

Nigerianness and Misrepresentations of Names and Signatures: Should the Colonized adopt the English-Language Naming Conventions?

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Abstract

History has it that the British once colonized Nigeria, South Africa, and India amongst others. South Africa and India, to a very great extent, have standardized their naming system while Nigeria is yet to standardize its naming system even though it is a common practice for Nigerians to start with their surnames or last names. Name arrangement and misrepresentations have become a problem for most Nigerians and this has escalated to a national problem.

The work, therefore, adopts the quantitative method of investigation using questionnaires and interviews as instruments for data collection to get first-hand information from judicial workers and non-judicial workers alike. The responses received from the respondents were further descriptively analyzed to ascertain the truth of their assertions.

From the investigation carried out, the findings show that lack of consciousness and proper education, among other things, are largely responsible for name and signature misrepresentations in Nigeria. It is, therefore, recommend that the Nigerian government and principal stakeholders of the various organizations should organize sensitization programmes often. However, most importantly, Nigeria needs to standardize its naming system for proper placement and recognition in the world.

Keywords: Nigerianness, Name, Signature, Misrepresentation, Pattern

Introduction

“Naming can be considered a universal cultural practice, every human society in the world gives names to its newborn as tags, majorly as a means of identification; but how the names are given, the practices and rituals involved, and the interpretations attached to the names differ from society to society and culture to culture”

Agyekum, 2006:21

In 2009, somewhere in eastern Nigeria, a Professor of Philosophy, while addressing his postgraduate students remarked, “Do you know that Nigerians do not know how to write their names properly?”, “Do you know that Nigerians do not know how to sign correctly?” These questions sound funny but when evaluated objectively and critically, one can tell that what the professor said is the truth. A name is tied to every animate and inanimate objects. The names we bear reveal our identities and our personalities. Names are presuppositions of our existence and essence. Most names people bear have positive meanings and impacts. That is why when people act contrary to their names, it calls for serious questioning. For instance, someone bearing Mercy and that person is not merciful, Christian (Christ-like) and yet he is dubious, Brave, and yet he is fearful. Names also speak volumes of who we are and what are. Without mincing words, most Nigerians do not know the difference between first, middle, and last names or surnames.

Another area of concern is signature as seen in the way and manner Nigerians append their name (that is, sign) is worrisome. The error of misrepresenting names and signatures is not only committed by the uneducated but even the educated are equally guilty. By “the educated”, we mean those who can read and write, we mean professors, academic doctors, graduates, and all those with academic and career pursuits. Since Nigeria was colonized by the British and schooled in British subjects such as reading, writing, spelling, grammar, and basic arithmetic, the right thing ought to be done, the status quo should be maintained as far as name and signature are concerned. However, there is room for innovations and new ideas as Africans and Nigerians in particular, can come up with their own nomenclature and signature endorsement which will be recognized worldwide as time goes on. In other words, standardization of its naming system or pattern. For instance, Pidgin English is commonly used in Nigerian music and movie industries and is now recognized worldwide (Oghuvbu, Gberebie & Oni, 2022).

British also colonized India and South Africa but these have standardized their naming system. Under their laws, what validates a contract is not a written signature per se but a legal agreement between the parties. Kidambi (2008) asserts that the English-language naming convention varies in India due to the Indian variety of naming systems. Many Indians in the South use caste titles such as Iyer, Rao, etc. Some others use their father’s given name in place of their surname. A few use the ancestral village as their surname (Kidambi, 2018). In the same vein, Sharma & Sharma (2005) submit that Bengali names follow the first name-middle name-surname pattern. All this boils down to the standardization of naming patterns. However, Kidambi (2018) advised all editors and authors to adhere to the English-language naming convention to avoid problems associated with attributing, citing, and indexing. A good number of South Africans of European ancestry name their children according to European tradition, which is the first name, middle name, and surname pattern. But those affiliated with the Zulu tribal group do have a patronymic in their name e.g. “Shaka”, which means “son of”. This, in a way, signifies social consciousness, a patriotic act (Do & Ngo, 2023).

Thus, the aim of this work is to investigate name and signature misrepresentations in Nigeria and to proffer possible solutions to the problem. The objectives are as follows:

- i. To identify the correlation between name and signature.
- ii. To identify Nigerianness as a determinant of name and signature misrepresentations.
- iii. To identify the legal implications of name and signature misrepresentations.

Furthermore, the work will be of great relevance, especially to the countries that were once colonized by superpowers. Being independent is to be free from neocolonial mentality, and to get rid of every trace of neocolonialism in every aspect of existence and essence as aspiring greatness should be their watchword.

Conceptual Framework

This work is anchored on the key concepts of Nigerianness, name, and signature. As such, a descriptive analysis is carried out to avoid ambiguity and to further understand the subject matter. Nigerianness, though ambiguous, has both good and bad connotations. According to *Wiktionary* (2022),

Nigerianness means “the quality of being Nigerian.” This perspective is too myopic and generic as the distinguishing qualities of being Nigerian are not clearly stated. They could be bad (unpatriotic) or good (law-abiding, optimistic). Nigerianness is the Nigerian way of doing things and is also seen in the misrepresentations of name and signature. Nigerians go by the names they bear of which some are Western while others are African. Some Nigerians bear both Western and African names depending on the kind of orientation they have. Whether Western or African, names have meanings; they are projections of one’s belief system, ideologies, and culture; projections of one’s future and destiny. Imoh (2021) asserts that names are “important indices for reconfiguration of identity and ethnicity”. According to Kuschel (1988), names and people’s sociocultural lives are connected because institutions do not exist or develop in a cognitive vacuum. This is why in African societies, names are given utmost recognition as they signify one’s identity (Chucks-Orji, 1972). As such, a person can deny his or her origin, family, or household because the person is an embodiment of other identities, amongst other things. Little wonder, Darmayanti & Bahauddin (2020) conceive a house (place of abode, family) as a vernacular architecture, a display of cultural and traditional values.

Mensah and Offong (2013) opine that names define both individual identity and group identity. In Nigeria for instance, through names, one can easily identify a Yoruba person from an Igbo person and vice versa. The *UK Guide to Names and Naming Practices* (2006) cites unique characteristics associated with the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria namely, Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa. It submits that Yoruba and Igbo names are often abbreviated- “Tai” for Taiwo and “Emeka” for Chukwuemeka while Hausa names are heavily influenced by Islam. An example is Abdulmalik. In this regard, names are seen as a valuable source of information and they also have religious implications. According to an Igbo proverb, “When a person is given a name, the spirits accept it” (cited in Fitzpatrick, 2012). A name is naturally a story or history in African culture (Onumajuru, 2016; Mbonu, 2010). A name represents the essential events or circumstances surrounding individuals at the time of their birth as seen in some Igbo names such as Ezè- king, chief; Dike- courageous person; Ikechukwu- God’s power and Adaaka- daughter of wealth (Onumajuru, 2016).

Igboin (2014) argues that African names transmit intrinsic relevance for the bearer and the community as a whole. For him, African names imply an intimate connection between the named and the name (Igboin, 2014). According to Ansa & Okon (2014), in naming, a people’s belief system is expressed. Naming is pragmatic, functional, declarative, and identifiable (Odebode, 2011). In his *Anthills of the Savannah*, Achebe uses four naming strategies (official names, first names, nicknames, and institutional/titular names) to represent the major ethnic groups in Nigeria (cited in Odebunmi, 2008). Ndĩgĩrĩgĩ (2015:191) opines that “Ngũgĩ’s intentional choice of semantically potent and socially loaded names in his novels aid in personifying the social realities he portrays”. Mbonu (2010) asserts that a personal name serves as a place-holder, social location, and a part of belonging in most African societies. Speaking of appellations as names, Abiodun & Olaogun (2012) write:

“In Yoruba culture, appellations serve as a source of defining and evaluating a person. They also have the power to suggest or predict the possible behavior of the bearer. They are not given at birth rather they are given later in life based on observed characteristic features, behavior, or traits (positive or negative). For instance, Ajófóyìnbó- a professional dancer”

Cited in Abiodun & Olaiye, 2022:50

A name, according to Hornby, “is a word or words that a particular person is known by” (2006:972). According to the *BBC English Dictionary*, a name is “the word or words that you use to identify something be it a person, thing, or place” (1992:764). It could also mean the reputation of someone or something. To Olatunji et al. (2015), a name is a term that distinguishes an individual or a thing from other individuals or things. *Chambers 20th Dictionary* extended the meaning of a name to “that by which a person or a thing is known or called, a designation, reputation, fame, celebrity, family or clan” (1983:1205). A name could be a first name or forename, middle name, and last name, or family name or surname. According to Hornby (2006), titles such as Mr, Mrs, Miss, Professor, Doctor, Reverend, President, and Chief are not the same as

names but they are important aspects of naming since they accord respect to the bearer of the name. As such, titles can be attached to surnames. For example, Professor King and Mr. Ken.

Another area of interest is signature from the Latin root *signare*, which means “to sign”. Signature is “your name as you usually write it” (Hornby, 2006:1367). According to the *BBC English Dictionary*, a signature is “your name, written in your characteristic way, often at the end of a document to indicate that you wrote the document or that you agree with what it says” (1992:1084). *Chambers 20th Dictionary* depicts signature as “a signing, a stamp, a signed name” (1983:1205). Self-concept is socio-culturally expressed by name (Olatunji, et al., 2005). Self-concept is “an embodiment of cognitive and affective components. The cognitive component includes a given collection of identities while the affective component is self-esteem” (Stryker, 1980). Gecas & Burke (1995) submit that self-concept is a result of the reflected cultural definitions of members (cited in Olatunji et al., 2005). Therefore, in this work, “Nigerianness” is taken to mean “the Nigerian way of doing things”, “name” is “someone’s identity” and “signature” is “someone’s name”.

Literature Review

This study is predicated on some remarkable theoreticians’ postulations of names. Starting with the descriptivist theory of names championed by Gottlob Frege and Bertrand Russell, a name depicts a description, it refers to “an object because of the name’s association with a description of that object. That is, a name is best seen as an abbreviated form of that description” (cited in Stokes, 2011:131). In other words, the descriptivist theory holds that the meaning of a proper name is identical to the descriptions associated with it by speakers, while their referents are determined to be the objects that satisfy these descriptions (Kripke, 1972). Russell holds that an ordinary proper name is known by description while a logical proper name is known by acquaintance. Kripke rejected the descriptivist theory of names and proposed his theory of direct reference which is causal. Kripke submits that a name designates the same individual in all possible worlds. That is to say, a name is simply a “tag attached to its referent and has no descriptive content whatsoever” (cited in Stokes, 2011:132). Further, Kripke argues that names are transmitted through a “casual chain”. A typical example is a naming ceremony where the name of a newborn baby passes from the namers (baby’s parents) to all those who witnessed the occasion as well as everyone else who uses the name. Thus, the name of the named is vital to the named in every possible world.

Another theory of direct reference is tag theory of names proposed by Ruth Barcan Marcus. The theory holds that tags are used to refer to an object, which is the bearer of the name. Marcus (1961) conceives proper names as tags having no linguistic meaning beyond their reference. Contemporary theorists such as Kent Bach and Jerrold Katz developed metalinguistic descriptive theory which conceives proper names as semantically associated with name-properties (Gray, 2018). This theory is of different varieties such as metalinguistic predicativism and referentialism. The former holds that names are predicates in the lexicon (Sloat, 1969; Burge, 1973; Bach, 2002; Geurts, 1997) while the latter opines that names are context-sensitive individual-denoting expressions (Recanati, 1997; Maier, 2009). Burge (1973) argues that a name is predicated true of individuals who have been given the name in a socially appropriate way. According to Geurts (1997), a person can acquire a name by any of a variety of different socially conditional naming practices such as baptisms, birth certificates, etc. Pelczar & Rainsburg (1998) supported a dubbing approach, a speech act where a name acquires a referent. On the practice approach to name-bearing properties, Loar (1980) avers that the distribution of naming properties is determined by practices of using a name to refer to an individual.

A myriad of scholars contributed to the discourse on the naming system in Africa. Mbarachi & Igwenyi (2018) adopted “anthroponomastics” to examine names in four selected Nigerian novels, viz. Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, *Anthills of the Savannah*, Chimamanda’s *Hibiscus*, and *Half of a Yellow Sun*. They submit that names, language, and culture are intertwined, a reflection of individual and group identities (Mbarachi & Igwenyi, 2018). In other words, through names, people negotiate their self-identities

within the constraints of social circumstances. On their part, Ansa & Okon (2014) investigated the Efik naming system, especially personal names. They adopted a quantitative method of investigation as data were collected from some schools churches' registers and revealed that the Efik community sees personal names as individuals' identities and naming ceremony reveals the socio-cultural, political, and historical importance of the bearer. According to Mbiti (1969), all African names are meaningful and they signify the bearer's personality and character. Mbiti believes that "the name is the person, and many names are often descriptive of the individual, particularly names acquired as the person grows" (1969:119). Further, Mbiti, holds that there are no family names in traditional Africa except in a few instances because individuals bear their names. So, the British (colonialists) were responsible for the adoption of in Africa because of its compatibility with the British law of property and inheritance. In this vein, Ayandele (1969) argues that the Yoruba so much believe in the sacredness of one's father's name (i.e. family name), and as such, no younger members dares to bear or mention the name even after a father's death.

According to Magesa (1997:89), "names preserve memories of historical events just as they represent current family or personal reality, or replay the circumstances of birth". Names are both negative and positive. The logic behind positive names is for the bearer to enjoy a full life while that of negative names is for deterrence or to avoid unpleasant reoccurrence (Magesa, 1997). Ayantayo (2010) disagrees with the claim that names determine the bearer's destiny or status in life. For him, "there is no logical connection between the name a person bears and the fortunes that attend with one's life" (Ayantayo, 2010) reason being that no parents would give evil names to their children. Ayantayo (2010) cites "Abiola" a Yoruba name, which means "born into wealth" and argues that many bearing the name are not as wealthy or famous as the late MKO Abiola. Igboin (2014) faulted Ayantayo's position by asserting that: (i) Parents can name their children by their present condition. (ii) Parents can name their children after a successful person out of admiration. (iii) A person can name his child after a friend as a seal to their friendship.

Igbo names have meanings and are impactful. On this note, Udechukwu & Nnyigide (2016) submit that the rationale behind Igbo names is based on past experiences (pleasant or unpleasant), life expectancy, divine appreciation, praise to God, man or nature, traditional beliefs, market days, and the reincarnated person. Adopting functionalist theory, Faloju & Fadairo (2020) argue that in the traditional Yoruba society, names are the guardians of culture, they are determinants of one's destiny, a portrait of one's identity and character, and a deterrence of bad character. They argue that the originality of Yoruba names in contemporary time have been tampered with losing their forms and meaning caused by the attachment of nicknames and foreign religious (Christian and Islam) names (Faloju & Fadairo, 2020). For example, the Yoruba name "Babátúnde" (father arrives again), the short form is Túnde (arrive again) while its nickname is "Tunds" which is meaningless. Thus, bothered by the threat of modernization to the Yoruba values of names, Faloju & Fadairo (2020) call for the restoration and promotion of Yoruba traditional names.

The above scholars have shown that there is a correlation between a name and the bearer to a large extent. They have also shown how important names are to the bearers (individuals) and the society at large. We, therefore, lend our voice to their findings as we take a step further to provide quantitative evidence for the correlation between name and signature. That not only name but signature also signifies one's identity and approval to legal deeds. A step further to show how Nigerians misrepresent the names they bear and the signatures they append instead of standardizing their naming system as they did to their music and movie industries which had gained global recognition.

Research Methodology

Both quantitative and qualitative techniques were adopted in this study to ascertain the real reasons why Nigerians write and sign the way they do. Under the quantitative technique, an open-ended and closed-ended questionnaire was distributed among 200 Nigerians. The data collected were analyzed descriptively and statistically (the use of frequencies, percentages, and Chi-square tests). Under the qualitative technique, an interview was used as a research instrument. Four judicial workers were selected from middle belt Nigeria because of proximity. The interview was conducted on a one-on-one encounter without a voice or

video recording as pleaded by the interviewees and their responses were properly written down, descriptively analyzed, and documented. The interviewees were asked the following questions:

- a. Does the change of name have any correlation with name arrangement?
- b. is named arrangement an issue in the court affidavit?
- c. Does the court pay attention to name arrangement?
- d. How often are people corrected in name arrangement in court?
- e. Does the name arrangement have any legal implications? If yes, what are they?
- f. What do you think about the disarrangement of name and signature among Nigerians?
- g. What is your opinion on the misuse of surname, first name, and other name?
- h. What are the implications of uneducated and uninformed typesetting workers on the arrangement of names?

Experiential approach was also adopted in the study since the researchers are Nigerians who understand the Nigerian terrain and the age long problem of the misrepresentations of names and signatures in Nigeria.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Bio Demographics
Source: Author, 2023

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Dependent Variables	N-200	%
Gender		
Male	113	56.5
Female	87	43.5
Total	200	100
Marital Status		
Single	178	89
Married	22	11
Divorced	0	0
Widowed	0	0
Total	200	100
Social Status		
Youth	191	95.5
Elder	9	4.5
Total	200	100
Work Status		
Student	179	89.5
Applicant	5	2.5
Civil Servant	10	5
Business	6	3
Retiree	0	0
Total	200	100

Table 1 above gives a descriptive analysis of the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Starting from gender, 113(56.5%) are male and 87(43.5%) are female. 178(89%) are single, 22 (11%) are married, none of the respondents are divorced or widowed. 191(96.5%) are youth and 9(4.5%) are elders. 179(89.5%) are students, 5(2.5%) are applicant, 10(5%) are civil servants, 6(3%) are business people and none is a retiree.

Analysis of Objectives

To address objectives one and two, respondents were asked the following questions, and their responses were explained below:

Table 2: Correlation between Name and Signature

Source: Author, 2023

No	Questions	Responses			Total
		Yes	No	Undecided	
1	Are you aware that surname is last name?	143 (71.5%)	50 (25%)	7 (3.5%)	200 (100%)
2	Are you aware that a surname is a family name?	187 (93.5%)	8 (4%)	5 (2.5%)	200 (100%)
3	Are you aware that surname is not first name?	160 (80%)	36 (18%)	4 (2%)	200 (100%)
4	Are you aware that name is signature and signature is name?	136 (68%)	60 (30%)	4 (2%)	200 (100%)

Table 2 above gives a descriptive analysis of the correlation between name and signature. 143(71.5%) of the respondents responded that they are aware that surname is last name while 50(25%) responded no, and only 7(3.5%) said neither yes nor no. 187(93.5%) know that surname is family name, 8(4%) are not aware while 5(2.5%) are neutral. 160(80%) know that surname is not a first name, 36(18%) are not aware that surname is not a first name, and only 4(2%) say neither yes nor no. 136(68%) say that they are aware that name and signature are the same, 60(30%) say they are not aware and 4(2%) say neither yes nor no.

Table 3: Nigerianness as a Determinant of Name and Signature Misrepresentations

Source: Author, 2023

No	Questions	Responses			Total
		Yes	No	Undecided	
1	Have you ever been educated on the use of surname?	151 (75.5%)	46 (23%)	3 (1.5%)	200 (100%)
2	Have you misused surname for first name?	96 (48%)	99 (49.5%)	5 (2.5%)	200 (100%)
3	Do you have a contrary opinion to name arrangement- surname, first name, and middle name?	73 (36.5%)	116 (58%)	11 (5.5%)	200 (100%)
4	Is there any time you change your name?	26 (13%)	171 (85.5%)	3 (1.5%)	200 (100%)
5	Is there any time you change your signature?	57 (28.5%)	141 (70.5%)	2 (1%)	200 (100%)
6	If your response is YES to question 3 above, what are your reasons?	Misrepresentations			
7	If your response is YES to questions 4 and 5 above, give reasons for changing your name and/or signature	Family decision, misspelling in name, and adoption purposes.			

Table 3 above gives the descriptive analysis of Nigerianness as a determinant of name and signature misrepresentations. 151(75.5%) of the respondents responded that they have been educated on the use of the surname, 46(23%) responded that they have never been educated on the use of the surname while 3(1.5%) said neither yes nor no. 96(48%) say they have misused surname for first name, 99(49.5%) responded no and 5(2.5%) say neither yes nor no. 73(36.5%) say they do not have a contrary opinion to name arrangement- surname, first name, and middle, 116(58%) say they do while 11(5.5%) say neither yes

nor no. 26(13%) say they once changed their name, 171(85.5%) say they had never changed their name and 3(1.5%) say neither yes nor no. 57(28.5%) say they once changed their signature before, 141(70.5%) say they had never changed their signature before while 2(1%) say neither yes nor no. 73(36.5%) of the respondents considered a name arrangement in the form of surname, first name, and middle name as a misrepresentation especially when the surname is not followed by a comma. Family decisions, misspellings in name, and adoption purposes are the reasons some of the respondents had to change their names and signatures.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the process of this study:

Hypothesis 1

H₀: There is no significant correlation between name and signature.

H₁: There is a significant correction between name and signature.

The above-stated hypotheses were tested with Pearson Chi-Square as follows:

Expected frequency is $\sum O = 1+2+3+\dots$

Whether there is a significant correlation between name and signature.

$$fe = \frac{\sum (143+50+7)}{3}$$

$$fe = \frac{200}{3}$$

$$fe = 66.66$$

$$x^2 =$$

Table 4: Chi-Square Tests

Source: Author, 2023

Fo	Fe	Fo-Fe	(Fo-Fe) ²	$\frac{(Fo - Fe)^2}{Fe}$
143	66.66	76.34	5828	87
50	66.66	-16.6	276	4
7	66.66	-59.66	3559	53
				$X^2 = 144$

X² tab n-1 at 5% significance

3-1 under 0.05

Therefore, x² tab = 5.99

Under 0.5

X² Cal = 144

Decision Rule

The decision rule states that if the calculated value is more than the table value, reject the null hypothesis (H₀), and accept the alternative hypothesis (H₁). But where the table value is greater than the calculated value, accept the null hypothesis (H₀). Thus, the tested hypothesis shows that there is a significant correlation between name and signature since the calculated (X²) chi-square is more than the x² table value.

Hypothesis 2

H₀: Nigerianness is not a determinant of name and signature misrepresentations.

H₁: Nigerianness is a determinant of name and signature misrepresentations.

The above-stated hypotheses were tested with Chi-Square as follows:

On whether Nigerianness is a determinant of name and signature misrepresentation

$$fe = \frac{\sum (151+46+3)}{3}$$

$$fe = \frac{200}{3}$$

$$fe = 66.66$$

$$X^2 = \frac{(fo-fe)^2}{fe}$$

$$x^2 =$$

Table 5: Chi-Square Tests
Source: Author, 2023

Fo	Fe	Fo-Fe	(Fo-Fe) ²	$\frac{(Fo - Fe)^2}{Fe}$
151	66.66	84.34	7113	107
46	66.66	-20.66	427	6
3	66.66	-63.66	4053	61
				X ² = 174

X² tab n-1 at 5% significance
3-1 under 0.05
Therefore, x² tab = 5.99
Under 0.5
X² = 174

Decision Rule

The tested hypothesis shows that Nigerianness is a determinant of name and signature misrepresentations since the calculated (X²) chi-square is more than the x² table value.

Analysis of Objective 3

Akinwale (2019) condemns the illegal and criminal activities of the issuance of affidavits by touts. Sani (2021) reported that despite the fair cost of obtaining affidavits in the different courts of Nigeria, a lot of Nigerians still prefer getting affidavits from illegal agents or touts at higher prices court reason being that the touts and their official collaborators do bypass checks and the compulsory need for a police extract or report. Nonetheless, any form of affidavit hawking is condemnable by law (Kunle, 2021).



Fig. 1: Typists and touts hustling for customers at Agodi-Gate, Ibadan
Source: Akinwale, 2019

Therefore, due to how typists and touts have debased the act of obtaining an affidavit for a change of name by proxy, some judicial workers were interviewed.

Table 6: Interviewed Questions for Judicial Workers
Source: Author, 2023

No	Questions	Responses
1	Does the change of name have any correlation with name arrangement?	Affirmative
2	Is name arrangement an issue in the court affidavit?	Affirmative
3	Does the court pay attention to name arrangement?	Affirmative
4	Does the name arrangement have any legal implications? If yes, what are they?	Affirmative as surnames are written in full.
5	How often are people corrected in name arrangement in court?	Very often
6	What do you think about the disarrangement of name and signature among Nigerians?	National concern
7	What is your opinion on the misuse of surname, first name, and other name?	National concern
8	What are the implications of uneducated and uninformed typesetting workers on the arrangement of names?	Lack of education, loss of job opportunities, prosecution, dismissal from work, and denial of government grants.

Findings and Discussion

The hypotheses tested above revealed that:

1. There exists a significant correlation between a name and a signature. This supports the initial claim that name is signature and signature is name.
2. Nigerianness is a determinant of name and signature misrepresentations.

The interviewees' responses are quite informative and interesting. That:

1. There is a correlation between change of name and name arrangement.
2. Name arrangement is an issue in the court affidavit.
3. The court pays attention to name arrangement.
4. Name arrangement has legal implications. That surnames are not supposed to be abbreviated to avoid misrepresentations. To this effect, a correction requires an oath of affidavit.
5. People are often corrected in name arrangements in court.
6. Disarrangement of name and signature is common among Nigerians due to poor educational background, and lack of proper enlightenment amongst others.
7. The misuse of a name is an error that must be corrected.
8. The illegality of obtaining court affidavits from fake or unauthorized judicial workers has legal penalties such as prosecution and imprisonment, dismissal from work, denial of government grants, and freezing of bank account(s) if need be, amongst other things.

Based on the above analysis, our findings are:

1. The disarrangement of name and signature is very common to Nigerians.
2. Nigerians often start with their family or surname first without any justification for it.
3. Most Nigerians are not conscious of name arrangement.
4. Most Nigerians are not conscious of signature representation.
5. Most Nigerians are yet to know the negative implications of the misuse of names and signatures.
6. Poor educational background, misplacement of priorities, prejudices, pride, wrong associations, religious influence, and stagnant knowledge are some of the reasons for the disarrangement of names and signatures in Nigeria.
7. Nigerianness (negative attitude) is a major contributing factor to name and signature misrepresentations.

Experiential Discussions of Name and Signature Misrepresentations

In the case of names, those specialized in education do write their names correctly. They are exposed to the way names should be written in a standard way. A Nigerian may bear more than two names

of which one is Western and the other African. Some Nigerian names are all African and they do connote African meanings. Those bearing at least three African names tried to maintain, promote, and defend their cultural heritage, which is not a bad thing. For instance, most Chinese people and Indians do bear their national names as they are proud of their national identities. Nigerians, bearing foreign names do so as a result of religious and Western influence (Oni, et al., 2021). Names such as John, King, Solomon, Harris, and Bill among others are not African names. Nevertheless, whether the names are Western or not, they are supposed to be arranged in order of recognition. If two names, it should be first name and last name. If three, first name, middle name, and last name. For instance, in the names, Ekele Ojochide Deborah, Ndubisi Chika John, and Haruna Shehu Shagari. The names Ekele, Ndubisi, and Haruna were wrongly represented as first names. Ojochide, Chika, and Shehu were wrongly represented as middle names while Deborah, John, and Shagari were wrongly represented as surnames. Another semantic error committed by Nigerians, especially those with three names, is seen in the abbreviation of either the second name or the last name—for example, Adekunle O. Bayo and Ade Ola B.

The way and manner Nigerians append their names on official documents is a thing of concern and is worse than name writing. Even those who specialize in education are not exempted from this error too. For instance, banks in Nigeria do take details of customers' transactions in the register especially when there is too much crowd and when there is poor network. But you will be shocked to see that in a day, week, month, or year, none of the bank customers signed correctly on their names in the bank register. Signatures of Nigerians are written in style and they are graphic. But these signatures have been eulogized by Nigerians with exclamation remarks such as “powerful”, and “second to none” among others. These signatures look pleasing to the eyes but are complicated and not readable. There are two main reasons responsible for the erroneous signatures committed by Nigerians. First, Nigerians believe that the money in their bank account can be stolen, that their signatures can be forged, or can easily be impersonated if their signatures are written simply.

According to Madison (2023), signature forging is a crime committed when a person signs another party's name or alters a document to commit fraud or deceive others. Second, most Nigerians are religiously inclined, and this explains why some signatures contain religious objects or symbols such as a cross, moon, and star. These errors are seen in academic and official certificates and awards. To worsen the situation is the case of some signatories signing without indicating their names. Assuming a fictitious name Christopher Chika with the signature below:

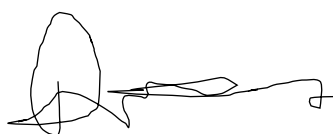


Fig. 2: Signature
Source: Author, 2023

From the above, the signature of Christopher Chika (Signatory) does not indicate the name, Christopher or Chika but rather meaningless and unreadable letters and contour lines.

A name is “one of the important means of communicating one's mind” (Oladipupo, 2014). Communication involves a proper understanding of the meaning of what is said or written down. As such, there are two standard ways of writing names: First, first name, and last name (for two names). For example, Christopher Chika. But for three names, first name, middle name, and last name. For example, Christopher Ike Chika. The second way is surname/last name (with a comma), first name, and middle name—for example, Chika, Christopher Ike. The idea of having abbreviated names in formal applications and documents is not proper. For instance, in the name, Godwin Ola A, “A” could mean Alice, Ade, Allison, Anthony, Adebayo, and Andrew among others. But what about the case of some authors abbreviating their first names on the front cover of published books? Yes, some authors do indeed abbreviate their first names

on published books but they write their names in full on the back cover (contains the author's profile and book information) of the same book. So, the right thing needs to be done in signature representation as well.

A signature simply means your name. There are two basic features of a signature: First, it must be clear, distinct, and readable. Most signatures of Nigerians are graphically designed, full of contour lines and cancellations. A cancellation, according to Hornby (2006), is "something that has been canceled; the fact of making something no longer valid". Cancellation is striking out what was written down reason being that it is wrong. So, how can a person after writing his name, then cancel it; meaning that it was wrongly written. A signature is clear, distinct, and readable means that every letter word therein is easily identified. It should not be the case of someone guessing what each letter represents. For instance, on the naira note of Nigeria, the signatures of the CBN Governor, Godwin Emefiele and Director of Currency Operations, Ahmed Umar are clear, distinct, and readable. They do not contain contour lines and cancellations nor religious objects or symbols. A person may not necessarily sign the way Emefiele and Umar did as first and middle names can be abbreviated while the last name is written in full. But the most important thing is that the signature of the signer must be clear, distinct, and readable.

The second feature of a signature is that, it must be universally recognized (that is, universal recognition). When you see some signatures, you begin to ask whose signatures are these since they are meaningless and communicate nothing meaningful. It is not a must to know the signer or signatory in person before you can confirm the identity of the person. Anywhere you see the person's signature, you will know it belongs to the person (signer) as evident in the case of CBN Governor, Emefiele and Director of Currency Operations, Umar.

When exposed to the truth on how name and signature should be written, three classes of Nigerians do react differently, viz. the arguing Nigerians, the unconcerned Nigerians, and the corrigible Nigerians. Most Nigerians belong to either the arguing camp or the unconcerned camp and only a few Nigerians belong to the corrigible camp.

The arguing Nigerians are incorrigible and they get offended when faced with the truth. They argue blindly and are unwilling to accept the truth; not ready to change their wrong perspectives of name and signature. The arguing Nigerians can be likened to the prisoners described in Plato's "allegory or myth of the cave" (Lewis, 1970) where they take the shadows on the wall for real things instead of the possessors of the shadows. The ignorance of the arguing Nigerians can also be likened to Francis Bacon's idols of the tribe (deceit of the senses) or idols of the cave (errors arising from one's education and temperament) (Omoregbe, 1991; Stokes, 2011). In 2018, somewhere in Western Nigeria, a lecturer while telling his students how names and signatures should be written, a good number of the students reacted negatively. They vehemently refused to accept the truth (Olu-Owolabi, Gberevbie & Abasilim, 2021). They insisted on what they had already known to be true. Then one of the students who happened to have traveled abroad (in a Western country) some time ago, intervened on the matter. The student told her course mates to listen to their lecturer because she once had a personal experience abroad where she went. There, she signed a document wrongly and her attention was drawn to it. She was told that what she signed had no meaning and that it did not in any way reflect her name. Since then, she had to change her signature. And when the student finished, her course mates became calm and convinced.

The unconcerned Nigerians at first, will show interest when corrected but it ends there because the truth of name and signature representations is the least of their problems. They have so many things to worry or think about, certainly not how names and signatures should be written. The negative character of both the arguing and the unconcerned Nigerians is not found in the corrigible Nigerians. They are ever ready to learn and very delighted to have known the truth and to correct their wrong. As earlier mentioned, the two major reasons why Nigerians sign the way they sign were: First, that the money in their bank account should not be stolen. Second, their signatures should not be easily forged. These reasons are very myopic and unacceptable. As such, counter-claims to the aforesaid erroneous claims on signature are as follows:

i. A criminal (forger or internet fraudster) does not necessarily need to forge the signature of an account holder before he can steal the account holder's money. All he needs to do is to have access to the account holder's transaction pins or passwords. In the case where the criminal has the withdrawal slip or book of the account holder, and he had forged the account holder's signature, the bank official will first verify the account holder's information before disbursing any fund to the said customer. But in the case of doubt, an arrest will be carried out or the request of the imposter (criminal) will be declined.

ii. With technological advancement nowadays, no signature cannot be forged.

iii. It is good for signatories to always have backup files (soft or hard copies) of any official document they append their names on for reference purposes and to avoid victimization.

Recommendations

Our recommendations, therefore, are:

1. There is a need for public and one-on-one sensitization/enlightenment programmes by Nigerian educational institutions, teachers, and facilitators to work on the mindset of Nigerians in correcting name and signature misrepresentations.
2. Just like the standardization of Pidgin English in her music and movie industries, Nigeria should employ the same in its naming system for global recognition.

Conclusion

A name signifies one's identity and it correlates with a signature. A misrepresentation of one's name and signature is a misrepresentation of one's identity, which may attract legal sanctions. Nigerianness is a major contributing factor to name and signature misrepresentations.

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