. Furthermore, questionnaire was administered directly on the literate respondents and retrieved after due completion.

3.6 Data analysis

Questionnaire information was tested hypothetically using the technique of analysis of variance to determine the convergence or divergence in the views of traditional witchdoctors and their clients with respect to the efficacy of traditional healthcare delivery system in the study area.

3.7 Results

Research question one

To what extent does spiritual forces cause diseases in Mbembe Society?

Table 1: The result of R and R² value of the spiritual forces causing diseases in Mbembe society

Values	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Standard Error of the estimate
Spiritual forces	.097	.009	.005	4.07
Diseases in Mbembe Society				

The presented table one above shows the R-value .097 of spiritual forces on diseases in Mbembe. This result implies that there are low effect spiritual forces on the causes of diseases in Mbembe society, while the R² values of .009 indicates the 1% variation of the causes of diseases in Mbembe society.

Research question two

Does traditional healthcare delivery system have any advantage over modern system in Mbembe Society?

Table 2: The result of R and R² value of traditional healthcare delivery system over modern system in Mbembe society

Variables	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Standard Error of the estimate
Traditional healthcare system	.140	.020	.016	4.05
Modern system				

From the result in table II it reveals that R and R² value .140 indicate the strength of traditional healthcare delivery over modern system in Mbembe society. This means implies low influence of traditional healthcare delivery system over

modern system. While the R^2 of .020 indicates 2% variation of traditional healthcare delivery system over modern system in Mbembe society.

Research question three

Does traditional healthcare delivery system effectively cure disease in Mbembe Society?

Table 3: The result of R and R^2 value of traditional healthcare delivery system effectively curing diseases in Mbembe society

Variables	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Standard Error of the estimate
Traditional healthcare system Curing disease	.51	.020	.009	5.03

From the result in table 3 above, it shows that R values .051 which indicate the strength of traditional healthcare delivery system effectively curing disease in Mbembe society. This means implies low effect of traditional healthcare delivery curing disease in Mbembe society.

Research question four

How does traditional healthcare delivery system give holistic healing in Mbembe society?

Table 3: The result of R and R^2 value of traditional healthcare delivery system on holistic healing in Mbembe society

Variables	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Standard Error of the estimate
Traditional healthcare system Holistic healing	.40	.002	.002	4.09

From the result in table 4 above, it revealed R-Value .40 which indicate the strength of traditional healthcare system on holistic healing in Mbembe society. This implies low influence of traditional healthcare delivery system on holistic healing in Mbembe society.

Hypothesis testing

Ho 1: There is no significant relationship between spiritual forces and causes of disease in Mbembe society.

Table 5: Result of simple linear regression analysis of the significant relationship between forces and causes of diseases in Mbembe society

Model	Sum of square	D.F	Mean square	F _{cal}	Sign
Regression	39.17	1	39.17		
Residual	4107.01	248	16.56	2.37	.125
Total	4146.177	249			

At .05 level of significance, DF 249

The result of table 5 revealed that the cal. F_{cal} values of 2.37 is less than the critical F-value of 3.89 at .0548 with 249 Degree of Freedom (D.F). With the result, the Null Hypothesis Ho that say there is no significant relationship between spiritual forces and causes of disease in Mbembe society is retained. This implies that there is no spiritual relationship between spiritual forces as causes of diseases in Mbembe society.

Table 6: Ho 2: There is significant relationship between traditional healthcare delivery system having advantage over modern system in Mbembe society

Model	Sum of square	DF	Mean square	F _{cal}	Sign
Regression	81.54	1	81.54		
Residual	4064.64	248	16.46	4.98	.027
Total	4146.18	249			

At .05 level of significance, D.F = 249

From the result in table 6 above the F-cal., value of 4.98 of 0.05 level of significant, D.F(249) and F critical value of 3.89. Since the F_{cal} is greater than the critical F-value. Therefore, the null Hypothesis is rejected, implying that there is significant relationship between traditional healthcare delivery system and modern system in Mbembe society.

Ho: 3 traditional healthcare delivery system does not significantly relate to effective curing of diseases in Mbembe society.

Table 7: Simple liners regression analysis for traditional healthcare delivery system and effective curing of diseases in Mbembe society

Model	Sum of square	D.F	Mean square	F _{cal}	Sign
Regression	10.61	1	10.61		
Residual	4135.56	248	16.68	.64	.43
Total	4146	249			

At .05 level of significant, D.F =249

Based on the result on table 7 the cal. F-value is .64 at .05 level of significant, 249 Degree of Freedom and F critical value of 3.89. Since the critical F-value is greater than the F_{cal}-value, the Ho of "no significant relationship" is retained.

This means that there is no significant relationship between traditional healthcare delivery system and modern system in Mbembe society.

Ho: 4 Traditional healthcare delivery does not significantly relate to holistic healing in Mbembe society.

Table 8: Simple linear regression analysis result for traditional healthcare system and holistic healing in Mbembe society

Model	Sum of square	D.F	Mean square	F _{cal}	Sign
Regression	1	1	6.48		
Residual	4139.69	248	16.69	.39	.53
Total	4146.18	249			

At .05 level of significant, D.F=249

From the above table 8, the cal., F- value is .39 at .05 level of significant, 249 D.F., and 3.89 critical F-value. From the result, since the F –value critical is greater than the cal., F-value, it therefore means that the Ho of “no significant relationship” is retained while the alternative hypothesis is rejected. Therefore this implies that there is no significant relationship between traditional healthcare system and holistic healing in Mbembe society.

4. Results/Findings

The result on the significant relationship between spiritual forces and causes of diseases in Mbembe society is retained. This implies that there is an extent of spiritual relationship between spiritual forces and causes of diseases in Mbembe society. This leads to the decision rule that there is a significance variation in the spiritual forces and causes of disease in Mbembe society. It follows that the null hypotheses are rejected while the alternative hypothesis is upheld. This result therefore is in conformity with the findings of previous researches cited in this study. There is therefore a close corroboration with the works of [5], [6], who agreed with this assertion and held that diagnosis of diseases in an African Traditional Healing System is a twofold event. Firstly, that the organic or physical cause of the sickness has to be established through careful examination and questioning by the medicine man; and secondly, by using the findings as complementary to a divination of the spiritual or mystical causes of the illness. This in real and does not out-rightly jettison the significance of biomedical therapy but carefully align with the necessity of diagnose before treatment which should apply to all.

Also, [14] who agrees that certain illnesses which defy scientific treatment can be transmitted through witchcraft and unforeseen forces. The findings of this study have led to the explanation of why traditional healthcare is important to Mbembe people from the changing health condition.

Evidently, the result so far provided conveys a great deal of implications in the direction of human health, environmental mainstreaming, and individual awareness of the impact of modern healthcare delivery system. Therefore, in line with the justification of this work, the study will add or extend the frontiers of knowledge in the field of population characteristics on traditional healthcare services.

4.1 Recommendations

Government and non-governmental organizations should collaborate to establish modern healthcare delivery services in the study area.

Public orientation of the population on most probable causes of diseases should be galvanized to at least minimize the strong superstitious acceptance that the imaginable spirits cause all diseases and human misfortunes.

Finally, there should be synergy, not absolutely though, of traditional healthcare delivery and modern systems for maximum and quality healthcare services in the area.

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