

**NAVIGATING THE JOURNEY OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY WITHIN THE
IDEOLOGIES OF *KARIN-KAPO*, *KENIMANISM* AND *KENIMATONISM*.**

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Abstract

Supervision is a key aspect of postgraduate study in many institutions of higher learning around the world. However, what is expected to be a long-life experience in some cases turns out to be unpalatable. This has an adverse effect on the products of such a sour relationship. The study looks at the situation of postgraduate supervisor, highlights various challenges faced by prospective students and ways to surmount them as they relate to supervisor-supervisee relationship. The paper relied on personal experience for primary data, information from secondary sources such as literature in books and the internet. A number of challenges were highlighted and possible solutions to them were discussed. The paper recommends that there should be proper teaching of research courses at undergraduate level to equip prospective postgraduate students with the rudiments and prerequisite of higher studies. Institutions of higher learning should provide adequate study facilities that will enable effective research activities, making it less stressful for intending students.

Keywords: Postgraduate, karin-kapo, kenimanism, kenimatonism, supervision.

Introduction

Climbing the educational ladder to its peak is always the wish of every bright and academic-inclined individual. However, this wish is at times aborted due to the ideologies that exist in the academic environment; especially as it relates to master-student relationship when it comes to supervision. The ideologies of *Karin-kapo*, *kenimamism* and *kenimatonism* were coined from some Yoruba words and phrases and used here by the author for the first in relation to academic discourse. Every postgraduate accomplishment; especially at Doctoral level, has a story; and when this story is told, in most cases; they are not palatable. This has been a source of fear to many prospective candidates to the extent that a lot of them look for foreign opportunities for further studies. The unlucky ones end up stopping at the undergraduate level to embark on other professions. Apart from post-graduate supervision, the ideologies exist beyond even to the level of relationships that exist among working colleagues to the point that it reflects in the products of such an environment. The problem identified is not peculiar to Nigeria or Africa, but the world at large. With a few exceptions, the notion of 'I passed through this and you must have a feel of it too' is common to most postgraduate supervisors and this has affected the expected cordial relationship between a supervisor and a supervisor. While this notion of rancor between supervisors and supervisees is believed to exist in most institutions of higher learning in Nigeria and around the world, its level of existence differs from one school to the other and as well as amongst individuals. This has made prospective applicants look at postgraduate study as a journey of uncertain end or no return. The feeling created as a result of this has affected the image of the academics especially at the senior cadres that a supervisor is seen as a demigod who is there to 'crucify' rather than correct or build; and thus; leading to hostility and hatred instead of the image of respect that their achievement ought to have brought. The unhealthy relationship has resulted in the problem of students staying longer than the years required for their studies or some not being able to complete it at all. Should we now say the problem of academics lies

within the academics?

The journey of academics can better be discussed in relation to selected Yoruba ideologies as seen from experience and personal interactions with colleagues in the field. The Yoruba of Nigeria are a people with rich cultural heritage. This includes the use of language to express their ideologies. Many of such ideologies are expressed in words and phrases and at times put together to form proverbs or idiomatic expressions; or used in coded form to convey a given message. It is from such that three selected words are coined to express the thrust of this paper in relation to academics. The phrase *karinkapo yiye nii yeni* expresses the ideology of togetherness in celebration of success amongst a group of individuals; *kenimani* is a word used to express the ideology of people who will not be happy with your progress in life. They are there to destroy and mar every road to someone's success. *Keni-matoni* is used to express the notion of perpetual subordination in all spheres of life amongst individuals.

The purpose of this paper is to highlight factors responsible for rancor between supervisors and supervisees as regards postgraduate supervision with a view to suggesting the way forward to effective and smooth relationship within the academic realm. The paper also attempts to express personal experience as a way of encouragement to prospective applicants. The paper relies mostly on personal experience and participant observation; having gone through the rigors of academics especially at the postgraduate levels, both as a student and a lecturer for a reasonable number of years. Secondary data were also collected from publications in journals, online, interviews and interactions with colleagues as well as textbooks. It also briefly discusses the cordial relationship that exists between the author and his supervisor as a way of encouraging prospective applicants at the postgraduate levels.

Conceptual Clarifications of Selected used Yoruba Ideologies

The notion of *karin-kapo* emanates from the spirit of oneness and togetherness in the journey of life. Human within this belief system sees every endeavour as a collective one; one that has to be accomplished using collective efforts. Within this realm are academics that encourage upcoming the younger ones to grow through mentorship that enables them to succeed. They see the growth of individuals as a collective task and learners have a sense of belonging; learning the needed skills and values in an environment that permits learning. Relating this to postgraduate study; especially in art, students are given the needed assistance through accessibility and fairness in relationships. In Yoruba context, the notion of *karin-kapo-yiye niyeni* encourages togetherness and a sense of shared responsibility leading to a successful end. Success of one is seen as success of everybody and otherwise.

The word *kenimanism* is coined from the Yoruba word *keni-mani* meaning - one that does not want you to have; emanating from the spirit of it must be me and me alone. This notion applies to the principle of having it all and self-recognition, ego and pride. It emanates from the idea of seeing every achievement as a product of personal wisdom, knowledge rather than a combination of these attributes and favour from God. This is not to undermine the importance of these attributes to personal success in academics, but to see it as a privilege and favour from the Creator who made it happen. The Yoruba also say that, *alakara kan kii fe kenikeji odin*, but when there is a spirit of fair play and love, businesses thrive and coexistence is the order of the day. The *Agama* lizard controls its territory and does not allow another in when it is present. In this vein, some supervisors see their students as a threat to their personal accomplishment;

especially with the very intelligent ones. This has made them constitute roadblocks that are difficult to navigate for students who may not understand the tactics and tools needed to a successful end.

Kenimatonism is coined from the Yoruba word *keni-matoni*; meaning the other person should not grow to my level. This is compared to the concept of *afe k'aje, mafe k'ayo* - one who is ready to feed you but not to satisfaction. The category of academics within this realm will enable one to grow but at a slow pace. They constitute roadblocks that will take considerable efforts from the learner to surmount. In academics, the category of mentorship here is that of a slow motion; the supervisor determines the growth of the learner and the limit of success. These categories of humans see themselves as small gods; who need to be worshipped and adored if one must succeed. The idea here is not to undermine the value of respect in every relationship but to emphasize the need for moderation and fairness in dealings. The Ph.D. degree for instance; is interpreted in different ways by people around the world; there are such funny interpretations such as Prayer, Hard work and *Dobale* (prostration); to others, it connotes-Pull him or her down, but in essence, it is the highest qualification; the height attained to prove to the world that one has gotten to the peak in academics (James, 2020). The notion of *kenimatonism* is where the idea of – *pull him/her down* emanates.

Challenges Facing many Postgraduate Students

A postgraduate student needs to hold the mindset that the journey of knowledge is a perennial process; hence, he/she should know that postgraduate study will equip him/her with the fundamentals or keys to unlock the door of knowledge. Embarking on a journey of a post-graduate programme is not without challenges, especially in developing countries like Nigeria. Among such challenges are those enumerated below:

- Fear of uncertainty: Many students lack confidence in their ability to start and finish the programme. The fear may have emanated from the experiences shared from fellow students and seniors who might have had one problem or the other postgraduate during their studentship.
- Getting a supervisor: Getting a supervisor may be a challenge; though some schools appoint supervisors while in others, the student looks for one. Giving the student to source for his/her own supervisor; especially at the doctoral level is to give the student that privilege to get someone who has the heart to do the job; having known the ability of the student. This was the researcher's experience. Jianhe, Meiyin, and Gaungjin, (2024) affirm that, research learning engagement is the basic element of master's students' innovation output, and the supervisor is the first responsible body for master's students' cultivation.
- Financial problem: Financial problem could be a major threat to a free-flow of study, especially in the modern day when the costs of education keep increasing from time to time. Most students at this level are of the working class and at most times have to combine work and study. In this situation it might be difficult for them to engage in thorough research with the needed focus.

- Poor mentorship: Inadequate and poor mentorship could be a source of challenge to

prospective postgraduate students. Some supervisors are too busy; either with official job schedules or other life issues that they do not have adequate time for proper supervision of their students. An average student may not know which way to go in this situation.

- Lack of Focus and Commitment: few students in this category do not come in with a clear-cut idea of the nature of their research and along the line; they get confused or beat about the bush. This prolongs their stay on the programme than required.
- Infrastructural Facilities in school and at home: This is a major threat to postgraduate study. Most institutions of higher learning and libraries are ill-equipped with state of the art facilities needed for proper research work. Students spend a lot of their study time to scout for needed materials and data; most times depending on foreign sources which might constitute delay.
- Ego and arrogance: Some students get carried away by the ego of having the opportunity and privilege to get to this level of education, and in essence lose their sense of humility and respect for constituted authorities. This poses a major challenge to their supervision and mentorship. The feeling of being too big or 'I have arrived' in a major setback at this level of study. After all, degrees are awarded based on students' character and learning. A postgraduate student should be one who stands to be corrected at any time and should stay in humility to true knowledge.
- Laziness: The postgraduate student should never be tired of being focused and seeking knowledge that can transform him/her to self-development. The research work should bring about positive changes to himself/herself, and in turn, impact the world at large.
- Health Challenge and Fragility: Some postgraduate students are faced with health issues or are rather too tender or fragile to face the rigor involved in level of education. Hence, they were not able to meet up with given deadlines.

My Postgraduate Experience with Professor Oluremi Mabel Awogbade

The author met Professor Oluremi Mabel Awogbade in 2009 through a phone call link during a courtesy visit to Mr J. O. Ayorinde; a lecturer at Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin, who happens to be an old School-mate of the Professor. At this time, there was stagnation and delay in my academic journey at the University of Lagos after the completion of my Master's degree; when it became difficult to get a supervisor to commence my Ph.D. programme. Fortunately for me, she was employed as a lecturer at the Department of Creative Arts, University of Lagos, this provided a privilege to quickly key in to this window of opportunity by approaching her to be my supervisor which she accepted without hesitation. Since then, we have been having a cordial and fruitful relationship as one strives not to disappoint; being her first Ph.D. student in Art Education in the University.

One will not expect the journey to be ever smooth; this is expected of every endeavour of this nature, but one can say that there was fair play in relationship with my supervisor in all areas of tutelage and mentorship. The programme was seen as a collective one as one enjoyed and fell

within the spirit of *karin-kapo*; this provides the urge to sail through the programme within a not only from the main supervisor alone but other co-supervisors; Dr. Adebisi Ademakinwa and Dr. Kefas Dajuma of blessed memory. The aura of love that surrounded me in Unilag; most especially from fellow students and lecturers alike propelled me to surge to the in momentum and served as inspiration for me to want to finish in time and even join the system. There was a privilege for me to get an offer as a graduate assistant in the department that afforded me the opportunity to learn some rudiments of the academics that was later built and relied on till date. During this period, there was the privilege to work with four postgraduate coordinators of which my supervisor was one, even though she had a very short stay due to change of institution; when she was employed by Kwara State University, Malete.

The master-student relationship eventually yielded the expected result as I was able to complete the postgraduate study within a period of five years as God blessed me with most of the factors earlier listed in this paper. As fate had it, the author joined his supervisor again as a junior staff in the same Department at Kwara State University, Malete in October, 2015. Here, the cordial relationship continues and grows stronger. Of course, there may have been one or two hitches along the line but God has been faithful to us both to keep the spirit alive till date. This short testimony above emphasizes the essence of building and keeping relationships.

Keys to Starting and Completing a Postgraduate Programme

For effective take-off and completion of a postgraduate study programme, the following steps among others could be helpful:

- Meeting deadlines: Students at this level should build the virtues of dedication and focus in order to always meet set deadlines. This is not only beneficial to their study but also helps in later life. Most supervisors have some expectations for their supervisors and feel disappointed when the virtues are absent.
- Respect: Personal integrity through respect to constituted authorities is a major weapon to successful completion of postgraduate study programmes. Respect; they say is reciprocal, hence, it is important to give respect to whom it is due; as it takes a lot of sacrifice to supervise students at this level. Most supervisors have to combine personal life with job schedules and supervision; especially, when the number of students may be more than required; though it is regulated in most institutions to ensure average workload on the supervisor.
- Personal sacrifice: Both the supervisor and supervisee should be able to give the needed sacrifice; seeing it as an opportunity to grow and garner experience; contributing to the growth of an individual and society at large.
- Prayer and hard work: Prayer is key in every endeavour. God holds the heart of man and makes things happen at the appointed time. The student should be hard-working in order to encourage the supervisor to flow along.
- Being Resourceful: Quality research activities can only be carried out in the midst of effective resources. Students at this level should seek knowledge with optimal resources; spending time and money to carry out effective research so as to extend the frontiers of knowledge. The end result should have a positive impact on the society and

contribute to national growth, as well as the growth of the individual/s involved. The supervisors are there to provide appropriate advice, and are not there to do the thinking for the supervisee (thesis mind, 2019)

- Proper mentoring: There should be proper mentoring with a human face on the part of the supervisor/s. The product is seen as a reflection of the producer. This should be in mind always. Characters should be built at this level which will have a direct impact on future products of such an environment.
- Institutional monitoring: There should be an effective monitoring mechanism put in place to check excessive use of power and authority by a few erring supervisors and unserious students. This in turn builds on the image and reputation of the affected individuals and institutions. Quinn (2000) in a study between counsellors and their supervisors' notes that, some states have formalized the supervision process by mandating qualifications for clinical supervisors and requiring contractual arrangements between counsellors and their supervisors. As a result, the relationship often lasts for a number of years.

Conclusion and recommendations

The paper posits that postgraduate study is a herculean task and should not be embarked on with a careless attitude. It requires a lot of effort from both the supervisee and supervisor. It should be seen as a journey that requires personal sacrifice, dedication and one that involves character building. Success or failure at the end is shared by both parties. The paper recommends that, there should be proper teaching of research courses at the undergraduate level to equip prospective postgraduate students with the rudiments and prerequisite of higher studies. Schools should also provide adequate study facilities that enable effective research activities, making it less stressful for intending students.

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