

Fetish Priests/Priestesses Media Programmes: Examining their Effects on the Youth in Ghana

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Abstract

Church-membership competition exists amid churches in Ghana. This competition is generally conspicuous among Penteco-Charismatics. Research findings have first indicated that the competition is the product of the swift growth of new religious movements. Secondly, it is due to the need to maintain and cause church membership growth. In this respect, Penteco-Charismatic churches in Ghana are in one way and the other under pressure to put up varied attractive strategies and Christian-related religious artefacts/products to attract and maintain people into their fold. In this seemingly same line of progression, one observes a replica of competition, this time, among fetish priests/priestesses in Ghana. In this regard, fetish priests/priestesses showcase their spiritual potency, daunting but sacred artefacts (e.g. snakes, birds), and then conjure money on various media platforms to win the interest of people into their fold. In view of the kind of scenes and the utterances that are telecasted and aired respectively on the media platforms in Ghana, the paper raises a question. “What is/are the effect(s) the programme has on the youth and children in Ghana? The paper maintains that fetish priests/priestesses television and radio programmes should be curtailed. This is because such programmes drive the youth to develop the desire for quick money, occult/magical practices, and social vices, which at the long run may ruin their lives and the society they live in.

Keywords: Ghana, Magic, Fetish Priest & Priestess, Riches, Media, Youth & Children

1. Introduction

The elders say long ago, *fetish priests/priestesses*² resided in thick forests and in remote places. There, they received clients and helped the clients per their needs. Moreover, it was unusual and uncommon to see fetish priests/priestesses in the public domain, or to see and hear them on any media platform. Generally, if they would come to the public domain, then it would be because there is a critical problem that warrants their assistance. For example, when there is the need to perform certain rituals to cleanse their town or community in the open space. Here, it must be noted that the fetish priests/priestesses came to the public domain to execute their duties upon consultation with and permission from the chief and council of elders in the society. In addition, the priests/priestesses came to the public domain because they had to perform certain rites to usher in the celebration of an upcoming event (e.g. festival). Presently, it appears to be out-dated for majority of the fetish priests/priestesses in Ghana to reside in the forests and remote places to receive clients. Now, they are near our doorsteps and are ubiquitous. In fact, it sounds and looks very difficult to tell whether fetish priests/priestesses and pastors are competing among themselves for client patronisation in Ghana. This is because one finds these religious personages perform magic and miracles respectively on various media platforms almost daily. Motivated by these backgrounds, this paper is interested in investigating into the effects fetish priests/priestesses-telecasted and aired programmes have on the youth and children in Ghana. In this respect, the paper pays attention to what they offer to patronisers and the magical performances aired and telecasted respectively on the media platforms.

2. Description of Methodology

This study is purely qualitative, using the mixed methods approach. Qualitative in the sense that this type of methodology in the words of Mutch (2005) focuses on stories and description of individuals' experiences, beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motivations and behaviours. More to the point, qualitative research approach enables the researcher to get relevant responses on the topic under research as according to Mutch (2005)³. The study used the qualitative approach because the focus of the study best falls in line with the explanations Mutch (2005) gives to qualitative research method. The study used the descriptive research design. This is because the

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² Among the Akan people of Ghana, a fetish priest/priestess is generally called “Okomfo”. He/she is generally fearfully dressed with cowries, beads, talisman, amulets and some scary artefacts hanging on their cloths. Such artefacts are purported to possess powers. However, the term is said to sound derogatory. In this regard, practitioners of African traditional religion maintain that instead of calling them “fetish” they should be called traditional priest/priestess.

³ Mutch, C. (2005). *Doing educational research: A practitioner's guide to getting started*. Wellington: NZCER Press.

descriptive design, unlike the other designs (survey, correlational and experimental designs) would not have allowed this research to direct its focus. Secondly, the descriptive design best fits this study. In this vein, it is important to refer to Pilot and Hungler (1999) who offer a contextual explanation for descriptive research design in view of the topic under discussion. The two scholars maintain that descriptive research design is that research design that helps to explain what exists and uncovers new facts and meaning through observation, description and documentation of aspects of events or situations as they naturally occur⁴. Still on methodology, five national television channels⁵ on *Multi TV*⁶ were purposively sampled for the study. This is because as part of the television station's programme line up, the five named television channels are well noted for hosting fetish priests/priestesses who come to showcase their spiritual potency to the viewers who may be interested in them. Data were collected from a population size of five hundred (500) respondents. The data were collected with the aid of questionnaires and by personal interviews.

The participants were made up of two hundred and twenty females (220) and two hundred and eighty males (280). The age distribution of the population ranged from eighteen (18) to seventy (70) years. Nonetheless, four hundred and fifty (450) of the population were youth whereas fifty (50) were old persons. The age range was important to the study in view of the reasons that follow. Firstly, the study aimed at involving both the youth and the old in the society to be able to balance and concretise discussions on the topic. Secondly, the study saw it important to ascertain their (youth and old persons) views on the topic under investigation. The collected data were presented on tables. The tabula representation of the data was done to enable the reader to have an overview of the ideas the respondents expressed on the topic under discussion. In that regard, the table was structured to caption a brief biographical data of the respondents, research questions, number of respondents responding to the research questions, the responses' equivalent percentage and the categories of response expressed by the respondents.

3. Ghana: An Overview

This section of the paper presents a general overview of the country Ghana. In this regard, discussions will be made brief to cover the following areas. They are Ghana's geographical location, population size, religion, the various ethnic groups and the status quo of Ghana as it stands in the year 2015. The areas mentioned are important for discussion because they provide a reader-guide to a better understanding of the focus of the paper. The Republic of Ghana has a total land area of 239,460 square kilometres. It lies almost in the centre of the countries along the Gulf of Guinea (the West African coast). To the east of Ghana lies the Republic of Togo, beyond which are Benin and Nigeria. On the west is La Côte d'Ivoire and on the north is Burkina Faso⁷. The year 2010 Ghana's Population and Housing Census records an estimated population size of about twenty-four million, six hundred and fifty-eight thousand, eight hundred and twenty three (24,658,823) people living in Ghana. Out of the 24,658,823 people, 71.2% of the population professes Christianity, 17.6% are Muslims, 5.2% are adherents of Traditional African religion, 5.3% do not belong to any religion and (1.4%) representing other religions. The Akan (47.5%), Ga-Dangme (7.4%), Ewe (13.9%), Guan (3.7%), Gurma (5.7%), Mole-Dagbani (16.6%), Grusi (2.5%) and Mande (1%)⁸ represent the various ethnic groups in Ghana.

Away from the geographical and statistical data about Ghana, the paper reflects on the general overview of the existential factors that surround Ghanaians. The paper does this to reveal some of plausible reasons that might have accounted for the influx of fetish priests/priestesses on the media platforms in Ghana. Daily radio and television news items coupled with series of industrial actions and demonstrations across the length and breadth of Ghana are evident enough to suggest that Ghanaians are not satisfied with life. Again, Ghana's government has placed embargo on employment⁹. This embargo has rendered majority of the youth in Ghana unemployed. Moreover, one cannot forget about the galloping increment in prices of commodities on the market. In addition to the aforementioned, the price of petroleum products in Ghana has gone high as against the reduction in the petroleum prices on the world market. The cost of living has become very high, coupled with the

⁴ Polit, D. F. & Hungler, B. P. (1999) *Nursing research: Principles and methods*, (6th ed.). Philadelphia: Lippincott. Retrieved from http://www.researchproposalsforhealthprofessionals.com/descriptive_research1.htm Accessed on 11th May, 2015.

⁵ The five notable Multi TV channels are: Capital Television, Royal TV, Z TV, A TV and Kesben TV.

⁶ Multi TV is Ghana's first nationwide free-to-air multi-channel digital Television service. It comes with some of the following channels: Joy Prime, Joy News, 4 Kids, Adom TV, Cine Plus, TV Africa, Gold TV, OB TV, TV 3, Kesben TV, Trust TV, Z TV, A TV, Ebola TV, Rave TV, Royal TV, Angel TV.

⁷ Anderson, Jnr. G. & Oppong, J. (2015). Faith and reason expressed: The case of Ghana. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(1), 32. See also: Land and people of Ghana, see: <http://www.ghc-ca.com/firm-e-land-people.html>, accessed on 27th February, 2014.

⁸ See: Ghana Statistical Service (May, 2012). 2010 *Population and housing census: Summary report of final results*. Accra: Ghana Statistical Service, p. 34.

⁹ Gov't to lift ban on public sector recruitment? (Thursday 19th March, 2015). See: <http://citifmonline.com/2015/03/19/govt-to-lift-ban-on-public-sector-recruitment/#sthash.Dtd2vBH6.dpbs> Accessed on 31st May, 2015.

depreciation of the Cedi to the US American Dollar and the British Pound Sterling¹⁰. However, if one should consider the existential factors above that seem to affect majority of the Ghanaian populace, then there is reason to understand partly, why there is influx of fetish priests/priestesses on the media platforms in Ghana and their desire to grasp the attention of the youth into making quick money.

4. Conceptualizing the term Youth

Many people have different opinions on the term “youth”. This is because of the relativity in understanding the term. Sometimes, it sounds enthralling to hear a sixty-year-old man or woman claiming to be a youth. However, the question is, is the term “youth” understood in terms of age or physique? Probably, “none or all of the above”. For some people, who a youth is, is understood in terms of strength, physique and exuberance. Others maintain that age measures who a youth is. In view of the confusion about defining the term “youth”, this section of the paper divides into two sections. The first section explains the term “youth” considering definitions by authoritative bodies and the inclusive definition adopted by Ghana. The second section of the paper presents a general overview of the youth in Ghana. By presenting the general overview of the youth in Ghana, one would be able to understand why it seems the youth form the primary target of the fetish priests/priestesses.

Hoetu (n. d.) maintains that it is difficult to define the term youth. For him, society’s perception of the term youth is subject to variations of time, space and societies. In this regard, he offers a functional, cultural and chronological definition of “youth”. Hoetu posits that in the functional sense, the term “youth” is described to imply the transition period between the social categories of childhood and adulthood, which is characterised by rituals and other physical changes. Cultural definition of youth relates to the role that individuals play in a given social context. On chronology, Hoetu maintains that the term youth, refers to those who fall within a certain age range. For Hoetu, it is important to note that age definition is important for the purposes of policy, planning and implementation¹¹. In sum, one can say Hoetu understands the term “youth” to mean a person who has transitioned from a particular age group (probably from the age of 15 years) into adulthood and is capable of contributing his/her quota of strength to society building.

Like Hoetu (n. d.) the UN General Assembly, the Commonwealth and the World Bank maintain that the term “youth” is by definition relative. This is because each region might have its own specific definition. Nonetheless, the three bodies have tried to homogenize the categorization of youth age to be persons between the ages of fifteen (15) and twenty-five (24) years (UN and World Bank), and between fifteen (15) and twenty-nine (29) years (the Commonwealth)¹². Like the African Youth Charter, United Nations Organization and the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Ghana National Youth Policy (August, 2010) defines the term ‘youth’ as persons who are within the age bracket of fifteen (15) and thirty -five (35) years¹³. In this paper, the term youth will mean persons between the age of fifteen (15) and forty-five (45) years. The choice of this working definition is guided by the idea of the level of strength persons in the said age range possess to enable them to engage in active physical work to society building.

5. About the Youth in Ghana Today

To make discussions on the lifestyle of majority of the youth in Ghana are sour. This is because they are the people who seem to fall prey to almost every social depravities and mayhem. Aside the youth being preys, they can be seen as people who are the less privileged group of people whose snags seems not to be properly addressed in the society. Dei-Tumi (2011) describes the youth as people who are mostly vulnerable, deprived, discriminated against, marginalized, exploited particularly by politicians, counterproductive, and the endangered species in society especially in Africa¹⁴. By the descriptions of Dei-Tumi (2011), one can comprehend the extent to which the youth in Ghana and in Africa are manipulated and considered without worth in the face of the affluent and the entire society. Hoetu (n. d.) like Dei-Tumi (2011) says that the youth of today are encumbered

¹⁰ The falling standards of the Cedi to the US Dollar: See: <http://fx-rate.net/USD/GHS/> Accessed on 31st May 2015.

¹¹ Hoetu, P. (n. d.). *Mainstreaming youth: The key to effective youth development in Ghana*. (A Parliamentary Briefing Paper). Retrieved from <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/ghana/10500.pdf> Accessed on 31st May, 2015.

¹² (a) The United Nations Programme on Youth. Retrieved from <http://social.un.org/youthyear/docs/UNPY-presentation.pdf>. Accessed on 27th May, 2015. (b) See: Speech Delivered by Mr. Emmanuel Dei-Tumi (CEO, Future Leaders’ Group) During a Workshop Organized by the Institute of Continuing and Distance Education, University of Ghana, on the Theme : “Policy Options for Youth empowerment in Ghana” at the Institute of African Studies on Friday, October 21, 2011. Topic: “National Youth Entrepreneurship Policy”, pp. 1, 2. Retrieved from <http://www.futureleadersgroup.org/media/downloads/Youth%20Entrepreneurship%20policy%20in%20Ghana.pdf> Accessed on 31st May, 2015.

¹³ Ministry of Youth and Sports. (2010). *National Youth Policy of Ghana: Towards an Empowered Youth, Impacting Positively on National Development*, p. 5. Retrieved from http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Youth/Ghana/Ghana_YouthPolicy.pdf Accessed on 31st May, 2015. See footnote 12 above.

¹⁴ See footnote 12 (b) for reference.

with many difficulties. Some of the difficulties according to Hoetu are, but not limited to, inadequate public services, especially education, limited employment opportunities, and limited or no opportunities for constructive political engagement. For him, the difficulties as he points out affect the youths' development into becoming responsible adults.

Aside the difficulties the youth face, Hoetu (n. d.) characterises the youth today as being gullible to political manipulation to engage in violence. His observations are that in most conflicts across Ghana and elsewhere in the world, the youth are used to prosecute violence in religious, ethnic, political, land and other natural resource related conflicts. In Ghana, the youth are exposed to the trade and use of illicit drugs and arms. The use of the drugs and arms by the youth in Ghana today has catalysed and heightened the rate of armed robbery cases in Ghana. The youth in the Ghanaian society have subscribed to some other social vices. Mention can be made of prostitution (including child prostitution)¹⁵, alcohol abuse, "Sakawa"¹⁶, sex abuse and among others¹⁷. In fact, these issues that surround the youth in Ghana today, in the perspectives of this paper points to but are not limited to the heightened level of youth unemployment, bribery and corruption among government officials, nepotism/favouritism and egoism. Nonetheless, the paper maintains that if the government catered for the youth in Ghana, the youth would have immensely contributed to nation building. Hence, the social vices that mostly involve the youth would have been suppressed, if not curtailed.

6. Fetish Priests/Priestesses: Who are they?

On the term "fetish" and its associate, priest/priestess, history reminds us when it was first used. Opoku (1978) and Boahen (1975) have maintained that the early Europeans who touched the soils of Africa referred to everything about the Africans as "fetish". The English term fetish emanates from the Portuguese "*fetico*"¹⁸. This term "*fetico*" originally referred to any work of art or such man-made religious objects as talismans, amulets and mascots which Africans, encountered by the Portuguese on their voyages, made use of. However, current studies have maintained that the use of the term "fetish" to describe anything African is considered derogatory. Therefore, Africans have advocated that fetish priests/priestesses should rather be called "Traditional Priests/Priestesses". However, in the context of this paper, I use the term "*fetish priest/priestess*" as it is. This is in view of the fact that on the various media platforms, the priests/priestesses refer to themselves as "fetish priest/priestess" but not "traditional priest". Nonetheless, I must maintain that irrespective of the fact that the priests/priestesses call themselves "fetish", the paper takes cognisance of the derogatory implications of referring to anything African as 'fetish'. In the study of anthropology of religion, the term priest (impliedly fetish priest) assumes many connotations. Arthur and Meyers (2001) posit that a priest at times is referred to as a supernatural leader or religious specialist¹⁹. Inferring from the two scholars, one can understand them to imply that a fetish priest/priestess is a person who possess supernatural powers. This person is assigned to spiritual duties on behalf of a group of people – society. Mention can be made of their socio-religio-political roles. Nonetheless, the focus of this paper will not allow discussions on the three categories of functions²⁰ as stated.

Fetish priest/priestess assumes many names among the various ethnic groups in Africa. Generally, Africans refer to a fetish priest/priestess as "*Juju man/Juju woman*". This is in the sense that s/he (*Juju man/Juju woman*) is surrounded by an aura of fear or magical property usually to do with spirits²¹. Opoku (1978) maintains that among the Akan and Ewe people of Ghana, a fetish priest/priestess is called *Ɔkomfo* and *Trɔnua* respectively. The Yoruba and the Ibo call a fetish priest/priestess, *Alufa* and *Eze-alusi* respectively²². There are many fetish priests/priestesses in Ghana²³. They are scattered all over Ghana's *ten regions*²⁴. However, majority

¹⁵ Teenage sex work increase in Cape Coast. See: <http://vibeghana.com/2013/01/11/teenage-sex-work-increase-in-cape-coast/> Accessed on 3rd June, 2015. See also: <http://www.modernghana.com/news/121296/1/child-prostitution-high-in-cape-coast.html> Accessed on 3rd June, 2015.

¹⁶ The word SAKAWA as used in the text is understood to mean "Internet fraud". It is an activity whereby the youth cheat people via the internet to get hold of huge sums of money from such victims' financial account. Recently, it has taken a different form. Sacrifice ritual has been introduced into this venture with the aim of rapidly gaining much money.

¹⁷ Hoetu, P. (n. d.). *Mainstreaming youth: The key to effective youth development in Ghana*. (A Parliamentary Briefing Paper). Retrieved from <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/ghana/10500.pdf> Accessed on 31st May, 2015.

¹⁸ Opoku, K. A. (1978), pp. 2, 4, 8. See also: Boahen, A. A. (1975). *Ghana: Evolution and change in the 19th and 20th centuries*. London: Longman Group Ltd.

¹⁹ Arthur, C. L. & Myers, J. E. (2001). *Magic, witchcraft and religion: An anthropological study of the supernatural*, (5th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill, p. 86.

²⁰ Arthur, C. L. & Myers, J. E. (2001), pp. 89, 90, 97, 98; Opoku, K. A. (1978), p. 74, Sarpong, P. (1974). *Ghana in retrospect: Some aspects of Ghanaian culture*, (reprint, 2006), p. 17, Dickson, K. B. (1969). *A historical geography of Ghana*. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 206-207 discusses some of the functions of a priest.

²¹ See footnote no. 6 of Appiah-Sekyere, P., & Anderson, G. Jnr. (2013). *Magic and miracles in Ghana: A critical examination. Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(11), 54.

²² Opoku, K. A. (1978). *West African traditional religion*. Singapore: FEP International Private Ltd., p. 74.

²³ Lists of fetish priests in Ghana: See: <http://enterghana.com/checkout-8-richest-juju-men-ghana-photos/> Accessed on 18th

of them are situated mostly in the Volta, Northern, Eastern, Ashanti and the Brong Ahafo regions of Ghana. Whereas some have gained high reputation, others are now coming to the limelight. Some of the high profile fetish priests/priestesses are Nana Kweku Bonsam, Nana Oboanipa, Nana *Togbe* Kedinakpo, Mallam Musah, Mallam Issah, and Nana Agradaa (priestess). Some of the upcoming, but powerful ones are Nana Bahumajuju, Nana Nzema Boduah, Nana Adehunufu, Original Believe Nana Ajoglojo, and Nana Maame Water.

6.1 *Fetish Priests/Priestesses: What do they Offer Patronisers?*

In the popular mind lingers the impression that all “fetish priest/priestess” offer the same kind of services to their patronisers. This impression nonetheless is invalid. This is because almost every “fetish priest/priestess” in Ghana is noted for a/some peculiar offer(s) s/he is capable of delivering to his/her patronisers. In Ghana, for example, Nana Kweku Bonsam unlike majority of the fetish priests/priestesses is the only fetish priest who is reported to be well noted for bequeathing powers to some Pastors in and outside Ghana to perform miracles in their churches. In footnote number 26, the link leads to a video. In the video, one observes Kweku Bonsam going to retrieve his god “*Kofi*” from a pastor. His presence at the pastor’s church premises was motivated by the pastor’s refusal to honour a promise he (pastor) made to the Kweku Bonsam. Still on Kweku Bonsam, in that same footnote number 26, one reads from the second link an interview between Kweku Bonsam and *Daily Guide News Agency*²⁵. In the interview, Kweku Bonsam recalls a number of about one thousand and over of pastors he has given powers to perform miracles²⁶.

Away from Nana Bonsam, the paper enumerates some of the general offers fetish priests/priestesses in Ghana offer their patronisers. The offers/services are, but not limited to doubling one’s money/wealth, granting spiritual powers, rendering spiritual protection against malevolent spirits, curing certain *spiritual diseases*²⁷ and restoring the potency of men’s manhood. Aside the offers/services that has been mentioned above, the fetish priests/priestesses claim to cure lunatics, persons with dislocated and broken bones, persons affected with stroke, and assist people who have the desire to travel abroad. Other offers/services the fetish priests/priestesses render are assisting traders to get better sales, protecting people from fraudsters, and granting barren women the fruit of the womb (children). To confirm some of the utterances vis-à-vis the offers/services the fetish priests/priestesses make and project respectively on the media platforms, the study conducted *interviews*²⁸. In two separate personal communications with three women on 5th April 2015²⁹ and two men³⁰ in Apewosika and Kukwaado³¹ respectively, the following were gathered. All the three women (Akosua, Mansah and Obaa Yaa) posited that they are barren. They added that for about three years in marriage, they have tried every medical means to assist them to procreate. Nonetheless, all the means have proven futile. Among the three women, Obaa Yaa reports that her friend, Afia introduced her to Nana Kwabena Bedu³². Obaa Yaa maintained:

I declared my intensions to the fetish priest when I met him at his shrine. In view of this, the fetish priest requested that I presented a bottle of wine to the god (Nana Tabir). According to the “fetish priest”, the wine would be used to offer prayers on my behalf. Because I did not have an idea of such a request but I wanted to get my problem addressed, I sought the priest’s permission and left the shrine to buy the wine. When I returned to the shrine with the drink, he offered a libation prayer to Nana Tabir to grant me a child. After a

May, 2015. See also: <http://www.modernghana.com/blogs/425121/50/ghanaian-powerful-spiritualists-gather-at-dromanke.html> Accessed on 18th May, 2015.

²⁴ Ghana has ten regions. They are Upper East, Upper West, Northern, Brong Ahafo, Western, Easter, Ashanti, Volta, Central and Greater Accra regions.

²⁵ Daily Guide is an authoritative newspaper sold in Ghana.

²⁶ “Nana Kwaku Bonsam reclaims god from church”. See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aj1-yFzUhbM> Accessed on 12th June, 2015. See also: “I Give Pastors ‘Kofi-Kofi’-Kwaku Bonsam” from: <http://www.modernghana.com/news/164522/1/i-give-pastors-kofi-kofi-kwaku-bonsam.html> Accessed on 12th June, 2015.

²⁷ Some of the sicknesses are but not limited to epilepsy, and convulsion.

²⁸ Here, I must state that it was difficult to get people who have had contacts with fetish priests/priestesses to interview. Nonetheless through networking, five people were gotten on board to grant interviews.

²⁹ For the sake of ethics, I refer to the pseudo names of the interviewees. The three women are Akosua, Mansah and Obaa Yaa.

³⁰ As noted in footnote 29, I refer to the pseudo names of the two men, Yaw and Kwame.

³¹ Apewosika and Kukwaado are communities located in the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. The two communities are seemingly small with a population of about two thousand inhabitants. The main language spoken among the indigenes is Fante.

³² Nana Kwabena Bedu is a fetish priest to the god, Nana Tabir who is a god situated in the male’s dungeon of the Cape Coast Castle. Nana Tabir is well noted for granting barren women the fruit of the womb. The god assists people who have issues with their businesses, education and marriage. Nana Tabir’s favourite drink is the wine. Nonetheless, if one presents Schnapps, Castle Bridge Gin, they are all acceptable.

period of two weeks, I felt uncomfortable with my health. I then visited the hospital only to be tested positive as being pregnant. Upon such a miraculous occurrence, I recommended the “fetish priest” and his god, to my two other friends who also got in touch with the same priest and had their desires addressed. When I delivered my baby, I presented a sheep and a sum of two hundred Ghana Cedi (GH ₵ 200) to the “fetish priest” as an appreciation. (Personal communication with Obaa Yaa on 5th April, 2015)

Turning away from Obaa Yaa and her friends, Yaw and Kwame narrate how they lost the potency in their manhood to a woman. The two men maintained that they sexually abused a woman simultaneously. After a week, they realised that their manhood had become inactive and unproductive. This frightening development led them in pursuit for an antidote. In the process, a friend led them to Nana Akora³³. Yaw and Kwame maintained that the fetish priest attributed the cause of their impotency to a marine spirit manipulation. The fetish priest, according to the two men maintained that the woman they abused sexually possessed an evil spirit that renders its victims impotent after engaging in sexual intercourse. In this regard, Yaw and Kwame were instructed by the fetish priest to provide two white cocks, two bottles of schnapps and three hundred Ghana Cedi (₵ 300) each. The demands were used to perform a sacrifice of cleansing to get rid of the spell cast on the two men. According to Yaw and Kwame after the sacrifice ritual, they regained the potency in their manhood. One can infer from Obaa Yaa, Yaw and Kwame’s narratives that to some degree what the fetish priests/priestesses utter on the media platform contain some elements of truth. Nonetheless, since the interviewees were few, their narratives cannot be used here to generalise about the potency of the fetish priests/priestesses who showcase themselves on the various media platforms.

6.2 Are their Offers/Services Free, or at a Cost: Interviewing the Fetish Priests

This section of the paper presents two interviews. The interviews were between the researcher and two fetish priests³⁴. The interviews aimed at ascertaining whether the offers/services fetish priests/priestesses render to patronisers are at a cost or not. Nevertheless, I must quickly emphasise that although only two fetish priests granted interviews and maintained that the offers/services fetish priests/priestesses render are at a cost, the study does not use their responses to generalise. However, the general impression is that almost no fetish priests/priestesses render any offers/services to patronisers at no cost. In an interview with Nana Obange he maintained, His work as a fetish priest operates on the principle, “*you use what you have to obtain that which you do not have*”. In this sense, one is likely to understand Nana Obange to mean that a person does not earn anything in life at no cost. Back to Obange, for him, inasmuch as prices of commodities on the market vary per the product, a client’s desire has its own cost. He added that clients who express interest in having their money doubled pay to him a sum of five hundred Ghana Cedi (₵500). This amount of money merits the client a ‘magical’ pot³⁵. However, before he issues out the magical pot, he performs certain rituals. The rituals are geared towards securing and ‘activating’ the pot to produce the desired effect to its user. Nana Obange maintained that there are rules that govern the pot on how it must be used. One of the rules is that the pot should be kept in a secret room where one else can have access. Secondly, the owner of the pot should not engage in any sexual intimacy before s/he touches the pot or visit the pot room. This is because it is an anathema to the pot for its user to engage in sexual intimacy before the owner uses it. According to Nana Obange, when this happens, the pot will not issue any money until the owner has returned the pot to him (Nana Obange) to perform certain rituals³⁶. The type of ritual however, was not disclosed to the researcher. The conversation ended on the note that the services/offers fetish priests/priestesses render to patronisers are not free.

Away from Nana Obange, the paper turns to Nana Nzema Boduah. On the same question, Nana Nzema expressed almost similar views as Nana Obange did. For him, nothing is acquired in Ghana and from the world without a fee. Nana Nzema maintained that he charges one thousand Ghana Cedi (₵1000) and performs certain rituals for a client who wants to safe travel abroad. He added that he has helped about two hundred clients to safe travel abroad and back without any difficulties whatsoever. Aside helping clients to travel safely, he renders spiritual protection to clients at a fee of three hundred Ghana Cedi (₵300). According to Nana Nzema, usually he issues a ring to that effect. The ring, as he posits protects its bearer from malevolent spirits’ attack and any form of mishaps that are likely to befall the ring³⁷. From the phone interviews, there is reason to posit that fetish priest/priestesses do not offer their clients free services. Their services/offers are at a cost per the clients needs as

³³ Nana Akora is the name of a fetish priest who resides in Apewosika.

³⁴ The two fetish priests are Nana Ogbange and Nana Nzema Boduah.

³⁵ See Figure A. in the picture gallery presented for the readers’ perusal

³⁶ Phone interview with Nana Obange on 12th May, 2015. The interview lasted for forty-five minutes (45 mins.). The interview aimed at ascertaining whether the offers/services fetish priests/priestesses render are with or without a fee.

³⁷ Phone interview with Nana Nzema Boduah on 12th May, 2015. The interview lasted for forty minutes (40 mins.). The interview aimed at ascertaining whether the offers/services fetish priests/priestesses render to patronisers are with or without a fee.

it can be observed in the interview.

6.3 Telling What Happens on the Media Platforms

Many events occur on the various media platforms where fetish priests/priestesses showcase their power. Nevertheless, space will not permit discussions on everything that happen. However, if one pays particular attention to the visuals above, one is likely to grasp what happens. Generally, the host commences the programme with a brief introduction of the guest on the show. Following this, he engages his guest (henceforth, fetish priest/priestess) in a dialogue. Usually, the dialogue paves way for the fetish priest/priestess to inform viewers and listeners about his/her personality, capabilities, location, and phone contact details. Subsequently, the programme's host allows the fetish priest/priestess to showcase his/her power to viewers and listeners. In the case of television telecast unlike the radio-hosted programme where the programme's host narrates the proceedings that transpire in the studio to listeners, here (on the television), the fetish priest/priestess displays and empties either his/her magical box, or pot to viewers to observe. The fetish priest/priestess does this to clear the supposed doubt in the minds of viewers. S/he then closes the box, or pot whereas s/he incants magical words. One can confirm the use of the box and the pot in figures labelled **A**, **B**, **D** and **G (ii)**.

Generally, the incantations are accompanied by winnowing of powder all over the magical box, or pot. Nonetheless, it must be added that sometimes whistle blowing accompanies the powder that is winnowed. This is dependent on the kind of priest/priestess who is performing. In a space of thirty seconds or less, the fetish priest/priestess opens the box, or pot and dips one of his/her hands. S/he does that to empty the box, or pot's content. In Figure **G (ii)**, one can spot Nana Agradaa dipping her hand into the box to fetch its content after she had incanted some magical words, blew her whistle and winnowed her magical powder on her magical box. Generally, what the fetish priest/priestess displays is money. One can notice money spread on the floor in figure **A**. The money is of different denominations and origin. Usually, majority of the money is in the Ghana Cedi denomination whereas few are American Dollars, British Pounds Sterling, and Euro. The denominations in the Ghana Cedi range between fifty, twenty, ten and five Ghana Cedi notes. After the fetish priest/priestess has ended his/her performance, the programme's host ends the programme. In doing so, he craves the indulgence of interested viewers to pick the numbers that are displayed on the television screen to get in touch with his guest.

6.4 Some Scenes on Television

This section presents pictures of what the fetish priests/priestesses do on television. The pictures are important in the paper because of some of the following reason. Firstly, the pictures provide the reader an overview of what happens on the various media platforms. Secondly, the visuals will open up viewer-discussion on examining the message fetish priests/priestesses carry to the youth and children in Ghana. Nonetheless, I crave the indulgence and a pardon of the reader that some of the pictures may look blurring. This is because the researcher captioned the pictures on a television set at the time the respective priest/priestess was performing. For this reason, the ability to capture a stable image became a limitation.

Figure A



Nana Obange (a.k.a. King of Darkness) conjuring money from his magical box.

Figure B



Nana Bahumajuju chanting money from his pot

Figure C



Nana Nzema Boduah incanting spells to cause money to appear.

Figure D



Nana Mame Water (right) and son in an interaction with the TV Host presenter.

Figure E



Nana Adehunfo chanting money from his magical box.

Figure F



Original Believe Nana Ajoglojo telling viewers what he is capable of doing for people.

Figure G (i)



Nana Agradaa in an interview with the TV Host presenter.

G (ii)



Nana Agradaa chanting money from her magical box to be given to some anxious- looking youths in her house.

Figure (G iii)



Two young men presenting their gifts to Nana Agradaa after the latter had helped them to become rich.

7. Views of Respondents on the Topic under Discussion

This section presents in tables the data collected from five hundred respondents on the topic under discussion. The tables below provide different information. **Table 1** presents the biographic details of the respondents. **Tables 2, 3, 4** and **5** present the responses of respondents vis-à-vis the research questions that guided the study.

Table 1. Biographic Information of Respondents

Bio Data of Respondents	Number of Respondents	Corresponding Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	280	56
Female	220	44
Age Range		
18-30	350	70
31-40	60	12
41-50	40	8
51-60	-	-
61-70	50	10
Religious Affiliation		
Christian	220	44
Muslim	205	41
African Traditional Religion	40	8
Syncretic	35	7
Ethnicity		
Akan	220	44
Ewe	190	38
Ga/Dangme	80	16
Frafra	10	2
Social Status		
Parent	265	51.2
Teacher	250	50
Student	400	80
Rev. Minister	80	20
African Traditionalist	40	8
Imam	60	12

Table 2 Research Question 1

Research Question	Response	Number of respondents	Percentage	
a. Have you ever watched/listened to any fetish priests/priestesses hosted on a programme on any media platform before?	Yes	450	90	
	No	50	10	
b. If "Yes", from what exact source(s)? Please write the name of the source(s).	Categories of Response	Name of the exact source(s)	Number of respondents	Percentage
	Television	TV 3	170	34
		Visat 1	140	28
		TV Africa	50	10
		Adom TV	40	8
Radio	Metro TV	50	10	
	Peace FM	190	38	
	Otech FM	45	9	
Internet	Oboɔba FM	198	39.6	
	Adom FM	17	3.4	
c. How often would that be?	Categories of response	Number of respondents	Percentage	
	Daily	230	46	
	Weekly	190	38	
	Monthly	20	4	
	Once a while	10	2	
d. What is the name of the fetish priest/priestess you watched or listened to?	Response	Number of respondents	Percentage	
	Nana Kweku Bonsam	420	84	
	Nana Agyiri	95	19	
	Nana Oboanipa	340	68	
	Wulome Nii Bgelemfo	95	19	
	Nana Agradaa	430	86	
	Nana Nyamekye	95	19	
	Togbe Zewuze	341	68.2	
	Nana Maame Water	125	25	
	Nana Nzema Boduah	90	18	
Nana <i>Togbe</i> Kedinakpo	89	17.8		
e. What exactly caught your attention when you watched/listened to the fetish priests/priestesses on that media platform you have noted above?	Categories of responses	Lists of Responses	Number of Respondents	Percentage
	Respondents who listened to the fetish priest/priestesses on radio	i. Confidence at speech on Radio interview	245	54.4
		ii. Topic under discussion	350	78
		a. Making quick money	245	54.4
		b. gaining favour		
		c. acquiring spiritual protection		
	d. child bearing			
	e. securing employment	iii. Predicting the score line for a football game	245	54.4
	Respondents who watched the fetish priests/priestesses on TV, Internet, smart phones etc.	i. Appearance (scary dress)	250	56
		ii. Conjuring different currencies from nowhere	250	56
iii. Transforming blank paper sheet, and an egg into money		350	78	
iv. Display of multiples of phones numbers		345	77	
v. Predicting the score line for a football game		212	47	
vi. Claiming to know the where about of one Ghanaian hip-life music artiste who was reported to have drowned in water		341	76	
iv. Topic under discussion		400	89	
a. making quick money	400	89		
b. gaining favour				
c. acquiring spiritual protection				
d. child bearing				
e. securing employment				

Table 3 Research Question 2

Research Question	Categories of Response	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
In Ghana today, there are many TV/Radio programmes whereby fetish priests/priestesses are hosted to showcase their power and conjure money for viewers to patronise their services. a. Do you consider such TV/Radio programme(s) to have any positive/negative effects considering the youth and children in Ghana?	Positive effects	150	30
	Negative effects	300	60
b. Give a reason to your response	Positive effects	The programme: i. Helps the youth, children and some adults in Ghana to be guided in making rational choices as to the type of religion to belong (taking into consideration some of the basic beliefs and practices inherent in that religion of choice).	10
		ii. Displays and promotes the African religious heritage which has suffered opposition for the past decade.	120
		iii. Helps viewers to know the tricks and strategies of the various fetish priests/priestesses in Ghana. This knowledge will help the viewers to remain focus when they get into contact with them.	12
		iv. Helps viewers to appreciate the views, beliefs and practices of African Traditional religion so that the viewers can avoid passing value judgments about African Traditional religion.	4
		v. The practices and utterances of the fetish priests/priestesses are no different from some pastors who use the same media platform to showcase their worth.	4
c. Give a reason to your response	Negative effects	The programme: i. Has become a platform to entice the youth to acquiring money quickly without subscribing to hard work to earn a living	200
		ii. Encourages the youth to become lazy in the society	25
		iii. Promotes fraud, deception and the desire for charms among the youth to enable them to lure women and dupe people in the society	20
		iv. Encourages the practice of human sacrifice and ritual practices among the youth to enable them acquire their egoistic desires	10
		v. The daunting artefacts, utterances and the scary nature of the dresses the fetish priests/priestesses wear induces fear in people	25
		vi. Has the potential of discouraging majority of the youth from schooling since it is very difficult to earn employment after school in Ghana.	20

Table 4: Research Question 3

Research Question	Responses	Number of respondents	Percentage
What do you think can be done about the telecasts as far as the moral foundation of the youth and children in Ghana are concerned?	i. The programmes should be given an age limit and be telecasted late in the night for viewers	350	70
	ii. The programme should be replaced with educative youth programmes	400	80
	iii. The fetish priests/priestesses should rather clear the bad and derogatory remarks that A.T.R. has suffered rather than conjuring money and teaching people the easiest way of making ritual money	310	62
	iv. The fetish priests/priestesses should rather use the platform to encourage the Ghanaian populace to have a positive attitude towards work rather than teaching them the short cut in acquiring money	400	80
	v. The National Communication Authority and the media houses should be clear on what they stand for in view of the kind of programmes that are permitted to be telecasted.	340	68
	vi. The good aspect of traditional worship and the role of the fetish priests/priestesses must be made clear for the public to understand how they operate in A.T.R.	368	73.6

8. Discussions

This section of the paper analyses the data collected from the field. The analysis is guided by the research questions.

On research question one (1), the following were observed. The data suggest that majority of the respondents who are youth representing 90% of the total population have watched and listened to fetish priest/priestess related programmes on the various media platforms. This finding suggests that to very large degree, there is reason to maintain that the youth are glued to the programme. Furthermore, apart from the television channels the study purposively sampled, there was a list of different television channels that were discovered. It must be said that apart from the television telecast, some radio stations were involved in hosting the same programme. The internet (precisely, YouTube) was noted to be one of the sources where respondents noted to have watched the programme. Basing on these findings, one would not be far from right to suggest that fetish priest/priestess related programmes have gained popularity and wide coverage across the length and breadth of Ghana. Majority of the respondents representing 78% of the entire population indicated that the programme has a strong potential to attract people. This is evident in the magical performances and some of the utterances by the fetish priest/priestess on the various media platforms.

Research question two (2) revealed the positive and negative effects fetish priest/priestess related programmes have on the youth and children in Ghana. The minority of the respondents perceive nothing wrong with the programme. Nonetheless, one observes a paradox in the views they maintained. The majority, representing 60% of the total respondents held a contrary position. For them, the negative effects the programme has on the moral foundations of the youth and children in Ghana outweigh the positive effects. One can infer from the views presented on Table 3 that largely, fetish priest/priestess related programmes are not healthy as far as the moral foundations and future of the youth and children in Ghana are concerned. Table 4 contains suggestions of respondents on what should be done about the programme as far as the moral foundation and the future of the youth and children in Ghana are concerned. Some of the emerging views suggest that the programme should be telecasted late in the night to deny the youth access. Another view suggests that the programme's content should aim at educating people about African traditional religion, which has long suffered criticisms. Nonetheless, if we should go by these views, then, deductively there is reason to maintain that the respondents have observed that the programme has negative repercussions on the moral foundations of the youth and children in Ghana. Furthermore, it must be noted that suggesting a late telecast of the programme does not change anything. This is because the programme can be accessed by the youth on the internet platform at any time.

9. Conclusion

The paper set out to investigate into the effects fetish priest/priestess television and radio programmes have on the youth and children in Ghana. In doing so, the paper was very much concerned with the moral foundations and the future of the youth and children. The findings of the study suggest that fetish priest/priestess television and radio programmes are not healthy and educative enough for the youth and children in Ghana. This is because the programme has the potential to drive the youth into developing the desire for quick money, occult/magical practices, and social vices, which at the long run may ruin their lives and the society they live in. Secondly, the negative repercussion the programme is likely to impact on the youth and children's moral foundations outweigh its seeming positive effects. In this regard, the paper maintains that such a programme should be curtailed. In connection with the findings, the paper suggests to parents, guardians, teachers, and elders in society to be concerned about the decisions, and content the youth and children take and consume respectively in their daily lives. Moreover, the youth must be taught the right morals of the land. To the youth, they should not be money conscious, rather, be hard working so that they will be able to achieve their goals. Finally, the youth must take into cognisance the fact that nothing is earned in life on a silver platter. Every good and pleasurable property comes with its own price.

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