Consumer Identity & Nigerian Wedding Rituals: A Blended Netnography Approach

By

Ladipo Olakunle Fagbola

Ph.D. Thesis   2019

Consumer Identity & Nigerian Wedding Rituals: A Blended
Netnography Approach

Ladipo Olakunle Fagbola

Salford Business School

The University of Salford, United Kingdom

Submitted in Partial Fulfilment for the Requirements of

The award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, January 2020

Declaration

I, Ladipo Olakunle Fagbola, at this moment declare that this work presented in this thesis was carried out by me. Any ideas, thoughts or quotations from other work found in the literature, published or otherwise, are fully acknowledged in accordance to the standard reference practices of The University of Salford, Greater Manchester.

Sign   Date

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Acknowledgements

Glossary

GWW	**Global white wedding** is "*a marriage [wedding] ritual consisting of a bride in a white dress, a ceremony with processional and vows, a celebratory reception and often a honeymoon*".
MRS	"**Market Research Society** *is the world's leading research association. It is for everyone with professional equity in market, social and opinion research …and in business intelligence, market analysis, customer insight and consultancy.*"
NL	**Nairaland.com**, Nigeria's largest online (self-moderated) public forum.
SI	**Symbolic interactionism** a strand of interpretivism that focuses on social interaction with specific emphasis on the processes by which participants interpret their social reality and actions. Emphasised by the philosophical position that all human behaviour is a form of social interaction

Abstract

(Global) White wedding rituals is the chosen consumption sphere for this study due to its preference for intense consumption of symbolic artefacts and its global reach. The materialistic tendency of the global white wedding allows for its infiltration and deterritorialised usage in most local wedding rituals. Nigeria was the preferred research site due to her prominent cosmopolitan tendencies and large consumer market, rife with Nigerian and non-Nigerian consumer goods. In particular, Nigerian wedding rituals were explored due to their proximity to the global white wedding and concentration of conspicuous consumption. Methodologically, a blended Netnography was applied, to collect and analyse online and offline data to illuminate the interaction of global white wedding consumer culture with Nigerian weddings. Here, thematic analysis was applied, uncovering the paths where Nigerian culture mixes, resists and elaborates on (global) white wedding consumer culture.

The findings indicate a complex use of wedding rituals at performing, negotiating and maintaining multiple identities including consumer and ethno-religious identities. Bridal identity, a globally recognisable consumer identity was performed within Nigerian wedding rituals. However, its expression was mostly localised, with traditional institutions of family and religion playing an outsized role in its expression. Contrary to the typical bridal identity that is market driven but sprinkled with ethno-religious aesthetics, in Nigeria, wedding vendors were largely absent and, in some cases, they actively undermined the bride. Further, the research concluded that Nigerian bridal identity is typically embedded within religious and familial guidelines. There are multiple occurrences of creativity, whereby, brides synthesise their personal aesthetic with traditional norms within said guidelines. When the bride's preferences go beyond prescribed expectations, the traditional institutions of family and religion re-assert their dominance over the ritual, resulting in a strained and unpredictable bridal identity.

1. Introduction

This chapter provides an overview and rationale for the thesis. It begins with a background to the thesis, introducing some of the key concepts that will be expanded on in subsequent chapters. Here, overarching themes and ideas are illustrated, focusing on the interaction between liminal spaces and consumer identity. This is followed by providing a brief contextual illustration of Nigerian weddings, drawing from a mixture of academic and non-academic sources. The purpose is to present a suitable introduction for readers who might not be familiar with Nigerian weddings. The next sub-section describes the rationale behind the study, here, the theoretical thrust of the thesis, liminal consumption, is presented. This is followed by an outline of the thesis aim and research questions, supported by a summary of the thesis' theoretical contributions. The chapter is then concluded with a thesis overview.

1.1. Background

Liminality is an anthropological concept popularised by Victor Turner (1969) based on Van Gennep's (in Bell, 1997) work on how social transitions occur. The original concept by Van Gennep (in Bell, 1997) assumed that for an individual or collective to change its identity, meaning and/or social position, it must first separate from its original form, enter a place of ambiguity and then re-integrate into its new and preferred self-conceptualisation. This place of ambiguity is where Turner (1969) focused his exposition and termed it a liminal space. However, decades later, other authors are moving conversations about liminality into uncharted territory. Tuner (1969) emphasised physical separation from the original space as important for liminality, in recent times, liminality has taken an ideological turn (Noble & Walker, 1997). Whereby, little or no change in physical attributes can still invoke, induce and coerce feelings of liminality (Cody, 2012a; 2012b; Cody & Lawlor, 2013; Ogle et al., 2013; Thomsen & Sørensen, 2006; Tonner, 2016; Underthun & Jordhus-Lier, 2017). This ideological turn focuses on the socio-cultural changes in meaning, with or without changes in physical spaces and artefacts. In addition, some authors have also emphasised how objects in and of themselves can undergo processes of liminality, not just human subjects (Hirschman, et al., 2012; Ogle, et al., 2013). An interesting conceptualisation of liminality is within wedding rituals (Turner, 1969). This occurs

when a marrying couple are considered engaged and no longer single but are yet to be fully recognised as married. The socio-cultural event of the wedding is the defining feature that allows socially recognised exit of the liminal space of engagement.

Weddings are no longer simple vehicles to achieving 'marriagehood', it has become a consumer experience in its own right. Fuelled by the need for differentiation, distinction and social recognition. Underpinned by a strong consumption ethic marketed as fairy tale (Boden, 2003; Ingraham, 2008). Multiple studies trace the current consumer focused wedding rituals to Euro-American consumer culture, with the USA playing an over-represented role in its meanings, associations and propagation (Geller, 2001; Ingraham, 2008; Otnes & Pleck, 2003). Of interest, is the intensification of consumption during the planning and execution of wedding rituals. Couples expend significant resources in accruing artefacts in creating the 'perfect' wedding ritual. However, majority of wedding ritual studies has been focused in the West, with recent forays into the Global South (Lumbwe, 2013; Nguyen & Belk, 2012; Ourahmoune & Ozcaglar-Toulouse, 2012).

The geographical context of this research is therefore the Global South, a part of the world that is under-researched, less so the drivers of it (Ezeh et al., 2011, Woodward, 2012). Nigeria, Africa's largest population and economy was selected due to its preference for material and symbolic consumption. Although, income inequality is high, those in the A and B socio-economic ranking are about 22 million in number, the size of a small country. This therefore gives the opportunity of observing considerable material consumption whilst in the Global South (Euromonitor, 2016a; 2016b; 2016c). In Nigeria, weddings rituals are one of the most important rituals and as it is a rite of passage into adulthood (Akintoye, 2010; Nwafor, 2013). A typical Nigerian wedding often consists of three segments; the traditional wedding, of the couple wearing traditional garments usually with a mixture of local and foreign (themed) accessories, whilst observing ethnic/tribal marriage rites. This is followed by a religious wedding done in a church or mosque where religious vows are exchanged. Finally, there is a reception/party to celebrate the union of the couple (Eytan, 2014), complete with full incorporation of white wedding artefacts and scripts. These can be done within a day or across several days/weeks, including multiple locations (Hume & Busari, 2012).

The wedding industry in Nigeria is currently expanding and vibrant, although concrete figures appear to be lacking. A Bloomberg article estimates that $17 million was spent on weddings in Lagos, Nigeria, over a five-month period (Bloomberg, 2014). Nigerian wedding planner, Weruche Majekodunmi, expresses that some couples spend over $2 million on a single wedding (Eytan, 2014). Mo Dharrah Sage, editor of *Nigerian Wedding Blog*, claims that the average Nigerian wedding costs between £7,000 and £10,000 for 300 to 500 guests, although guest lists can easily run into the thousands (Hume & Busari, 2012, Shearlaw, 2016). Bucknor-Obruthe of *Zapphaire Events* adds that the average wedding lasts up to 10 hours (CNBC Africa; 2015). The internet (specifically social media), is increasingly playing a greater role in this conspicuous consumption, whereby, couples-to-be increasingly partake in pre-wedding pictures to be uploaded to wedding blogs and other online platforms in anticipation of the actual wedding ritual (Shearlaw, 2016; Onyebuka & Halim; 2016). A potential driver for the increases in wedding spend is the recent competitive element attached to them; friends and families try to outspend and outdo each other (Eytan, 2014). Park (1997) attempts to split wedding rituals into two broad categories, hedonic and utilitarian; the hedonic focuses on aesthetics and entertainment values and utilitarian focuses on simplicity and pragmatic decision-making. From the above, it appears that hedonic values fuel Nigerian wedding ritual consumption patterns. *Wed Magazine*'s (a Nigerian publication) publisher, Eso, describes Nigerian wedding rituals as a *"high concept production"*, whereby, most weddings are designed to be extravagant and to show opulence (Hume & Busari, 2012). This implies that Nigerian wedding rituals are beyond the functional norms of exchanging vows but include expressions of taste, aesthetics and class. Pleck & Otnes (2006) contribute to this perspective, that the rise of lavish weddings is less about marriage and more about pageantry, religion, luxury, acknowledging and being acknowledged by friends and family. The typical Nigerian wedding can be described as *"a luxury cheered by all"* (Augustine, 2014).

In addition to the classed norms of having a lavish wedding, Dr Usman Mohammed, a socio-political researcher at Zaria University (Nigeria), expresses that there is a general perception that a man must 'earn' his wife and this can be illustrated by how much he is willing to spend on the wedding (Augustine, 2014). The concept of 'earning' a wife was traditionally attached to the groom paying a bride-price to the bride's family

but has now been extended to the groom paying for a lavish wedding, in addition to the initial bride price (Oladeji & Ariyo, 2014). These therefore illustrate the intersection of traditional values intermingling with norms of materialism, competition and symbolic consumption. Nigerian wedding rituals are moving away from their traditional physical spaces of the celebrants i.e. home of the bride, but towards commercial arenas of event halls. These event halls typically offer better facilities including multiple toilets, exits, security etc. but they also offer symbolic status. The users of these commercial spaces appropriate them as an objective yardstick to signal their social status within society; the bigger and more expensive the hall, the higher up the social ladder they are (Tade & Nnamani, 2015).

Similarly, '*Aso Ebi',* the traditional Yoruba (a Nigerian ethnic group) clothing system, whereby, members of a family or group wear the same cloth/fabric to show solidarity with the wedding couple has become commodified as a system for differentiation, class and exclusion. Due to increasing size of social networks, attendants of the wedding ritual try to differentiate themselves within the ritual by having a unique style or fabric of Aso Ebi. Therefore, within the same ritual, multiple Aso Ebis are worn as an attempt at creating/differentiating their social space and status (Nwafor, 2013; Tade & Aiyebo, 2014). In both instances of Aso Ebi and event halls, commercialisation allows for traditional practices to be modified into artefacts for illustrating and performing class, social status and differentiation. The process of commercialisation borrows heavily from Western ideas, including the use of event planners to decorate the wedding halls, which was typically done by the bride's family (Tade & Nnamani, 2015). Keeping in context that 60-70% of Nigerians earn less than $2 a day, (CIA, 2010; National Bureau of Statistic, 2010) it can be implied that Nigerian weddings have become an aspirational '*once in a lifetime*' event (Pleck & Otnes, 2006) that should be done without sparring any costs.

1.2. Rationale

The original conceptualisation of liminality focused on ritual experiences (Turner, 1969), however, contemporary studies on liminality rarely consider rituals (Cody, 2012a; 2012b; Cody & Lawlor, 2013; Ogle et al., 2013; O'Loughlin et al., 2017; Thomsen & Sørensen, 2006; Tonner, 2016). As rituals can be seen as the performance of social,

historical and cultural norms within a distinct time bound space (Nguyen & Belk, 2012). That is rituals often function as a reflection of society and its study gives a clearer picture of the 'whys' and 'hows' of social reality and relations (Bell, 1997; Nguyen & Belk, 2012; Turner, 1969). Therefore, by combining these two important social spaces, we get to unravel understand life outside the ordinary, liminal spaces, whilst still focusing on society as whole, rituals. Simultaneously, studies of wedding rituals rarely consider the liminal experience of participants (Boden, 2001; 2003; Ingraham, 2008; Otnes & Pleck, 2003). As understanding of liminality helps illustrate the structural forces that require role changes and transitions (O'Loughlin et al., 2017). Studying wedding rituals without the liminal perspective gives an incomplete picture of the ideological tensions and structural imperatives driving ritual spaces. This study addresses both concerns in extending and reifying how liminality is experienced in contemporary ritual spaces, wedding rituals. In addition, current conversations around liminality are extending the concept beyond its original use regarding status change (both social and cultural changes in status) (Cody, 2012a; 2012b; Cody & Lawlor, 2013; Ogle et al., 2013; O'Loughlin et al., 2017; Thomsen & Sørensen, 2006; Tonner, 2016). This conversation now focuses around the mid-point between two or more irreconcilable ideologies. Therefore, a person can experience multiple layers of liminality depending on how many ideological crossroads they experience at any given time (Mupotsa, 2015). Following this expanded conceptualisation of liminality, the study investigates if similar occurrences can be seen in liminality's original social context, rituals. In a sense, this study aims to ascertain of the advances made in liminal studies also apply to ritual performance, the original grounds of liminal conceptualisation.

All of the above will be viewed from the perspective of consumer culture, that is, most contemporary human interaction is now moderated by the market (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). That is both small and large social spaces routinely have acts of consumption embedded within them and therefore needing various categories of goods and services for their full elaboration (Slater, 1997). In this study, the focus is on consumer identity strategies, that is, how are participants consumer aesthetics and preferences expressed within the ritual and liminal spaces they occupy?

1.3. Research Aim, Questions and Contributions

The overall aim of the study is to unravel the liminal tensions experienced by Nigerian brides and grooms. This will be achieved via the following research questions;

1. How is liminality experienced via the consumption patterns of Nigeran brides and grooms?
2. How does bridal identity, as a consumer identity, affect the agentic experience of Nigerian brides and grooms?
3. How do Nigerian brides and grooms perform their preferred consumer identities?

The thesis provides incremental theoretical contributions to studies on liminality (Nicholson et al., 2018). This study concurs with assertions that liminality is not just bounded to between and betwixt multiple social statuses, rather, it can also be viewed as being between and betwixt multiplied irreconcilable ideologies (Hirschman et al., 2012; McNeill & Graham, 2014; Ogle et al., 2013; O'Loughlin et al., 2017). This is largely due to wedding rituals having their own internal consumer identities and no longer identity free social spaces as originally described by Tuner (1969). Within the Nigerian context of this study, the ideological difference is the individualism advocated by white wedding industry for the wedding ritual to be an expression of the bride's consumer tastes and aesthetics. Versus, the collectivised Nigerian wedding ritual being an expression of the families' consent to the union of the marrying couple and as a means for the transmission of family knowledge, culture and aesthetics. Therefore, from being engaged to being married, the couple continuously struggle with these two opposing perspectives, some managing at partial reconciliation and others failing. However, this is the main ideological difference within Nigerian wedding rituals, others will be discussed in detail in forthcoming chapters.

1.4. Thesis Overview

The study is structured as follows; chapter 2 is a literature review conducted to map the theoretical landscape, here, emphasis is on outlining the major ideas within the different theoretical fields that were engaged with during the course of the thesis. Rather than an elaborate historical analysis, insight is drawn on how the theoretical lenses help illuminate the phenomena of consumption. First, consumption and

consumer identity are delineated, with emphasis on the social influence and meaning making systems that govern contemporary consumption. Here, emphasis is on the individual within the collective, not as an isolated entity. An overview of Nigeria and her consumer culture is also presented, to give further context to that provided in prior sub-sections. However, only academic sources are employed in this regard. Finally, rituals and weddings are considered, the primary research context of the thesis. Here, some history is provided and a mapping of the contributions of ritual and wedding studies to (consumer) research. A summary of the literature review is provided, and a theoretical framework is used to illustrate a snapshot of the theoretical influences of liminal consumer identity. Chapter 3 is on the research methodology. First, details of the research philosophy is provided, in relation to other potential and rival perspectives. Then, a research design is mapped out, alongside an in-depth analysis of Netnography as a suitable research method. In-depth interviews are also considered to supplement findings from the Netnographic inquiry. The ethical dimensions of the study are presented, with special attention to the ever-evolving landscape of the internet and internet enabled research. A number of dilemmas are presented, particularly anonymity, whilst potential solutions are suggested. Ethical considerations for the interviews are less complex and the popularity of the method allows for a more direct ethical approach. Data analysis is also considered, by comparing different potential approaches, with justification for the chosen approach of thematic analysis. An approach augmented by the use of computer software, NVivo. This is followed by reflections of the researcher, considering some of the major obstacles the researcher encountered during the study. Finally, an overview in the form of a summary of the methodology chapter is provided.

In chapter 4 the thesis' findings are presented, the outcome of the data collection and analysis. In the introductory section, a basic illustration of the different sub-rituals that consist a Nigerian wedding is presented. Followed by themes from the online and offline methods. These are separated and presented as two distinct sub-sections of the findings chapter. Due to the contexts of offline and online being relatively different, even though, the research aim is similar. Finally, a summation of the thesis findings and themes is provided. The findings chapter is followed by chapter 5, thesis discussion, this chapter attempts to interrogate the research findings within the

theoretical landscaped mapped in the literature review. Finally, chapter 6 is dedicated to the thesis conclusion. First, a summary of the entire thesis is presented, followed by an abridgement of the theoretical contributions the thesis makes. Limitations of the thesis are suggested and potential for furthering the thesis' thrust are offered.

1.5. Summary

This chapter introduces the thesis, starting with a background that contextualises the Nigerian (wedding ritual) consumptionspheres and some of its major influences. Followed by a rational, which focuses on the theoretical justifications for the thesis. The research questions and aim are also provided to give specificity to the research's agenda. The chapter is then concluded with a thesis overview, which covers how the rest of the thesis is presented.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

The literature review starts by asking elementary questions regarding identity, what is identity and how is it experienced, performed and embodied in modern society? The answers provided borrows from Jenkins' (2008) work exploring identity from a socio-cultural perspective, away from the mechanical individualist perspective common within psychology influenced conversations about identity. The emphasis here is the ephemeral and contextual nature of identity. Then the literature turns towards consumer identity, one of the most common forms of identity performances of contemporary material culture. Following the idea that consumer culture has permeated most of human society, the study of consumer identity gives valuable insight into the inner workings of contemporary peoples. Adding further context, consumer identity is categorised into 4 streams, that differentiate the motivations and influences behind the performance of consumer identities. In this context, local consumer culture of Nigeria is the primary research site, in particular, Nigerian ethno-religious identities due to the absence of a national identity.

The second major strand of the literature review focuses on rituals, a human activity embodied by intense emotion and consumption. Rituals are a core facet of most human societies and are particularly useful due to their capacity for public transmission and display of tradition. The intensification of consumption and emotion is most typical to rituals that aid identity transition. This invokes the concept of liminality, a social sphere that temporarily occurs between and betwixt two or more stable social positions and identities. The concept of liminality will be expanded upon with focus on the novelty of this sphere, leading participants who pass through it having to confront their fears, hopes, preferences and aesthetics within a relatively short period of time. One of such sites is the wedding ritual, a space that allows the transition from single to married. Due to the insertion of consumer culture into weddings, consumer identities within liminal spaces has become the norm, with bridal identity being relatively popular and also a global phenomenon, due to its linkages to global white wedding. Here, global white wedding refers to the deterritlosied white wedding which took root in the UK and popularised globally by the US. Similar to consumption focused

identities, global white weddings' materialistic inclination allows it to be combined with most local cultures. In conclusion, a literature summary will be provided to connect the disparate theories and perspectives in the form of a conceptual framework.

2.2. Unpacking Identity

Identity is a popular word and research paradigm, specifically for symbolic and experiential consumption. This approach to consumption moves away from purchasing decisions as a means of understanding consumption (Beck, 2000). It is important to delineate exactly what identity is in the context of this thesis, this will be elaborated on in the following sub-sections about identity as social performance. This will be followed by consumer identity and the tensions of performing a consistent consumer identity.

2.2.1. Identity and The Consumer

Identity is a powerful concept that allows for the abstraction of relationships. Compared to primates that have a maximum of 200 members in a social group (Lang, 2006), human abstract identities allow for the creation and maintenance of social groups with members numbering millions (and billions in the case of China and India) (Jenkins, 2008). Jenkins (2008) presents identity as a two-fold concept, as a vehicle for communicating sameness and difference, simultaneously. The meaning behind any identity is what an identity is to be associated with, sameness, and what it is not, difference. This is based on his understanding that identity is based on meaning, not intrinsic meaning alone but socially derived and negotiated meaning. He further exerts that this meaning is in constant flux and (re)negotiation, therefore, identity in itself is a process (Lawler, 2014), a meaning making process that has no end (Brown & Capozza, 2000; Luedicke, 2011). A complementary perspective is viewing identity as ephemeral, similar to a stage play that exists only when it is performed either physically, replayed through technology/imagination or discussed in social conversations, all of which are various forms of social interaction (Ahuvia, 2005; Lawler, 2014).

An opposing view is the representation of identity as cognitive, that is, identity is created from intrinsic knowledge of self, constructed within neurological limits. A stance broadly attributed to cognitive psychology. This claim has broadly been disputed by multiple disciplines, including other cognitive psychologist (McDonald & Wearing, 2013; Brown & Capozza, 2000). A prominent counter-argument to identity as cognitive, is the idea of reflexivity; the act of introspection. This argument infers that all (neurotypical) individuals socially reflect on their actions, thoughts, behaviours and attitudes from the perspective of an outsider or an assumed 'other'. This social introspection often leads to identity modifications or maintenance, means that individual identity is always performed in respect to something or of someone. Therefore, identity is never a self-contained phenomenon, rather is it is a 'social fact', subject to social forces (Beckett & Nayak, 2008; Hall, 2000; Jenkins, 2008; Rose, 2000). Social introspection further leads into the breakdown of the individual-collective dichotomy; the individual is often viewed as separate from the collective (collective consists of socio-cultural groups including but not limited to ethnic, national and biological groups). However, introspection suggests individuals self-moderate their behaviour based on their assumed position within the collective. This then blurs the boundary between the individual and the collective (Jenkins, 2008; Desmond, 2003; Lawler, 2014).

Identity is thus a socially determined concept that encapsulates an individual's preferences, thoughts, attitudes and behaviours. Nonetheless, there are warnings on the overemphasis of academically derived concepts that are taken as natural and given, but, are simply metaphors for interpreting and describing human behaviour (Bell, 1997). This means that this approach to identity is one of many perspectives of understanding human behaviour with its infinite permutations. This approach to research and knowledge will be expanded on in detail in the research philosophy section of the methodology chapter. Before moving on to consumer identity, consumer culture needs to be presented, as an avenue for the acquisition and expression of identity via market forces. The following is a definition of consumer culture:

> "Consumer culture denotes a social arrangement in which relations between
> lived culture and social resources, and between meaningful ways of life and the

symbolic and material resources on which they depend are mediated through markets"

(Arnould & Thompson, 2005 p. 869)

This expression of culture allows for the injection of an endless plethora of meaning into human behaviour. Although, participation in consumer culture is mediated by other social factors including class, gender, race, age, geography etc. This paints a picture of unequal access to consumer culture; in addition, certain social groups have had more influence on contemporary consumer culture than others i.e. racially white classed Euro-American citizens (Ingraham, 2008). Consumer culture has developed further into its own meaning making system that permeates almost all aspects of social life, including identity construction (Lurry, 1996; Slater, 1997; Zukin & Maguire, 2009). This is achieved by the commodification of human artefacts and symbols, into the ahistorical consumer goods (Slater, 1997). This avoids economics inclined analysis of consumption, which suggests a passive consumer exploited by economic and political forces, or the 'economic man' that thrives for maximum utility (Edwards, 2000; Slater, 1997). In performing a preferred consumer identity, social factors act as constraints to limit the extent, depth, frequency and associations that can be had within consumer culture (Ferreira & Scaraboto, 2016).

Consumer identity can be considered as a manifestation of preferences, attitudes and behaviours associated with participating in consumer culture. Consumer identity's primary associations revolve around consumption activities, activities that can be an important aspect of other identities (Zukin & Maguire, 2009). Similar to issues of studying and defining identity, consumer identity spans a wide range of institutions, disciplines, methodologies and organisational interests (i.e. academic, business, NGOs, state governments etc.). Consumer culture has become ubiquitous in most societies; it often becomes barely distinguishable from contemporary culture. Following a social identity perspective on identity as elaborated by Jenkins (2008), the following sub-sections applies an approach that attempts to decipher the aims, motivations and uses of consumer identity. These sub-sections include how consumption can be used to resolve identity conflicts, to exercise control, to achieve differentiation and to aid identity transformation. These can be done simultaneously and do not suggest a linear or regimented process.

a. Consuming to Resolve Identity Conflicts

Due to multiple contemporary forces (e.g. globalisation, secularisation, migration, natural disaster, nationalism), individuals are increasingly disconnected from traditional sources of identity including religion, birthplace, ethnicity etc. (Slater, 1997). Therefore, the development and maintenance of a coherent sense of identity becomes more difficult (Ahuvia, 2005; Slater, 1997; Ustuner & Holt, 2007; Varman & Belk, 2008; Zukin & Maguire, 2009). A common theme for deciphering consumer identity is its role in resolving conflicts, often intrinsic to consumer culture (Varman & Belk, 2008). That is, identity related consumption, even mundane consumption (Gomez & Torelli, 2015; Patterson & Schroeder, 2010; Sinha, 2016), is increasingly under the rubric of resolving, negotiating and avoiding identity conflicts (Ahuvia, 2005; Dunning, 2007; Chan et al., 2012; Coleman & Williams, 2015; White & Dahl, 2006).

Within marketing communications, consumers are often approached from two contradictory poles, first, the consumer is praised as sovereign i.e. "consumer is king" (Beckett & Nayak, 2008). Paradoxically, consumers are further identified as 'you are what you consume' i.e. "I shop, therefore I am". If it is further considered that meanings associated with consumer goods are socially prescribed (Jenkins, 2008; Lawler, 2014; Scott, 2015), then individuals who construct their sense of identity from consumption are therefore subject to social definitions and meaning, hence, not sovereign[1] (Saren, 2007; Scott, 2015). This creates a conflict in the individual's self-perception, the consumer views him/herself as both sovereign and socially determined. The consumer is then further presented with a never-ending range of consumer goods to help resolve this conflict (McDonald & Wearing, 2013; Thompson et al., 2013). Further, anti-consumerist attitudes and patterns are common but anti-consumerist identities are often built around consumption, even if it is the rejection of consumption (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Cherrier, 2009). This can be perceived as individuals focusing more on the sovereign side of their consumer identity.

Within the study of consumers (academic and business), there's the contradictory perception of the consumer as a fool exploited by the market and the celebration of the

---

[1] Sovereign in its broadest sense, as in free/independent of external influence.

consumer as a hero liberated from traditional shackles (e.g. religion and governments), free to pursue self-interest (Ahuvia, 2005; Ferreira & Scaraboto, 2016; Kirmani, 2009; Thompson et al., 2013; Slater, 1997). Other conflicts include public-private, rational-irrational, autonomous or other-determined, active-passive, creative-conformist, individual-mass, subject-object (Ahuvia, 2005; Slater, 1997). A more pessimistic account is the perspective that consumers are inherently empty i.e. lacking internal agency, and only consume to fill some form of hole (or void) within themselves (Saren, 2007; Slater, 1997). This extends to the idea and that the creation of a consuming identity is an illusion (Ahuvia, 2005; Gabriel, 2015; Varman & Belk, 2008). This is likely an extreme view of the way individuals engages in identity-work through consumption. However, it can have resonance in instances of individuals attempting quick and superficial consumer identities (Ahuvia, 2005; Saren, 2007). Ahuvia (2005) presents three strategies consumers use in resolving the conflicting interests and identities. These include demarcating, choosing one over the other, compromising, where the consumer attempts to take a neutral position between the two poles and synthesizing, here, the consumer attempts a fusion, often resulting in a new (novel) identity (or option). Ahuvia (2005) did not consider deceptive consumption, whereby, individuals publicly consume a specific consumer good to signal a certain identity whilst privately consuming an opposing consumer good for private reasons (Thomas et al., 2013; Sinha, 2016). Although, deceptive consumption implies a contextual demarcating strategy. This presents consumer identity as fluid and contextual, which can be employed and performed for a variety of reasons (Gil et al., 2012; Thomas et al., 2013).

During disposal of consumer goods important to the consumer identity, individuals are likely to attempt a cleansing of the goods. In Hirschman et al., (2012) study, participants employ a temporospatial demarcation by storing the goods in their garage as a way of maintaining their identity whilst distancing the consumer identity from the goods before disposal. Whilst in Trudel et al., (2016) study, participants go through greater effort to recycle items important to their consumer identity instead of conveniently trashing the item. This can be perceived as a compromise, the individual invites a green identity as a means of tempering the loss of an important identity construct. In both cases, simply disposing of the item creates an identity conflict and

the participants employ different disposal strategies in maintaining their identity whilst removing the unwanted/unneeded item (Davis & Francis, 2014).

In sum, a range of identity conflicts arise in the everyday life of an individual and consumption is increasingly used as a medium for mediating and resolving these conflicts. Ironically, some of these conflicts arise as a result of participation in consumer culture and are further implicated by using consumption in resolving such conflicts. Individuals engage in a wide variety of strategies in resolving these conflicts during acquisition, consumption and disposal. Ahuvia (2005) proposes three overarching strategies but it appears they can be used interchangeably depending on context and motivation.

b. Being in Control

Being in control can be perceived as a modern variation of self-determination, which can be criticised as an over-emphasis on consumer agency. Being less restrained by traditional institutions, the individual is free to consume as he/she pleases. However, the ability for restraint is expected, "to whom much is given, much is expected". Therefore, individuals must self-regulate their consumption. Collectively, consumer culture has ascribed negative connotations to obesity and consumer debt, as the identities of overconsumption i.e. lacking self-control (Slater, 1997; Gil et al., 2012). This resonates with consumers as sovereign; however, its emphasis is on self-control and personal responsibility, rather than independence and autonomy.

Democratisation (i.e. liberation from traditional sources) of identity also fosters identity anxiety. Increasing consumer choice often results in an increasing number of ways of getting it 'wrong', that is, individuals increasingly run the risk of performing the wrong identity through consumption, knowingly or unknowingly (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Even when a given identity is successfully performed on the side of the performer, there are still risks of it being inappropriately perceived by a receiver via a transmission process that is neither linear nor static (Patterson & Schroeder, 2010). This can be due to general misunderstanding, social context, misinterpretation of past behaviours etc. This gives rise to consumption experts, who help individuals in the "right" way to consume and therefore stay in control of their preferred consumer identity. This often comes in the shape of life coaches, dieticians, self-help

books/authors, gym instructors, therapists, cosmetic surgeons, wedding planners etc. (Lurry, 1996; Slater, 1997; Zukin & Maguire, 2009). A situation exacerbated by frequent (often planned) social obsolescence of consumer goods and identities (Zukin & Maguire, 2009). A counter argument by Slater (1997) adopts a Foucauldian perspective that asserts that freedom of choice is simply a manifestation of power relations and doctrines (Barnhart & Penaloza, 2013). Rather than viewing consumer culture as liberating individuals (or collectives) from hegemonic forces, consumer culture injects consumption activities with meanings that attempt to maintain or create social order/structures. Then, allowing individuals the creative process of (re)producing prescribed social dynamics (Barnhart & Penaloza, 2013; Lawson & Todd, 2002; Ustuner & Holt, 2010).

A subtler form of identity control is the way consumer goods are employed as stable points in individual identity, whereby, life itself is conceived as unstable and dynamic. In this sense, consumer identities are built as anchor points in the individual's (perceived) unstable and unpredictable life experience (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Bardhi et al., 2010; Ferreira & Scaraboto, 2016). This feeds into the lifestyle narrative, by creating specific consumer lifestyles, individuals can practice a stable consumer identity across multiple contexts. (Cappellini & Parsons, 2014; Ferreira & Scaraboto, 2016; Zukin & Maguire, 2009). These lifestyles can be conceived as consumer manifestations and abstractions of broad socio-political views, e.g. the green consumer (Davis & Francis, 2014; Lawson & Todd, 2002; Zukin & Maguire, 2009). In cases of changing meanings associated with specific consumption activities, individuals often try to insulate their identity from new meanings, particularly when the activity is important to their current self-concept. This is often done by focusing on the functional ends of the consumer goods and less so their symbolic meanings, which is currently what is under negotiation (Arsel & Thompson, 2011). Therefore, trying to re-assert some identity control when the social context keeps changing.

In sum, individuals are expected to take control of their consumption, for those struggling with being in control, experts are available to help craft and negotiate a new conforming identity. This is not always successful, due to consumers being part of socio-cultural structures that exert great influence on exactly what is acceptable, the

means and the meanings attached to consumption activities and identities. This lack or loss of control is further exacerbated by social obsolescence.

c. Consuming to Be Different

Consumer identity as a resource for expressing uniqueness is a common and mostly accepted conclusion (Arsel & Thompson, 2011; Barnhart & Penaloza, 2013; Berger & Heath, 2007; Bhattacharjee, et al., 2014). An interesting nuance to this is that achieving uniqueness is domain driven; individuals are less likely to use goods that they do not consider as identity relevant (e.g. washing up liquid) as a way for achieving uniqueness. That is, there are certain domains or product categories (e.g. hairstyle) that are more likely to be used in presenting a unique identity (Berger & Heath, 2007). It is a complex process of how certain domains or product categories come to be more relevant for consumer identity, but situational cues can influence which domain is important for the given context (Coleman & Williams, 2015; Oyserman, 2009; White & Argo, 2009). In addition, domains that are important to identity performance tend to be within the conspicuous consumption sphere (Berger & Heath, 2007; Chan et al., 2012; Dimofte et al., 2015; Sinha, 2016; White & Dahl, 2006). Further, these important domains tend to be socially determined, that is, the individual's social group determines which consumption categories are important for their consumer identity (Chan et al., 2012; Gomez & Torelli, 2015). In sum, the salient identity, the relevance of salient identity to the consumption context and the meaning attached to the consumer goods all play a role in how (consumer) differentiation is pursued (Zhang & Khare, 2009).

The need for uniqueness often comes secondary to the need for association. After the individual has successfully performed an identity attached to their preferred collectives, they then consider other features or consumption activities that allow for differentiation within the collective (Bartikowski & Cleveland, 2017; Chan et al., 2012; Thomas et al., 2016). However, in a foreign and/or unfamiliar environment, maintaining boundaries i.e. distinction from the locals, can become a primary concern. In such cases, the performance of a unique consumer identity becomes the primary means of identification and association to their home/original collective (Bardhi et al., 2010). Therefore, the need for association stays primary but the need for uniqueness

varies according to context (Bartikowski & Cleveland, 2017). A related concept is 'othering', a strategy that employs the association of negative and/or unwanted characteristics with a perceived 'other'. This 'other' can be an individual or collective. Consumption is then done in the respect of being opposite to this different 'other', therefore, maintaining a form of consumer identity based on being different with a perceived 'other' (Bardhi et al., 2010; Davis & Francis, 2014; Fennell, 2009). From the above, uniqueness is achieved by distancing or avoiding a different/unwanted identity, through the careful consumption of selected goods. Therefore, differentiation can be both internal and external to the collective the individual is part of.

The need for uniqueness through consumption is relatively popular, particularly amongst luxury markets, however, identity associations to a collective is often a pre-requisite for uniqueness. The individual often presents a clear and stable identity within their preferred collective and then goes on to pursue uniqueness within the collective. Should the collective be absent, the individual then uses uniqueness as means of establishing a connection to their absent collective.

d. Consumption as Transformation

Identity transformation can be achieved via consumption including intensifying consumption, consuming in new contexts, consuming new goods or stopping consumption of certain goods (Bardhi et al., 2010; Ferreira & Scaraboto, 2016; Ourahmoune, 2016; Seo, 2016; Zukin & Maguire, 2009). For example, the transition from fiancée to bride-to-be is often achieved through the purchase, ownership and wearing of a wedding dress. The wedding dress retail shop is often a new context for the fiancée and there is a possibility that she stops consuming goods strongly associated with being single (e.g. online dating services) after the transformation (Ingraham, 2008; 2015; Nash, 2013; Sykes & Brace-Govan, 2015). This transformation process takes on a dialectical approach; first, the goods are injected with meaning, usually jointly by consumer collectives and marketers, then absorbed into the consumer identity to be used as fuel in the transformation process. During the transformation process, the consumer identity performed further reinforces/challenges preconceived meanings attached to the goods and therefore projecting meaning back into the goods (Ahuvia, 2005; Castillhos & Fonseca, 2016;

Ferreira & Scaraboto, 2016; Foxall, 2013). This back and forth motion of meaning creates a dynamic space, rich with cultural resources, to be consumed by its participants (Ahuvia, 2005; Chan et al., 2012). Transformations are rarely instantaneous but often achieved through repeated exposure to the new context or goods. Through multiple instances of temporary exposures, the individual comes to possess the necessary cultural capital or knowledge to fully transform (Ourahmoune, 2016; Sykes & Brace-Govan, 2015). This cultural capital is acquired through the development or reworking of a consumer identity that has the necessary associations and meanings with the target post-transition collective, position or space (Cappellini & Parsons, 2014; Ourahmoune, 2016; Syrjala, 2016). Consuming to ignite transformation, during transformation and to end transformation will be adequately addressed in subsequent chapters when discussing rituals and liminality.

2.2.2. Nigeria and Her National Identity

a. Defining Nigeria

This section will discuss Nigeria; defining Nigeria, a brief over of Nigerian consumer culture based on limited studies and then her ethno-religious inclinations. Nigeria is the most populous African country, with an estimated population of 180 million people. She also has a young population with a mean age of 19 (CIA, 2016). Nigeria, both metaphorically and geographically, presents a complex social terrain, due to the wide range of ethnic groups and identities, religions, languages, histories etc. Particularly, ethnic groups in Nigeria are in excess of 200 (Akanji, 2011). Therefore, the terms 'Nigeria' and 'Nigerians' are used as placeholders for a gamut of socio-cultural flows, however, unravelling these complex flows are beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, this study assumes an Afropolitan definition of Nigeria, as people, things and cultures that have strong ties and roots to the current day geographical area called Nigeria. This therefore includes people in diaspora and those indigenous to the area (Artner & Stanislawski, 2013; Eze, 2014; 2016; Strubel, 2012). A relatively loose definition that purposefully avoids hard social boundaries for the sake of aiding the explorative aim of this study, whilst simultaneously respecting the heterogeneity within Nigeria.

b. Nigerian Consumer Culture

Studies of Nigerian consumer culture appear to be infrequent and relatively scant. This section is a summary of the available studies on the various aspects of Nigerian consumer culture. Starting with food, such studies on Nigerian food consumption tend to focus on the nutritional value, health references and food security, less so on the socio-cultural role food consumption plays. These studies tend to conclude that food consumption is often moderate in frequency and volume but emphasise the need to improve nutritional value. In essence, they advocate for "healthy eating" (Babalola et al., 2014; Ezeh et al., 2011; Olumakaiye, 2007; Olumakaiye et al., 2010). This fits into the organic, low fat, low sugar trend of contemporary consumer culture (Askegaard & Linnet, 2011). Conversely, Nigerians openly embrace fast foods, with the middle and upper classes being frequent consumers. In Nigeria, fast food consumption is moderately expensive, perceived as elegant and seen as a status signifier/symbol (Olutayo & Akanle, 2009b) in contrast with the Global North's cheap and accessible image of fast foods.

Considering product packaging, the labels on the goods are not commonly read regardless of literacy levels. However, colours and design of packaging plays a larger role in product choice and consumption (Babalola et al., 2014; Mcleay & Oglethorpe, 2013; Omotosho, 2008). An illustrative example is Erhun & Erhun's (2003) findings of media advertisements having greater influence on preferences and intake of medicines than label information. In addition, most print media advertisements rely on functional benefits of the products including features, savings, specifications, etc. (Alozie, 2003; Ogbadu et al., 2012; Oyekunle & Tiamiyu, 2010), which are not the most persuasive types of advertisements. Further, Olatunji & Akhagba's (2013) research concludes that 10 to 12-year-old Nigerians can decipher the intent behind video advertisements and can apply healthy scepticism to claims made in the advert. Considering that video is usually a more effective form of marketing compared to print, Gbadamosi et al., (2009) proposes the term "bandwagon effect", whereby, Nigerians are likely to embrace specific consumption as long as it is socially ratified. Suppliers then help in identifying the socially 'correct' product, through packaging and advertisements. However, the element of trust comes into play, in sectors where consumers trust suppliers, that is the product/market has been socially rectified as 'good' or 'safe' e.g. makeup and beauty products, advertisements significantly influence on buying intent (Ogbadu et

al., 2012). In other sectors, such as life insurance, there is little trust on suppliers delivering on the promise of a pay-out, therefore their adverts are largely ignored and subjective norms from family and friends are the deciding factors (Omar & Owusu-Frimpong, 2007). In both cases, trust is largely dependent on past experiences, collective and individual.

The distrust Nigerians have for consumer goods and suppliers is felt the most by Nigerian suppliers (Ogbadu & Ameh, 2012), as there appears to be a preference for foreign goods. The absence of adequate consumer protection is claimed to be the leading cause for the ambivalence or outright rejection of "made in Nigeria" goods, whereby, consumers cannot trust the quality of goods recommended by suppliers and retailers (Folorunso, 2013; Odia & Agbonifoh, 2015; Omotosho, 2008). This preference for foreign goods varies according to ethnic group and simultaneously according to product category (Okechuku & Onyemah, 2000). An opposing argument can be made that foreign suppliers simply have better products or are better at advertising and marketing their products. A claim that appears unexplored (to the best of this author's knowledge) i.e. comparing marketing activities of foreign goods to local. A simpler explanation is that the majority of Nigerians are poor and are rightly cautious as they have to maximise every penny spent (National Bureau of Statistics, 2012). This is supported by claims that majority of consumer spend in Nigeria is non-discretionary (Euromonitor, 2015; 2016a).

Regarding fashion, there appears to be a closer relationship between suppliers (tailor) and the consumers. A useful description is "prosumer", in that the consumer is directly involved in the process of creating the product. Amongst women from Western Nigeria, advertisement of local fashion products in the media is minimal. However, there is the publishing of magazines, online articles and posts of other women wearing their own bespoke items. This creates a cyclic pattern of women looking at pictures of other women and then showing their tailor or fabric manufacturer their favourite pieces to be combined and modified into a new unique item, thus emphasising the idea of fitting in whilst standing out. Fitting in, in the sense that the same mediums are continuously trawled, whilst the same consumers are the primary content (suppliers) of the mediums. However, the motivation to trawling these mediums is to find inspiration or

ideas for new and unique products. Photographers also play an active role in this process, by recording the images at social functions, e.g. birthday parties or wedding rituals (Strubel, 2012; Nwafor, 2012; 2013; Olutayo & Akanle, 2009a; Tade & Aiyebo, 2014). This harkens to previous conceptualisations that uniqueness is only pursued after collective identity is secure.

In Northern Nigeria, there is also a similar prosumer culture of buyers presenting designs and patterns to the embroider, who then negotiates and advices on the final product (Douny, 2011). An interesting contrast between the North and West regarding their fashion items is that prosumers in the West are keen on lighter, easier to produce fabrics, with more variety and options, i.e. "fast fashion" (Olutayo & Akanle, 2009). In the North, handcrafted, slow, meticulous designs and products are celebrated and rewarded by social recognition/capital i.e. "high fashion". This could be explained by the cultural proximity of the West to Euro-American (consumer) culture and the North's preference for Islamic values and slow evolving cultural norms (Douny, 2011; Akanji, 2011). In both North and West, a major motivation in the pursuit of bespoke designs is uniqueness; each prosumer intends to display their own unique (often expensive) tastes, whilst simultaneously being couched in socially accepted consumption norms (Douny, 2011; Mckinney & Eicher, 2009; Nwafor, 2012).

An interesting source for cultural information and lifestyle is Nigeria's entertainment industries. In particular, "Afrobeats", Nigeria's Pop music industry, which is increasingly gaining recognition at American music awards (Strong & Ossei-Owusu, 2014). Using the concept of deconstruction and reconstruction, Emielu (2011) suggests that musical genres are created in a local setting (construction) and then come in contact with other cultures, which are used as cultural resource for reconstruction. As the genre matures, artists further deconstruct the genre and rebuild the boundaries and core meanings/techniques of the genre, to be further reconstructed. Focusing on "Highlife" music, a popular Nigerian music genre, Emielu (2011) suggests it is a product of syncretisation of local Nigerian folk music with Afro-American Jazz, Afro-Caribbean "Calypso" and British Empire's military brass band music. An alternative is the localisation of American "Hip Hop" into creating Nigerian "Hip Hop"; this skips the construction phase in Nigeria and rushes on to deconstruction

and the reconstruction. Within "Hip Hop", Liadi and Omobowale (2011; 2012) propose multilingualism as the catalyst to nationwide adoption, whereby, local artists infuse "Hip Hop" with their local dialect/language. This then reconstructs "Hip Hop" in local terms and tongues (Fasan, 2015; Omoniyi, 2006). Omenugha (2016) uses the term "cultural poaching", as a means of Nigerian youth engaging with global celebrity culture to enhance their localised sense of self. In this case, Nigerian youth deconstruct global celebrity culture and deliberately pick preferred aspects in the (re)construction of their own consumer identity. This "cultural poaching" plays on the ideas of hybridisation and creolisation (Arnould & Thompson, 2005), the merging of two cultures to create a distinct new one. In addition, the majority of Omenugha's (2016) participants professed a preference for both American and Nigerian culture. In essence, Nigeria's music landscape is international in its favour whilst simultaneously local in its content.

Hollywood is typically identified as a major driving force behind America's consumer culture; Nigeria has her own film industry called 'Nollywood'. However, Nollywood has only recently veered into the role of advocate for consumer culture. They originally played a limited role in advocating for a consumer identity and lifestyle and often focused on religious, political and moral issues (Adesokan, 2011; Akudinobi, 2015; Bryce, 2012; Madichie, 2010; Makhubu, 2012; Okome, 2012). The rise of internet (film) distribution and improved production quality suggests that Nollywood is set to play a significant role in driving Nigeria's consumption landscape (Akudinobi, 2015; Obiaya, 2010; Yeku, 2015). In addition, Ryan's (2015) "New Nollywood", a recent collection of movies that take middle class incomes and tastes for granted. "New Nollywood" movies tend to glamorise consumption and attempt to create desire. Ryan (Ibid) concludes that "New Nollywood" is still in its infancy and its impact on Nigeria's consumer culture is yet to be seen.

A related perspective worth mentioning is that of gendered consumption. Specifically, there appears to be a gendered approach to alcohol (Dumbili, 2005), food (Babalola et al., 2014) and fashion consumption (Olutayo & Akanle, 2009a). A simple explanation is the patriarchal social construction of contemporary Nigeria; nonetheless, there are

instances of disruption. Dumbili's (2005) study points at women consuming "men's drink" (i.e. beer) as a means of demonstrating equality to men.

The above presents a relatively uneven consumption landscape, some based on advertisements, some on social norms and others on one to one relationship between the supplier and the consumer. The entertainment industry also has its own unique features of hybridity, synthesis and creolization, in addition to a rising middle class entertainment niche.

c. Ethno-Religious Nigeria

With the presence of over 200 ethnicities in Nigeria, the possibility of a national identity becomes a challenge. This creates the opportunity for salient ethno-religious identities to be the dominant identity (Adebanwi & Obadare, 2010; Asekun, 2015). However, the root of such strong ethno-religious identities present in Nigeria is rather instrumentalist in its manifestation. The ruling class mobilise ethnic and religious identities for the accumulation and uneven distribution of political power and material resources (Agbiboa, 2013; Akanji, 2011; Hutchinson & Smith, 1996; Lenshie & Johnson, 2012). This mobilisation of ethno-religious identities hinders the creation of an inclusive national identity and therefore fosters separatist movements (Onuoha 2013a; 2013b). The blame can be laid on both the British colonial empire and successive post-independence governments for following governing structures imposed by the British, albeit with multiple modifications (Agbiboa & Maiangwa, 2013; Onuoha, 2013a; 2013b). To legitimise their rule over the pre-independent Nigeria, British imperialists reinforced expanded existing social structures and used the indigenous elites to run the day-to-day activities of the colony. They further took on a divide and rule tactic that restrained integration and encouraged competition amongst ethnic groups. This is still being used by present day politicians to discourage aggrieved ethnic groups from joining forces (Adebanwi & Obadare, 2010; Blanton et al., 2001; Lenshie & Johnson, 2012).

Even within ethnic groups, there are multiple gradations for difference, that is, subgroups within the ethnic social groups (Obinna, 2012). This deliberate splintering of national identity along ethno-religious lines has caused numerous conflicts

including one civil war and has deepened the roots of inter-group prejudices (Osaghae & Suberu, 2005). This prejudice is even seen in children, as Asekun's (2015) study on primary school children recorded negative attitudes towards children from different ethno-religious groups. Contrary to the above, there are instances of seemingly positive outcomes of instrumentalising ethnic identity. Omobowale & Olutayo (2009) uncovered the process of how people who identify with Lalupon, a local community in Western Nigeria, come together in solidarity to successfully implement development projects (e.g. portable water systems). This process revolves around using development projects as a collective means of performing ethnic identity (Chukwuezi, 2001). Following the notion of identity as a resource for achieving political aims, there are also instances of religious identification being used for similar purposes (Olarinmoye, 2013), some leading to deadly consequences, the case of 'Boko Haram', a fundamentalist Islamic group in the North, being a good example (Agbiboa, 2015; Agbiboa & Maiangwa, 2013). A more ambiguous use of religion is in controlling access and rights to arable farmland, an outcome that often produces one or more aggrieved groups (Ifeka & Flower, 1997; Udeagha et al., 2013). A major difference between religious identity and ethnic identity is that religious identity often takes places in a wider and often global framework. This is due to the predominant religions, Islam and Christianity, having specific frameworks on how the world is/should be organised (Janson & Akinleye, 2015, Smith, 2001). Focusing on religion, below is a quote surmising religion and Lagos;

> "*Religion plays an important role in the lives of road users in Nigeria's former capital, Lagos. Often described in terms of an "apocalyptic megacity" overwhelmed by cars, where road signs have been replaced by religious billboards and where prayer is the means to avert the dangers of the road.*"
>
> Janson & Akinleye, (2015)

From the above, religion plays a vital in the everyday experience of Lagosians (Williams, 2010). That is, standard practices of road laws can be ignored and replaced with prayer and religious beliefs, physically manifested in the use of religious billboards replacing road signs. On the other hand, ethnic identity is often tied to specific practices rooted in geography and shared (and/or assumed) history. However, this difference largely disappears when ethnic identity implies religious affiliation, e.g.

Hausa ethnic group of the North are stereotypically Muslim (Akintoye, 2010; Dowd, 2016). A more prominent instance is syncretisation, this occurs when ethnicity, indigenous religion and imported religion are strategically combined in creating in a new and novel identity. It can be argued that these syncretic identities are the dominant Nigerian identity, whereby, ethnic or religious identities are rarely performed independently (Adebanwi, 2005).

Ethnicity and religion play prominent roles whilst context often determines which is most salient (Agbiboa, 2013). There have been studies on the positive relationship between ethnic identity and self-esteem. Based on social identity theory, people who have positive attitudes towards their ethnic groups and identify with it are more likely to feel happier and can use their ethnic identities when dealing with negative or stressful situations (Cislo, 2008; Kiang et al., 2006; Phinney & Chavira, 1992). Therefore, excluding the politicised narrative of ethno-religious values, Nigerians might also use their ethno-religious affiliations as a coping mechanism, particularly in relation to the prevalence of poverty and income inequality.

On a state level, with particular reference to Northern Nigeria, adoption of Sharia (i.e. Islamic law) has resulted in limited access to certain products considered anti-Islamic; including alcohol and sex work (Olaniyi, 2011; Olarinmoye, 2013). However, religious and ethnic leaders are supposedly still answerable to the secular laws of the Nigerian constitution (Weimann, 2010). Similar but less authoritative, are Christian churches that also discourage alcohol consumption, sex work and further prescribe dress codes based on culturally situated Christian perspectives. That is, a dress code prescribed in a church in Nigeria might differ from those prescribed in the USA, even if they are the same church (Janson & Akinleye, 2015).

This section suggests that Nigeria is a deeply religious country, which religion regularly replaces the secular state in both implicit and explicit ways. Subsequent sections will discuss rituals, an essential part of most religions and many ethnicities. Studying consumption within rituals gives the opportunity to observe explicit ethno-religious practices in an intense and often sacred consumption space.

2.3. Weddings

This section will explore rituals as a broad concept for capturing multiple social interactions. An introduction to rituals is given, followed by a discussion of liminality as a ritual space for role transitions. Wedding rituals are then discussed, with particular interest in the global white wedding ritual.

2.3.1. Rituals

a. Introduction to Rituals

A widely accepted definition of ritual is difficult to come by, due to its diverse uses and meanings to multiple people, both academically and in lay terms. As a caveat, Bell's (1997) extensive and in-depth survey of ritual theory concludes that ritual as a concept is less a human social phenomenon but rather a concept invented by academics. Ritual was originally intended as an analytical tool to understand the underlying reasoning and history of religious practices without significant emphasis on the truthfulness or falseness of doctrinal beliefs. An advantage of ritual studies was that differing religions across time and space could be compared even if their content, aesthetics, history and beliefs differed. This was aided by the initial conceptualisation that rituals were the physical and tangible manifestation of religious concepts and abstractions (Collins, 2004). As the study of rituals intensified so did the scope, and it was magnified beyond the trappings of religion, and over time, rituals came to be viewed by many as the sole/core constructing medium of society, including Durkheim, Goffman, Frazer, Lévi-Strauss, to name a few. This particularly suited Western researchers, as rituals allowed for the social comparison of contemporary Western society with remote tribes and social groups, historically and geographically. This was often done on the assumption of universal patterns in all rituals. One of the consequences of this comparative approach resulted in ahistorical interpretations of rituals and its accompanying symbols. Often done to compare typically incomparable societies and, in many cases, to create global overarching social scientific abstractions. Such ahistorical accounts often resulted in reductive and narrow interpretations of ritual practices, of note is Freud's conclusions that ritual practices are simply different ways of resolving the guilt attached to killing or wanting the death of patriarchal figures (Bell, 1997; Collins, 2004).

Nonetheless, Bell (1997) credits early ritual theorists for providing the framework for future methodologies and theoretical frames, including comparative studies, phenomenology, social functionalism and cultural symbolism. The data used in the study of rituals were also diverse including ethnographic data, archaeological artefacts, animal behaviours and written accounts from missionaries, adventurers, emissaries and soldiers. These diverse data sources provide rich and broad categories for ritual theory, whilst simultaneously compounding the multiple meanings and interpretations of rituals. Therefore, what is considered as a ritual is not restricted to religious events, also includes secular events, such as presidential swear-ins, sports pre-game activities, graduation ceremonies, etc. All of which with their observable differences, are now theoretically relevant to ritual studies due to their perceived structural and symbolic similarities (Collins, 2004; Hockey, 2001; Turner, 1969). A running theme in Bell's (1997) analysis is the persistent quest by ritual theorists, except for a few symbolic/cultural theorists, in producing or identifying universal rules governing all rituals.

A ritual can be understood as a collection of activities that employ specific artefacts, used in a prescribed manner, performed and orchestrated by specific individuals (with prescribed roles) and for a particular audience. These activities often take place episodically and are done to create a prescribed or anticipated response from the performers and audience, simultaneously (Gentina et al., 2012; Kochuyt, 2012; Turner, 1969; Rook, 1985; Stanfield & Kleine, 1990). There is a wide range of ritual sources, however, cosmology (religious) and cultural values tend to be the most influential, they also tend to be the most public (Hockey, 2004; Turner, 1969; Rook, 1985). Successful attachments of consumer goods and activities to established religious and communal rituals have often resulted in highly effective marketing campaigns (e.g. Black Friday, Christmas gift giving, white wedding dress) (Otnes & Pleck, 2003; Ger & Belk, 1996; Zukin & Maguire, 2004). In addition, rituals can also be employed as a mirror to view and understand the dynamics of a society (Bell, 1997; Nguyen & Belk, 2012; 2013). Further, rituals act as social meaning making vehicles for ritual participants and audiences, that is, rituals are used to make sense of social worlds (Bell, 1997; Fernandez et al., 2011).

In contemporary times, rituals are becoming less socially prescribed or demanded, rather, they are becoming less visible, public, collective and sacred. They are instead being individually initiated, flexible, blurred and vaguer (Gentina et al., 2012, Hockey, 2001). Consumption rituals appear to be the exception, Ger & Belk (1996) propose consumption rituals as a replacement to religious rituals (which do frequently overlap), based on the predominant and overreaching influence of consumer culture on contemporary society i.e. consumption as the new religion. This increased blurring of boundaries has also affected the number and type of artefacts that are important to a ritual, particularly for social rituals (e.g. weddings), the inclusion of artefacts is increasingly dependent on economic power and less so on socially prescribed norms (Besel et al., 2009).

b. Categorising Rituals

Rook (1985) presents four major components of a ritual; artefacts, script, performance roles and a target audience. Artefacts are objects, symbols, icons, logos, totems or colours that are used during the ritual, whilst simultaneously being used for interpersonal non-verbal communication. Artefacts often have multiple social meanings attached to them beyond their functional use (Turner, 1969; Nguyen & Belk, 2012). The script guides the sequential process of the ritual and also prescribes how the artefacts are to be used and the roles participants are to play. Script flexibility or rigidity varies on a number of factors including type of ritual, time, place, socio-economic factors etc. Performance roles consist of specific activities each ritual participant is to undertake before, during and after the ritual, performance roles can further consist of active and passive roles. The target audience are also in some sense participants, as they actively consume the ritual visually, physically, acoustically and/or culturally (Nelson & Deshpande, 2003; Leeds-Hurwitz, 2002). However, it can be difficult to draw boundaries identifying who the target audience is, especially due to mass and social media. This is particularly true for social rituals, the audience tends to be anyone who is willing to consume the ritual (Ingraham, 2008; Leal et al., 2014; Rook, 1985).

From a hierarchical perspective, rituals can be divided into three categories, the institutional (e.g. religious or political activities), social events (e.g. birthday and

weddings) and individual everyday rituals (e.g. hair grooming and drinking habits) (Gentina et al., 2012; Gusfield & Michalowicz, 1984). This is simply an ordering attempt, a wedding ritual can take place in a religious institution, have a public reception party after and also contain personal preparatory rituals before the wedding e.g. makeup application. A competing categorisation is the secular-sacred dichotomy. Originally, sacred was assigned to religious artefacts, spaces and time (Rook, 1985). However, sacred has now come to mean 'important' and 'personal' and is synonymous with 'special'. In a similar vein, secular was previously thought as profane, that is non-religious (Gentina et al., 2012). However, the lines between these categories are increasingly blurred. The sacred can be a royal coronation, whilst the secular can be a lady applying her daily makeup. Objects used in each ritual can be both, the Queen might be wearing secular makeup for a coronation and the lady might consider her makeup products/kit as sacred (Clark, 2011; Gentina et al., 2012). The elevation of seemingly secular objects, symbols or artefacts to the realm of sacred is often done with focus on an important individual identity, here, the individual creates or modifies a personal ritual around an artefact (Broderick et al., 2003; Ferreira & Scaraboto, 2016; Oswald, 2000). This categorisation is likely overly subjective as an effective means of understanding rituals, particularly when different people in regard to the same ritual, in the same culture can assign different levels of sacredness or secularity to an object, symbol or artefact (Guigova, 2013). In addition, it feeds into the meaning making debate that takes a structuralist approach to interpreting cultural symbols, with an undue focus on binary oppositions often with its reductive tendencies (Bell, 1997; Lanier & Rader, 2017; Saren, 2007).

More common ritual occurrences, particularly institutional and social, tend to be around important socio-biological events including childbirth, puberty, aging and death; collectively these can be termed life-cycle rituals (Houston, 1999; Nelson & Otnes, 2005). This is further emphasised by Jenkins' (2008) conclusion that individuals experience life in stages with an attributed identity, going from one stage to the next, each transition marked to an extent by a ritual. Each of these transitions are often contain tensions including ambiguity, uncertainty and anxiety; dramatised rituals help evoke strong emotions that aid in soothing tensions around these transitions (Otnes & Pleck, 2003; Jenkins, 2008). Such life-cycle rituals are often

developed through religion and are then subsequently secularised. This soothing of tensions is vital in sustaining these transitions, the longer (i.e. time) and wider (i.e. the difference in states), the more dramatic the rituals tends to be. There is also the claim that transitory periods threaten social structures (Bell, 1997; Turner, 1969); this will be further addressed in the liminality sections. Further, rituals also serve to distance the individual from their former states whilst simultaneously welcoming and cementing them into their new identity, this is often done through familiarisation achieved by public dramatisation of their new roles and identities. Unlike individual identity, that is supposedly intrinsic, collective identity is forged in the public, through observable joint activity. Rituals are often activities that are jointly performed between the participant and the audience as a way of forming and strengthening collective bonds and identity, an important component in cementing the transitioning individual into their new social identity (Arend, 2016; Jenkins, 2008; Kochuyt, 2012). Although wedding rituals are not around biological events, they are generally called life-cycle rituals due to the important role transition that are involved, i.e. single to married (Ingraham, 2008).

c. Rituals and Social (Re)Order

A recurring theme for the use of rituals is the achievement of social (re)order, particularly publicly performed social rituals (Besel et al., 2009; McDonald & Wearing, 2013; Obinna, 2012). However, this does not do away with individual agency, rather, it encourages people to place themselves into pre-defined socio-cultural positions and roles. There are multiple forces that determine and influence role choices. Regardless, rituals in themselves achieve said social order by reproducing socio-cultural categories, relations, hierarchies and maintaining information flow, both vertically and laterally. This is often done in ways that are historically perceived by ritual participants as having the least amount of chaos and for fostering harmony (Jackson, 2005; Nguyen & Belk, 2013; Oyedele & Minor, 2012; Saren, 2007). There are multiple instances of this perceived historic harmony and social order being fabricated, however, should participants view the ritual as meaningful and authentic, they will continue to partake in the rituals, even if the anticipated results are currently lacking (Adebanwi, 2005; Hobsbawm, 1983; Onuoha, 2013; Vergès, 2001). However, Ingraham (2008) attests that there are instances of ritual participants considering a ritual as inauthentic and

banal but still participating for other reasons, including improved status, peer and family pressure, financial gain, security etc.

Adebanwi (2005) proposes that rituals in themselves can be used as a form of agency, by reconfiguring prior rituals, adding new elements and changing the intended roles. Here, performance can then be used as a means of accumulating new political and social capital i.e. social reorder. Adebanwi's (Ibid) proposition is done within a framework of society being a constellation of power centres, however, it implies social actions as simply power negotiations (Arend, 2016). Reconfiguring or inventing new rituals as a means for social order is often done with a sense of continuity in mind i.e. linking the past to the present. To give an impression that the ritual is ancient, however, most rituals, over time, undergo changes in the content, ascribed meaning and the role the ritual is supposed to play, these changes are often done to retain/increase the social significance of the rituals whilst fostering common identity (Adebanwi, 2005; Cannadine, 1983; Kapur, 2009; Roche & Hohmann, 2011; Rook, 1985). In achieving or maintaining social order, rituals can also be used in disseminating and creating common knowledge, via public performance, (new) collective abstraction is made real and tangible (Jenkins, 2008; Zukin & Maguire, 2004). In this case, a utilitarian frame is emphasised, whereby, rituals become a means to an end (Seraj, 2012). Askegaard & Linnet (2011) advocate for a balanced approach, whereby over-emphasis is not given to either individuality or conformity. This concludes that a ritual is simply not a collection of individual needs and desires, neither is it explicitly for community development and control.

Goffman (1959 in Bell, 1997) proposes that the social world is scripted and ritualised, following a set of rules governing each individual and collective action. Stanfield & Kleine (1990) recommend that there are essentially 3 different notions in Goffman's ritual claims; habit, ritual and ritualised behaviour, although they do readily overlap. From Stanfield & Kleine's (Ibid) analysis, the three constructs can be placed on a spectrum from habit => ritual => ritualised behaviour. Habit feeds into rituals and rituals feed into ritualised behaviour. A further explanation is that habits are repeated/frequent individual experiences that are then reflected in the ritual but in a more emotionally intense and symbolic manner, over a distinct timeframe. Whilst ritualised behaviour is an extension of the ritual over a longer period with negligible

emphasis on role transition (Rook, 1985). Therefore, Goffman (1959 in Bell, 1997) simply refers to habits, rituals and ritualised behaviour as one phenomenon. Jenkins (2008) further criticises Goffman's assertions as too rigid to account for the unpredictable situations most people encounter in their daily lives. Jenkins (Ibid) stresses that it is impossible to make an exhaustive list of rules and roles to fit every imaginable situation. Jenkins presses on, that most decisions are made out of habit, and that rituals only take up a small amount of daily life, including secular and sacred rituals (Bell, 1997; Hockey, 2001). This further demarcates habits and ritualised behaviour as every day phenomena and rituals as more individualised events.

Of interest is the localisation of globalisation, the transformation of foreign practices into local activities. This can be achieved by syncretising foreign and local rituals into new rituals, which are unique to the local region. This enables familiarisation in the local context whilst publicly connecting participants to a perceived global social polity; other terms include creolisation, hybridisation, synthetisation, and indigenisation (Ammaturo, 2016; Guigova 2013; Leichtman, 2014). Syncretisation is further heightened by mass and social media, rituals are no longer geographical tied to traditional institutions, rather, they can be viewed, consumed, personalised and replicated anywhere at any time across the globe (Clark, 2011; Ger & Belk, 1996). In a similar but opposite fashion, rituals can be used as a resistive force, to re-acculturate individuals into ethnic cultures as an attempt at resisting foreign cultures (Adebanwi, 2005; Chattaraman et al., 2009; Takhar-Lail & Chitakunye, 2015). Rarely in their original form, rather, these ethnic rituals are reinvented and modified, namely 're-traditionalisation' (Adebanwi, 2005; Hobsbawm, 1983). Rituals as a resistive force can also evolve into a coping mechanism for unfavourable social, economic and political conditions, which can further evolve into social reordering as previously mentioned (Adebanwi, 2005).

2.3.2. Liminality

Van Gennep (in Bell, 1997) proposes that socio-cultural transitions often associated with rite of passage rituals usually take place in three steps: separation, transition (liminality) and then (re)incorporation. Separation from the previous identity, place, state, social position or age, cumulatively referred as a phase. During separation, the individual attempts to lose connections with their original phase, whilst in transition

they enter a phase of liminality, described as lacking in identity, place and social position, also described as a 'phase-less' period of the rite of passage. After transition, the entity becomes (re)incorporated in a new phase with all its ascribed labels and attributes. There is some evidence that during the (re)incorporation stage, the individuals often have improved psychological well-being when compared to the other two stages (Cody; 2012a; Cody & Lawlor, 2011). Victor Turner (1969) expands on the concept of liminality that is the transition stage, he states that a liminal space can be physical, by placing the individual in a secluded place, or conceptual, by stripping them of their previous social status and labels but not yet assigning them new ones. Turner (Ibid) describes this phase as ambiguous, between and betwixt social positions, with norms of humility, lack of sexual agency, marginalisation, isolation and passivity. However, Hopkins et al., (2014) encounters participants who described their liminal experience as positive, some negative and others mixed, thus implying that liminal spaces in themselves are not naturally negative experiences (Hirschman et al., 2012). A more general understanding of liminality is that it is a phase in the life cycle of a subject (individual or collective), where established norms and beliefs of its identity are temporarily suspended until new ones can be assigned (Fasan, 2015; Houston, 1999; Kalua, 2009; Yeku, 2015). Jenkins (2008) concludes that all explicit and organisational identity transitions occur within liminal spaces. Similar to rituals, dimensions of liminality can be considered as hierarchical; individual, group and societal, although fluidity and mixing of the three levels is expected (Underthun & Jordhus-Lier, 2017).

a. Contemporary Uses of Liminality

Original conceptualisations of liminality by Turner and Van Gennep was focused on its temporal and experiential nature, contemporary application of liminality has expanded its use. For instance, Harrison et al., (2015) identifies multiracial identity as liminal. That is, people who have multiracial identities, which are between and betwixt two or more distinct racial identities, are in a permanent state of liminality. Considering multiracial identity as a permanent existence, liminality can therefore become permanent. However, this can then lead into its own distinct identity often referred to as 'mixed race'. An identity that is not a sub-category of the different contributing races (Slater, 1997). In addition, states of liminality can be cyclical (e.g.

Halloween or birthdays) or uni-directional (e.g. weddings or childbirth) (Turner, 1969; Tonner, 2016). The difference between cyclical and unidirectional can be fluid, for example, getting married can be unidirectional if the individual stays married or cyclical if the individual gets married multiple times either through divorce, death of a spouse or polygamy (Hirschman et al., 2015; Otnes & Pleck, 2003; Ingraham, 2008). A further stretching of the concept of liminality is that it can occur at a juncture of multiple irreconcilable ideas and ideals. This is a theoretical extension of Turner's original approach to liminality as the conceptual space between two distinct social statuses and/or labels. Contemporary liminal theory goes further, that a conceptual space between two or more irreconcilable identities can also be considered liminal. Here, most important is that the identities in question are mostly irreducible and should a form of reconciliation be reached then such space is no longer liminal as it has therefore developed its own internal and structural logics (Hirschman et al., 2012; McNeill & Graham, 2014; Ogle et al., 2013; O'Loughlin et al., 2017). Cody's (2012a; 2012b) study on "Tweens" (i.e. young people between 10-12 years old) suggests that Tween identity is a liminal one. Cody (Ibid) concludes that the liminars (i.e. Tweens) have strong connections and longings for their previous identities (child), whilst simultaneously longing for their new and anticipated identity (teen), existing in a state of incompleteness. That is, the Tweens cannot comfortably identify with either their previous child identity or their anticipated teen identity. Mupotsa (2015) echoes a similar position in her analysis of South African wedding rituals, she writes that liminal spaces can occur as a meeting point between the real, symbolic and imaginary. In both cases, liminality is afforded the role of a "melting pot" of conflicting ideas/ideals. This clashes with the original assertion of liminality as a state of suspended identity, rather, it becomes a state of multiple conflicting identities (Noble & Walker, 1997; Turner, 1969).

Following the premise that liminal spaces exist in-between social positions/statuses, Turner (1969) describes liminal spaces as boundless and liquid in terrain. This lack of fixity permit for the revision, criticism, inversion and renewal of social structures and norms (Houston, 1999; Lankaukas, 2002; Strong & Ossei-Owusu, 2014). However, there are instances of liminal spaces achieving a form of permanence and therefore developing their own internal structure (Robards & Bennett, 2011). Turner (1969)

claims Christianity was once a liminal space; early Christians considered themselves outside society and equal to each other, but in time, a rigid hierarchical structure developed within the Christian faith.

Turner (1974) coins a new term 'liminoid' as a response to liminal experiences that happen outside rituals. Liminoid experiences focus on 'leisure spaces' sought after by individuals as a means of escaping social norms and structures (Tumbat & Belk, 2011). Turner (Ibid) differentiates liminal spaces for pre-industrial societies and liminoid spaces for post-industrial societies. This therefore leaves an unanswered question for countries like Nigeria, who are neither pre-industrial or post-industrial (Chete et al., 2014). Another criticism is that such labels are based on capitalist descriptions of society and are less reflective of social, cultural, historic and political changes (Targ, 1976). In addition, Turner (1974) focuses on 'play' and 'escapism' as the primary motivation for the existence and the seeking of liminoid spaces, which are voluntary at their core, contrary to liminal spaces that exists as a mandatory phase for social transitions. Contemporary conceptualisation of liminoid spaces is that people intend to actively resist or ignore social norms and expectations within them (Koc, 2013; Kozinets et al., 2004), whilst liminal spaces in-themselves have flexible norms (Turner, 1969). In liminoid spaces, there is no status change after an individual emerges from them. Also, people seek liminoid spaces for their intrinsic value, e.g. nightclubs and the perceived fun attached to them (Taheri et al., 2016). In contrast, liminal spaces have a functional and at times mandatory aspects attached to them; functional in the sense that to become married, one needs to go through the liminal space of a wedding, or to gain a university degree, the individual is expected to attend a graduation ceremony. There are exceptions, for example, you can have your degree certificate posted to you. However, the general idea is that liminal spaces are embedded and not perceived as a 'play space'. Therefore, this study will focus on liminal spaces even if it contradicts with Turner's assertion that it is for pre-industrial societies.

Liminal studies are often directed at individuals (Cody, 2012a; O'Loughlin et al., 2017), Hirschman et al., (2012) applies liminality to material possessions. In this instance, material possessions lose their purpose in the lives of their owners and are kept on the periphery (i.e. places outside the everyday lives of the owner including garages or storages) as an alternative to disposal. Hirschman et al., (2012) further stresses

liminality as a space that can be created and maintained for mundane reasons and not just for individual transitions but also for object/possession transitions. Following the notion of possessions and liminality, Ogle et al., (2013) observes that consumption can induce feelings of liminality, this can happen if the liminal consumption activity is judged as disparate from the identity of the consumer (McNeill & Graham, 2014). Cody (2012a; 2012b) observes Tweens (persons between 10-12 years old) as being forced into a liminal state by marketers' segmentation practices, that only cater to children (i.e. below 10) or teens (13 and above) and therefore increasing the liminal ambiguities and tensions for Tweens. In this case, Tweens consuming products from either segment and/or age groups induces and increases the feelings of liminality. This introduces the concept of liminal consumption i.e. consumption done to induce, during or to exit liminality. Such consumption can be done to ease the emotional strain often associated with liminality; however, there can be unintended effects.

An unintended effect is overconsumption, as a result of making ill-considered decisions due to engaging with a novel consumption landscape. This is often due to the loss of collective and individual identities (left in the separation phase) that help guide typical purchasing decisions (Cody, 2012a; 2012b; Tonner, 2016). Tonner (2016) observes liminars that consume to fill a void caused by being liminal, however, these liminars project such consumption as positive, as a way of achieving some form of belonging, normalcy and structure. This runs counter to the typical negative attitudes towards consumption as a means of achieving well-being (Saren, 2007). Kerrane et al., (2018) offers a counter narrative of South Asian British women inserting themselves deeper into their family's social web as a means of dealing with liminal anxiety and therefore reducing the role of consumption. However, this produces the consequence of reduced (consumer) agency as they become more subject to the decisions made by older family members. Tonner (2016) continues, that service providers often exploit the limited knowledge of liminars. A complimentary concept is liminality inducing consumption, in Ogle et al., (2013) and Thomsen & Sørensen's (2006) study of new mothers, the purchase of items linked to motherhood, like maternity dresses and prams, some of these purchases induced feelings associated with the liminal space of being a new mother. However, in this case, post-liminality is achieved when a suitable amount of role-knowledge and performance is achieved, that is, going from 'new

mother' to 'mother'. This then presents a porous boundary between liminal and post-liminal spaces (Cody, 2012a; 2012b). In the market place, liminars often experience a lack of voice and adequate representation, there is often unidirectional communication from the retailers to the liminars and not the other way around (Cody & Lawlor, 2013; Harrison III et al., 2015; Nash, 2013), which is further exacerbated by Tonner's (2016) assertion that liminars are often novices in liminal consumption spaces. Typical to many studies on consumption, liminal consumption studies have mostly focused on racially white and socio-economic middle to upper class people (Cody, 2012a; 2012b; Cody & Lawlor, 2013; Ogle et al., 2013; Thomsen & Sørensen, 2006; Tonner, 2016; Underthun & Jordhus-Lier, 2017), leaving room for studying liminal consumption within non-white and/or other socio-economic classes of people. This study therefore aims to push liminal theory even further by asserting that different levels of liminality can be experienced within the same role transition space depending on the type, context and influences of the consumption being undertaken.

2.3.3. Global White Wedding

This section will focus on wedding rituals, beginning with some of the popular functions of a wedding. A definition of white wedding rituals will be introduced, and the global aspect will be elaborated on. This will then be followed by how weddings can be viewed as an avenue for democratisation of knowledge and power. This is then followed by the introduction of the word 'perfect' and how it is typically conceptualised within the wedding industry. The penultimate section of the wedding discussion is focused on how weddings are used to manage identity transitions, typically for the bride. And finally, how weddings do not always lead to the liberation as many within the wedding market suggest. A potential response to the democratisation perspective introduced earlier.

a. Wedding Rituals and their Social Functions

This sub-section gives an overview of the social uses of wedding rituals. Wedding rituals provide a public means of displaying allegiance and identification i.e. having a Muslim wedding ritual explicitly signals your association with Islamic and/or Arabic culture (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2002; Ourahmoune & Ozcaglar-Toulouse, 2012). Typically, weddings involve the union of two people, but also involve the amalgamation of the

wedding couples' nuclear and extended families (Otnes & Pleck, 2003; Leeds-Hurwitz, 2002; Lumbwe, 2013). This amalgamation can be further extended in the use of weddings in managing familial connections (Lozada, 2006), this becomes more important with the increasing fragmentation of family bonds via the multiple forms of migration; including, intra-regional, inter-regional and international migration (Fernandez et al., 2011; Kochuyt, 2006). In Northern Vietnam, wedding rituals often last several days and consist of multiple stages with varying importance. The part of the wedding an individual is invited to signifies their importance to the family and can also be used to distance the family from someone they currently consider undesirable. Similarly, inviting a colleague or family-friend to an intimate sub-ritual of the wedding is likely to strengthen the bond and signal their public elevation to the role of (non-biological) family (Nguyen & Belk, 2012; Soucy, 2014).

In response, the size and type of gift given by attendees can also signal the importance of the couple and their family to the attendee (Goodkind, 1996; Soucy, 2014). An example is the type of gold gifts given to the bride during Indian weddings, each quality, including size, type, weight and purity (i.e. carat), signals a specific meaning to the bride and her family (Fernandez et al., 2011). In essence, the decision of who attends the wedding and the response of the invited becomes a complex means of social interaction. However, in individualistic cultures, due to their preference for autonomy, flexible social networks and weaker inter-personal bonds there might be less need for such an elaborate means of social interaction (Thompson et al., 2013). In addition, being married is also presented as a way of achieving social capital, the ritual signals being part of a dominant social group, specifically married couples and broadly speaking, adulthood (Ingraham, 2008). The above examples illustrate immediate interactions, there are also less immediate uses of wedding rituals, such as government regulations of wedding rituals that have longer term effects, often perceived by states a means of social coercion (Ingraham, 2008; Leal et al., 2014; Nguyen & Belk; 2012; Roche & Hohmann, 2011; Sykes & Brace-Govan, 2011). In sum, wedding rituals can be used and understood from a functional perspective, as a means of regulating and balancing social systems (Bell, 1997). Nguyen & Belk (2012; 2013) further emphasise that wedding rituals act as a reflection of society that help reinforce and reproduce societal structures, demands and changes.

In relation to consumption, wedding rituals often entail significant resources and expenditure, taking months and sometimes years to plan. This is typically a result of the 'once in a lifetime' ideal attached to weddings. In many instances, it is considered the most important day of an individual's life. Therefore, weddings have enough depth and importance to show and shape an individual and collective's identity(-ies) (Ingraham, 2008; Kochuyt, 2012; Otnes & Pleck, 2003). Kochuyt (2012) proposes that the reason people have extravagant weddings can be similar to the *'nouveaux riche'* as a means of signalling their newly found wealth. However, this rings hollow against the multiple studies across various cultures, that informants advocate and endorse extravagant weddings regardless of social status, wealth or class (Fernandez et al., 2011; Nelson & Deshpande, 2003; Nguyen & Belk, 2012; Ourahmoune & Ozcaglar-Toulouse, 2012; Rao, 2001).

b. Democratisation and White Wedding Rituals

Wedding rituals tend to be historically religious rituals; they are increasingly secular, particularly in Western countries (Ingraham, 2008; Leeds-Hurwitz, 2002, Sykes & Brace-Govan, 2015). Winch & Webster (2012) explains this as a result of traditional authorities, religious institutions and family hierarchy, losing their power and being increasingly replaced by the market. For example, wedding feasts were often done in the home of a family-friend or relative, currently, most are done at business premises including hotels, banquet halls, restaurants etc. (Otnes & Pleck, 2003; Nguyen & Belk, 2012). Further, there appears to be increased syncretisation of wedding scripts, due to the wedding couple being offered unfettered access to artefacts and symbols by marketers regardless affiliation, limited by only purchasing capacity. This is increasingly being done without the consent of religious or traditional leaders and authorities. A single wedding ritual can contain elements from a diverse range of cultures, religions, languages, markets, etc. (Ingraham, 2008; Lumbwe, 2013). For example, a Kabyle wedding in Northern Algeria can have a Berber dress, French crown, American music, Arabic henna[2] designs, Moroccan food, and so forth (Ourahmoune &

---

[2] Henna is a temporary body dye used for designs on the skin.

Ozcaglar-Toulouse, 2012). It can tentatively be said that wedding rituals are being democratised by the market.

One of the most democratized types of wedding rituals is the white wedding ritual, it can and is increasingly being done without the input and consent of traditional authorities. Due to its consumption-oriented focus, it offers multiple avenues for expressing various and sometimes conflicting identities simultaneously; including cultural, national, global and individual identities. The flexibility at the core of white wedding rituals can be attributed to the (increasing) plethora of consumer choice and personalisation, which has also made it a popular ritual and source for cross-cultural weddings (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2002; Nelson & Deshpande, 2003). White wedding rituals has taken hold across the globe, its intrinsic consumption focused flexibility allows of it to be combined with non-Western local wedding rituals (Fernandez et al., 2011; Lankaukas, 2002; Lumbwe, 2013; Leeds-Hurwitz, 2002; Mupotsa, 2015; Otnes & Pleck, 2003).

The term 'white wedding' is often used interchangeably with 'lavish wedding' largely due to the leading texts on the topic referring to one of the terms whilst broadly referring to the same concept, namely 'Cinderella Dreams: The Allure of the Lavish Wedding' by Otnes & Pleck (2003) and 'White Weddings: Romancing Heterosexuality in Popular Culture' by Ingraham (2008). However, both texts refer to the same event, which Arend (2016, p. 145) describes as:

> "*a marriage [wedding] ritual consisting of a bride in a white dress, a ceremony with processional and vows, a celebratory reception and often a honeymoon*".

A fundamental difference between Ingraham (2008) and Otnes & Pleck's (2003) accounts is that Ingraham attributes the rise of the white wedding to market forces reinstating patriarchal and often oppressive norms in the guise of consumer choice whilst aiming for maximising profits. Otnes & Pleck do acknowledge the driving force of capitalism and market forces, but they point at the changing lifestyles and tastes of consumers whilst market forces are simply responding to fulfil new demands i.e. playing a secondary role (Hockey, 2001). Multiple sources corroborate both arguments, Ingraham (2008) often favoured by (neo) feminists (Adrian, 2004; Arend, 2016; Nash, 2013) and Otnes & Pleck (2003) is often echoed by those who view

economic power and consumer choice as liberating forces (Lin *et al.,* 2012; Ourahmoune & Ozcaglar-Toulouse; 2012; Ustuner, 2000). It is likely a mixture of both, for example, wedding rings are patriarchal leftovers initially used to visibly mark married women whilst their husbands were ring-free. This has been reinterpreted by ring retailers as both the husband and wife now wearing rings as an expression of their love, there is also an extra emphasis on precious metals, therefore increasing profits (Ingraham, 2008; Otnes & Pleck, 2003). Similarly, wedding retailers and vendors are now catering to social groups who were previously excluded from white weddings, including divorced persons, non-white people, LGBTQ+, older/elderly persons, etc. as a response to social and legal changes (Ingraham, 2008; Otnes & Pleck, 2003).

The term 'white wedding' was coined from the white wedding dress the bride was expected to wear, however, it is no longer mandatory, brides now have the options of other colours. In addition, the white dress no longer serves as the defining symbol of a white wedding. Other sub-rituals and artefacts have become just as important including the cake, a wedding reception, photography, decorated cars, veil, and many others. This list of artefacts is yet to be fully complete, as it is constantly and frequently updated (Otnes & Pleck, 2003). In addition, in mainstream USA, white wedding can simply mean a wedding ritual taking place in a church whilst lavish emphasises on the consumption aspect (Ingraham, 2008; Nelson & Deshpande, 2003; Otnes & Pleck, 2003). Therefore, the term 'lavish wedding' might be more apt within the USA. Otnes & Pleck's (2003) preference for the word 'lavish' might be better explained by Ingraham's (2008) assertion that the white wedding ritual is 'the celebration of the accumulation of spectacle'. Here, 'spectacle' refers to a public display of wealth and social status, and accumulation is done through the procurement of multiple goods and services including the white dress, suit or tuxedo, cake, flowers, food, photography, entertainment (DJ and MC), etc. Most of the above are often luxuries in their own right with an associated upscale price tag but become more expensive when associated with wedding rituals. For example, wedding cake is often more expensive than a non-wedding cake even if the ingredients, process and skill required are the same (Otnes & Pleck, 2003; Ingraham, 2008). However, there are other types of weddings, which can be considered as lavish but do not fit the script and structure of a white wedding e.g.

Hindu weddings (Fernandez et al., 2011; Kapur, 2009). Therefore, the term 'white wedding' will be used instead.

There are criticisms of the ritual, some labelling it as invented and inauthentic (Mupotsa, 2015), however, Otnes & Pleck (2003) provide a detailed history of its origins, modifications and contemporary manifestations. The chide of white wedding rituals as being inauthentic might hold more water, particularly due to its overemphasis on materialism and consumption and less emphasis on the sacred significance of the ritual itself (Ingraham, 2008; Arend, 2016). However, it can be claimed that its particular consumption orientation is what makes it so inclusive and to permit anyone regardless of primordial origins and allegiances to partake (Lin *et al.,* 2012), albeit with the mandatory (often significant) financial capital (Ingraham, 2008; Nguyen & Belk, 2012). The significance of white wedding rituals is numerous, in particular is its capacity to serve as popular marketing vehicles. Advertisers employ white wedding imagery to sell a plethora of related and unrelated products and services, including automobiles, real estate, holidays etc. (Ingraham, 2008; Otnes & Scott, 1996).

Romantic love is a mandatory and sacred symbol within white wedding rituals, in addition, white wedding rituals are considered as the ultimate end, 'happy ever after' of romantic love (Ingraham, 2008; Mupotsa, 2015; White, 2011). The increased diffusion of romantic love and its associated consumption practices around the globe, which Ingraham (2008) and Otnes & Pleck (2003) attribute to Hollywood, has further encouraged the spread and participation of white wedding rituals outside its Western origins. However, there has been a lack of the needed local economic opportunity that permits full participation, particularly in the Global South (Posel et al., 2011; Whitehouse, 2016). Boden (2003) provides a detailed reading of how romantic love became embedded in white wedding rituals.

c. I Want a 'Perfect' Wedding

One of the driving ideas behind the need for conspicuous consumption at white wedding rituals is the word 'perfect', which Ingraham (2008) describes as an orchestrated fantasy (Nash, 2013). The idea of having a perfect wedding, perfect dress, perfect cake, and/or perfect music, is often employed as an excuse to encourage the

couple to dedicate significant resources for the creation of an assumed fantasy (Besel et al., 2009). That is, for the fantasy wedding ritual to be created, the 'perfect' consumer goods have to be incorporated. Incidentally, when 'perfect' is used in this context, it is often an allusion to one or a combination of the following words; expensive, tasteful, unique, different, rare, classy, elegant etc. (Ingraham, 2008). The strife for perfection is also presented as the bride exploring her own agency by overcoming multiple obstacles through consumption and choice, which is then narrated as a success story. One of the major obstacles brides face is the reconciliation of the multiple scripts to be incorporated into the wedding ritual; including individual, family, religious, classed and ethnic scripts (Adrian, 2004; Sykes & Brace-Govan, 2015). Through the consumption of specific goods and services prescribed by vendors, these scripts are said to be reconciled and the bride is transformed into the perfect ideal via the rigid direction of 'experts' i.e. vendors (Adrian, 2004).

Sykes & Brace-Govan (2015) split these scripts into two broad categories, scripts presented by mass media, interpreted by wedding vendors and scripts presented by the family which might contain historic, cultural, religious and/or ethnic features. Parents and older family members are often keen on seeing their values reflected in the wedding ritual, as evidence that they have passed on family traditions to the next generation (Kochuyt, 2012; Leeds-Hurwitz, 2002). Due to the individualistic tendencies associated white wedding rituals and its increasing marketisation, the ability of families at enforcing preferred scripts is increasingly diminishing. This is further enhanced as many couples financially contribute or completely pay for their own wedding ritual (Fernandez et al., 2011; Nguyen & Belk, 2012). In addition, there is also the tendency for symbolic ethnicity, the couple might conduct or express certain ethnic customs, artefacts or sub-rituals without understanding or appreciating them, in turn, the audience might also be in the same position (Fernandez et al., 2011; Kochuyt, 2012; Leeds-Hurwitz, 2002). In essence, they might be wearing an ethnic item to show association to please their family or for aesthetic reasons but are not fully committed to the identity they are portraying. In sum, the idea of a 'perfect' wedding is being deployed to rationalise consumption and to aid reconciliation of multiple scripts. Arend (2016) challenges the popular notion that women have been day-dreaming of their fantasy wedding ritual since childhood, Arend asserts that there is

yet to be convincing empirical evidence for this and it is likely that vendors and marketers invented the idea of a fantasy wedding (Sykes & Brace-Govan, 2015). Arend (2016) does identify the three main sources that creates desire for weddings in women; exposure to real weddings, consumption of weddings in mass media and regular discussions about weddings with female friends and family. All of which are collaborative social interactions, rather than isolated individual desires.

In respect to mass media wedding ritual scripts, Ingraham (2008) asserts that these scripts are often presented as tradition, as something that has been passed down from generations (Nguyen & Belk, 2012; Roche & Hohmann, 2011). An example is the presentation of a diamond ring during marriage proposals, this idea was developed by N.W. Ayers for De Beers diamond mining company, as a means of increasing sales of diamonds to the mass public (Bambacas, 2002; Otnes & Pleck, 2003; Ingraham, 2008). This is done by imbuing artefacts with transformational properties, as was done with the wedding dress, which is presented as having the potential of turning the bride into a real-life princess (Nash, 2013; Otnes & Pleck, 2003). In addition to creating new traditions, vendors have also been successful in turning older traditions into consumption spheres (Fairchild, 2014; Ingraham, 2008; Nguyen & Belk, 2012; Otnes & Pleck, 2003; Otnes & Scott, 1996). The white dress for the bride was previously a simple garment to illustrate purity (i.e. virginity) but has been converted into a symbol of class, taste and differentiation. An artefact brides-to-be spend significant resources to procure, whilst others actively consume in the form of images (Fairchild, 2014; Ingraham, 2008; Nash, 2013).

Commodification of ritual artefacts is not unique to the West, in South Africa, a traditional custom called '*Ilobolo*', which loosely captures the exchange of gifts between the groom's and bride's families has been converted into a bride-price like sub-ritual. The father of the bride ascribes a value to his daughter and requests payment in the form of livestock, cash, furniture, cars and other material goods. Without payment, the wedding ritual is unlikely to hold. This creates a barrier for lower income earning men to get married and further reinforcing a class/wealth distinction. There are no observable indications that the '*Ilobolo*' evolution is market lead, rather, a mixture of state legislature and societal influences (Mazibuko, 2016; Parker, 2015; Posel et al., 2011; Rudwick & Posel, 2015), therefore, the

commoditisation of wedding rituals cannot be placed solely at the feet of market vendors.

In the pursuit for perfection, the bride is advised by vendors to conduct the ritual according to her taste, which is often an allusion for 'class' and social distinction (Arend, 2016; Jenkins, 2008; Reed-Danahay, 1996). This idea of taste is then performed through the mining of multiple market niches, including those outside the wedding industry, to create a distinct, unique and classed wedding (Winch & Webster, 2012). This is further augmented via online access, whereby, brides can retrieve information about a wide range of weddings, spanning several cultures, regions and time-frames, searching for ideas to incorporate into their own wedding ritual (Nguyen & Belk, 2012). Roche & Hohmann (2011) describe weddings as a means for reproducing social power relations, the wealthy can have a lavish wedding to publicly illustrate their status. However, the less wealthy can also run into significant debt to give the impression of a higher status, which can lead to lower life quality and further hamper social mobility (Park, 1997; Ingraham, 2008). Therefore, in the absence of debt, the wealthy signal their higher socio-economic status and the less wealthy, by having a tamer wedding ritual signal their lower socio-economic status. However, this excludes anti-consumerists sentiments that still use other artefacts to signal socio-economic status (Otnes & Pleck, 2003). A number of Nguyen & Belk's (2012) participants expressed frustration and feelings of being left-out for not meeting consumer expectations i.e. not having a lavish enough wedding ritual. These feelings are heightened via the consumption of more lavish weddings on mass and social media (Otnes & Pleck, 2003; Ingraham, 2008). Nguyen & Belk (2012) do encounter instances of trickle down, whereby, larger upscale stores sell their unsold stock to stores who service lower income earners, however, this is likely to be stock not wanted by the higher earners and/or are out of season, further providing visual markers of socio-economic status (Nash, 2013).

The presentation of a perfect bride is beyond just the gaze of the groom but also for the audience of the wedding, particularly for attendant women to judge and be impressed (Broekhuizen & Evans, 2016; Nash, 2013; Winch & Webster, 2012). In some instances, the groom is simply an attendant at the bride's event (Pepin 2008). Park (1997) goes as far as claiming that simply attending a white wedding can be considered

conspicuous consumption, specifically if the attendee is concerned and judging the appearance of the wedding. Therefore, the attendees, the couple and their family are jointly creating and performing a white wedding ritual (Ingraham, 2008; Lozada, 2006). Previously, the display of a white wedding ritual was mostly for people who attend the wedding, but the anticipated audience for a wedding has vastly increased and so the means for competition. This is largely fuelled by social media and the incorporation of non-celebrity weddings and couples into bridal commercial literature (e.g. magazines). This competitive spirit is not limited to the couple, their families/parents are also invested in having a bigger and more extravagant wedding ritual than their peers' children (Arend, 2016; Ingraham, 2008; Nash, 2013). Ingraham (2008) further makes note of websites and online interactions of newly wedded brides who directly compete against each other for prizes, by presenting and comparing pictures from their wedding ritual (White, 2011). Leal et al., (2014) further acknowledges the rise of online communities dedicated to wedding planning with its own shared values, rules and codes of conduct. This indicates that the consumption of white wedding rituals has significantly increased in scope and is likely to continue as more mediums of consumptions are created.

Online communities help guide the purchasing decisions of members (Kozinets et al., 2010; Kozinets, 2015; Belk et al., 2013). Viewed as a consumer-to-consumer relationship, members view advice as less biased towards vendors and particularly seek reference of potential vendors (Leal et al., 2014; Chen & Shen, 2015). From a study by Leal et al., (2014) of a Brazilian online wedding community, informants all joined the online wedding community to seek references of vendors, this later evolved into a network of loose relationships and a number of smaller autonomous sub-groups with closer/tighter relationships. Leal et al., (Ibid) states that a major advantage of consumer-to-consumer relationships is that they can evolve into providing emotional support to the bride. This is largely due to those giving advice having empathy on the seeker due to their own relatively recent experience of wedding planning, and further due to the perceived absence of a transactional relationship (Chen & Shen, 2015; Kozinets, 2010). The absence of emotional support or connection is one of the drawbacks brides have complained about when dealing directly with vendors (Nguyen & Belk, 2012). This presents the potential for further diluting and democratising the

authority of vendors, however it does pose the opportunity for vendors to seek useful feedback and for gauging market trends (Kozinets, 2015; Leal et al., 2012).

The direct and indirect impact of vendors is further emphasised by their role in supplying both the script for the way the wedding should be composed and how it is narrated after the event i.e. as a success story (Broekhuizen & Evans, 2016; Guigova, 2013). Vendors often advocate for strict adherence to prescribed scripts, however, encouraging micro-variations, for example, changes in the colour, texture and sometimes appearance of the cake, however a cake itself is mandatory (Bambacas, 2002; Fairchild, 2014). This is likely due to vendors having multiple experiences with white weddings and therefore having set expectations (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2002). There are also instances of large deviations from the script causing significant discomfort and costs for vendors (Adrian, 2004). In particular, Sykes & Brace-Govan's (2015) ethnographic study of wedding gown purchase explains that initially, brides-to-be are often resistant to mainstream bridal identity, however during the retail experience of purchasing the gown and through frequent contact with the wedding industry, the brides become acculturated by retailers and start to develop their own bridal identity. This initial resistance to bridal identity could be explained by Hopkins et al., (2014) study, that concluded that participants who are anticipating role transition are more critical of advertisements that are role-oriented but due to the demands of problem solving, become receptive to such advertisements. Similarly, through personalisation of existing wedding gowns, the brides are able to use their gown as a means of expressing individual identity (Sykes & Grace-Govan, 2015). Therefore, in this case, personalisation can be conceived as a problem-solving activity. In essence, the wedding can be visually different but structurally the same and these structures can be controlled and reinforced by vendors (Adrian, 2004; Bambacas, 2002; Sykes & Brace-Govan, 2015).

There is an idea that women are more materialistic than men and therefore are more inclined to want an extravagant wedding. However, multiple authors, feminist and non-feminist, argue that the wedding industry is designed and invested in the bride being the centre of the wedding and further tying her self-identity and esteem with the scale and uniqueness of her wedding (Adrian, 2004; Ingraham, 2008; Otnes & Pleck, 2003; Park, 1997; Pepin et al., 2008). In response, many of the wedding academic

literatures tend to focus on the bride, being that the bride is often expected and instructed by vendors to micro-manage the entire ritual whilst the groom stays on the periphery (Adrian, 2004; Besel et al., 2009; Fairchild, 2014). However, it is worth noting that there is typically a wedding committee, however, its members vary according to culture, tradition and possibly financial capacity. Few studies have so far mentioned and investigated the role of the committee (Lumbwe, 2013; Sykes & Brace-Govan, 2015), but do focus on the individual roles that members play within the wedding planning process. Contrary to assertions that men are not invested in wedding rituals, within cross-cultural weddings, grooms who are of Western origins, marrying a non-Western bride, are well informed and often take charge for implementing aspects of the wedding that pertain to white wedding rituals (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2002). Therefore, grooms might be much more knowledgeable than they let on and are willing to do more should the occasion demand. This can be explained by Jenkins' (2008) assertion that the pressure and need for conformity is highest at cultural boundaries. Therefore, the groom could feel pressured to conform to white wedding ideals when located at a cultural boundary, such as an inter-cultural wedding (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2002; Nelson & Deshpande, 2003).

Referring back to the bride, they are often sold the idea that a unique wedding is an avenue of achieving a mini-celebrity status, only if it is a perfect wedding and managed by a perfect bride (Winch & Webster, 2012). For this, the role of wedding manager is presented as prestigious by vendors. Winch and Webster (2012) suggest that the role of manager is packaged in self-empowerment rhetoric and the bride is made to believe that being the manager for the wedding is an opportunity to explore and enhance her sense of agency. This empowerment rhetoric is however aimed only at socially mobile women, with the economic power to forge and maintain new consumption identities (Nash, 2013). The bride is given the impression of being powerful as she assumes the position with the ultimate capacity to choose and reject whichever item or service she deems fit for the wedding ritual. However, in reality, many brides do not have the physical, financial, cultural and/or social resources to produce a wedding entirely on her preferences (Ingraham, 2008; Nelson, 2013; Otnes & Pleck, 2003; Winch & Webster, 2012). Ironically, the groom often wields veto power even if the bride makes most of the decisions (Boden, 2003; Besel et al., 2009; Ingraham, 2008; Pepin et al.,

2008). In wedding guide books aimed at men, the advice often given to men is focused on how they should manage their discomfort for being part of the wedding planning (Pepin et al., 2008). This is further reinforced by other vendors who question overenthusiastic grooms for being too involved in the wedding planning process (Adrian, 2004; Pepin et al., 2008). Pepin et al., (2008) describes this as the groom managing the bride whilst the bride manages the wedding (Boden, 2003). Further, a study by Mikucka (2016) of 87 different countries using World & European Values Survey data between 1981 and 2009, concluded that married women have a life satisfaction advantage over their unmarried counterparts, an advantage that has steadily decreased for men but remained static for women. This suggests that as society women have more to gain from being married compared to men. Therefore, the men can be less interested in having the perfect wedding. In sum, there are multiple factors that ensure the bride remains the centre of the white wedding ritual independent of materialistic tendencies.

d. Managing Identity and Transitions

White weddings can also be considered as a form of collective identity management, whereby, multiple parties are invested in how the wedding ritual is performed. Each member of the collective giving their varying inputs on which artefacts and symbols they feel needs to be present, including but not limited to the state, parents, peer group, ethnic group, family, religious officiant and the couple themselves (Ingraham, 2008; Roche & Hohmann, 2011; Sykes & Brace-Govan, 2015). This acts as a vehicle for connecting the couple to the social groups of the involved parties (Pepin et al., 2008; Kochuyt, 2012). Kalmijn (2002) links the lavishness of a white wedding ritual to the involvement of the couple's parents and family; the more involved the family is, the larger the white wedding ritual. In extension, cohabiting couples and previously divorced couples are less likely to have their family involved in the planning of the wedding compared to couples who live with their parents or those who are living alone. Kalmijn (2002) interprets this relationship as a means for managing uncertainty, because previously married or cohabiting couples are more familiar with the roles within a marriage than those living alone or with family (Baker & Elizabeth, 2013). However, this does not account for older couples who renew their vows by having a large white wedding ritual (Otnes & Pleck, 2003). Thus, suggests that

Kalmijn's (2002) conclusions are only relevant to those who perceive themselves as undergoing a role transition. In a Taiwanese study, Adrian (2004) suggests that white weddings have evolved beyond being a 'rite of passage' but rather a 'rite of distinction', here, the ritual serves to differentiate the marrying couple from their peers. This evolution is mostly credited to the increased age of marrying couples, which often comes with stable careers and increased income, therefore needing less of a transition to join the perceived social group of adults (adulthood) (Baker & Elizabeth, 2013; Sykes & Brace-Govan, 2015). In more recent studies, Australians and New Zealanders claim that wedding rituals no longer signals a rite of passage into adulthood as many couples are already cohabiting. Rather, it signals a stronger and public commitment to the relationship. Informants expressed increased satisfaction in their relationship as a result of becoming married (Baker & Elizabeth, 2013; Sykes & Brace-Govan, 2015). The above studies indicate that wedding rituals still serve as a rite but the specific type of rite is flexible and likely region/culture specific, albeit with limited studies (4) to support this claim. Regardless, white wedding rituals can still serve as a point of transition from one state, to another.

Several studies via a feminist perspective often give the impression of the bride as being coerced and exploited by wedding vendors (e.g. Besel et al., 2009; Ingraham, 2008; Nash, 2013). Sykes & Brace-Govan (2015) conclude that within the context of purchasing a wedding dress, convenience and word of mouth are the deciding factors in purchasing a dress and less so the influence of vendors, including bridal magazines and dress retailers (Arend, 2016). Accordingly, there are multiple instances of brides asserting their own agency, some going as far as using a second-hand dress to express anti-consumerist sentiments even when they can afford a brand-new dress (Otnes & Pleck, 2003). An extreme version of agency, which evolves into satire, is that of rural weddings in Southern France. Reed-Danahay (1996) observes a wedding tradition of mixing chocolate and champagne in a chamber pot as a direct mockery of bourgeois sensibilities. The two products are often associated with middle to high (class) culture and they invert this association by placing them in a chamber pot to signify excrement. This supports the notion that wedding related consumption is not always in line with contemporary wedding consumer culture (Roche & Hohmann, 2011). Therefore, white wedding ritual participants can express their agency, however, as previously stated,

vendors are invested in keeping said agency within the confines of white wedding ritual structures and scripts. In addition, these expressions of agency do not account for the market norms or ritual scripts that dictate the wedding planning process. Rather, they illustrate how different wedding artefacts can be acquired and used.

An emerging area of study, is wedding rituals as a form of resistance and/or negotiation of hegemonic forces, including globalization, state authority, cultural norms, foreign cultures, class distinction, heteronormativity, parents and older family members etc. (Goodkind, 1996; Lankaukas, 2002; Nash, 2013; Nguyen & Belk, 2012; Reed-Danahay, 1996; Roche & Hohmann, 2011; Sykes & Brace-Govan, 2015). Nguyen & Belk's (2012) Vietnamese informants were keen to exclude Chinese customs from their weddings, as they currently perceive China as culturally imperialist. Similarly, informants from Roche & Hohmann's (2011) study of rural Tajikistan weddings use extravagant weddings as a means for expressing their Islamic transnational identity, as opposed to the conservative (secular) identity prescribed by the post-Soviet Tajik government. Other studies are focused on weddings as a means of embracing and negotiating globalisation (Adrian, 2004; Lankauskas, 2002; Lozada, 2006). The term 'negotiating' is key, as there is rarely ever full adoption of globalised artefacts or structures, there is often a localisation process of the global (Adrian, 2004; Rumford, 2013;2014). That is, defining the global in the terms, customs and rituals of the local, colloquially, teaching globalisation to speak the local dialect. However, negotiation and resistance patterns are often heterogeneous and are as different and complex as the local cultures globalisation contends with. For instance, Chinese and Taiwanese couples have professional wedding photographs taken in rented dresses and tuxedos, which are not worn on the day of the event and are often the only professionally captured pictures of the wedding (Adrian, 2004; Lozada, 2006). This deviates from the white wedding ritual script of wearing a dress and a tuxedo on the day, not before. However, it can be argued, that this is simply an aspirational effort at emulating Western ideals as seen in the makeup of Taiwanese brides that are done to signal a fairer Western look (Adrian, 2004). A response to Western beauty ideals that have become global; slim, tall, blonde hair, narrow nostrils, pale skin etc. (Ingraham, 2008). However, the way these ideals are localised still require fitting into local social structures. In China and Taiwan, the couple are expected to wear local attires, but the

couple still wants white wedding ritual consumer artefacts, hence, the preference for wearing the costumes before the wedding (Adrian, 2004; Lozada, 2006). In addition, Western beauty ideals are employed as a means for class distinction within Taiwan and less so for being Western for its own sake (Hoang, 2015; Shih & Kubo, 2002).

This localisation varies and is not only geographically specific, but it is also temporally relevant, this is illustrated via Kimport's (2012) study on white wedding attires worn by same-sex couples in the USA. Kimport (Ibid) concluded that same-sex couples that were previously legally excluded from white wedding rituals in the USA were more likely to conform to gender norms of white wedding ritual attires. That is, male same-sex couples are more likely to both wear suits than any other attire, whilst female same-sex couples are more likely to wear a wedding dress than any other attire, both conforming to the gender ascribed attires of white wedding rituals (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2002). This augments a previous study by Oswald (2000), that LGBTQ couples are often hidden in heterosexual weddings, in an attempt conform to the rigid structures of white weddings, which is predominantly a heterosexual ritual.

Nash (2013) opposes this view of localisation, she asserts that it is simply a case of the white wedding industry looking for new markets to exploit and sell their readymade white wedding artefacts. In her study of Australian maternity wedding dresses, i.e. wedding dresses for visibly pregnant women, Nash (2013) asserts that there was little difference between the maternity and non-maternity dresses. This close similarity often resulted in form-fitting maternity wedding dresses, which often caused anxiety for brides who could not find more comfortable, loose fitting dresses. In both instances, the agency of the white wedding ritual participants appears curtailed by the rigid nature of the white wedding ritual script. Therefore, regardless of the motivating forces for acquisition, word of mouth and/or convenience (Sykes & Brace-Govan, 2015), the market still force fits them into ready-made clothes. However, this can still be viewed as a form of localisation, in both cases of same-sex and pregnant bride wedding rituals, markets are simply reacting to lifestyle changes and behaviours that are no longer broadly considered as deviant (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2002; Nelson & Deshpande, 2003). The act is likely profit motivated but the action itself can be described as localisation, in that the way white wedding rituals are being adapted is unique to each locale and are in-line with geographic and temporal lifestyle changes.

In essence, even within the West, the birthplace of white wedding rituals, localisation is still a continuous phenomenon and is interpretively performed during every instance of a white wedding ritual (Bell, 1997; Lozada, 2006).

e. When Consumer Choice Fails to Liberate

White wedding rituals are often presented by vendors as both traditional i.e. white wedding structures and history, and modern i.e. consumer choice and personalisation, a contradiction that needs the expert guidance of vendors to reconcile. However, an additional layer of contradiction is added when non-white women are involved. Within Australia and the USA's wedding industry, non-white women are encouraged by bridal magazines to imitate their racially white counterparts, e.g. by being told to straighten their hair or to hide their often curvier body figures (Ingraham, 2008; Sykes & Brace-Govan, 2015). Mbunyuza-Memani (2018) encounters a similar precedent in South-African wedding reality television series, of natural kinky Black hair being phased out and foreign straight hair being foregrounded. Suggesting that this is not limited to the West. This therefore implies that non-white women participating in white wedding rituals are encouraged into assuming racially white aesthetics, challenging the liberation mantra associated with white wedding rituals, and its associated consumer choices. With increased complexity, Mupotsa (2015) argues that contemporary South African Black women often still face sexist and patriarchal social structures, that consumer choice rarely alleviates. Therefore, by participating in wedding rituals, they succumb to the patriarchal social structures of marriage and white wedding rituals does little to liberate them, rather, it pulls the women towards oppressive structures and expectations, whilst simultaneously extoling the benefits of consumer choice (Mazibuko, 2016; Mupotsa, 2015).

In an attempt to integrate into white wedding culture in non-Western regions, having multiple wedding rituals is a norm (Ingraham, 2008; Kochuyt, 2012; Mbunyuza-Memani, 2018; Roche & Hohmann, 2011). Lumbwe (2013) highlighted seven important sub-rituals conducted during wedding rituals of the Bemba speaking people of Northern Zambia, three of which are variations of white wedding rituals, including a kitchen party (a variation of bridal shower), a church procession (including the white gown, suit/tuxedo and other artefacts) and a white wedding reception. Each of these

are conducted with strict adherence to local religious and cultural customs, e.g. at the kitchen party, mostly religious music is played, whilst being an alcohol-free event, contrasting with more consumption focus of Western bridal showers. A similar process has been identified in Algeria, South Africa, Taiwan, Tajikistan and Brazil (Adrian, 2004; Mupotsa, 2015; Ourahmoune & Ozcaglar-Toulouse, 2012; Roche & Hohmann, 2011). This harkens to the localization argument earlier stated and further reinforces the presumption that white weddings are significantly flexible when viewed from a consumption perspective. However, white wedding rituals are performed in non-Western regions within local social structures, with limited evidence of liberation.

Section (2.3) 'Weddings', attempts to illustrate the multiple ways white wedding rituals can be used in achieving multiple social ends including class affiliations, status, negotiating/resisting hegemonic forces, performing collective/individual scripts etc. The essential ingredient in the white wedding's success at achieving such diverse and sometimes contradicting aims is its preference for materialism and consumer choice. By converting white wedding rituals into consumer artefacts, it detaches the ritual from its traditional gatekeepers and enforcers, therefore, allowing for indiscriminate use and modification. As a consumer symbol, its meaning also becomes contested and modified to suit whichever social context it is employed in. A general overlook suggests that the white wedding market is vendor and manufacturer driven, with consumers given opportunity for micro-adjustments.

The two leading sources on contemporary white weddings have focused on the USA market; subsequent studies have expanded the scope to other Western and Asian countries. There are limited studies on African countries and less so on Africa's most populous country, Nigeria. Of particular interest is the method of localisation of white wedding rituals as a global phenomenon in non-Western cultures. A number of studies have emphasised which white wedding artefacts are incorporated in local wedding rituals, however, none have provided detailed analysis of the how and why this happens. Lin et al., (2012) & Adrian (2004) provide simplistic answers that localisation for white wedding rituals is done to emulate Western ideals to increase social standing and differentiation. This explanation can be applied to many Western goods consumed in non-Western countries and therefore not unique to white wedding rituals. Nguyen & Belk (2012; 2013) provide a more nuanced explanation with regards

to Vietnam; they conclude that as Vietnam continues to shift from a 'centrally planned communist' society to capitalist, the incorporation of Western consumption ideals will increase. However, they fail to illustrate the specific mechanisms behind the localisation of white wedding rituals, that is, why are certain aspects of the white wedding ritual incorporated and others rejected. Roche & Hohmann (2011) provide a similar broad stroke socio-historic process for Tajikistan. Nguyen & Belk (2012; 2013) and Roche & Hohmann (2011) provide macro-level explanations giving little room for agency and micro level interpretations. Whilst Lin et al., (2012) and Adrian (2004) provide simplistic albeit agentic explanations not unique to white wedding rituals. This study will therefore try to unravel how white wedding norms are negotiated in Nigeria, that is, which parts are rejected, which are accepted and importantly, why.

2.4. Conceptual Framework
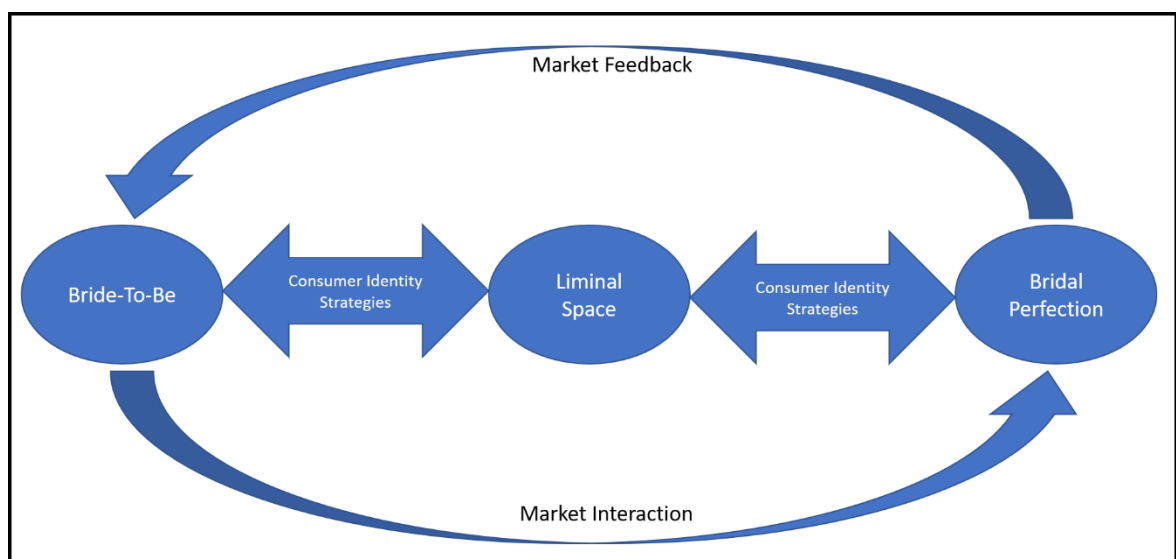
Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

Figure 2.1 gives a pictorial overview of the conceptual framework of this study. Following in the footsteps of leading literature on wedding ritual, emphasis is placed on the bride instead of the wedding couple as a unit. However, as Leeds-Hurwitz (2002) suggested, there are occasions of the groom taking on a managerial role in organising the wedding ritual. Once the bride-to-be has accepted her role as future bride and engaged, she engages in a list of consumer identity strategies to ensure she

acquires the needed socio-cultural knowledge from the wedding ritual planning phase. Of note is the 'consumption as transformation' strategy, whereby, the bride-to-be engages in novel consumptionspheres to aid her transition. Within the liminal space, she then has to reconcile the two major wedding ritual scripts available to her, those presented to her by mass media and those encouraged by family. Although there is often overlap between the two scripts, there are typically fundamentally parallel, due to mass media encouraging individualism and family focused on collective identity (Ingraham, 2008). The gap between the two perspectives become more pronounced in the Global South and its related rituals (Mupotsa, 2015). Within this reconciliation process, she still has to consider her own aesthetic preferences, typical of 'consuming to resolve identity conflicts'. In a sense, she is struggling against the identities imposed on her by the liminal gatekeepers, i.e. wedding vendors and family. All of these is towards an ideal perfection, that itself is dynamic and changes as the bride-to-be becomes more familiar with the wedding ritual process and industry i.e. market feedback. This is mostly spurred by the 'consuming to be different' consumer identity strategy, whereby, the bride aims to have a unique and memorable wedding ritual. Whilst simultaneously performing a pre-determined script as is required for fitting into the white wedding tradition. Here, 'market interaction' refers to her encounters with the wedding ritual industry.

The liminal space in the framework refers to the standpoint between the bride-to-be current reality and all the possibilities of bridal perfection. However, these possibilities are influenced and limited by liminal gatekeepers, including vendors, parents, states, religious institution etc. However, participants have a range of consumer identity strategies to employ when navigating around and through the liminal space. The cyclical nature of the framework tries to illustrate the dynamic nature of this process, discouraging a linear representation of liminars' experience. Further, bridal perfection refers to the envisioned totality of the wedding ritual based on the bride's consumer identities and expressions. In this section, bridal perfection is not a constant but a product of the different forces acting on the bride and her own aesthetic preferences, the back and forth motion of the different arrows also illustrate that bridal perfection is not static, rather, emerges from the different negotiations liminars undertake. For example, a bride changing what perfection means due to the constraints of her budget.

2.5. Summary

This chapter provides an overview of the theoretical strands that influence this thesis. Primarily, they include consumer identity, rituals and liminality. In addition, a brief overview of Nigeria via consumption, religion and ethnicity is provided. All of these are then pictorially summarised via a conceptual framework.

3. Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The transient and ephemeral nature of wedding rituals and consumer identity dictated the selection of an inductive approach that encourages emic interpretations. Therefore, a philosophy informed by centring the subjective experiences of participants was chosen, i.e. relativism and interpretivism. Going a step further, the chapter will acknowledge the subjective experience of the researcher in this process, elaborating on how the data produced is co-operatively created between the researcher and participant, i.e. constructionism. The socio-cultural inclination of the thesis also prompted a preference for symbolic interactionism which focuses on the social reality of participants. After a discussion of the research philosophies, the main methodological tool selected for the purpose of the study will be discussed, namely Netnography, sometimes referred to as online ethnography. A method that immerses the researcher into an online space, dedicated to a specific issue. A thorough investigation reveals that there are numerous online data collection methods, however based on the aims of the present study, Netnography emerged as being the most suitable in that it lent itself well to the observation of an online community with clear boundaries and unique internal dynamics. The researcher was immersed in a predominantly Nigerian online community called Nairaland over the course of twelve months.

With this in mind, the chapter not only details the epistemological stance taken by the researcher, it also casts light onto the ways in which the data collection process was expanded, organised and executed. The chapter will also provide discussion on how the addition of interviews was used to complement the online method. The outcome of which were an additional 32 interview participants, a table of the interviewees will also be presented. A discussion of the ethical concerns follows in the latter sections of the chapter, in addition, a generic data analysis method will be presented, thematic analysis, which can be surmised as coding, clustering and theming. A critical evaluation of the method will be considered and how it compares to other data analysis methods.

A summary will also be presented at the end of the chapter, to conclude the methodology chapter.

3.2. Philosophy

3.2.1. Ontology – Relativism

Relativism is the ontological view adopted by this thesis, whereby reality is assumed as being subjective. This thesis does not engage with moral relativism; ethical considerations are addressed in the ethics section of the thesis (Ethical Considerations, section 3.5). From an ontological standpoint, within the frames of social sciences, relativism assumes that reality is not a singular unified entity, rather, it is dependent on the interest, capacity and meaning making system (including biological, cognitive and cultural systems) of the observer. Here, observable reality is subject to the observer. Avoiding absolute relativism, that assumes all things are subjectively derived, a pragmatic notion of relativism was applied (Hales, 2006). A form of agnosticism was also included, that is, it cannot be truly known what reality is, as reality is always perceived from the point of a human subject and hence human subjectivity. In essence, material reality does exist outside of cognition but it cannot be perceived independent of cognition. This stance assumes that conceptualisations are the subjective creations of humans and some concepts are more useful than others. The concept of oxygen appears more useful in understanding biological processes as opposed to natural spirits. This further allows for multiple, sometimes contradictory, concepts to be held simultaneously. In this respect, this also veers from outright scepticism that assumes it is beyond human cognition to comprehend reality, therefore, suggesting the fruitlessness of ontological debates and perspectives.

Ontological relativism accepts the basis of scepticism, that reality is always subject to human cognition and comprehension; however, the debate is still worth having, as utility for different conceptualisations of reality cannot be ignored. This becomes pertinent when certain conceptualisations of reality can be counter-productive e.g. evil spirits (O'Grady, 2002). In addition, ontological debates allow for the inspection of common-sense beliefs that are often taken for granted. The realist ontology assumes reality is prior to cognition, with its own structures and properties. However, within realist debates there is the potential for relativism, i.e. 'are the properties of an object

relative to that of another object?' or, 'is there potential for absolutism within realism?' In line with ontological relativism, absolutism of all kinds, including relativism, scepticism and realism often limits ontological debate. In particular, absolute relativism can be likened to idealism, whereby, reality is wholly constructed by the mind (i.e. cognition) and is independent of any form of material reality. Conversely, arguing whether there is a singular material reality or multiple can also lead to a dead end. Following earlier agonistic leanings, human subjectivity is still the primary mechanism used to judge whether information representing reality originates from one or multiple sources. An alternative is the abstract debates of multiverses, recently dominated by quantum mechanics and string theory (Hales, 2006; O'Grady, 2006).

Assuming a relativist leaning realism, multiple theories can be used to describe a singular material reality, therefore, rejecting the notion of a perfect theory, instead focusing on the 'most useful' theory. Ontological relativism perceives a form of reductionism in this, all theories point to the same material reality albeit with differing accuracy. Ontological relativism instead assumes, given different contexts, theories of reality are irreducible. Consequently, any form of grand theory that attempts to unify all theories is also rejected (Benton & Craib, 2001; O'Grady, 2002). In the same stride, empiricism is precluded, as it focuses on knowledge gained through observation. For this knowledge to be a unifying theory, it posits a singular structure for human mental cognition, i.e. all humans perceive reality in the same intrinsic way. This veers into another version of absolutism.

Within empiricism there is also a relativist leaning that takes on a 'theory of best' approach. That is, there is no underlying set of observation free from human subjectivity and therefore, theories generated from observations need constant revision and improvement (Benton & Craib, 2001). This thesis restricts itself to ontological relativism; although it has been proven that natural/hard science is also a social process within sociological studies, particularly 'the doing of science'. At some periods of time, women were excluded from being scientists and the findings offered by women in science were rendered void on the basis of their gender. Even if the facts and findings generated from natural science are non-relative, the context they are generated in plays an important role (Benton & Craib, 2001; Williams & May, 1996).

A tangential path is cultural relativism, which suggests that all cultures are different and all cultures are 'right', and therefore should not be compared to each other. It follows that ethnocentrism should be avoided at all costs. This assumes cultures are homogeneous entities, in actuality, within cultures there are heterogeneous values and belief systems. This becomes more pronounced when cultures are equated to nation states, which often contain multiple ethnicities (Hales, 2006), therefore cultural relativism was rejected. Within relativism, this study assumes constructionism as the preferred approach. Constructionism refers to a specific focus on social interactions. This perspective rejects the notion of an objective truth waiting to be discovered, a core proponent of objectivism. Rather, knowledge is established by social interaction between individuals (Gomm, 2009). The term constructionism can then be expressed as knowledge being constructed, not discovered (Crotty, 1998). Bryman (2012) states that constructionism also refers to the negotiations that produce social hierarchies and systems. These hierarchies and systems are not given but are continuously negotiated and (re)constructed. Rather than looking at cultures as distinct monoliths, constructionism encourages cultural inquiry via the interrogation of how participants co-create their cultural systems, rather than as a natural given.

In reference to constructionism, construction of meaning is always done within a specific social context, i.e. culture. This social context can be referred to as an inherited meaning making system that allows people in shared social contexts to give the same or similar meaning to the cooccurring objects or phenomena (Crotty, 1998; Silverman, 2016). This further suggests that in a different social context, the same object will likely be attributed with a different meaning. This stance differs from subjectivism, which assumes that the object/reality/world in question plays no part in the construction of meaning. Here, subjectivism claims that all meaning is imposed on objects/reality and further rejects the notion of intentionality. Intentionality suggests being conscious means to be aware of 'something' (Ibid). Hence, subjectivism advocates that humans create meaning independent of the object and then impose this meaning on the object. Therefore, constructionism assumes that there is a material reality observable by human senses. However, the object cannot be fully described without considering the subject who encountered the object and an experience does not occur in a vacuum devoid of the object of the experience. This therefore assumes the data and

interpretation by the researcher is also socially constructed; whilst further construction occurs between the researcher and participants and the research community, respectively (Bryman, 2012; Cooper, 2008). Constructionism further assumes that there are no true or valid interpretations of phenomena but only more useful interpretations against other less useful ones (Cooper, 2008). As a further opposition to objectivism, Crotty (1998) asserts that even non-social realities and knowledge are also socially constructed, (e.g. engineering, physics, biology etc.). Therefore, regardless of the object being studied it is always viewed from the lens of culture. Constructionism lends itself to "how" questions, which is the main thrust of this study; how liminality is experienced in a Nigerian wedding ritual context? (Kendall & Wickham, 2004). In sum, constructionism assumes that knowledge is dependent on human perception, social conventions and experience (Gilbert, 2008).

As all knowledge is assumed to be a social construct and dialogical, it can then be inferred that researchers are simply creating new social constructs to explain existing constructs, therefore lending itself to post-modernism (Gomm, 2009), a sub-category of subjectivism. However, unlike constructionism that attempts to give some form of structure or approach to understanding phenomena, post-modernism typically is more fluid. Instead, post-modernism often focuses on discrediting modernist approaches to research and knowledge (Bakker, 2011; Crotty, 1998). It can even be suggested that an attempt to define post-modernism is anti-post-modernist. As post-modernism also categorically challenges objectivism, it is easy to group it alongside constructionism (Gomm, 2009). However, the constructionism research approach attempts to inject elements of objectivity and reflexivity in meaning making without claiming to be the correct or perfect version of knowledge- a stance often assumed by objectivism (Crotty, 1998; Gomm, 2009; Potter, 2004). In sum, constructionism is not a description of social reality but of basic assumptions and properties in reference to meaning i.e. knowledge. In particular, it assumes knowledge, meaning and systems are emergent and in constant flux (Bryman, 2012).

3.2.1. Epistemology – Interpretivist

This thesis is focused on the subjective meaning participants assign to the actions and objects within their social reality. Given its preoccupation with meaning and understanding, interpretivism presents itself as being the most suited epistemological

position. In particular, as a social science thesis, differing from natural sciences where a positivist position tends to be favoured, interpretivism is concerned with the understanding of human phenomena. Positivism is often tasked with explanatory approaches, with emphasis on casual relationships, i.e. cause and effect. Interpretivism proposes that human behaviour is not so linear and straight-forward, rather, it is influenced by a plethora of complex and often indistinguishable factors. The inclusion of the researcher's pre-conceptions is also a frequent criticism of interpretivism. More specifically opponents assert that researchers are unable to separate their own bias from the context under investigation. As a result, all findings that emerge under such a lens are likely to be 'tainted', and thus imbued with a researcher's own world-view. A fair criticism, though, if the aim is to understand the subjective meanings behind actions, the researcher requires a meaning system of their own. This assumes that all human behaviour is resultant and influenced by meaning. In addition, the researcher is charged with understanding the meaning making system of the participant and report from their own common-sense view, i.e. participant's perspective (Bakker, 2011; Barron, 2013).

Due to its dialogical nature, interpretivism is often political with multiple narratives vying for the audience/presence (Denzin & Lincoln, 2002; Earthy & Cronin, 2008). This can be construed as a criticism, however it is near impossible to have (unstructured) conversations without acknowledging the political climate wherein such conversations are taking place (Earthy & Cronin, 2008). Therefore, the context is part of the data and decontextualisation removes some meaning from the data i.e. making the data apolitical. A suggested solution is to report the 'facts' and let readers decide on the political use of the study. This approach assumes social facts can be presented free of their political roots. Rather, interpretivism suggests reporting the 'facts' alongside the multiple political influences, albeit not listing all of them, instead offering a subjective collection of possible influences based on primary and secondary data. Nguyen & Belk's (2013) study is emblematic, as it provides a brief overview of Vietnam's state policies and propaganda on what constitutes a wedding ritual. In a similar vein, section 2.2.3 'Nigeria and Her National Identity', attempts to provide an overview of the political landscape of the thesis.

This research therefore adhered to an interpretivist approach that asserts that causal relationships in social and/or cultural settings are near impossible to identify (Crotty, 1999), thus, implying that social phenomena can be observed, understood and explained, ideally from the perspective of the subjects of the research. In line with constructionism, symbolic interactionism (SI) was adopted, mainly a strand of interpretivism that focuses on social interaction within human behaviour, with specific emphasis on the processes by which participants interpret their social reality and actions. However, there is the position that all human behaviour is a form of social interaction, i.e. human behaviour is often in reference to collective norms. This leans towards the social identity perspective pursued in section 2.2.1 'Identity and The Consumer' of the literature review. These meanings are interpretive in nature and can change over time. That said, interpretations are constrained by the cultural meaning making systems available during the interaction (Crotty, 1998; Oliver, 2012).

The above contrasts with phenomenology, another version of interpretivism that encourages meaning making with the least possible influence of culture and other 'given' meaning making systems (Crotty, 1998). This can be understood as Peirce's 'firstness'; the immediate interpretation of an experience before second-hand experiences and knowledge systems can modify the immediate interpretation. This immediate interpretation is often a feeling, possibility or a vague awareness (Bakker, 2011; Crotty, 1998). In opposition, SI suggests that researchers take note of their pre-conceptions but assumes these pre-conceptions cannot be eliminated rather, they are part of the meaning making process between the researcher and participants (Bryman, 2012). A process echoed in constructionism. Grecas (1980) identifies two core criticisms of SI, one being the difficulty associated with defining the concept of self, which tends to be the centre of SI related research. The other being the astructural inclination of SI (Smith, 1981), which often presents a narrow view of social power and organisation. For the first critique, a possible explanation is that a core notion of SI is that humans are too complex to be understood from an *a priori* standpoint (Oliver, 2012). This implies that understanding human phenomena should be inductive and therefore a fixed, distinct and/or direct inference of what the self is, is near impossible. Several attempts have been made to solve the astructural nature, particularly by the

Iowa School of American sociology, to no avail, having been criticised for being too quantitative (Crotty, 1998) and plagued with reductionist tendencies (Smith, 1981).

SI focuses on the shared knowledge system that enables social interaction and how this system is reflexively applied, modified and elaborated on during the interaction (Grecas, 1980; Handberg, 2014; Oliver, 2012; Smith, 1981). Social interaction is not limited to verbal conversations, but includes body language, personal interpretations of the world, how one presents themselves to others, perceptions etc. All these can be considered as social interaction as they imply back and forth negotiations of what we think our social reality is and what the social reality might mean to others (Linstead, 2006; Lundgren, 2005; Stewart et al., 1978). SI further assumes that social interaction consists of continuous interpretations of social reality with the use of inherited symbolic systems, including language and culture. The symbolic aspect of SI is also important as it emphasises the way symbols are employed in human interaction to transfer information from one individual or collective to another. This also includes how these symbols are interpreted on the receiving end, i.e. a bi-directional system. Further, these interpretations are not dormant; they are taken into consideration for future interactions and also have the potential to alter the identities and relationship between the communicating parties (O'Grady, 2002). SI focusing on the 'what', i.e. 'what is the interpretation?', whilst ethnomethodology, another version of interpretivism, leans towards the 'how'. Following on from earlier accounts that the researcher makes use of their own meaning making system whilst ethnomethodology asserts that researchers should not place their own meaning making system above that of their participants, but rather both are equally valid. In addition, it becomes beyond the reach of the researcher to tell the 'truth' of what participants interpret, though the researcher can observe resultant behaviours. In accordance, detailed observation and analysis of human interaction is the preferred mode of research in ethnomethodology (Ammaturo, 2016). Similar to phenomenology, ethnomethodology takes the position of naturally occurring talk/interactions/data, free of the researcher. Such situations are difficult to achieve in the presence of the researcher. As long as the researcher is present, even simply as an observer, their presence can be deemed as part of the data/context (Wilkinson, 2016). Another criticism is that ethnomethodology is often over-descriptive, attempting to make note of every detail regardless of its relevance to

the study. In context, this study does not attempt to give a detailed account of Nigerian wedding rituals; rather, the rituals serve as reference for observing the presence and influence of liminality. SI naturally lends itself to this process, that is, what symbols are used in the ritual? And most importantly, 'why?'

3.3. Research Design

This study takes a preference for inductive methods. There are a variety of inductive methods; including ethnography, interviews, focus groups, visual inquiry and content analysis. In addition, many of these methods overlap, for example; unstructured and spontaneous interviews are typically part of ethnography whilst content analysis can be applied to visual data. It is also difficult to claim a perfect method; rather, weighing advantages over disadvantages is a more plausible route. Content analysis is usually applied to available data; it is not a data generating method, but rather an analysis method. Therefore, this method was discounted due to its limited utility for probing, i.e. if an interesting finding is discovered, it is difficult to dig deeper if the data source is limited to what is readily available. With this in mind, the research adopted an ethnographic stance, more specifically, Netnography. The latter term originates from ethnography and has been developed to refer to the practice of participant observation in virtual/digital environments (Kozinets, 2015). Coupled with this, offline interview and participant observations were also conducted to improve the depth of the online data. Focus groups was a tempting method; to gather ritual participants in a room to discuss their collective experience. However, the Netnographic aspect of this study considered an online Nigerian wedding ritual community as a whole, satisfying the collective narrative of focus groups and is also naturally occurring. Members of focus groups tend to be put together by the researcher and participants can feel coerced into an unfamiliar environment, whereby, they are prompted to talk about personal experiences (Bryman, 2012). Along a similar path, elements of visual inquiry were present in both the offline and online methods. Visual data was part of the online community, predominantly pictures of past wedding rituals and offline, the researcher recorded images of the wedding ritual attended. However, these are not the primary thrusts of the thesis' method but secondary to the textual data the study was concerned with. This is on the assumption that a visual-only approach will be limited in eliciting

the way identity is socially constructed, whilst visual inquiry lends itself to identity expression.

Ethnography is one of the more popular methods for inductive studies. It is premised on participant observation, that is, the researcher becomes a part/member of the social context they are investigating. Simultaneously, the researcher maintains their role as an observer, taking notes and recording activities within the context. This gives the researcher a dual insider-outsider identity. This dual approach is assumed to give the researcher the opportunity to understand and interpret the phenomenon whilst keying into social scientific theories and models.

3.3.1.   Netnography

Ethnography and related qualitative methods (e.g. interviews and participant observation) appear to be the dominant method for investigating (wedding) rituals (Broekhuizen & Evans, 2016; Fairchild, 2014; Fernandez et al., 2011; Gentina et al., 2012; Nelson & Deshpande, 2003). This is likely due to the perception that rituals need to be considered holistically because they are more than an aggregation of individual parts/sub-rituals (Ingraham, 2008). There are a few exceptions of surveys and questionnaires being used but they are often open-ended, narrative inclined or based on findings from a qualitative pilot study (Arend, 2016, Leal et al., 2014; Park, 1997). Ethnography can be distinguished into participatory and non-participatory ethnography, whereby the non-participatory is premised on the researcher not influencing the investigated phenomenon (Gobo & Marciniak, 2016). However, following symbolic interactionism, simply observing the incidence can be considered as participation albeit passive, rather than active. Therefore, giving rise to the debate, to what extent is the researcher active/passive in the research context.

This thesis uses an ethnography informed research method that advocates for an inductive naturalistic study of human phenomenon (May, 2001; Sharpe, 2004), which is exemplified by Sharpe (2004) and Davies (1999):

> *"The adoption of an ethnographic approach can also be based on the rejection of the belief that social processes can be studied as artefacts of consciousness accessible through questionnaire surveys. From an ethnographic perspective*

such methods are seen as superficial, remote and mechanistic…. [Ethnography] enables researchers immerse themselves in the social processes being studied."

(Sharpe, 2004, p.308)

"…as a research process based on fieldwork, using a variety of (mainly) qualitative research techniques but including engagement in the lives of those being studied, over an extended period of time."

Davies (1999, p.4)

Sharpe's (2004) definition focuses on the premise of the rejection of the belief that social artefacts are representative of social processes. Instead, calling for an immersion of the social process itself, if it is to be understood in depth. Meanwhile, Davies (1999) makes note of ethnography as a collection of research techniques, therefore not ruling out deductive methods but focuses on fieldwork, i.e. contact with the social process and actors over an extended period of time. One of the benefits of an ethnographic approach is that it allows for the study of identity without accepting ethnic, normative, academic or legal labels as "given" (Davies, 1999; Heath & Street, 2008). Ethnographers are therefore granted scope to shift from prescriptive to descriptive labels (Heath & Street, 2008; Sharpe, 2004), and combine these descriptions with theoretical grounding, ultimately allowing for further depth to the interpretations (Davies, 1999; Matusov *et al.,* 2007). Within the context of global white wedding and its influence on local consumption, Appadurai offers a succinct summary of ethnography's role;

"The task of ethnography now becomes the unravelling of a conundrum: what is locality, as a lived experience, in a global and deterritorialised world".

(Appadurai, 1991, p.200 In Kraidy, 2002, p.192)

The dictates of this thesis echo tenets of native ethnography, a form which sees the researcher as a member of the researched community or society. This in turn reduces the prospects of misintepreting collected data (Kraidy, 2002; Davies, 1999). In support, the researcher has experience as a wedding photographer, having frequently documented Nigerian wedding rituals. This experience allows for valuable insights to be added to fieldnotes during data collection. Davies (1999) warns that simply being a native to the social setting should not be assumed to be unproblematic, especially as

the researcher in this case is a member of a Western/foreign institution. Therefore, caution was taken in limiting the researchers' world view on the data by following a systematic data anlysis process described in coming sections. Section 3.7, reflections, gives an overview on some of the issues the researcher encountered from a personal and first person perspective.

Nigeria exists over a large physical landscape and with a significant number of its population in diaspora, a traditional ethnographic approach might provide limited results due to its usual confinement to a relatively small geographical area (Kraidy, 2002, Sharpe, 2004). Therefore, an online ethnographic approach (i.e. Netnography) was regarded as being more suitable, providing an interesting avenue for exploring the research aim as doing so rendered distance inconsequential. Netnography offers the opportunity of acquiring interactive data relating to online topics that matter to consumers and not just those dictated by the researcher (Belk et al., 2013). Netnography is also a novel method for studying Nigerians, as there is yet to be considerable uptake in Netnographic studies of Nigerian culture, to the best of the author's knowledge.

Using offline participant observation, it was felt that researcher would be able to follow in detail the processes and decisions the wedding couple make during their wedding planning process. The limitations for doing so were noted however as this confined the researcher to one participant at a time, as Ingraham (2008) indicates, the bride and groom might jointly make a decision but the buying of the services is done individually e.g. the bride buys her wedding gown without the groom and vice versa regarding the groom's suit. In addition, to the best of the author's knowledge there is yet to be a physical wedding planning community, as opposed to online wedding communities. This differs from wedding fairs, which is more of a marketplace for bringing vendors and buyers into direct contact (Nguyen & Blek, 2012; Otnes & Pleck, 2003). This is further buoyed by studies that conclude purchasing decisions are increasingly being made online, even if the purchase itself is done offline e.g. seeking advice, reading reviews, looking for inspiration etc. (Ferreira & Scaraboto, 2016; Miller et al., 2016). Sykes & Brace-Govan (2015) propose short and focused ethnographies, whereby, the purchasing decisions of a particular product are of concern. This is likely to produce thick description of that singular process. This differs slightly from the aims of this

study, which seeks to unravel the meeting point between global white weddings and Nigerian weddings. It therefore requires some prior knowledge regarding which product segment is most likely to give adequate insight of this juncture. On the other hand, it is likely the online wedding community will focus on the tensions of wedding ritual planning and how to solve them, omitting the taken for granted aspects of the wedding ritual. The resolution of this is part of the motivation for a blended Netnographic approach, through the inclusion of offline interviews and participant observation of actual wedding rituals.

Online activities are increasingly playing a bigger role in individual's purchasing decisions, identity creation, expression and interaction. Netnography attempts to uncover the cultural complexities of online interaction, as in ethnography, it involves data collection done simultaneously with data analysis. This is unlike other online data analysis methods such as social network analysis and content analysis, which tend to decontextualize the data from the participants, more so social network analysis. In addition, as the name implies, social network analysis is concerned with connections between participants and less so the meaning making process of the group. There are instances of combining social network analysis with other qualitative methods to improve depth of analysis (Belk et al., 2013; Kozinets, 2002; 2015; Nelson & Otnes, 2005). Limitations of content analysis have been covered in previous sections. Kozinets defines Netnography as:

> "*A name given to a specific set of related data collection analysis, ethical and representational research practices, where significant amount of data collected and participant–observation research conducted originates in the manifests through the data shared freely on the internet, including mobile applications*".

Kozinets (2015, p. 79)

Kozinets provides a general guide to conducting Netnography, including; (1) making cultural entree, (2) gathering and analysing data, (3) ensuring trustworthy interpretation, (4) conducting ethical research, and (5) providing opportunities for culture members' feedback (Kozinets, 2002; 2015). It was suggested as a guide but it is not a linear process, particularly, step (4) regarding ethical research, as this should be recognised throughout the study (Markham & Stavrova, 2016; MRS, 2014b). There

have been other versions of ethnography focused on the online medium, including online ethnography and virtual ethnography (Hine, 2000; Boellstroff et al., 2012). The three approaches are intrinsically similar; Netnography appears to be increasingly popular. Hine (2000) focuses on the individuals responsible for the online space and less so the members of the community. This differs from Kozinets' community centred approach in which reporting focus is directed at community member's identities and worldviews (Kozinets, 2015). However, others have used the term virtual ethnography and focused on online communities as proposed by Kozinets (2015) (Catterall & Maclaran, 2002; Hine, 2008). The phrase online ethnography is often loosely applied and appears to embrace non-academic writers, albeit professional writers i.e. journalists (Robards & Bennett, 2011). The preference for Netnography is buoyed by Leal et al., (2014) and Nelson & Otnes' (2005) Netnographic study of online wedding communities.

There is the archival aspect of studying online communities, whereby information is simply downloaded and studied with limited interaction between the researcher and the community, i.e. passive participant observation. This bare similarities with content analysis. This approach has been critiqued for being distant from the social context with a tendency of making shallow inferences from the data (Bowler, 2010; Davies, 1999). In addition, field-notes are equally as important as they allow the researcher to tell their own personal story in addition to that of the researched community. This can also aid reflexivity during data analysis. Similar to ethnography, there is no 'one size fits all' rule for executing Netnography, therefore, this study included both offline and online data collection as a means of triangulation (Bryman, 2012). In addition, the online informants tend to carry out their consumption habits offline (Brennan et al., 2015; Ferguson, 2011), and it therefore becomes important to document their offline behaviour. Further, the separation between online and offline is becoming increasingly blurred, e.g. uploading a live stream of the wedding online. In essence, it can be viewed as both online and offline simultaneously (Kozinets, 2007).

As an investigation into Nigerian weddings, Nairaland.com (NL) a popular website, was identified as the primary platform for the research due to its high traffic and thriving community (Alexa.com, 2017). Nairaland.com contains multiple sub-forums, including wedding related discussions since its inception in 2005 (Aderinto, 2015;

Nairaland, 2016[3]). To aid entrée into the online community, basic analysis of previous wedding related conversations were conducted. This was done via open coding of the downloaded conversations to aid familiarity with the online community as suggested by Belk et al., (2013). Following successful entrée, data co-created between the researcher and online community was obtained. This is not limited to conversations the researcher is actively participating in but simply due to the researcher's presence in the community, it is anticipated that the data will be modified as such (Belk *et al.,* 2013). This refers to online participant-observation, whereby, the researcher observes online interaction and contributes in an appropriate manner (Nelson & Otnes, 2005). There is no consensus on what '*appropriate*' is, but contributions should be in line with the norm of the online community, whilst adhering to ethical guidelines (Kozinets, 2015).

The data collection period lasted for 12 months, from October 2016 to October 2017. Kozinets (2015) insists that the lived-experience (i.e. participant observation for an extended period) allows the researcher to gain insider status, which is mandatory for interpretation from the view of a community member. As the researcher was already a member of the Nigerian wedding community, as a specialist (photographer), an extended period of research sought to further enhance immersion. The time scale consisted of three phases; the first three months of data collection focused on gaining entrée to Nairaland. This involved seeking consent from the website's moderators and gaining sufficient understanding of the community before engagement. This phase focused on downloading and analysing previous conversations on the forum i.e. archival analysis. The following six months consisted of intense participation and involvement within the online community, including asking questions, endorsing comments and articles, posting content, sharing personal experiences etc. During this period, prominent members were identified through the frequency, depth and breadth of their posts. The final three months consisted of engaging these prominent members to confirm and expand on emergent themes from the data.

---

[3] Nairaland, (2016). How to Place Targeted Ads on Nairaland. *Nairaland.com*. Retreived http://www.nairaland.com/1049481/how-place-targeted-ads-nairaland

Similar to most inductive methods, ethnography suffers from constrained generalisability, whilst also being regarded as overly descriptive, context specific, subjective and offering limited replicability. However, ethnography is concerned with the study of observable behaviours, an approach more deductive methods are limited in, say self-reported Likert questionnaires. Although attitudes and opinions can be expressed or perceived from the ethnographic data, it captures holistically 'if' and 'how' it rhymes with the observed behaviour. Laboratory experiments can capture behaviours, but this is a highly regulated and usually unfamiliar setting for the participant and can prompt artificial or unnatural behaviours or worse, researcher/experiment induced behaviour. In addition, regardless of interpretation of behaviours based on the researcher's pre-conceptions, human behaviours are usually relatively consistent and stable over time. For example, a wedding ritual can be interpreted as patriarchal or as a celebration of romantic love; it does not detract from the social fact, that a wedding ritual has taken place and neither does it change the meaning attributed to the ritual by the bride, groom and attendants. It can therefore be argued, regardless of how many wedding rituals observed, within the same culture, the behavioural patterns should be similar, although not 'exact' as preferred by deductive methods. Also, the preference for description allows the actual behaviours to stand on equal footing with the interpretations of the researcher. Therefore, the researcher is limited to imposing their personal pre-conceptions onto the data.

The generalisability limitation is often over-emphasised by critiques of ethnography and inductive methods. However, other disciplines including astrophysics, genetics, anthropology, geology etc. are often context specific and with limited generalisability. Improved generalisability can be achieved by employing a theoretically driven analytical approach, which is often done via theoretical extensions and/or comparisons with multiple contexts (Gobo & Marcniak, 2016; Nicholson et al., 2018). This study employs both methods, theoretical extension by applying theories on ritual, liminality and consumer identity to the data analysis and interpretations. This is followed by a compare and contrast method, which often entails comparing the behaviours in the current context against those of other studies on a similar issue in different contexts i.e. wedding rituals in other countries. This compare and contrast method appears popular amongst wedding ritual ethnographies, which is likely due to

the global white wedding being a readily available and comparative standard (Lumbwe, 2013; Ourahmoune & Ozcaglar-Toulouse, 2012; Roche & Hohmann, 2011). The generalisation suggested here is not the same as studies with hundreds or thousands of participants, rather, generalisation in contributing to theory and academic knowledge.

3.3.2. Interviews and Participant Observation

It was concluded that diversity of data would improve the depth of explanation and understanding of nuances that occur in the community (Arend, 2016). This also coincides with earlier descriptions of ethnography, as a collection of qualitative techniques. Therefore, semi-structured face-to-face, in-depth interviews have also been conducted; these were in turn informed from insights gained during observation and participation within the online community. Following a tentative analysis of the online data, an interview guide was created in appendix 4 and later updated to appendix 1 after pilot testing. These interviews involved participants who were planning their wedding rituals and those who were recently married (within the previous two years) (Fairchild, 2014; Leeds-Hurwitz, 2002). Minimal attention was paid to the theoretical framework when designing the interview guide, as interest was on augmenting the Netnographic data.

Talk (i.e. the interview process itself), can further be considered as a process for reconstructing existing social reality, but still within the limitation of narrative not being equal to experience. That is, someone giving a retrospective account of an event or their perspective on a phenomenon should be considered both within the social and conversational context and should not be considered as an accurate account of events (Kitzinger, 2004). An important limitation of interviews is that information that informants decide to omit, remains beyond the interviewer's control. This can occur for several reasons, and more often than not, the interviewer is not aware of such omissions (Andrews et al., 2004). Similar to the data collected during participant observation, the interview data is considered as co-created between the interviewer and interviewee (Andrews et al., 2004; Belk et al., 2013). Nonetheless, interviews appear to be a popular tool amongst researchers studying weddings and other rituals (Arend, 2016; Fernandez et al., 2011; Gentina et al., 2012; Sykes & Brace-Govan, 2015). In this respect, the researcher also attended wedding rituals in person to create field-

notes (Broekhuizen & Evans, 2016; Fairchild, 2014) and photographs (Fairchild, 2014; Kimport, 2012). These acted as supplementary data in addition to the online conversations on NL, with the aim of gaining a holistic understanding of Nigerian wedding rituals (Guigova, 2013). Leal et al., (2014) refers to this approach as blended Netnography, whereby, online and offline data collection methods are employed. Leal et al., (Ibid) gives the impression that online conversations provide a broad overview about brides whilst offline interviews are employed to provide deeper insights and more concise understanding. A discussion guide was used during the semi-structured interview to highlight key wedding ritual events that need to be discussed (Appendix 1). The interview guide was created from insights gleaned from NL, to both confirm and expand on emerging themes of the NL data. Although, the theoretical thrust of the thesis informed the interview guide, more emphasis was placed on exploring what a Nigerian wedding is. This is due to the only literature the author could identify on Nigerian weddings that provided a wholesome overview was published over three decades ago (Mann, 1985). Recent studies on Nigerian weddings are available, they often focused on snippets of the ritual (Nwafor, 2012; 2013; Ubong, 2010), rather than the ritual inclination of this study that sees the entire process, from engagement to honeymoon, as a continuous experience of liminality (Ingraham, 2008; Turner, 1969). Hence, the interview guide aimed to establish a basic foundation of the processes of a Nigerian wedding and then used standard probing techniques (i.e. asking follow-up questions) to provide details that appear to contribute to the theoretical thrust. A consequence of this approach is that the conceptual map played less of a role in the crafting of the interview guide. This can be seen as a disadvantage, but it was deemed that wholistic understanding of Nigerian wedding rituals had priority over conceptual and/or theoretical connections. Particularly, to encourage emic interpretations.

Participant observation of wedding rituals consisted of attending the ritual, informal interviews with the ritual attendants (i.e. not audio recorded), note taking, and taking photographs on the researcher's mobile phone. It was decided that using a professional (DSLR) camera would not be appropriate, as this could draw unwanted attention to the researcher, albeit at the loss of higher quality images (Belk et al., 2013). Similar to interviews, people do not always do what they say and it is plausible that they may modify their attitude in the presence of the researcher. Whilst these claims are valid, it

was felt that they were moderated by certain factors. For example, it was likely that, given the relatively large scale of (Nigerian) wedding rituals which are attended in upwards of 100 people, the presence of the researcher would be minimised. Also, due to the importance of wedding rituals it was further be assumed that the participants will be mostly focused on successful performance of their own wedding ritual, rather than the presence of the researcher.

An unanticipated event occurred at a Christian church service that was focused on the principles of a Christian marriage. The researcher was invited to attend the service by one of the interview participants. The researcher attended two events from the same church, during which pictures and notes were taken. Informal interviews were not conducted at this event, as explicit permission from the church authority was not given. Particularly, due to the unanticipated attendance of the services. Therefore, a passive participant observation was taken. Ethical considerations of this will be discussed on subsequent sections.

3.3.3.   Sampling

a. Online Sampling

Due to the ethnographic nature of the study, a specific sample size was not pre-determined (Fairchild, 2014). Nairaland.com (NL) is the most popular Nigerian online forum according to Bing and Google search engines, see Appendix 2 and 3. NL dominated the top three results.
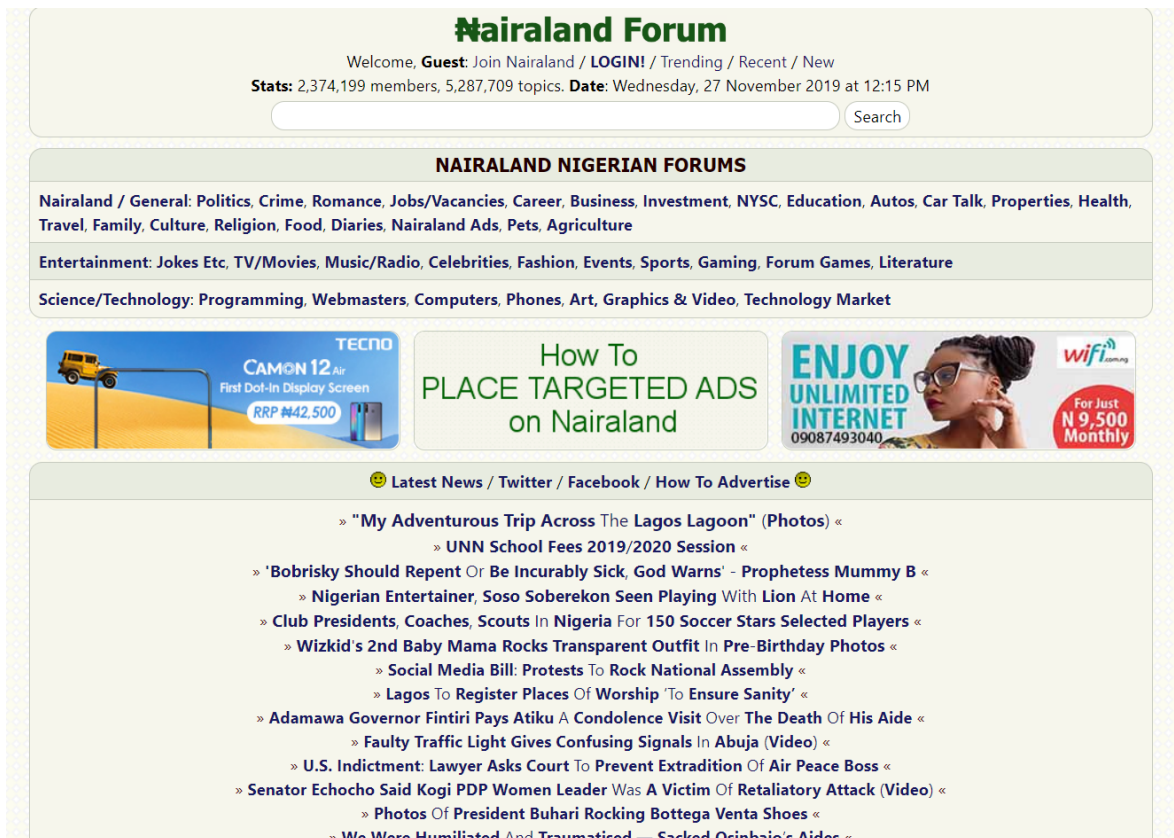
Figure 3.1 Nairaland 'events' section (Nairaland.com)

Figure 3.1 is a screenshot of the homepage, also referred to as the landing page, the first page visitors see on arrival to the website, if they are not following a link to a specific discussion or section. As illustrated in figure 3.1, there are multiple sections of the website including sports, crime, romance, education etc. Of interest is the 'events' section under the entertainment category of the website. Nairaland's 'events' section is specifically for parties and wedding related discussions, the sampling in this case simply means going through every post for wedding related conversations within the 'events' section and bookmarking them for further investigation and contribution.

Figure 3.2 Nairaland homepage (Nairaland.com)

Figure 3.2 illustrates the kind of discussions encouraged on this section of the website, including birthdays, weddings, occasions, planning etc. After a linear attempt of going through every thread on the events section, NL's own search engine was employed, to identify discussions outside the 'events' section using keywords relating to Nigerian wedding rituals (e.g. wedding, marriage, party, owambe, bride, groom, wedding planning etc.). 43 relevant discussion threads were identified and downloaded. This was done via copy and pasting into a word document, page by page. Below is an example of such a thread, that goes as far back as 2013;

Your Questions On Wedding Planning Answered! - Events - Nairaland

Your Questions On Wedding Planning Answered! by ▓▓▓▓ 1:10am On Apr 25, 2013

4 months to my wedding august 24th and 25th please where do i start from? i have nobody except love and my husband to be.

Weddingfever: Please help me plan my wedding.

5 Likes 5 Shares

Re: Your Questions On Wedding Planning Answered! by ▓▓▓▓ 3:45am On Apr 25, 2013

Best wishes, dearie. What d'you mean by where to start from? You've started already. I mean, you've picked the dates. That is a major step.

Anyway, have you picked your wedding colors? Have you booked for anywhere close to the wedding venue, which will be the reception hall? Reserved or booked ahead for rental equipments? Who's gonna decorate the hall, the cars? Print the invitation, RSVP cards (optional), church programme (make sure you keep for yourself and your groom) and start sending them out. Just the IV and RSVP cards, I meant oo!

Is there an option to write your own wedding vows and have you written them? If No and you really want to, these Steps To Writing Your Own Wedding Vows, will help you immensely. Does the institution require you to show blood tests? Have you completed your name change documents? Applied for marriage licence yet? Sent wedding announcements to local newspapers/magazines, maybe?

Are you going to sell aso-ebis? For Bride's and Groom's sides, for both the trad and the white wedding? Who and who's going to be among the bridesmaids and groomsmen? Are they aware of how much their wears might cost them? Shouldn't they be visiting the tailor's like right now? Determine how many are interested now. Give out the gifts (if you want to give gifts for these) as you're distributing them, so no one person can buy a single bundle, share among 6 people and then, disturb you for 6 gifts on your day or after. And if you're solvent enough, you could give gifts to your guests. Like jotters/calenders/pens/umbrellas, on which your faces're printed. Whether they buy aso-ebi or not.

Hey, what about your own wedding attire(s)? Are you certain they meet the dress code of the institution (church/mosque) as regards sleeves, low neckline, color....?? Of course, Do-Not-Forget-To-Buy-Wedding-Rings!! And don't forget to hand them over to the ring bearer or best man, on that day too - to take to the church or wherever.
Who's going to do your make-up btw, make your hair, tie your head tie...you know...help you dress? You need professional touch, of cos. It's not everything that our aunts and mums can help us do perfectly, all the time.

Confirm which cars (2 or 3) and drivers, will be taking you, your groom, your train and maybe folks, to all the venues. Someone might need to coordinate the parking at the venue's parking lot too.

What does your guest list look like? D'you think more than a 100 people will show up? Or are you going to make it strictly-by-invitation, to help you impede chaos, even better? How are they going to sit? Just anywhere? Have you booked to have that particular caterer you've heard wonderful stories about, before someone else, makes her unavailable on your day? Discuss your menu with her/him. Is she/he going to be baking your cake or will you just order a beaurrriful one? Oh, also check in with your vendors: confirm arrival and delivery times. Also, do not forget to make arrangement for people to serve and maybe ushers too. Yes, they're different. 😊

What about your MC, a DJ/live band, a photographer, a videographer? Give a list of important shots to take, to your wedding photographer. You get the drift-- students from so so so, members of kegites, daddy's family and so on.

Practiced your dance moves? Don't get "served" by your hubby on that day oo. People must "spray" you money. Which of your trusted friends/fam will help you pick them up and keep them safe, until after the boogie?

Would you need to hire hotel rooms for out of town invitees? Where will you retire to, on that very day, after the ceremony? Honeymoon's where? Flight tickets? 😊

Best wishes, dear!

61 Likes 5 Shares

Re: Your Questions On Wedding Planning Answered! by ▓▓▓▓ 3:47am On Apr 25, 2013

After the wedding, do not forget to tell "mummies and daddies", people who gave gifts, friends and all that attended, fat fat fat thank you...via phones or any medium that's humanly possible. Have a happy married life. 😊

11 Likes 2 Shares

Figure 3.3 Wedding planning discussion thread (Nairaland.com)

Figure 3.3 gives a glimpse into how questions and replies are presented in respect to wedding planning.

b. Offline Sampling – Snowball Sampling

For the offline sample, purposive sampling was employed, specific to individuals who had recently hosted their wedding ritual. The interviews were conducted over two years, with 2 short visits to Nigeria between 19th February to 19th March, 2017, and 16th February to 12th March, 2018. Initially, participants were to be obtained from active members from NL, though this was hindered due to a general reluctance to meet in person for the interview. Therefore, recruitment was pursued via the researcher's personal network. This included contacting friends, family and vendors for referrals. This proved more effective and may reflect Nigeria's relationship-based society in which word of mouth holds considerable weight, given that this is how referrals for interviews were secured (Akanji 2011). In addition, participants expressed a level of surprise and scepticism that the study was preoccupied with Nigerian weddings only; they often suspected an ulterior hidden motive. Even vendors, whom the researcher had prior relationships with, based on prior working interaction as a wedding photographer, were more sceptical. It could be assumed they feared losing their 'dear customers' to a rival photographer. A less dubious alternative could be that their general unease with the study inhibited them from risking their client relationship for a process that appears to offer them negligible returns.

The researcher was able to successfully overcome the above challenges through consistent phone calls, emails and texts resulting in 32 in-depth interviews lasting between 45 – 140 minutes. Bryman (2012) described this as opportunistic and snowballing sampling. In addition, the samples were taken from two major Nigerian cities; Abuja, the researcher's home town and official capital of Nigeria, and Lagos, the commercial centre of Nigeria.

Table 3.1 Participant Profile

	Role	Location	Age	Tribe	No. of years married
Chukwuma	Groom	Abuja	30	Igbo	1
Nafisa	Bride	Abuja	22	Hausa	1

Bimpe	Bride	Abuja	27	Yoruba	1
Akin	Groom	Lagos	32	Yoruba	1
Kola	Groom	Lagos	29	Yoruba	2
Emma	Bride	Lagos	25	Igbo	1
Sola	Bride	Lagos	28	Yoruba	1
Ola	Bride	Lagos	27	Yoruba	Engaged
Funke	Bride	Lagos	29	Yoruba	Engaged
Chisom	Bride	Abuja	32	Igbo	1
Ije	Bride	Abuja	38	Igbo	1
Abiola	Groom	Abuja	43	Yoruba	1
Zahrah	Bride	Abuja	20	Hausa	1
James	Groom	Lagos	34	Igbo	1
Bunmi	Bride	Lagos	26	Yoruba	1
Bidemi	Bride	Abuja	30	Yoruba	1
Busayo	Bride	Abuja	32	Yoruba	1
Emeka	Groom	Abuja	35	Igbo	Engaged
Ihuoma	Bride	Abuja	32	Igbo	Engaged
Aisha	Bride	Abuja	26	Hausa	1
Musa	Groom	Abuja	28	Hausa	1
David	Groom	Abuja	34	Igbo	1
Amaka	Bride	Abuja	36	Igbo	1
Dele	Groom	Lagos	32	Yoruba	1
John	Groom	Abuja	40	Nupe	2

Ogechi	Bride	Abuja	26	Igbo	1
Eze	Groom	Abuja	32	Igbo	1
Tunji	Groom	Abuja	31	Yoruba	1
Folarin	Bride	Abuja	22	Yoruba	1
Tola	Bride	Lagos	28	Yoruba	Engaged
Eni	Bride	Abuja	37	Yoruba	1
Kola	Groom	Lagos	32	Yoruba	1

Source The Researcher

Prior to interviewing one participant- James, the researcher was invited to his church, where he subsequently insisted that the interview take place, following the Sunday service. The researcher was thus compelled into attending a church service for the purpose of securing the interview. Coincidentally, the service focused on Christian wedding rituals. More specifically, the Pastor delivered a sermon on the principles of a good Christian wedding. Of the researcher's own volition, a second mid-week sermon on the same topic was attended. However, due to the absence of consent from the church, data collection was limited to participant observation and reflective notes.

3.4. Pilot

During the first phase of the Netnographic data collection, a number of themes were already emerging, albeit in the absence of close analysis. This was then used to create the interview guide. The interview guide was tested, particularly to minimise the risk of returning from the field i.e. Nigeria, with inconclusive data. A convenience sample of five people, who were born in Nigeria but are currently residing in the UK, were recruited for in-depth interviews, lasting 60–120 minutes. Below is a profile of the interview participants.

Table 3.2 Pilot Participant Profile

No.	Role	Location	Age	No. of years married
1	Groom	Birmingham	32	1
2	Bride	Birmingham	26	Engaged
3	Bride	Birmingham	27	3
4	Bride	Birmingham	29	2
5	Bride	Salford	28	1

Source The Researcher

During the interview with participant 3, she struggled to remember details of her wedding and she mentioned multiple times that she could be wrong. As a result, it was decided to limit the number of years married to two years. In addition, it became clear that the discussion guide was overly rigid and needed to be shortened to the main points. This was to allow for deviations and to enable participants to tell the story of their wedding ritual in the order they preferred. Appendix (4) details the original guide whilst Appendix (1) offers the updated guide that was eventually used during interviews in Nigeria.

Findings from the pilot study in conjunction with the early themes of the Netnographic data were presented at the International Marketing Conference on the 19th of December 2016, at Media City, Salford. Unfortunately, this conference does not have a publicly accessible literature of the conference material. However, the findings from the pilot focused on the difficulties participants faced in regard to accommodating their families' requests when planning their wedding ritual. Feedback received from the conference related to the research aims of the study and the research context. The feedback provided was used to narrow and refine the aims of the thesis. In addition, a particular critique was focused on *"Why wedding rituals?"* as opposed to other social rituals, particularly funeral rituals. Given the role weddings play within society i.e. maintaining and reproducing social order, it was felt that they were a justified choice and the decision was made to persist on this path (Nguyen & Belk, 2012). In contrast,

funerals play less of a symbolic role of the liminal experience of living peoples (Slater, 1997).

3.5. Ethical Considerations

3.5.1.   Ethics in Online Research

This research was guided by, and adhered to, both the Marketing Research Society's (MRS) 'code of conduct', 'guidelines for online research' (MRS, 2014a; 2014b; 2019) as well as The University of Salford's ethical research criteria. Given the involvement of human subjects, the research was required to account for several ethical considerations including informed consent, age of participants and the public/private nature of online interactions. There is a general discussion of what constitutes a human subject, particularly within an online context. Initially, ethics for human subjects were stricter in comparison to non-human subjects. In addition, human tissues, bones, blood etc. had a different ethical approach as they were human but not subjects i.e. do not have decision making capacity. However, the online world is more complex. Within big data, identifiable features are claimed to have been removed from the data, the general approach is that the data pertains to non-human subjects even if it was originally from human subjects. This assumption is more common within the business world, but less so within academia. However, an argument can be made, that with enough effort, aspects of the data can be traced back to the original contributor and thereby the human subject is still within the data. In NL, it is clear that human subjects are present in the forum, consisting of numerous identifiable features including names, gender, commenting patterns, ideologies, email addresses, phone numbers and geo-location data which is available to the website owners/administrators. Therefore, this study assumes interaction is with human subjects and therefore harm, vulnerability and personally identifiable information are of primary concern. As a result, the research was conducted in a way that no harm came to the forum participants and neither were they exploited in anyway (Belk et al., 2013; Hine, 2000; Kozinets, 2015).

NL is an open forum, anyone with an internet connection both within and outside Nigeria can contribute by simply registering with an active email or persons may 'lurk' i.e. access information without registering and/or contributing. Therefore, gaining informed consent from every individual that takes part in this online community

appears unattainable, including lurkers. This becomes more pertinent when considering NL has been in use since 2005, therefore consent would be required from both past and present users. As a community, present users include the 1.6 million registered users and the 7 million monthly visitors (i.e. including those who do not register) (Aderinto, 2015). This therefore confounds the process of obtaining informed consent from every member of the community. This can be compared with seeking informed consent from every member of a community during an ethnographic study; consent is often sought from community leaders and informed consent from specific individuals who have the potential of adding rich narrative to the study through interviews or closer inspection (Sharpe, 2004). Similarly, permission was sought and given from the website's administrators and moderators to join the community and gather relevant data (Strubel et al., 2013). Appendix (5) is a sample of the letter sent to the NL moderators, of which they gave permission for the researcher to carry out the study.

A difficult decision was made to deliberately exclude a theme of trolling, bullying and insults as the anonymity of the victims and perpetrators could not be guaranteed. As it was almost impossible to gain informed consent from every comment poster, it was deemed that their safety and anonymity could be compromised should the comments be traced back to them. This could be done by placing the comment in a search engine and it should with minimal difficulty identify the NL member. This is due to NL being one of the millions of websites archived by Google and Bing. There was the option of altering the comments to ensure anonymity, but this would likely distort the essence of the comment. Although, including such a theme and the comments related to such would add greater depth to illustrating how NL members interact, it had limited utility to the study. That is, illustrating the level of trolling, bullying and insults would add little to understanding to Nigerian wedding rituals and/or the liminal tensions associated with them. In addition, it was considered that the interview findings painted a good enough illustration to some of the unpleasant aspects of wedding planning.

Originally, informed consent was to be acquired from NL participants whose comments were to be used in published materials. However, this was largely unfeasible as most did not reply to requests for consent and of those that did reply many did not complete the consent form and others were simply not interested in the

study. In addition, due to the archival capability of search engines, any comment can easily be traced back to the NL account of the originator. Therefore, anonymity was not, and continues to be, unfeasible, due to the open nature of the forum. There is the argument, that the comments are already public and including them in published materials have minimal possibility for harm. However, it is difficult to argue that the NL contributors had the intention of their posts to be placed in the spot-light of an academic journal or being viewed by a non-NL community. (Buchanan & Markham, 2012). However, the comments regarding wedding rituals were deemed relatively harmless, as weddings are a popular topic in Nigerian society (Akintoye, 2010).

It is difficult to confirm the age of NL participants, however, contributors are required to be over 18 years old to register on the website. Still, NL does not appear to have strict vetting of contributors' age. Due to the relatively mild sensitivity of the topic, wedding rituals, it can be assumed that data captured from minors is unlikely to cause harm. According to the Nigerian 'Child Rights Act', 2003, the minimum legal age for marriage is 18, therefore any persons involved in the wedding ritual of a minor does so illegally (UNICEF, 2007). However, according to Loaiza & Wong (2012), from a 2008 household survey, 39% of women aged 20-24 were married/in union before age 18. Loaiza & Wong (Ibid) further concludes that 84% have no education, 40% come from rural areas and 70% are of the poorest 20% of the Nigerian population. It can be assumed that they have limited input in the wedding ritual due to their limited social, economic and knowledge capital. In sum, this study does not have the power to identify and/or exclude under 18s from the online sample, it does however assume that their presence on NL will be negligible (MRS 2014a, 2014b).

Withdrawal was also an ethical concern that emerged as part of the study. As some members might not have been aware of the ongoing study, they were not in a position be able to withdraw. As previously claimed, this study posed negligible threats to any participant and therefore being unaware posed negligible risks. Ideally, it would have been more effective to provide all information pertaining to the research on the researcher's profile (Appendix 6), however, NL offers limited capacity, restricting content to only 2-3 sentences.   To mitigate against this, a blog was created that contained all the relevant information including participants' right to withdraw (Appendix 7), linked to the researcher's profile. This strategy is unlikely to be

significantly effective; it therefore increases the importance of community feedback on the study. As such, findings were be presented to community members and those who did not agree with the findings could withdraw (MRS, 2014a, 2014b). So far, nobody has posed any concerns or interests in withdrawal. There are other researchers who take a lurking approach and do not announce their presence and simply observe without participating (Leal et al., 2014; Williams, 2014). This might be advantageous for studying sensitive topics, e.g. drug abuse (Garcia & Pelaez, 2013), but the low risk nature of this study rendered such an approach unnecessary. Further, Kozinets (2015) appears to disapprove of lurking as potentially unethical.

3.5.2.   Offline Ethical Considerations

For the interviews and participant observations, the researcher continued to follow the code of conducts offered by The University and Salford and the Market Research Society (MRS, 2014a; 2019). Here, anonymity was the primary concern and was facilitated by replacing all identifiable information from the published interview data excerpts with pseudonyms. Including names (of people and places), dates and specific incidents that could be linked back to the participant, e.g. the pattern of decoration used on the wedding car. A research overview (Appendix 8) was sent to the participants via email before the interview. The overview was then presented to the participant again to be read in the presence of the researcher, before the consent form was presented (Appendix 11). Upon acknowledgement of the details of both documents, participants signed the consent form and were made aware of their right to withdraw at any moment before, during and after the interview. Participants often responded with a form of amusement. One participant said, *"all this, for weddings?"* This indicates that participants perceive this study on wedding rituals as low risk, once they had a gist of the intended study. This directly contrasts the levels of unease expressed when the interview was being negotiated between the researcher and potential online participants.

All interviews were undertaken in places requested by the participant, to ensure that the participants were in a familiar and comfortable setting; including restaurants, home and place of work. Fortunately, most participants preferred to meet in public places. This was to minimise any feelings of pressure and to reduce the perceived power distance between the participant and the researcher who could be perceived as

an expert. However, it was difficult to obtain a similar consent from ritual attendees. Only 2 of the 5 wedding couples were pleased to have their pictures published. This runs contrary to the full anonymity of the interview participants; it was decided that their talk (i.e. interview transcript) posed potential for shame and therefore anonymised. This assumes that images could be linked to the interview excepts in the thesis. Therefore, only talk is presented.

A more tenuous ethical dilemma was that of the Church services, specifically the one unanticipated service attended by the researcher. The first service was completely unplanned; therefore, no ethical considerations were taken before attendance. Before the second mid-week service, attempts were made to contact the Church Pastor to gain approval to carry out research at his church. These were largely ignored including texts, phone calls and emails. However, the researcher had the opportunity to speak to the Assistant-Pastor on the day of the mid-week service which he appeared in charge of. A recognisable trend followed; he found it baffling that the researcher was seeking permission to a public event and suggested the research can continue as long as it causes no disruption. He refused to have a longer conversation and was not interested in viewing the ethical forms and research overview. Therefore, no data from both services will be published. Rather, they were still considered within the whole data set during analysis.

3.5.3.   Data Storage and Retrieval

Data use and storage was also a concern, therefore, all informant-generated content was stored on the University of Salford's encrypted and secure student 'F' drive. Due to the peer-reviewed nature of the thesis, the data will be stored for up to 3 years upon completion of the study. The primary user of the collected data will be the researcher for research purposes only. However, the supervisory team at University of Salford will have access to the research data only after the explicit consent of the researcher. Further, the data was be stored in the UK in compliance with the UK's Data Protection Act (DPA 1998), updated in 2018 (DPA 2018), in conjunction with the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR 2016), which was implemented in 2018. In addition, the data collected was not and will not be accessed outside the EU (MRS, 2014a; 2014b).

3.6. *Data Analysis*

3.6.1. Thematic Analysis

Data refers to the transcribed interviews, the audio recordings of the interviews, field-notes, photographs and downloaded content from NL including text and images. Data analysis happens simultaneously with data collection, insights gained from previously collected data influence how and what new data is collected (Fairchild, 2014). The primary aim of data analysis is abstraction and reduction; that is, to generate broad ideas and concepts about what is being said and transforming it into more manageable sizes. Manageable in the sense that over 500 pages of A4 text was collected, excluding field-notes and pictures. Therefore, the analysis permits for the grouping or categorising of the data to allow comprehension in the context of social science theory. This fragmentation of the data has been criticised, particularly for its perchance of decontextualizing sections of the talk. For example, the phrase *"I hate weddings"* can easily be misunderstood, however, within the context of the interview, the participant was referring to the stress associated with planning a wedding ritual. In response, short descriptions of the codes, categories, themes or labels were used to retain the context and meaning behind data excerpts (Bryman, 2012; Rapley, 2016). Appendix 10 illustrates this.

There are a variety of analytic approaches including thematic analysis, framework, narrative analysis and grounded theory. Grounded theory is a method that contains data collection and analysis; it is a data collection driven method that avoids being informed by existing theories/research. As such, it was felt that this approach did not suit the style and approach of this thesis, therefore it was discounted. Also, as it had been excluded as a data collection method, it was not considered as a data analysis approach. As a data analysis approach, it directs the researcher to remove all preconceptions during analysis, an approach divergent from the symbolic interactionism stance the thesis takes. Narrative analysis emerged as being more in line with this study, offering useful insights even if it is not the desired analytical approach. Narrative analysis takes talk (i.e. interview transcripts and online conversations) as performative, that is, each story can be viewed as an action to achieve a certain end e.g. expressing an identity. It therefore focuses on the structure, pauses and context of the talk, less so the experiences referred to in the talk. It can be

surmised that narrative analysis is primarily concerned with how social discourse is used to create meaning during conversation. The primary thrust of the thesis is to understand the interaction between GWW and Nigerian participants and less so the oral performance of the wedding ritual experience. Here, thematic analysis is concerned with recurring talk that gives a general overview of the data, and therefore the phenomenon the talk refers to. When regarding falsity, narrative analysis appears to have the upper hand, in that, falsehoods are part of the tools employed to achieve the aims of the participant. In thematic analysis, falsehoods skewer inferences made regarding the phenomenon of interest. This is an additional motivation to rely on multiple sources of data to corroborate different talks and data when employing thematic analysis (Silverman, 2011).

Thematic analysis and framework analysis are relatively similar; Bryman (2012) suggests that framework analysis is a version or offshoot of thematic analysis. However, framework analysis appears to have a deductive leaning, in that, themes are identified in a sample of the data, before the remaining data is fitted into the themes. However, the original themes can also be independent of the data (e.g. from prior literature). Nonetheless, there is still an iterative process that requires continuous modification of the themes; should the data not adequately fit the existing categories, or some themes needing sub-themes or combining similar themes. Regardless, there is the potential to miss emerging themes or omit complexities within the data, for example, linking one sub-theme to an entirely different theme. This is often heightened due to the way the data is organised in a table, appearing rigid and therefore leaving little room for illustrating (sub)theme relationships (May, 2001). There is also the tendency for counting; the most important theme can easily be ascribed to the theme that contains the most data excerpts. Back to the earlier example, each bride might mention hating wedding rituals only once, but the significance outweighs the number of times they mention how much they love wedding shoes.

The above tries to differentiate the different analytical approaches, however it should be read more for emphasis rather than specific differences. There are multiple similarities within the approaches and sometimes structural similarities. Ideally, multiple persons should be involved in the analysis of the data, to ensure consistency. This was achieved via code comparison between both the researcher code and

supervisor. The supervisor took a sample of the data was coded. This was then compared with the code analysed by the researcher for the purpose of reliability and reconciliation. As was mentioned in the pilot section, findings from this study have been presented to academic peers throughout the process for feedback and critique of the method and logical consistency of the research. This includes two doctoral colloquiums, one post-graduate research conference and three international marketing conferences.

It has been argued that thematic analysis is a generic approach to data analysis and theme finding is likely to be inevitable (Bryman, 2012). Clarke & Braun (2006; 2017) argue an approach being popular is not grounds enough to dismiss it as a data analysis tool in its own right. Clarke & Braun (Ibid) therefore offer a systematic process and definition of thematic analysis, which was employed for this thesis, an approach that has also been utilised by other studies (Pascoal et al., 2014; Schinke et al., 2013; Walters, 2016). Clarke & Braun (2006) define thematic analysis as:

> "*a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail. However, frequently it goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic.*"

This definition demarcates thematic analysis from any epistemological or ontological approaches, including grounded theory (Rapley, 2016). Applied in an inductive sense, not necessarily bracketing out the researcher's preconceptions but from a constructionist approach of the identifying themes within the research data set. The data set comprises of all data collected relevant to the current analysis, data item denotes a singular data entity (e.g. one interview transcript), whilst data excerpt indicates a part of a data item (Clarke & Braun, 2006; 2017). Following on from the inductive stance, latent meanings were sought, going beyond surface and semantics of the data set. That is, 'what is the participant trying to say?', which moves towards reading in-between the lines. This approach is suitable for the constructionist stance taken; the meaning the researcher assumes meaning behind the words or actions is constructed between the researcher, participant and research community.

Table 3.3 Thematic Analysis Process

	Phase	Description
1	Familiarisation with the data.	Transcribing if necessary, reading and re-reading the data and noting initial ideas and comments.
2	Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3	Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4	Reviewing themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5	Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6	Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

(Source; Clarke & Braun, 2006, p.87)

The above illustrates the process recommended by Clarke & Braun (2006) when conducting thematic analysis. Similar to most qualitative data analysis approaches, the phases ascribed to thematic analysis are not linear or rigid but iterative and require multiple applications of the phases in a cyclical manner (Rapley, 2016). Appendix 10 gives an overview of the themes, codes and extracts used in the data analysis.

Existing literature was consulted throughout the coding process, which brings the risk of force fitting existing codes from literature to the data set and omitting original codes. However, the risk of re-inventing the wheel and missing the opportunity of positioning insights into contemporary discourses outweighs force fitting (Belk et al., 2013; Dey, 2004). To avoid losing original (emergent) codes, open coding was initially employed. The open coding process generated over 500 codes, then several levels of abstraction were performed to reduce the number of codes to a manageable size (Bryman & Bell,

2015). Abstractions involved grouping similar codes into a larger more abstract category/theme, iteratively (Dey, 2004).

Initially, only NL data was analysed as they informed the online interactions. This was done for five months before offline data collection was initiated. Immediately after the first interview, a constant comparative method was applied so that the NL data was continuously analysed in conjunction with the offline data. These comparisons occurred simultaneously. Although coding has the tendency to shrink, break and dissect the data, it is done in the context of the whole. It is a process that allows different parts of the data to tell a multi-faceted complex story (Belk et al., 2013; Dey, 2004; Gentina et al., 2012). The use of multiple types of data sets during analysis is relatively popular amongst wedding rituals studies (Broekhuizen & Evans 2016; Nelson & Desphande, 2003; Leal et al., 2014; Otnes & Scott, 1996) and is understood as an attempt to investigate the multiple aspects of a multi-faceted ritual.

3.6.2.   Computer Aided Analysis (NVivo 11)

A general misconception is that computer aided analysis performs on behalf of the researcher. In a good qualitative study, the software's role is to aid the analysis, particularly when organising the data, which can be a difficult task in manual qualitative data analysis. The software essentially keeps the data in a virtual format; therefore, coding, cutting, merging and clustering are all done virtually by the researcher with the aid of the software. These are all tasks that can be done manually, for example, writing on paper with a pen can be done in software, but the typing and words still need to come from the author. The creative process of writing a book/paper is still entirely in the hands of the writer, similarly, computer aided analysis cannot make decisions on what to code, how to code and the interpretation of the codes. In the process of linguistic analysis, computer aided analysis can play a bigger role, but this falls outside the scope of this thesis. Within the confines of thematic analysis, the main thrust for computer aided analysis is the ease of coding and retrieval of codes (Bryman, 2012).

There are multiple software programs that can be used for analysis, from generic word processing tools to more complicated and dedicated tools, including NVivo. Tools including Microsoft Word and Excel can be used for this purpose as they offer a shorter

learning curve, given that most researchers are familiar with them. However, they are less robust in organising multiple types of data, particularly mixing textual and visual data. In addition, Microsoft Word/Excel does not have transcription capabilities that dedicated data analysis tools have. In particular, organising the raw data is often done outside the software and will require its own data management techniques or software. On the other hand, data is imported into the dedicated data analysis tools and can be analysed independent of the raw data. This becomes very useful when audio files can be imported, transcribed and analysed within the same tool. Therefore, minimising the risk of losing data or loosing connections along the way. Regarding most software, backing up the data, tools, files and all related documents is mandatory, some dedicated data analysis software do this automatically (Lewins & Silver, 2007). Therefore, the researcher opted for a dedicated data analysis tool.

There are a number of dedicated data analysis software packages; Nvivo11, ATLAS.ti7 and MAXQDA12 appear to be the most popular. Each approaches data analysis in a unique way, although sometimes they can be similar. However, compared to Microsoft Office Suite (i.e. Word, Excel, OneNote, etc.) the learning curve is steeper and more time consuming. In addition, new versions of the same software can require some re-training. The researcher has had prior experience with Nvivo, a software relatively popular amongst universities (Bryman, 2012; Lewins & Silver, 2007). Nvivo11 also has numerous training materials online, officially from the makers, QSR, and by other users free of charge. The University of Salford also offers training in the use of Nvivo, which is available free to students. Therefore, access to the software and training material played an important role in the decision to use NVivo11.

A major drawback for ATLAS.ti7 is that it operates with an 'external database', which means documents are stored outside the software and therefore cannot be moved or modified once analysis begins. Nvivo11 functions on an internal database; the data is imported into the software as a project and can be moved at will. This project can further be modified on different computers that have the NVivo11 software installed. Therefore, it has a form of flexibility that permits use across multiple computers on the university campus. MAXQDA12 has a similar internal database system, however, it has only specific file types that it is able to read, namely 'rich text format' (rtf). This format excludes Microsoft Word documents and Adobe PDFs, which are two popular text

formats. In contrast, NVivo11 accepts a number of file types including doc, docx, pdf, rtf, jpeg, png, mp3, mp4 etc. In terms of user interface, NVivo11 takes multiple user interface design cues from Microsoft Office, therefore making it most appealing in terms of familiarity. However, MAXQDA12 can be considered easiest to learn for those teaching themselves. ATLAS.ti7 and MAXQDA12 have their strengths in mixed methods data analysis but Nvivo is intuitively focused on coding and thus the primary mode of data analysis this thesis applied (Bryman, 2012; Lewins & Silver, 2007; Lewins et al., 2016). Nvivo11 was the version offered by the University of Salford and was therefore adopted for this research. The researcher was initially familiar with NVivo10, fortunately, the changes between the two versions is mostly cosmetic. It is worth noting that Nvivo11 does have the capability for counting, e.g. how many times does a word appear, however, this capability was deemed to be irrelevant to the current study. Therefore, the whole software has not been utilised and only capabilities relevant to the study were employed.

3.7. Reflections

Sourcing for interview participants from NL was significantly harder than anticipated and due to time constraints, I had to rely on my own social network. The 3-6 months I scheduled to gain the trust of the online community appears to have been inadequate. Upon reflection, it would seem as though a longer period of time was necessary to allow the in-depth connection needed for the relationship to develop and extend offline. In addition, more visible participation in the forum might have helped, though I cannot be sure of this. What surprised me the most is the realisation of how little I knew about Nigerian weddings. I have had years of experience as a wedding photographer and was deeply involved in the preparations of my sister's wedding. I therefore had an over-inflated sense of wedding know-how. The more time I spent on NL, the humbler I became in the realisation of the shallowness of my wedding ritual knowledge and understanding. I am very happy I went through this humbling process before I interviewed people for the study. I cannot imagine how arrogant I would have been perceived with such an inflated ego.

I think this also contributes to why I could not form the needed connections with NL members. Most people who came to the website were typically seeking information,

comfort and acknowledgement. Upon realisation that my knowledge was lacking, my options for forming good connections with NL members became limited to providing comfort and acknowledgement. I was very uncomfortable attempting either approaches, as a researcher and a man, it seemed too close to the ethical boundaries. I did try to reaffirm people's choices i.e. acknowledgement, but not having the needed depth and experience to provide multiple examples suggests my gestures were perceived as shallow. In the Nigerian context of rigid gender roles, I also felt any attempt at providing comfort to the majority female participants would be 'weird'.

As a Nigerian coming from a British institution, with an accent that suggests I have been in the UK for a considerable time, it is likely my (privileged) position impacted participant replies during the interviews. To be specific, the participants may not have felt I was instantly relatable, taking longer to warm to me, if at all. That said, for the majority of the participants, it appeared to take between 20-30 minutes, before they relaxed and began to and talk more freely. It might be interesting to compare interview transcripts with an interviewer who has spent most of their life in Nigeria. I also know my gender influenced the interviews in ways I cannot fully account for. Whilst talking to female participants, I am sure more intimate parts of their rituals would have been omitted. I also anticipate missing subtle ques and covert meaning due to my socialisation as a Nigerian man. Therefore, when probing for more details I was sensitive to resistance that suggest discomfort. Although there was a different type of resistance to probing when participants struggled with articulating their thoughts, but this is usually carrying an expression of confusion rather than discomfort. But I do admit, this difference is a grey area, rather than a rigid boundary. In opposition, the male participants often started with an expression of disappointment, some exclaiming that 'why would a man do a PhD on weddings?' I did anticipate this, due to prior wedding photography experience, I was aware of Nigerian men's reluctance at engaging with activities they consider feminine and that includes talking about wedding.

Most participants expressed that they felt good after the interview, that they enjoyed and benefitted from being listened to about their wedding experiences. This surprised me, as I assumed people regularly talked about their weddings, on social media at least. That was when I realised that they probably never shared the difficulties of planning a

wedding with others, especially not on social media where only sharing positive highlights is the norm. Therefore, I became extra cautious when listening to their difficulties, showing empathy and avoiding being judgemental whilst trying to probe for depth. It was a weird experience, trying to balance empathy with interest, not a situation I am overly familiar with.

By the time I started the offline interviews, I was under the impression I had rid myself of all presumptive tendencies. This also proved to be a false sense of safety. I then realised being teachable requires continuous effort and not one-off acknowledgement. A particular incident is most illustrative, this was when I interviewed my last Hausa participant. After speaking to other Hausa participants, I assumed that Hausa men do not propose to their partners and simply go straight to the Introduction of the families. The participant was offended when I expressed this assumption, who then went on to give a detailed account of the proposal and the significant effort involved. Although I profusely apologised, I could sense a shift in the tone of the interview for at least 30 minutes before the participant became friendly again.

3.8. Summary

This chapter has considered the research philosophy, particularly the relativist and interpretivist schools with a preference for symbolic interactionism and constructionism. The Netnographic data collection method was explored alongside the supplementary qualitative data. Sampling was presented as purposive, with an element of snowballing. The ethical considerations were explored, particularly the grey areas relating to online data collection. Thematic analysis was applied to the data, consisting of inductive coding. This was assisted by NVivo11, a qualitative data analysis software. In respect to the research design specifically, online data collection and interaction was started, whilst the data analysis was done simultaneously with collection. In addition, an interview guide was created and tested via pilot interviews. Upon analysis and reflection of the pilot findings, the interview guide was shortened and simplified. Whilst still collecting and analysing the online data, further interviews were conducted in two trenches. Similar to the online process, interview data was collected and analysed simultaneously. The data from both methods were analysed

independent of each other, hence in the next chapter the findings are presented separately.

4. Findings

4.1. Introduction

Following the inductive approach detailed in the methodology chapter, the findings will provide an exposition into the subjective understanding of Nigerians involved in wedding planning, mainly from the perspective of the brides and grooms. However, Nigerian weddings also involve the family, vendors, court and religious institutions. To begin, a summary of the typical number and types of sub-rituals that occur within a Nigerian wedding ritual will be presented. These sub-rituals are flexible, sometimes, some are merged or omitted entirely. However, the presentation of bride price, which is often part of the traditional wedding is mandatory, reasons for this will be provided in the theme which addresses the family's role within the ritual. Starting first with the findings from the online data, three themes will be presented which focus on the aesthetics of the wedding. Here, participants focus on seeking advice and emotional support from the online community. To deepen insights gained from the analysis of the online data, in person interviews were also analysed. These are presented as five themes, with multiple sub-themes. Of the five themes, four provide detail of the constraints the brides (and occasionally grooms) have to wrestle with to host a successful wedding ritual. Whilst theme (4) 'accelerants of wedding fever', provide insight into the motivations that encourages brides even when the obstacles seem insurmountable. This is then followed by relating and contextualising the online and offline findings. In conclusion, a summary of the findings will be presented, drawing potential connections to theory which will be discussed in detail in chapter five.

Analysis of the data suggests Nigerian weddings involve a wide variety of activities, with fluid mixing and overlapping between these activities. Simplification suggests four different sub-rituals that collectively make up a Nigerian wedding, including:

1. **Introduction** – This occurs when the groom's family officially meets the bride's family. During the meeting, discussions are held regarding the terms and details for the other ritual activities, including calendar dates, bride price, dowry, financial contributions etc. The families also exchange gifts and acknowledge the wedding couple as officially engaged/betrothed.

2. **Traditional wedding** – Although resembling the Introduction, the traditional wedding involves a larger number of family members and other kin. Its focus is on the traditional and cultural rites associated with the ethno-cultural norms of the bride's family. The bride price and/or dowry are usually paid in this sub-ritual. The focal point of this sub-ritual remains on the couple's parents and the senior members of the family. After this event, they are culturally and legally married.

3. **Church, Mosque and/or court wedding** –This part of the wedding focuses on religious ordinances, as prescribed by religious leaders with less influence from parents and family. During this event, legal documents are often signed or, a court wedding is done instead with the absence of a religious overseer. Documents signed in this event can be presented outside Nigeria, unlike the more cultural traditional wedding.

4. **Reception** - This often centres on the conspicuous celebration of the wedding couple and is usually the site of most consumption activities. This sub-ritual focuses on the wedding couple, whilst parents and family fall to the periphery.

Of the interviews, there were two occasions in which the brides had a bachelorette party, whilst the men did not have a bachelor's party. Conversations on NL make no mention of bachelorette or bachelor's parties, which appear to be popular in white wedding rituals (Ingraham, 2008). The third and fourth sub-rituals appeared similar to white weddings described by Ingraham (2008) and Otnes & Pleck (2003), whilst the Introduction and traditional wedding rituals are similar to weddings in non-Western countries, including Algeria (Ourahmoune & Ozcaglar-Toulouse, 2012), Vietnam (Nguyen & Belk, 2012), Zambia (Lumbwe, 2013), Tajikistan (Roche & Hohmann, 2011) etc. This corresponds with the argument that when foreign wedding rituals are adopted, they are often done in conjunction and/or syncretisation with local wedding rituals (Ingraham, 2008; Lumbwe, 2013). The following sections will provide details of the themes observed from the data.

4.2. Findings for Online Data

4.2.1. Validation and Clarification of Wedding Choices

In resonance to studies on liminality and wedding rituals (Ogle et al., 2013; Thomsen & Sørensen, 2006; Tonner, 2016), participants were often novices and needed the guidance of others. The NL forum was commonly used to seek advice on decisions relating to wedding ritual consumption; "*where do I buy a wedding dress?*", "*what's a good budget for a wedding?*", "*how many ushers [food servers] will I need for 200 guests?*" etc. More interesting, is their need for others to validate decisions they have already made. This resonates with the idea that consumers face too many options and become incapable of making informed decisions. They therefore turn to experts who help them make the 'right' decision (Lurry, 1996; Slater, 1997; Zukin & Maguire, 2009). In this instance, it is less so experts and more community collaboration. The use of an online community has been noted to reduce the authority of vendors, as illustrated by Leal et al., (2014). By getting reassurance from a collective as demonstrated by NL1, allows for the bride to have more faith in her decisions.

> "*pls help out b4 I commit fashion blunder*" NL1

> "*that's a beautiful colour combo! It wuld be nice! And as everyone rightly said nw [now] is the best time to start planning*" NL2

The first quote is asking for validation, i.e. "does this make sense?". The second quote is in reply to a question from someone else but along similar lines, which asked if it was too early to start planning for the wedding. In essence, the person NL2 was replying to had already started her wedding planning but needed reassurance that she was not starting too early. In essence, NL2's comments captures the collective effort in confirming that the information seeker's choices and decisions were valid and need not be reconsidered. In addition, clarifying certain processes is also important to some of members, whereby, they have certain intentions but struggle with implementations.

> "*...but do I let the caterer know now that I'm going to delegate somebody to check the food on that day?*" NL3

NL3 was concerned about being cheated by the food caterer and had opted to assign a trusted person to monitor the caterer's activities. This trusted person is typically a family member, this will be elaborated on in the interview themes. It could be embarrassing for the caterer to be suddenly informed that their services will be

supervised. NL3's concern is less so about fear of making the wrong decision but more so regarding how to appropriately interact with a wedding vendor. This implies that it is her first time employing a food caterer. In sum, brides are often novices in the planning and execution of a wedding ritual, they therefore need the support of others for its successful performance.

Arend (2016) identifies three possible sources of brides seeking such validation and clarification, including exposure to real weddings, consumption of weddings in mass media and regular discussions about weddings with female friends and family. Exposure to real weddings can offer valuable source of inspiration and as NL5 illustrates in the following quote, can also be a source for validation;

> *"NL4; Is it compulsory to cut cake during traditional ceremony, #yorubatribe, NL5; nope. My cousin's Baker forgot to bring d cake claiming she didn't know the time for the trad wedding. The wedding was done without a cake."*

NL5 uses her experience of her cousin's wedding to validate NL4's enquiry about not using a cake for her traditional wedding ritual. Although NL4 asks a direct question, it can be suggested that she had already made the decision and needed it to be validated by the NL community. It is worth also noting that NL5's reply comes from a relatively negative place, of an incompetent vendor, but, she still uses it to help validate and justify NL4's preference to exclude the cake cutting from her wedding. However, this is likely a limited source, as brides will have to attend numerous weddings to see variations of the wedding ritual consumption ideas and 'scapes' they envisioned. This is another advantage of the NL forum, of pooling experiences, rather than brides depending on their own individual knowledge (Leal et al., 2014). Consumption of wedding rituals in legacy mass media are barely mentioned in the data as this is an online forum, but, all members of the forum are consuming wedding rituals in a sense. Particularly when advise and suggestions are offered via pictures. Below is a picture in reply to a question about the usability of burgundy as the main colour for a wedding ritual;

Figure 4.1 Burgundy Colour Theme (Nairaland.com)

The image above will be consumed by most members, including those not particularly interested in burgundy. Then friends and family, the data occasionally mentions friends. Family is a recurring feature, however, family is often mentioned in a not so positive light. Such conversations typically centre on how to overcome challenges and disagreements with family.

> *"I wanted a small wedding, but my mum is trying to razz things up with traditional dancers from her village and her meeting people with different colors. I didn't want the aso-ebi [uniform dressing] thing, but she insists so can the ladies wear maroon and pink or should I choose a different color entirely? Thank thanks thanks!! Plenty plenty!"* NL17

NL17's comment illustrates the typical clash between older family members and NL contributors. Importantly, NL17 is not asking for advice on how best to have her preferences prevail, rather, emphasis is on how to accommodate her mother's request. In respect to friends specifically, NL likely fills this vacuum of a friend that brides can rely on. It is not a close-knit group, likely due to its open nature that anyone can join the conversation and even read the content without registering. However, the horizontal relationship between contributors gives users equal voice. It is likely that friendships do develop from the forum, as personal contact details are frequently exchanged, but these are outside the reach of the current thesis.

NL collapses the demarcation between (social) media and friends. NL3's comment also lends to the transactional relationship brides often have with vendors, coming from a position of mistrust. Echoing sentiments espoused by Gbadamosi et al., (2009) on Nigerians not trusting marketers and producers. There is likely an additional element of distance, whereby, it is easier to trust a stranger's opinion based on the assumption that they have nothing to gain in deceiving the bride and that they are collectively striving for the same goal (Leal et al., 2014). In summary, brides are often keen for a number of reasons to seek some form of validation and clarification from the online community. For the obvious reason that they are novices they need external support to reify their decisions. According to the literature (Arend, 2016; Ingraham, 2008), this external support should be driven by vendors, however, a lack of trust likely drives brides to NL. The above gives less of a perspective on liminality and more focused on the collective dynamics and uses of the NL forum.

4.2.2.   The All-Important Colour Theme Selection

One of the most talked about topics in wedding discussion on NL is about colours. A typical wedding ritual often contained two conspicuous colours, sometimes referred to as 'colour(s) of the day'. The marrying couple, particularly the bride, often tries to select the 'right' colour (Nwafor, 2013). A common motivation for searching and considering different colour themes is the overarching aim for uniqueness. The bride is simultaneously looking for a colour that matches her tastes and differentiates her from her peers. NL6's comments give a glimpse into how seriously colour selection is taken.

> *"Just for clarification, It would not be a bad idea to have my friends wear Pink + Maroon while I wear Maroon jewelry? If I decide to wear a Maroon gele [headties], will it be too matchy with my friends?"* NL6

Similar to the above theme, this quote is aimed at getting clarification from the NL community. Pertinent to the current conversation, NL6 is most concerned with avoiding blending in with her own friends. She wants to make sure her colours allow her standout on 'her day', i.e. not match with her friends. For those who are struggling with which colours to choose, NL is also a perfect place to make such enquiries. Below is NL7's quote in this regard;

"*I tought of deep green or leaf green and peach combination. But I can't find pictures of these 2 combinations on the net so I don't really know how it will look like and whether the colours go together. Please can anyone help me out with pictures?*" NL7

In NL7's experience, she is asking for proof that the chosen colours are complementary via asking for pictures. Pictorial replies are not limited to pictures containing Nigerian people or of Nigerian wedding rituals. Analysis of the data suggests that participants source for images all over the internet, however, they rarely reference the sources of such images. This suggests that the discussions on NL are not bounded by Nigerian geographical boundaries. Rather, NL embodies the typical boundless nature of online spaces (Kozinets et al., 2010).

Figure 4.2 Colour theme selection (Nairaland.com)

Figure 4.2 suggests how to combine two different colours and to give a visual illustration if they indeed *"blend"*. It is important to also note that most of the consumer goods appearing in the image are of direct reference to goods that are expected to be

used in a wedding ritual. Further emphasising the wedding ritual consumption aspect of the forum. In addition, such images might come attached with detailed explanations, or as simple standalones. The following consist of a question and reply regarding how to implement a colour theme;

> *"NL8; One major problem we are facing is how to combine d color for decoration, cake, for couple, sweet ladies [bridesmaids] and for Bride's elder sisters....we don't want everything to look matchy matchy....plz help me and my sister from anoda"*

> *"NL9; Create a color palette with mint, various shades of pink, teal, yellow, and neutrals like brown, gold and champagne to create a cohesive visual theme that isn't too matchy, matchy."*

"Matchy, matchy" is used to represent colours being overly similar, i.e. matching too much. Similar to NL6, NL9 gives an intricate approach to applying the colour theme. This pursuit for uniqueness via colours is recurring and is often considered from multiple perspectives, comments below indicate:

> *"NL6; Just for clarification, It would not be a bad idea to have my friends wear Pink + Maroon while I wear Maroon jewelry? If I decide to wear a Maroon gele, will it be too matchy with my friends?"*

> *"NL10; Seems to me like everything might be too matchy matchy and bride and groom would look too much like the guests"*

The first comment is from a bride concerned with differentiating herself from her friends, whilst the second is concerned with differentiating the couple from the audience. The above collectively illustrates how colours are concerned with achieving uniqueness via differentiation. However, it fails to directly address why colour is being used in this way as there are various other means the bride or couple can use to differentiate themselves e.g. a crown, being physically separate from the audience, arriving to the ritual venue after the audience etc. Focusing on Nigerian consumer culture, packaging and colours are the pre-dominant factors in purchasing decisions (Babalola et al., 2014; Mcleay & Oglethorpe, 2013; Omotosho, 2008), it becomes clearer why colour selection is this important. Particularly due to the wedding audience not being able to perceive the packaging the consumer goods come in, therefore, colour becomes the primary signifier for wedding consumer goods. The driving factors behind the importance of colour theme is yet to be fully uncovered, but

it can also be inferred that it is driven by a need for visual demarcation (Ahuvia, 2005). This may be influenced by concerns on how the couple are represented in pictures, which is likely to be seen by strangers who might not be able to recognise/identify the couple. By using colours to demarcate themselves, they also solve the problem of post-ritual demarcation (Nwafor, 2013).

Colours can also be the cause for conflict, although this occurs less frequently than the above. Here, family members impose their own colour preference in opposition to the colours preferred by the brides. More details will be provided on the power dynamics of couples and their parents in the offline theme (1) 'wedding is for the family'. Below is a quote that demonstrates the discomfort NL members feel when their parents disrupt their planning;

> *"The main colors are champagne gold and coral… I want to add orange becos of my mother inlaw. Don't even know how to do that." NL11*

> *"3 weeks to my wedding & my in-laws changed my wedding colors from purple & yellow to royal blue & yellow. Now I'm at a fix. I bought purple gowns for my bridesmaids & my sisters too have bought purple lace for their asoebi. What do I do now? I'm sad cos they've started sending the invitations & its written royal blue and yellow." NL12*

In both comments, advice was given on how to combine the colours with less emphasis on confrontation between the bride and the groom's family, similar to the thrust of NL17's question. In both instances, the issues are from the groom's family, suggesting that they want their visual and aesthetic representation in the wedding ritual. Following the premise that most of the wedding ritual is planned by the bride (Boden, 2003), it can be assumed that the groom's family had little input on the colours she picked. Therefore, they then impose their preferred colour and in the experience of NL12, the imposition can be done with little regard for the bride's preferences. It goes on to reinforce the importance of colour in Nigerian wedding rituals.

4.2.3.   Nairaland as Champions of Global White Wedding

The NL community appear to have a slant towards the use of GWW artefacts. When giving advice, they often use narratives typically associated with GWW. Below is one of such examples;

"Who's going to do your make-up btw, make your hair, tie your head tie…you know…help you dress? You need professional touch, of cos, it's not everything that our aunts and mums can help us do perfectly, all the time." NL13

This has resonance with the idea of the commodification of the wedding rituals, of encouraging the use of professionals for almost every aspect. The above quote is illustrative, particularly about helping the bride *"dress"*, implying that even relatively simple/fundamental tasks need to be outsourced to a professional. This further pushes against activities traditionally done by family members. Vendors often stand to gain with increased professionalisation and commodification of the wedding ritual, by translating into more services and products to sell (Ingraham, 2008; Leeds-Hurwitz, 2002, Sykes & Brace-Govan, 2015). Another aspect of the above quote is the use of 'perfect', a well-established word used in selling wedding ritual services. As suggested by Ingraham (2008), it is a way to rationalise the consumption of relatively expensive consumer products. By implying that aunties and mothers cannot help in attaining 'perfection', the above is not just selling white wedding services but employing white wedding narratives that only vendors can help the bride achieve 'perfection'. This further supports argument by Otnes & Pleck (2003) that GWW narratives are employed as a means for freeing the wedding couple from traditional and parental influences. That is, participants should rely less on their parents and family and more on professional vendors. This is fuelled by the suggestion that professionals are also needed to take on responsibilities to reduce the burden on the bride. Below is an interaction between two members;

"NL14; Mehn[4], planning a wedding is one of the most difficult things to do. Whew!
NL15; Say that over and over again! I will hire a wedding planner cos' it's a bit overwhelming for me. Best wishes on your wedding plans."

By NL15 acknowledging NL14's concerns, she provides NL14 a welcoming space to feel tired and overwhelmed without judgement. Most curious is the suggestion that a wedding planner is needed to make it less *"overwhelming"*. Thereby, suggesting to NL14 and other members that including the professional services of a planner helps in

---

[4] 'Mehn' and 'whew' can be loosely translated as slangs that represent exasperation.

reducing the difficulty of the wedding ritual process. This will likely add to the costs of the wedding ritual, although, it can be argued that the savings realised from using a professional who can source for discounts and cheaper artefacts can offset the costs of hiring such a planner (Ingraham, 2008). A common theme in the study of online communities is how it provides emotional support to its members (Chen & Shen, 2015; Kozinets et al., 2010; Kozinets, 2015;), support brides claim to be lacking in their interaction with vendors (Nguyen & Belk, 2012; Sykes & Brace-Govan, 2015). A complementary narrative is that the brides' preferences are the most important. The next comment is a reply to a question pertaining to whether dancing to John Legend, an American singer, is acceptable in a traditional wedding ritual.

> "... *dancing to John Legend's all of me in a trad attire to me seems odd! But I always tell brides one thing- It's your big day, do what will make you happy and fulfilled so you could do it your way.*" NL14

An interesting section of the quote is "*It's your big day*", another popular narrative of GWW, that attempts to individualise the wedding as the bride's day. This offers the bride managerial authority over the ritual (Besel et al., 2009; Ingraham, 2008), away from traditional Nigerian modes of familial authority over the ritual (Akintoye, 2010). The original question implies that the bride was already willing to veer from the norms of a traditional wedding, NL14 in this case is attempting to provide the rational for this, even whilst admitting it as being "*odd*". The emphasis is turning the wedding into a consumer ritual, whereby, artefacts beyond the socially prescribed norms can be incorporated (Besel et al., 2009). It can be suggested that the NL community is playing the role of vendors, who are known for pushing GWW artefacts to help brides reconcile their personal preferences with that of their family (Arend, 2016; Besel et al., 2009). This is heightened by the obvious push of participants towards hiring (more) professionals. Following the premise that Nigerians do not trust marketers and vendors (Ogbadu et al., 2012; Omar & Owusu-Frimpong, 2007), this could be a strategy of improving vendor-client relationships.

In addition, some brides attempt to co-opt the groom into defending their stance and preferences. Here, NL15 pairs up with her groom in direct opposition to his family;

"to be honest, my in-laws have no right to change my color or go ahead with their own decisions because its my wedding. the color decisions is between I and my husband to be. then the in-laws can carve out from the decisions. what I hate to have domineering people around me. soon the would dictate how your wedding night or probably honeymoon would be." NL15

NL15 does not give direct advice on the instance of in-laws changing a bride's wedding colour, rather she reinforces the role of in-laws as making their own decisions within her own preferences. She claims *"its my wedding"*, but, goes on to claim that the decisions are done in conjunction with her groom, therefore suggesting that in cases of in-laws trying to overrule the bride, the groom could be recruited to resist their attempts. This feeds into assertions put forward by Pepin et al., (2008) that grooms often have more power over the wedding ritual than the bride. Here, a liminal tension is observable of the bride needing the groom to maintain her agency within the wedding ritual planning process. Alternatively, this can simply mean such opposition will go down easier on the groom's side if the objections are coming directly from their own. Putting NL14 and NL15's comments together, they both push the narrative of the wedding day being for the bride, typical of GWW and in contradiction of Nigerian weddings as a collective affair (Nwafor, 2012; 2013).

One of the core facets of GWW is the accumulation and display of spectacle. The more consumer artefacts are displayed during the wedding ritual, the better (Arend, 2016; Ingraham, 2008). A similar narrative is used with NL, particularly to encourage members in pursuing their preferred consumption modes and quantities. Below is a reply towards a disgruntled groom complaining about the excesses of his bride:

"If you guys can really afford the excesses, even if she wants to jump down from the moon, please allow her. You know you're the one going over to her place to marry her, so you may not necessarily find any use for the echoes of how luxuriously, the wedding went. Let her bask in the knowledge that her marriage was one-in-town abeg[5]..." NL16

Although the comment starts cautiously, "*if you guys can really afford the excesses*", it goes on to argue that the wedding should be as excessive as the bride wants, regardless of the groom's preferences or sensibilities. The following comment *"You know you're*

---

[5] 'Abeg' can be translated to 'please'.

the one going over to her place to marry her", plays on the idea that a man should be willing to expend significant resources in order to get married. A similar occurrence that was reported in Adrian's (2004) Taiwanese study; should the man be reluctant to expand significant resources for the wedding, it would be assumed that his love for the bride is not genuine. Or in the South African case, he is simply not capable of being married and/or below the bride's status (Mazibuko, 2016; Rudwick & Posel, 2015). Or the USA context of spending significant proportion of his monthly wage in acquiring an engagement ring for her (Otnes & Pleck, 2003). On first glance, it appears NL16's comment undermines Pepin et al., (2008) assertions of the groom having veto power over the wedding ritual. However, it should be read through the lens of the 'validation and clarification of wedding choices' theme. The groom is seeking justification/validation for opposing his bride's wishes, NL16's reply does not guarantee that he will go along with the bride's 'excesses'. In summary, forum members regularly push GWW narratives to help encourage brides in gaining greater autonomy during ritual planning.

4.3. Interview Data Findings

4.3.1. 'Wedding is for the Family'

This theme illustrates the important role family plays within the Nigerian wedding ritual. Specifically, why and how the wedding ritual is centred around the family. This theme attempts to show the three different facets that make up the family. Some of the guiding fears that direct family decisions and requests, how the traditional wedding reflects family consent, the varying types of support family provides and rare instances of participants covertly and overtly subverting family influence. To re-emphasise, family plays a significant role in the wedding ritual, some participants go as far as centring the family, whilst the couple are secondary to the process.

> *"When you're planning for [your] wedding, they say marriage is for the both of you, wedding is for the family" Folarin (F)*

From Folarin's quote, the marriage itself is what the couple should focus on and the wedding ritual is 'for', that is, is planned, organised and performed 'for' the family and by the family. This is likely due to the collectivised perspective Nigerian weddings are viewed. As a ritual whereby the families give consent for the couple to marry and less

about the couples' own consumer preferences and expressions (Akintoye, 2010; Mann, 1985). The likely implication being that brides (and grooms) who try to assert a more individualistic approach to the wedding ritual would be met with stiff resistance. In some rarer cases, the bride is not even present during the wedding ritual itself and it is simply conducted in her absence. Nafisa's quote below demonstrates this;

> *"The official Nikai [Muslim wedding ritual], ...usually happens in a mosque or in a family home, ours was in a mosque in [Northern state], but, I don't really know what happens, it's usually, they bring your bride price and they pray and say something by, I don't know, just like prayers, when it was done, someone called my aunty to say it's done now, so they told me." Nafisa (F)*

Nafisa's comments further demonstrates her limited knowledge of the Muslim wedding ritual, in addition, the fact that the completion of the sub-ritual is communicated to her aunty, rather than directly to her also reinforces her position within the ritual(s).

a. The Constituent Parts of a Nigerian Family

This sub-theme attempts to identify the three main interdependent parts of the family and the specific roles they play. This idea of family can be broadly divided into three interdependent categories; the parents, related family and Kin. The parents tend to be the most important, especially during the initial stages of ritual planning.

> *"...to be honest, when it gets to the wedding, its less about you and more about your parents, it's their day ...so it's not really personal, I don't see it as personal." Bidemi (F)*

Bidemi's quote shows that she is already resigned to this arrangement by claiming it not to be 'personal'. This is contrary to how vendors try to sell wedding rituals to brides as being 'her day to shine' (Ingraham, 2008; Otnes & Pleck, 2003), supported by NL community. However, due to the patriarchal nature of Nigerian society (Dumbili, 2005), the father is the primary ingredient within the ritual planning process.

> *"We've been dating for like 5 years, my parents knew him, everyone knew him, it was him, so he came to see my dad, to introduce himself formally, after that, he sent his parents to come and see my dad, after they came to come see my dad, to make it formal, then they were invited to come and bring some stuffs,*

kolanut[6] and some sweets, that is to make it certain that yes, you're, that is the formal engagement, so we got engaged and we picked a date." Zahrah (F)

Zahrah's quote emphasises how her wedding proposal ritual occurred, it does however illustrate how initiation of the wedding ritual planning was centred around her father. Similar to Bidemi, Zahrah did not appear to have any reservations for this process. Of note, is the way she used the word 'formal(ly)' multiple times, this suggests that a specific socio-cultural process has been completed and acknowledged (Akintoye, 2010; Olajide & Ariyo, 2014). Should the father be deceased, the patriarch assumes the role of father, which can be any male within the family, but always male. The following quotes illustrates that;

"Ever since, I actually wanted a big wedding, but [laughs] I wanted a big wedding erm, erm, my brother, who represented my late dad, didn't want it. So, he advised me to, that we should cut down and we should not just show ourselves and all that. So, because we had to cut down on some things that we wanted to do, like the hall, you know, the, the, the, yeah the hall, basically and the number of guests and all that. ...was hoping for like 400 but, erm, it was cut down to, close to 200." Eni, (F)

"His husband's father is late, so he had to bring an uncle who is equally elderly." Amaka (F)

Regardless of the patriarch's relationship to the bride, he often holds significant veto power over the entire process. As in Eni's quote shows, her brother overruled her preference for a big wedding and reduced the number of guests by half. Within the context of Nigerian weddings, 400 guests is not excessive (Tade & Nnamani, 2015). Similarly, Amaka's groom's father is deceased and his uncle took on the role as patriarch. In sum, both the groom's and bride's families are directed by a patriarch. Participants unquestioned acceptance of this arrangement suggests an absence of liminal tension. However, such tensions will surface in subsequent sections when the family starts to overrule and/or undermine participants' preferences.

Regarding the related family, the mother, siblings, cousins, aunts and uncles also play significant supporting roles.

---

[6] Kolanut is a fruit from the Kola tree.

"Over here, the society, the family plays a major role in weddings, parents, uncles, cousins, everybody has a say, once two people decide to get married" Ihuoma (F)

"Her mum was involved, my siblings were involved too, ...honey, erm, all the erm, groundnut oil, all those stuff, yam, my brothers was [sic] involved too, most of those stuff you could get them from villages. Everybody kind of found a way to come in to get, maybe to push out to get this kind of stuff, particularly, things like honey, you don't easily find them around, like the yam, you get them cheaper in the villages. Like the groundnut oil, you find them in the villages, so everybody was involved." David (M)

Related family as the name implies are people who are directly and biologically related to the marrying couple. As David's quote implies, they often play a supporting role sourcing for items, foods, vendors and venues. In some instances, they also take the role of a vendor, typically the mother as a food caterer, sister or cousin as a makeup artist, brother as a fashion designer and/or tailor. Collaboratively, they also give continuous advice and suggestions to participants as they plan their wedding ritual. This will be expanded on in subsequent sub-sections when incompetent vendors are discussed.

The Kin is vaguer to conceptualise, as it simply means 'people from the village'. Nigeria is mostly rural, with several urban centres (National Bureau of Statistics, 2012; Nwafor, 2013), however, the participants of this study lived in urban centres, but majority of their parents were born in rural villages. Therefore, they have strong connections to their village. These 'people from the village' play an essential role regarding the traditional wedding, which involves the creation and monitoring of the traditional wedding rites. This often takes the form of a list of items called 'bridal list', which includes the bride price which the groom's family is expected to present and/or pay to fulfil his role as a capable groom. Therefore, suggesting the boundary of who is involved in the wedding ritual is difficult to define, as the phrase 'people from the village' implies, anyone who lives in the participants ancestral village. Below is a typical wedding list provided by the Kin.

"These lists were drafted like in 1990, in the 90s, there are certain things in the list that are much more higher now, like the [50kg] bag of rice ...the list stated that its either you bring [50kg] bag of rice or you the bring the equivalent of the bag of rice which is N5,000. As at the time the list was drafted, [50kg] bag of rice was N5,000. So, we gave them N5,000, because we wanted to save costs,

another thing was the stock fish, not [just] stock fish, real big stock fish, the size they asked for is about N15,000 but ...as at the time they drafted the list I think stock fish was about, they wrote stock fish 3,500 [Naira]. So, we gave them cash of 3,500 [Naira], to really bring down the cost, so that was it. Then, during the whole process, they brought, the both families came, to check the things, the list and everything was fine, everybody, the different groups got all they were supposed to get." Chisom (F)

In more abstract terms, the list can also be conceived as a symbolic continuation of Kin customs over an extended period. As the quote illustrates, it is less about the cash value of the items, and more about the items in themselves. In pre-colonial times, the ancestors of present-day Nigerians did not attach a cash value to the list items, all items needed to be submitted for the (traditional) wedding rites to be fulfilled (Akintoye, 2010). The next quote tries to illustrate that the Kin is not a singular entity, rather a collection of smaller social groups within the village.

"Ije; ...because the way they ...categorise it in my place, you have a canopy for the women, then you have a canopy for the first daughters, then we have a canopy for the youth, as in the girls, then we have another canopy for the community, then we have another canopy for the visitors, and another canopy for church members
Interviewer; Why did you divide them like that?
Ije; That is how it is done, yes, because when you are giving them their food, you don't just put the food together, no, the food for the women, they will tell, actually tell you what they want, they need swallow, a cooler [large box] of rice, as in, the rice whether white or stew, I think that of the women, their own is a cooler of jollof rice, while that of the first daughter, theirs is jollof rice, there is still swallow[7] attached to it.
Interviewer; And do the visitors demand?
Ije; No, no, no...
Interviewer; Is it on the day they tell you or they tell you before?
Ije; No, no, no, they tell you before, it is included on the list, 'make swallow with bitter leaf soup'." Ije (F)

Due to the significant power held by the patriarch, he still dictates where the traditional wedding ritual takes place, as opposed to the norm of hosting it in the village. The following quote illustrates this;

---

[7] 'Swallow' is a range of Nigerian starchy foods that are often eaten with soup and not chewed, as opposed to rice. A Western counterpart to 'Swallow' could be mashed potatoes

> *"It was done in Abuja, my father asked him to come here, because he lives here, but that can be done anywhere. It can be done anywhere ...as long as the father says its suitable for him that time, it is where it's done."* Amaka (F)

Overall, the family and Kin set the tone of the wedding ritual, whilst the couple often play a secondary role. The next quote sums this up;

> *"You're not the one getting married, you're not the only one that is the celebrant, your parents too. So, they want to invite all their friends, they want to invite everybody"* Dele (M)

b. **Wedding Haste as a Response to Liminal Uncertainty**

Outside financial considerations, the family are often pushing for the wedding ritual to occur as soon as possible, once intentions have been declared and accepted. The following quote introduces this;

> *"...an average Nigerian, especially the Yorubas[8], wouldn't want the wedding to take long after the proposal, my mum was already asking when is the Introduction, when is the wedding and all that."* Sola (F)

This plays into ritual studies, that gatekeepers are often keen on minimising the amount of time liminars spend within a liminal space (Bell, 1997; Turner, 1969). There is often a fear, that, should liminars spend too long within said space, they have the potential of disrupting social norms and structures (Fernandez et al., 2011). The next quote gives a more contextual illustration behind this fear;

> *"...they asked us to fix, that me and her to come together and agree on a date for, for the wedding itself, which we did, like erm, we started looking for dates that were going to be suitable for everybody. According to the parents, they didn't want something, I think they were kind of scared of all these guys that come to do, that comes to ask for their hand in marriage and then they go away and never come back. At first, they told me that they didn't want something that will stay too long after the whole Introduction, as soon as we, the Introduction is done, they want the wedding to happen immediately."* David (M)

One interpretation of David's quote involves the use of time pressure as an attempt to minimise the possibility of embarrassment. As proposals are often publicly announced and celebrated, it could cause significant embarrassment should the wedding have to be cancelled. The ensuing quote focuses on why parental consent before proposal is

---

[8] Yorubas are one of the ethnic groups in Nigeria.

important. However, reading in between the lines, it highlights the genuine fear of a cancelled wedding ritual.

> *"So, because of the Western world, ...that you're supposed to ask the [woman] first to marry you, it is usually symbolised with the wedding ring, but, I had told my husband the other way round. Because there are some steps, god forbid something goes wrong and you've given me a ring, you've asked my father and he's ok, and we ask around and we find out something about your family or about you that can't make me marry you, I think it'll be embarrassing, especially these days, proposals are big deals. ...like my dinner, was about, consisted of 10 to 12 people, they were taking pictures, social media, it goes up on people's display pictures on WhatsApp, on BB [Blackberry], so I had told him, ask my father, seek his consent, so once my father was ok with it, he proposed." Amaka (F)*

As Amaka shows, the inclusion of social media further magnifies the scale at which this embarrassment could happen. Extending the unwelcome news to shores and eyes that were not present at the proposal and/or Introduction. This resonates with Fernandez et al., (2011) study, which claims that Indian family members fear the woman becoming pregnant whilst engaged and therefore disrupting socio-cultural norms and expectations. Therefore, compounding the fear of embarrassment for the family, i.e. the woman becoming *'impure'*. The next quote echoes a similar sentiment, albeit focused on the importance of bride price, it emphasises the public consequences of breaking socio-cultural norms.

> *"If a man didn't pay your bride price, ...I'm telling you that person can receive any insult. Ah! yes now! Yes, 'look at you, you just, you're a cheap girl, did they even pay your bride price, you just follow'. So, it will make, it's a kind of, in fact the lady will not be fulfilled. Even if she is there eating money, she will not be fulfilled. because, your bride price was not paid, there is this prayer that parents, 'oh god, my child is going to that home, she will be a blessing to that home'. you know you're now going with your parents' blessing, it gives honour."*
> *Ije (F)*

Ije's quote also suggests that anything that brings dishonour will also reduce the chances of the woman finding fulfilment, regardless of her socio-economic status i.e. *"eating money"*. This sub-theme includes a number abstractions and assumptions, nevertheless, it tries to prove that the more time spent engaged, the more anxious the bride's family would be. This anxiety is likely linked to a fear of public embarrassment and dishonour. This preference for speed could also be further opportunity to

discourage the bride from having a fully customised wedding ritual which likely requires more planning than a more conventional ritual.

c. "[The Traditional] Wedding is for the Family"

The traditional wedding ritual, one of the multiple sub-rituals within the wedding process, acts as an expression of collective and ethno-cultural identity. In this sub-ritual, the participants' preferences are often secondary to that of the father and family. Here liminal tensions start to emerge, below is Ihuoma trying to reconcile her preferences with her father's opposing expectations;

> "I think my dad, he has never given any out, anybody in marriage and all that, so, he is super excited, he wants to infuse all the whole culture he knows. [laughs], into the marriage, …I got his elder brother involved so, he has been talking sense into him. Any little thing my dad would be like 'I'm a chief, you're supposed to come, after this, come again, come again, do this, we have to", like he knows all the culture and he wants it to happen on that day. Like me I'm insisting I don't want erm, bridal rites… I'm insisting it should be done on Introduction day, but he's insisting that it must be done on the traditional wedding day, but somehow, we came to an agreement and he moved it to the Introduction day. So, I think that is just it, sometimes he wakes up and he will call you and be like 'ooh, I have decided, we must not do that thing that day, we must do it…'. He's just been like that throughout this period, I don't know why …he has some other advisers around him that maybe if he finishes deciding to do something they will tell him 'oh no, it's not done like this, tell her'. I just think, but the, he's excitement is exhausting us. [laughs]." Ihuoma (F)

Although Ihouma does voice her preferences and comes to an agreement with her dad, he still insists on infusing the traditional wedding with as much cultural norms and activities as possible, with the excuse that he is trying to protect and project his image as a 'chief'. Interestingly, even her uncle, who is older than her father, has less of a say than her father. One of the potential reasons why the family often aims for exclusive control of the traditional wedding is because it is often considered the most important aspect of the entire wedding ritual process. Below are quotes that illustrates this;

> "…that's the most important day. That's where they pay the bride price" Aisha (F)

> "…that's the main wedding, I hate to say, that's the wedding god recognises. That's the real wedding, the church wedding is just spiritual, but the main wedding, is the traditional wedding …everything done traditionally, …you'll be

in your traditional attire, parents pray for you, the groom's parents pray for you, everyone prays for you, yeah, I think that's the real wedding, it was fun. I always enjoy traditional wedding." Bunmi (F)

Aisha's explains that the traditional wedding is the most important day of the wedding ritual process, which typically occurs over several days. Focusing on Bunmi's qoute, if 'pray' is replaced with consent, it gives a clearer illustration of the inner workings of the traditional wedding. Because, during this prayer, the bride kneels and the parents lay their hands publicly on her head and give short prayers. This also resonates with Ije's quote that not receiving the parent's blessing i.e. consent, will also cause unfulfillment to the bride. The bride price, steeped in patriarchal symbology, it was typically conceived as the trade of material resources for the bride's reproductive capacities (Boden, 2003; Ingraham, 2008). Therefore, should this exchange not take place, then the wedding is not recognised. Even in instances of the traditional wedding not taking place, the bride price still needs to be paid. John's quote below captures this.

"My traditional wedding, I did erm, to cut cost, I didn't do a ceremony. So, what I did was erm, I just got the list of requirements that needs to be fulfilled for marrying someone from her place and then got my people to go there and we paid..." John (M)

There are also instances of the bride price, sometimes called dowry, being returned to the groom's family, suggesting that the bride price is a symbolic performance of socio-cultural norms.

"When my husband paid the dowry, I noticed that my brother returned it back, that that's how they do, yes, you know that we're not selling our daughter, we're not selling our daughter, so take back your money ...that we're not selling our daughter, though you pay the dowry, take the money back." Eni (F)

Delving deeper, Eni's statement can also be conceived as a display of power or socio-economic standing. That the bride's family do not need the money and can do without it. Following the premise that bride price was originally conceived as payment in exchange of the bride's reproductive capacity (Ingraham, 2008), Eni's brother, the patriarch in this case, is not saying that Eni is infertile, rather, that the loss of Eni's reproductive capacity can be endured by the bride's family. This also lends further support to the influence the patriarch has over the ritual, having the power to change and alter certain aspects of the wedding ritual norms. Although, not entirely subverting them but enough to change significant portions of it. In addition, there is the counter

argument that the bride is not being sold (including her reproductive capacity), rather, the bride price is a token of appreciation from the groom's family. Amaka attempts to explain this;

> *"You're not going to say you're selling out your daughter, it just believes in Igbo land that a girl has a price, she's priceless of course, nobody's wife has a price tag to her, in the process of her growing up to become that beautiful woman or that beautiful flower you want to pick, things were invested. That is the time, family, not even the father, mine came from my people in the village, the older people, the kinsmen, my older kinsmen, so to them that is like a little price or token you have to give for all the things for that woman you so now desire ...but don't get it wrong, it's not selling her, people get it wrong, that we're being sold because it really amounts to large sums of money, but we're not being sold, it's just a rite. So, it has to be done."* Amaka (F)

However, Chisom states that she "*...can't be present at the negotiation of my bride price.*" Further questioning the claim that 'the bride is not being sold'. Regardless of how the bride price is conceptualised, it can be seen as a material evidence that both families have agreed to the union of the couple (Mazibuko, 2016). This is likely the primary reason why it is so important, therefore, absence of the bride price exchanging hands, then (culturally) the wedding is not recognised. This feeds into the previous quote that "[the traditional] *wedding is for the family* ", this implies a literal interpretation, that is, the wedding is for the family to consent to the union of the couple as married via the exchange of gifts and bride price. Continuing down this path, it reinforces why the family typically wholly controls the traditional wedding sub-ritual.

The traditional wedding sub-ritual is not solely transactional, it is also a means of involving the entire Kin in the ritual, to meet each other and to act as witnesses to the union. The next quotes by Eni and Amaka delve deeper into this;

> *"The traditional [wedding] brings you close to your family, you know, its directly to your family, you get to know each other and all that and then, then to exchange things between each other and all that, you get to see your husband's family members right there."* Eni (F)

> *"Then the highlight of the day is ...the girl comes out to her father, he prays for her and then gives her a glass of palm wine, palm wine is also very significant in the Igbo culture, gives a cup of palm wine for me to show him, because many people would have not seen my husband, they'll just know I'm getting married,*

so that time is when I would dance around and go and give my husband the person I'm, I want to marry the glass of palm wine and take him back to my father to pray for us.

...for you to actively say you've gotten married traditionally, ...some groups of people have to be represented, like erm, erm, my kinsmen, Umuada, are the first daughters, the youths, different people have to be there to witness, for you to say traditionally you've been given out. Even though they are not active, they need to be there, that's it that's the culture." Amaka (F)

Eni's quote resonates with Lozada's (2013) assertions that weddings can be used in managing familial connections. Here, Eni's family gets to meet her groom's family, especially those who had not been intimately or directly involved in the wedding planning. This also leads into Amaka's quote, of the palm wine being used to identify the groom publicly to Amaka's family, especially members who are yet to meet him. This is important, due to all participants living in urban areas, with most having family in both urban and rural areas. In sum, the traditional wedding is a means of getting consent of the two families and also as a means of visibly signally the union of the couple and family. The second half of Amaka's quote carries deeper meaning, she suggests that a woman can be married but for her to be able to publicly acknowledged as married, her Kin must bear witness to the union i.e. "*for you to actively say you've gotten married traditionally".* As Ije has established, should a woman not be traditionally married and claims to be married, she is likely to be insulted.

In addition to the threat of insults, there is also a longer term need of keeping the Kin happy. After Introduction, the bride's family often goes on a fact-finding undertaking, to discover the groom's roots and to uncover any perceived abnormalities or oddities in his family (Akintoye, 2010) (*"...we ask around and we find out something about your family or about you that can't make me marry you"* Amaka). Should his immediate family have been continually antagonising the Kin, they are unlikely to give a good report about the groom. In summary, the traditional wedding ritual plays multiple roles for the family including a material evidence of the union through the payment of bride price, public display of the couple to both families and to maintain positive Kin and familial relations.

d. Family Support (Economic, Cultural and Social Support)

Following the groundwork laid by authors on liminal (Cody, 2012a; 2012b; Tonner 2016) and ritual consumption (Boden, 2003; Ingraham, 2008), the findings concur that the couple are indeed novices in wedding ritual planning and consumption. A position echoed in the online data findings. The following quote illustrates how much participants must rely on others for the successful performance of their wedding ritual;

> *"I think, it's actually all interwoven, it wasn't really specified this is what I'm supposed to do. We were all working together, logistics, accommodation, feeding, all the things that we need to provide. All the traditional things we need to present on the wedding day and all that. My family was deeply involved." Musa (M)*

This collective support can be divided into three; financial, social and cultural. Financial support refers to the cash sum needed to pay for the wedding artefacts. Social support refers the network of individuals, vendors, priests and Kin needed towards the ritual. And, cultural support is the required knowledge on how to effectively navigate the complex terrain of Nigerian wedding rituals. From a financial perspective, parents often contributed between 30% to 100% of the wedding costs. In the below quote, her parents covered majority of the cost;

> *"Zahrah; for a decent wedding, I think you're going to spend like 3-4 million [Naira], that will be ok.*
> *Interviewer; and how much was yours?*
> *Zahrah; I think, I can't really say the exact amount, because most of the things my parents handled it, but like 3-4 million [Naira] that we spent." Zahrah (F)*

(The above approximates to between £6,400 to £8,500 @ £1 to N466[9]). One of the reasons why the couple often had to rely on their parents and family for financial support is they seemed to have a negative attitude towards debt. Zahrah's quote illustrates that (Nigerian) wedding rituals are expensive, supported by Ingraham and co (Adrian, 2004; Arend, 2016; Boden, 2001; 2003; Ingraham, 2008; Nash, 2013). Therefore, relatively young couples typically needed more money than they often earned or could save. It is not clear what caused this negative attitude to debt, but it appears very prominent. Below is a reply by Akin that illustrates this;

---

[9] https://bit.ly/2DHz3ez

"Interviewer; Did anybody advice you on moderation?
Akin; Not to borrow ...no matter any expenses you make during this period, that people will come and eat, that no matter what you cook, people will still say they are not satisfied, and you should just do it in a very simple way and you must not borrow" Akin (M)

Interestingly, the interviewer asked about moderation and yet, the answer was regarding debt. This is further complicated by Akin claiming to have had about 2000 people at his wedding. Therefore, the form of moderation pursued is geared towards avoiding debt, and not moderation in actual total spending. This presents a kind of conceptual approach to moderation by de-linking it from total spend and projecting moderation onto avoidance of debt. The next quote adds further context;

"Sola; I was so happy that I didn't have, I've heard people say that after their wedding they have to pay back debt and I'm so happy, as much, I tried so hard that I don't repeat what I hear people say and I was very happy that god helped me and my husband, it was just what we had that we used. And it appeared that what we had, it was enough of, it was enough for what we wanted, we didn't have to like, extend or overshoot our budget or strain ourselves, that would now affect us later ...because the wedding is a 1-day event, the marriage is a life-time thing. So, it's best to short pay the wedding, and over pay the marriage than to short pay the marriage and over pay the wedding.
Interviewer; And do you have an idea of what the total budget was?
Sola; Ok, [long pause] say 1.5 million [Naira]
L; And how much of that came from you?
Sola; For me it was just, say, 300 thousand [Naira]
Interviewer; And your husband?
Sola; Say about 700 thousand [Naira] and then the rest came from my parents."
Sola (F)

Sola is relatively proud of the fact that her and her husband did not go into debt, whilst having to rely on her parents to contribute 30% of the budget. This negative attitude towards debt appears to give the participants some sort emotional salve for the high cost of the wedding ritual process. Going back to costs itself, if the couple are discouraged from taking on debt, then the only available route for additional funds is gifts from friends and family. Friends are likely to be their own peers with similar limited financial resources, therefore, family becomes the primary source for additional resource. In a simple sense, the more the family and/or parents contribute financially to the wedding, the more of it they are likely to control (Kalmijn, 2015). Unsurprisingly, the higher the wedding ritual cost, the more likely the parents and

family paid for most the wedding. The maximum being 30 million Naira, wholly paid for by the family. Added to the hierarchical nature of Nigerian society, i.e. deference to parents and authority (Akintoye, 2010; Olajide & Ariyo, 2014), the power the family wields then significantly increases. In sum, wedding rituals are expensive, borrowing is discouraged, therefore, the couple must rely wholly or partially on their family making financial contributions.

To effectively organise a lavish wedding ritual, multiple vendors need to be involved. Details on why the wedding are typically lavish would be expanded on in interview theme (2) 'the exorbitant costs of weddings'. This was the first wedding of all participants in this thesis, therefore, they were mostly inexperienced in sourcing, engaging and negotiating with vendors needed for the ritual. Below is an example of the participant's father helping to source for a venue for the reception.

> *"My parents did the most part of the hall choosing and all, dad, my dad did most part of it. I visited just three halls, he visited the area, and saw the three halls and said I should go to so, so, so place, that he saw three different halls and gave me the prices of the hall, I should go there, check the halls out and check the one that I would like …so, we went to check the hall, and so we checked three halls, it was the last one we checked, then we concluded that we were going to use and we met with the manager of the hall. …my fiancé as at then just felt we should ask for the amount that the hall was going for and then he said N250,000, because it was a 200-sitter hall, it was N250,000. And we were like, was he not going to reduce the price? He said no, that that was the price he was going for, so we got home, I told my dad, eventually my dad found out that he had a friend that knows, that his friend knows the owner of the hall, so I left the bargaining of the hall to him, to do, and then he eventually came back that the man agreed that we should pay 200,000 [Naira]. So, we took the hall for 200,000 [Naira]."*
> *Sola (F)*

> *"My mum works in the kitchen in her church. So, she has already informed the kitchen staffs and they are up and doing, they can fix things up, even that day [laughs], I trust them. They do their stuff two days before, so it makes it so easy"*
> *Kola (M)*

In Sola's quote, her father did not just help source for a hall, he went further in helping to secure a cheaper cost for it by engaging his social network. In the second quote by Kola, his mother also helps to call in a favour that he likely cannot reach on his own. This is also likely due to parents being significantly older and therefore having a significantly larger social network. Therefore, parents freely provide their collective

social network to help source for the right location, vendor and to help negotiate a better deal. This is supported by previous studies on Nigerian consumption habits, whereby, consumption preferences are collectively determined, whilst individual preference is often within a narrow range of the collectively determined consumption (Folorunso, 2013; Gbadamosi et al., 2009; Odia & Agbonifoh, 2015; Omotosho, 2008). That is, Sola picking one of the three her father had endorsed. In addition, the family likely has experience with planning the wedding of participants' siblings. The next quote illustrates how past weddings of siblings help inform the participants' current wedding ritual planning.

> *"Interviewer; The list, do you know how it was prepared?*
> *Folarin; Yes ...well, we strictly followed my brother's own" Folarin (F)*

> *"My sister got married 3 years ago, that was, yeah, she got married 2 years before me ...I mean she did a lot of it, ...when I went to book my appointment with the makeup artist, she was on the phone, talking with the person, telling, negotiating, she was practically in everything, she made sure she handled, I didn't do anything without her consent." Bunmi (F)*

In Folarin's experience, her bridal list was predicated on her older brother's experience. This suggests some form of continuity and transfer of experience regarding wedding ritual planning. Although Bunmi does not explicitly mention her sister using her own wedding as a template, it can be inferred that her capacity to negotiate with vendors on behalf of Bunmi is significantly influenced by her own wedding. Vendors typically play a key role in educating and indoctrinating liminars on the appropriate way to consume (Sykes & Brace-Govan, 2015; Tonner, 2016). However, in the Nigerian context, vendors were often incompetent, late, deceitful and/or unreliable. Therefore, the role the family played is disproportionately larger due to the vacuum left by inadequate vendors. The following quote sums up the general sentiment participants had towards vendors;

> *"...what we found out after the [traditional] wedding, they had taken other weddings as well, so they put little or no attention in mine and that made mine suffer, so we had to start looking for family members and people around to just kinda mend things up. So it doesn't become messy, so yeah, sometimes the vendors are greedy, and their greed affects the couple or the wedding in the long run ...we already knew there was catastrophe, we already had guests coming in and they were still arranging tables and seats ...it was terrible, it was [an] eyesore, as the bride, I just choose to be calm." Amaka (F)*

Amaka's family taking over the role of paid vendors is a reaction to incompetence, therefore showing how family members must continuously be involved in the wedding ritual process to fill the vacuum created by unreliable vendors. Kerrane et al., (2018) identifies similar, albeit less of a reaction, but of new mothers actively placing themselves in the direct care of family, hence less need for consumption experts. After the experience of the traditional wedding ritual, there was a change in tack to avoid a repeat in the Church wedding. The following is a quote from the same interview, illustrating this change in approach towards vendors.

> *"Amaka; …because we had learnt from the trad [traditional wedding], …so we had decided that we wanted to meet all the vendors …to set down laid rules, we had to call a meeting, because like I told you, we were planning for a thousand people…*
> *Interviewer; who created the rules, who's idea was it to call the meeting?*
> *Amaka; …my mum had a committee of friends, and amongst those people they had like people, who they had given certain responsibilities to. Someone's responsibility was to map out what the people [vendors] would do, map sections there will be [in], so someone was in charge of that, even whilst other people supported her, because other people had different responsibilities, so she was the one who addressed all of them that day, gave them their tags, told them what to do, if you have any problem you can meet me, or this woman, that woman, this woman, so there was supposed to be somebody assigned to do that, but she was amongst my mum's committee of friends." Amaka (F)*

The 'committee of friends' are Amaka's mother's close friends who are providing their time (and expertise?) free of charge, similar to Kola's mother's kitchen friends/colleagues. The specific strained relationship between vendors and participants will be elaborated on in subsequent themes. In sum, even when the requirements of finances and social network has been fulfilled, family members are still essential in delivering, monitoring and coordinating the wedding ritual. This leads into the final type of support needed, cultural knowledge. Here, a deep understanding on how to create the desired or desirable wedding ritual is needed. Besides the actual consumer artefacts delivered by vendors, specific knowledge of traditional norms is also wielded by older family members, knowledge not easily known by the participants. Although, this is easily the sight of conflict, as advice offered by the family is sometimes in conflict with the participants preference. However, without said advice, participants would likely struggle to enact their own preferences.

"She was helping us choose the fabric, her taste was a bit different, my mum likes floral, not really floral, but like really decorative things and we prefer simpler things, so we were conflicting a lot. Especially with decorations and stuff like that, but she was helpful, she knew a list of all the things we'll need, so it was a bit organised." Nafisa (F)

In the above quote, their aesthetic tastes differed and therefore conflicted, but, Nafisa's mother knew the individual items needed, better than Nafisa herself. Regarding the more cultural and less consumption focused aspect, some families have created a penalty system for transgressing grooms. Whereby, the groom will be fined a specific amount of money if he is not familiar with the cultural process or norms. The next quote illustrates some of the things that might get the groom fined;

"Interviewer; Are you going to have a spokesperson at the Introduction?
Emeka; Yeah definitely ...yeah my uncle, I don't really know much about the culture, you need to take people that knows so much about the culture.
Ihuoma; So they don't fine him, because they can fine him.
Emeka; So they don't fine me.
Interviewer; Ok, tell me about this fine, ...how does it work?
Ihuoma; If you're not really aware of the culture and you go there, like probably when you're meant to stand and talk, you're sitting and talking, when there are elders around, you can be fined. When you speak wrongly, not because you don't have respect but because you didn't give due to who due is, you know, respect to whom you should respect, you can be fined. You know, so there are several things that you can do that the other cultures, your father in laws might see as an offence and decide to fine you" Ihuoma (F) & Emeka (M)

The above quote shows significant knowledge of the cultural process is demanded of the groom to ensure compliance. To counter this, most families pick a guardian, representative or spokesperson that ensures the groom avoids such penalties. In some cases, the groom and bride can be completely absent from the rituals and only represented by their guardian. Further emphasising how family oriented Nigerian wedding rituals can be. The following quotes illustrates this wholesomely;

"You're not required to be there, herself [bride] too, she's not required to be there. So, it's just my family, the person that has been appointed to represent me, like my guardian, chosen by my father." Musa (M)

"There was a particular man in that family whom god gave us the wisdom to liaise with at the initial level. We told him, please we want you to stay on our side. You know, ...'sir, please as it is, you're going to be our mouth piece, so if

the situation becomes so tense and I can't answer any question, you are speaking for me'." Abiola (M)

The quote by Musa strongly suggests that the guardian is not the patriarch, rather, a representative of the groom himself. The second quote further expands on the role of the guardian; to direct and shield the groom during the wedding ritual process. In sum, the family does not simply control or influence the wedding ritual for authoritarian reasons, they significantly contribute socially, culturally and financially. However, some of the systems within the wedding ritual process demands their input like the penalty system, whilst others are externally influenced like incompetent vendors.

e. Family is not Omnipotent, but Close

The above sub-themes suggest a near absolute power of the family on the ritual process and planning. However, there are instances of resistance by participants, but they tend to be mostly about aesthetic preferences and not much script modifications or other deeper structural deviations. As indicated by John, he wanted to save costs by not having a traditional wedding, but, he still went on to pay the bride price. Therefore, omitting the conspicuous consumption of a lavish traditional wedding but adhering to the socio-cultural expectation of paying the bride price. A more dramatic illustration of this is Nafisa's, she wanted a specific type of head tie to be done by a vendor unfortunately, the vendor was absent. However, her aunties insisted that she joins the celebrations without said head tie. She insisted and eventually got her way, but, at great cost to her emotional and mental wellbeing. The next quote attempts to summarise the conflict;

> *"Nafisa; …our older sister just came and were like we have to go in, now, now, now! We had different outfits for the Qam, and she was like Nafisa, your in-laws are already here …we told the makeup artist to come back around 6 [PM], 6:30 [PM], and that was around 5 [PM], …but she didn't come on time, and my aunties were putting so much pressure on us, 'you have to come out now, your in-laws are here, do you want them to think that you're', I don't know how to say this in English, 'like you're [long pause] snubbing them. Do you want them to think you're snubbing them? They'll hate you, since from day one', they were saying all sorts. One of my aunties was even cursing at me, that was it for me, because I had a headache, I hadn't eaten, I was up all night, so I just broke down, and I was pissed off already, my friends, everything, you know, the stress, I was crying and I couldn't stop, so we had to use the makeup from when she did it since*

around 9[AM]. My eyelashes came off, everything, my makeup was ruined. And I couldn't stop crying, eventually the Gele [head tie] woman came because no one could tie it but my aunties were saying just use this same outfit, wear a veil over your head, but you know you've planned everything, what you're wearing and how you're going to look and someone will just come and take it away from you. So, we waited till around 6:30, then I went out.
Interviewer; Then the Gele [head tie] woman came?
Nafisa; she tied it and I went out" Nafisa (F)

By 5PM, her aunties were demanding that she come out to see her in-laws, but she managed to delay and insist on having her Gele, a type of head tie. This process took about an hour and half, but eventually, she had her way. Nafisa's quote also illustrates the potential costs of successfully resisting the demands of family; emotional trauma. In addition, Nafisa was not insisting on changing the script, plan or process, but that, she should be allowed to wear her preferred type of head tie. To avoid such confrontational situations, participants were more likely to use less direct means of subverting the instructions of family. The following quote by Bimpe gives an illustrative overview;

"...I was just sneaking out because my dad told me that it's not good for a bride to be going out the week of her wedding, it's kind of dangerous according to Yoruba tradition. But I think it's true sha! [but when] I was going to go out that week, I was just sneaking out." Bimpe (F)

Here, Bimpe choose to sneak in and out of the house instead of directly challenging her father's instructions, ironically, instructions she agreed with, in principle. This is typical of socially hierarchical societies, like Nigeria, whereby, individuals invent multiple covert strategies in dealing with the demands of family and elders (Fernandez et al., 2011; Oladeji & Ariyo, 2014). There were also a handful of instances of the father relinquishing his authority to the couple and allowing them more autonomy. Here, the family still had to consent, but their demands were not imposed on the couple. The following quotes captures this sentiment;

"My dad respects my choice, whatever choice I made, it's fine, he will only advise me if it's not going to be good, but whatever good choice I make, he's fine with it. ...actually, on a normal Yoruba typical setting, I'm not supposed to be involved, with whatever decision made, it should be fine. But then, my family is a free one, so my dad was just like, I should talk with him [groom], pick a date, decide on any date we want, he's fine." Ola (F)

Ola's relationship with her father was more horizontal than most, her family being 'free' implies she was given more autonomy than other (Yoruba) people might get. However, said autonomy still needs to be within implicit guidelines, i.e. a *'good choice'*. This capacity to accommodate the participants' preferences went beyond the boundaries of interactions amongst members of the nuclear family. Similar to Ola's interaction with her dad, resulting in him giving her (near) free reign without her asking, there are also instances of nuclear-Kin subversions. This occurs when parents change Kin requests to the benefit of the marrying couple. In Ogechi's, her mother summarised the entire wedding list as requested by the Kin into a monetary sum, as a cost saving measure to the groom. An act she did without request from Ogechi's groom. The following quote summarises this;

> *"My mum just wanted them to see the list and be like 'see o, I'm telling you to bring so, so and so amount, but if I tell you to drop that amount and follow this list you'll spend a lot more money, I need you to know'."* Ogechi (F)

"I need you to know" suggests that the groom and his family were not initially consulted when Ogechi's mother decided to request a cash only sum. She therefore presented them with the list, so, they could see the benefit of her decision. In other instances, the family could interfere on behalf of participants in other institutions involved in the ritual process, to subvert their demands and directives in favour of the couple. This links into earlier claims of family engaging their social network to help the participants achieve their needs and wants. The following quote from Emma illustrates her mother using her capacity of being an influential church member to bend church rules to favour Emma's request;

> *"We chose December, now when we went to church, to pick the date, we now realised that they were like, some rules they only, they only do weddings twice a month, two Saturdays a month and they already had, the two Saturdays they already had weddings ...that was the church we wanted to get married at ...so, we went back, had to write an application to ask them for special permission to get married during the week, blah blah blah, my mum intervened, they finally allowed us to marry on Thursday at 10am."* Emma (F)

Although the above reads like a rehash of claims made in previous sub-themes, however, the emphasis here is that participants' preferences are not always at the behest of the family. In summary, this sub-theme attempts to show different instances that the family's authority is not always absolute. It also illustrates the different ways

within and outside the family on how norms and processes that are subverted on behalf of the wedding couple.

4.3.2. The Exorbitant Costs of Weddings

This theme attempts to illustrate why Nigerian weddings are so expensive. It does this by focusing on three main sub-themes; (a) 'competing preferences significantly increase wedding costs', (b) 'the bewildering number of obligatory consumer artefacts' and (c) 'the process of reducing costs, its gendered and contextual inclination'. It is well established the immense costs needed for a successful lavish white wedding (Boden, 2003), this theme reifies this but adds further nuance as to why. The first sub-theme on the number of perspectives is relatively novel. In the wedding literature, the primary core of a white wedding are the bride's preferences, tastes and aesthetics (Boden, 2003; Ingraham, 2008; Otnes & Pleck 2003), whilst in the Nigerian context, these needs are further expanded to encompass that of the family and sometimes peers. Therefore, increasing the number of opinions to appease for the ritual. The second sub-theme is more in line with the literature, that the number of consumer artefacts needed is ever increasing and never complete. And finally, the way cost savings are pursued produces a unique set of circumstances that rarely diminishes the high costs of white weddings. All of these will be discussed in detail in the following sub-sections.

a. Competing Preferences Significantly Increase Wedding Costs

As was established in the previous theme, the family makes significant demands regarding the wedding ritual, and within the family there are often competing forces. Similarly, the church, vendors and peers, can also exert pressure and demands on the wedding ritual process. Besides the mental effort needed to resolve this often-contradictory influences, there are also material costs attached to these demands. For example, the bridal list (which includes the bride price) demanded by the bride's family often requires significant financial costs. Chisom's list costs the following;

> *"The cost of the total of everything that was in the list was N450,000." Chisom (F)*

This is more than twice the Nigerian annual minimum wage of N216,000 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2012). In the same vein, the church also has its own financial

demands, in order to accommodate the church wedding. Although, not all churches request cash sums upfront, but those that do, do not place cheap requests. Below is Dele's interaction with his church;

> "...the one that brought up the conflict, was the fact that that particular church wanted us to pay N200,000, just to conduct a wedding in that church." Dele (M)

In Dele's experience, he eventually negotiated down to N120,000, a significant saving but still costly. What often makes this request for cash by the church more difficult to deal with by the couple is that they are often not aware of this requirement from the church prior to being engaged, thereby generating its own emotional discomfort. The following quote gives a glimpse into this situation;

> "There are societies in the church, there's the catholic men's association, catholic women's association, then there's the youth association. So, its assumed that everybody who is of marriageable age is supposed to be in the youth society but a lot of us where not in the society and they pay levies. So, he [the priest] wanted to at least to go and get a certificate from the youth organisation, saying we were members, when you go there my church was charging us N15,000 and [I] refused to [do] that. I said lai lai, I'm not going to pay this thing, I tried everything, because I grew up in the church, I knew all the people that were there and they refused to give it to me" Ogechi (F)

In Ogechi's, the church itself did not have a lump sum request, rather, sub-groups within the church had their own multiple charges, before the church as a whole goes forward with the wedding. Although she claimed to have grown up in the church and knew of the levies, she was shocked that she still needed to pay to obtain the needed certificates. She had to struggle with her preference of having a Christian wedding at her family and childhood church whilst also being reluctant of paying significant sums for the privilege. It can be assumed that Ogechi has contributed to the church over her lifetime, typically through tithes and offerings. Hence the discomfort at paying for access to a place she had contributed to over many years. Similarly, the charges requested by vendors for wedding services is also on the higher side. Although, participants are typically vaguely aware that vendors charge more for weddings, the actual difference in their expectations and reality can be enormous.

> "DJ, N170,000. So, it's ridiculous". Ogechi (F)

Peer pressure also exerts its influence, in Amaka's wedding, her friends suggested she use one of the popular Nigerian wedding photographers. Below is her recollection;

> *"I was planning a wedding and of course I had to invite a few friends, and then you'll hear 'oh no, use George Okoro', ...I sent George Okoro a mail and said 'hey, I'm getting married, I would like to, I would like you to cover my wedding, how much would it cost?' and I get a reply and he said its 'N1.5 million', hello! the economy is so hard, do I earn N1.5 million a year? What's my husband's take home a year that we're running a wedding that way, and so, even if you're not using a George Okoro, you're still using lots of vendors that are so pricy." Amaka (F)*

Amaka's quote summaries the sheer surprise at how much vendors costs, how her friends urged her towards increased wedding ritual costs and her overall view that regardless of how popular a wedding vendor is, they are *"pricy"*. This reinforces Ogechi's comment of the *"ridiculous"* cost of wedding vendors. Finally, the preferences of the marrying couple is rarely cheap, as those preferences need to be executed by these already *"pricy"* wedding vendors. For example, Dele and Ogechi could have opted not to get married in a church, but, as devout Christians, this was almost non-negotiable. From an aesthetic perspective, the demands, predominantly from female participants, was usually detailed and occasionally complex. Therefore, requiring vendors to go further than their typical services. Below are Sola's instructions to her reception hall decorator, illustrating the more complex demands. In Emma's experience, she was not familiar with the type of wedding dress that she preferred, however, she knew she wanted a 'side train' as opposed to the common 'back train'. A unique feature, which the researcher had never encountered prior to the interview.

> *"I had pictures, I had three pictures from three different weddings that I attended and how they decorated ...I picked from each of the three decorations, which I would like, I picked the chair, the kind of chair in one of the pictures, I picked the kind of flowers used in another and I picked the kind of sequence used in decorating. So I just picked from three pictures that I had, so showed her the three pictures, showed her what I wanted from the three pictures and how I wanted to combine them, and so, she, she actually took the three pictures and then she sent me, when she got the materials of what I wanted, she sent me the pictures, so I was like ok, let's do it this way, let's mix this with this, I don't want a sequence background, she likes to work with, she likes to put sequence on the chair, I didn't like it, so I told her, that chair will work for me but without the sequence, I told her [to] use the sequence for the background instead. So*

that's what she did, she used the sequence for the background instead, the stage and then the chair was just the white chair without the sequence, though it was adorned with flowers, white flowers and that was basically it. Then there was a white carpet from the chair to the dancing floor, so that we'll just walk on the white carpet to where the chair is." Sola (F)

"My wedding dress is regal by all standards, it was an amazing ...I didn't have many dreams about weddings, I didn't know of [what my] wedding dress was going to look like, I didn't have a clue, so when I went to her [dress designer], she was like, 'ok, what do you want', I was just like, 'I don't know'. 'Ok, do you have like a style?', 'I don't know', and good thing, she kind of loves like, clean slates, because she loves to like bring her own ideas to life. She was just like ok, great, you don't know, 'is there anything you don't want' and I was like 'yes, I don't want ball gown, I'm not walking around in a ball gown all day'. And I said, I wanted a side train, as opposed to a back train. I didn't want anybody to have to carry my train at the back, so I wanted a side train instead." Emma (F)

In both quotes, participants were more likely to request something out of the ordinary. According to Adrian (2004), the more vendors have to deviate from their standard offerings to accommodate special requests, the higher the costs to them, both in time and resources. That is, vendors often have specific process for delivering goods and services, and disruptions could be costly. Overall, the findings also coincide with prior literature that women compared to men were more invested in performing a lavish and expensive wedding ritual (Adrian, 2004; Boden, 2001; Ingraham, 2008; Otnes & Pleck, 2003; Park, 1997; Pepin et al., 2008). This was established in the literature review, that the market deliberately centres the bride and encourages significant consumption. Following Sola's thrust, there was a general desire for having unique consumer artefacts. In most instances, unique often means more expensive compared to generic (Adrian 2004; Ingraham, 2008). The same experience echoed by Emma, who wanted the uncommon 'side train', even though she had less of an idea what the general style or design of the dress should be. It can be interpreted that her major concern for the dress was uniqueness, regardless of the style, design or fabric. The next quotes by Sola and Bimpe emphasise the acquisition of fabrics that express uniqueness and the accompanying higher costs;

"I was looking for a lace that was not too common. That people won't see on me and say 'no, I've seen this lace from somewhere', it has to be unique. Not like Aso Ebi, according to what the market women said, they said they have the laces that are used for Aso Ebi that are so common and the one they are going to be

using for. I eventually got a lace ...I think when we bought it, it was about 50,000 [Naira] when I got it." Bimpe (F)

"When I told her [mother] the price I was looking at for my, the amount I was looking at for my traditional attire, she was like 'anh ha! that's much', I was like 'OK, that's what I want', because the truth is, you can only get something that is not too popular ...ranging between N30,000 to N50,000, ...she was like, that's too much, when you can always get a N15,000 five yards material or a N20,000 five yards material, like, it's my wedding, and I actually want it to be very nice ...I saw the fabric I liked in the colour I wanted, though it was expensive, not too expensive, it was within my budget. It was 35 [thousand Naira]? 35 [thousand Naira], yeah." Sola (F)

Sola's mother suggests that a regular or more generic material can cost between N15,000 to N20,000, however, due to their needs for something less popular, Sola and Bimpe both pursued the higher cost fabrics. Sola's claim of finding the material she wanted within her budget further shows that budgeting is simply a technique for keeping track of costs and not necessarily for reducing costs. Bimpe's comment also establishes that vendors are aware of this need for uniqueness and therefore push the brides towards costlier consumer artefacts. This supports claims that market vendors within wedding rituals have continuously pushed up prices (Ingraham, 2008, Nash, 2013). The need for something unique is partly explained by Bimpe's comment on the way 'people' would perceive the fabric. This can be further elaborated on by delving into the few instances where men insist on increased conspicuousness. Due to the delays by the church, Tunji's bride wanted to omit the church wedding ritual, but he insisted on delaying the wedding till the church consented.

"I wish I supported her motion, I would have supported her motion, but I was just being ceremonial about it, that 'what would people say, what would people feel like you don't have the money to feed people, you're dodging away from this, you're dodging away from this'. So, one side of me, I wanted to support her, but one side of me was being ceremonial." Tunji (M)

"I actually don't compromise when it comes to quality, so I go all the way, like my wedding suit and everything, I think I was supposed to, I got it for, I had it made for almost N100,000, a lot of people were like why would you spend so much on your wedding suit, once tailors in Nigeria know that it's a bridal, their prizes are just up there. 75, 80, 85 [thousand Naira], and then I just looked at the options I had, then I settled for this guy, I think he, for me I think he's one of the best tailors you can have in Nigeria, Tayo Gabriels. So I had to settle for him, although he was more expensive than the others. Same for the Agbada ...so, he's

actually good, a very good job, I got a lot of compliments. So I was comfortable."
Dele (M)

Here, Tunji was more concerned with what his peers, friends and family might think of his financial status should he not host a church wedding, even though, it was the church itself who was preventing him from it. Regarding Dele's quote, he also acknowledges that tailors charge more should the service be for a wedding ritual, as established by prior studies (Boden, 2003; Ingraham, 2008). However, he also took into consideration what 'people would say'. Not in the explicit fashion as Tunji's, but he couches his preference for an expensive wedding suit in terms of (high) quality. Dele concluding the he *"got a lot of compliments",* and therefore *"was comfortable",* reinforces the notion that he was keen on public approval. Together, they both take an uncompromising approach to displaying their financial capacity. Following on from Adrian (2004) and Geller's (2001) assertions that men are perceived to lose socio-cultural status by becoming 'trapped' in marriage-hood, they therefore spend lavishly as a means of trying to counter this perception. Therefore, it becomes essential that Tunji (and Dele) has the full means to show his financial capacity, because of this perceived loss in socio-cultural status. Following the idea of peer recognition (and pressure?), the need to accommodate as many people as possible was also a major contributor to costs;

> *"It's Africa, everybody comes. And then you can't say, you can hardly make your wedding strictly by invitation, because we're Africans, that's not what we are known for. When its, if it was in the UK or the US, people are a little bit conservative, you don't have people coming that you don't invite. But here, everybody 'oh she didn't invite me but I know her mum, I was her mum's classmate', everybody comes to celebrate with you. Its straight from the heart… So, I think that is why, a lot of people go for weddings, if you plan for 500, you should see about 800."* Bunmi (F)

> *"People you don't even know will come for your wedding, people you don't expect."* Tola (F)

According to Bunmi's quote, it is the norm to budget for additional guests than expected, therefore, regardless of how large the budget is, participants always had to anticipate exceeding these budgets because more people than invited will always attend the wedding ritual. Reinforcing the idea that budgeting focuses on tracking costs, rather reduction. It is interesting that this occurrence is framed as an aspect of

'Africanness' or African identity i.e. "*it's Africa …we're Africans.*" Substituting Africa for Nigeria or a person's ethnicity, also further emphasises how conspicuous consumption can be tied to a person's sense of belonging. Therefore, attempting to restrict audience attendant or preferring a small wedding ritual is going against socio-cultural norms. Making such a decision more difficult and therefore almost forcing participants into acquiring ever increasing costs. Tola further emphasises that Nigerian wedding rituals is not an intimate affair, rather, a public event with a near open-invite to all. Bunmi's suggestion is emblematic, whereby, participants often expected about 50% increase to the number of people invited and/or expected. There were also more extreme examples, Abiola's quote expresses this;

> *"We've planned for 500 people, seeing over 2000, we became worried. So, the food couldn't go round, we had to just buy drinks, at least additional drinks."* Abiola (M)

Unsurprisingly, food prepared for 500 people was not enough for the 2000 who arrived. Drinks can be bought ready to drink from nearby vendors, whilst food needs to be prepared and requires significantly more time to acquire, especially at the volume needed by Abiola. It is also interesting that Abiola's main concern was food and drinks, and not for example over-capacity of the venue and the inconvenience it will pose to the 500 who were specifically invited. Further, most of these 2000 are likely to be strangers to Abiola and his bride, this can be gleaned from Tola's quote *"people you don't even know will come".* From the participants, Abiola in particular, the act of offering food was a very important aspect of the ritual;

> *"You can't have a wedding without feeding people, making people feel like yeah, you're celebrating something. Most people come to the wedding not to look at your face 'yes, I do, yes I do.' They actually come to rejoice with you, eat with you, party with you."* Bunmi (F)

It is a wonder what would happen if (free) food and entertainment was not offered at wedding rituals, would less people attend? Further, it could be a result of consumer culture invading Nigerian wedding rituals and turning it into a sight primarily for consumption. There were several instances where participants did not eat during their own wedding rituals, whilst offering food to several hundred guests. This will be considered in-depth in subsequent themes, but it suggests how food might not be as core to a Nigerian wedding as Bunmi claims.

Echoing sentiments espoused by Ingraham (2008) and Otnes & Pleck (2003), that wedding rituals have been framed as a 'once in a lifetime' event. Participants framed their approach to their wedding ritual as an event that happens only once. Below is Bunmi's take on this;

> *"They are particular events in your life that just changes, that changes your life, like when you are born, nobody knows when they are born, yeah, but then you're going to be sharing your life with somebody else, that's the only time you know, you don't know when you're going to die, I think those are the three most important parts of your life; when you're born, when you start sharing your life with somebody else and when you're going to die. That's the only one you actually witness, the others, people just celebrate it in your absence, when you don't know ...it just makes me feel that, our wedding day is something you should enjoy, apart from birthdays where people celebrate you, those are the, that's the only time you are celebrated. And where you think oh, this is because of me, it's a very happy day in your life, that you can't afford for anybody to ruin, not even the church."* Bunmi (F)

Here, Bunmi, a devout Christian, asserts that celebrating her wedding ritual goes beyond the demands and preferences of her church. More interesting, is the way she frames her wedding ritual, as one of the three most important moments of a person's life; birth, wedding and death, following the life-cycle perspective on rituals (Bell, 1997; Houston, 1999; Nelson & Otnes, 2005). Birth and death ritual celebrations are often done in the absence of the person, whilst the wedding is the only event the celebrant is fully conscious and can actively partake. This appears to contradict earlier assertions that *"wedding is for the family and marriage for the couple".* However, if family is viewed as a socio-cultural unit and the couple as one of its multiple sub-units, it somewhat reconciles this contradiction. Primarily, the aim of Bunmi's quote is to show how important wedding rituals are perceived. A different reading of the quote suggests an attempt to de-collectivise the wedding ritual, painting it as a deeply personal phenomenon. This therefore permits or encourages participants to pursue uniqueness at excessive costs due to the perceived importance of wedding rituals.

In summary, there are numerous and sometimes opposing demands and influences on the way the wedding ritual needs to be conducted, which often results into escalating costs trying to satisfy all needs, requests and suggestions.

b. The Bewildering Number of Obligatory Consumer Artefacts

This sub-theme this has been well established in the literature, that the number of consumption artefacts needed for a successful consumption-oriented wedding ritual is substantial (Fairchild, 2014; Ingraham, 2008; Nguyen & Belk, 2012; Otnes & Pleck, 2003; Otnes & Scott, 1996). The following gives a summary of the different artefacts and services needed;

> *"…the [invitation] card …wedding gown and some the traditional wears …the decorator …Aso Ebi for my girls …pink bag, a pink clutch and a pink shoe …the venue …makeup artist …the photography and the video coverage …lighting, flowers and stuff …the cake …catering for weddings …[souvenirs] towels, tea cups, mugs, jotter …alcohol …ring …Shekere [percussion musical instrument]…the mat, and the chair …more than 10 cars or buses …MC …DJ and a live band"* Bimpe (F)

Bimpe's quote is complimented by Appendix (9) downloaded from Nairaland, which contains some of the needed artefacts for a wedding ritual. It is worth noting that many of these items are duplicated, as they need a set for the traditional wedding and a separate set for the religious wedding and occasionally a third set for the court wedding.

> *"Bimpe; the money was for the wedding cake was hundred thousand [Naira].*
> *Interviewer; did you have a cake for trad [traditional wedding] too?*
> *Bimpe; yes, we had [cake] for the trad."* Bimpe (F)

The literature establishes that this high number of (near) mandatory artefacts are mostly vendor driven (Ibid), participants suggest an additional layer or influence of being perceived as cool, being on trend and not being left out. Here, these artefacts are not being forced on the marrying couple, participants are actively trying to keep to trends of the kind of wedding artefacts being used. Below are some excerpts that illustrates this;

> *"…I think Florence did this on her wedding day and I want to do the same, …Nonso did this on his wedding day and I want to do the same thing"* Emeka (M)

> *"Everybody is just trying to follow the trend …my white [wedding ritual] was going to be done in Abuja, was done in Abuja, and that's where I live, that's where my office is, so I had more people coming, I was more eager to make it a nice wedding. Hey, like I said, I'm not going to be 100% following trends but I*

> *don't want to be the one person who her wedding was not hyped or wasn't nice or on-fleek, I wanted to slay as well ...In the Igbo land it's not compulsory you change but well thanks to trends once again its nicer of you to change, so I did. You change when you come out the first time," Amaka (F)*

Emeka's quote is self-explanatory, the last section of Amaka's quote illustrates why she had to purchase multiple dresses for the same traditional wedding. As previously suggested, the bride often needs a minimum of two dresses, one for the traditional and another for the religious wedding ritual. Amaka, due to following trends, went even further, by purchasing two sets of dresses for the traditional alone. In addition to another two sets she will wear for her church wedding i.e. one for the church ritual itself and another for the reception. It is worth noting that Amaka's wedding was one of the costlier weddings, which she claimed costed about N6 million. After claiming neither she nor her husband earn up to N1.5 million per year, it is safe to assume the family paid for most of the wedding.

From the offline participants, visual and aesthetic inspirations are primarily sourced online, including blogs, online magazines, other online forums and social media platforms. Of the (semi) professional lifestyle blogs and online magazines, the primary content is that of normal Nigerians. That is, it less so commercial photography but pictures of people at various social events not limited to weddings (Nwafor, 2013), becoming something akin to a content aggregator, who sources their content from others (Ingraham, 2008). If it is assumed that each wedding ritual is designed to be unique and different, sourcing inspiration from the same pool of symbols is likely to increase complexity. That is, the more wedding ideas are sourced from the same sites, future wedding rituals will therefore attempt to create more intricate versions of the same/similar wedding. This could be a driving force behind the need for complex colour themes and implementation. Bidemi changes her colour theme after consulting such a blog:

> *"Bidemi; yeah, I had problem with the colour to pick for the day, I first of all went with white, maybe white colour or off-white but I just decided that I changed my mind, I just fell in love with carton brown, just changing of mind."*
> *Interviewer; where did you see it?*
> *Bidemi; I had a lot, I used to go to Instagram, all those Bella Naija weddings and they have all these different things for weddings. So I go there sometimes, if I see any picture I like, I save it. That was how I came up with the colour" Bidemi (F)*

'Bella Naija' (Bellanaija.com) is a popular blog for Nigerian fashion, ranked 161ˢᵗ most popular amongst Nigerian websites, which has been active since 2006 (Alexa.com[10], 2019).

Chukwuma, a wedding photographer, gives insight into the logic of how and why so many artefacts are procured;

> *"...to be on the safe side just have at least 2 [million Naira], to start with. Then you can go up to colour, see what you can do ...for the wedding to take place, you need to be sure of how many people you want to invite first of all. Once you're sure of the guest capacity ...find a place that can accommodate them comfortably and find out how much. If it is 1 million [Naira], know that your budget, you've added 1 million Naira to it. ...the next important thing, food. Next thing, water, I didn't say drinks, water. Then what your wife will wear and what you'll wear. Those things are priority, with these four things, your wedding has taken place, successfully. ...The rest are just things you now tweak based on how much you can run into, to make your wedding better. So basically, after that, you now, ok, let's add one bottle of wine per table, how many tables are there, you calculate and add it to your own. You have to have like a backbone, a skeleton, of, if all of these things fail, the wedding is fucked up. ...Then you want to add a little stuffs, you can add coke and Fanta, cheaper too. It can go round, capacity, amount you'll, number of guest times number of [drinks], add it to your budget. This is how you budget it, based on your pocket. Once you have saved for the skeleton, wedding dress, wedding hall, food and water, if it costs 1.5 [million Naira], your wedding can take place safely. Any other thing, is counterfeit, then you'll now be like ok, there're two more things, MC & DJ. ...those are the main things, that is budget, the rest, is what colours outside the budget. I can say that the budget for my wedding is 2 million [Naira], I'm spending 3 million [Naira], the reason is because we decided to buy bottles of wine for the table, we decided to buy bottles of Hennessey and spirits for the high table. We decided that we're going to stay in a 5-star hotel, that is for the wedding, so that they can shoot awesome pictures... The food, just rice and chicken is not enough, we need salad, small chops, ice cream, there's dessert and all those things. All those things that'll make it colour you outside your budget, separate them from your budget... Then you can start making deposits for those things, so that the prices don't change, as time is going after you made the deposit, just carry the balances and keep somewhere, don't spend it... you want to make the wedding grander, in what aspect are you going to make*

---

[10] http://www.alexa.com/siteinfo/bellanaija.com

grander, if you want a smoke machine for the stage, you just throw that in, do you understand? That way, it helps you, it hurts less" Chukwuma (M)

A lengthy quote but can be summarised as pursuing a basic wedding will require certain non-negotiable artefacts, then, the more money the participants are willing to pay, the more artefacts that can be added to make it *"grander".* Focusing on drinks alone, a wedding reception can offer, water, wine, Hennessey, Fanta, Coke, Champagne etc, this list can go on infinitely, only curtailed by the financial capacity of the wedding couple and their family. This feeds into the idea that the wedding is more than just a ritual but also an illustration of socio-economic status (Ingraham, 2008), the more money available to spend, the more *"colourful"* the wedding can be. On the concept of trends and consumer lifestyle consumption, this could have the potential of helping to choose which type of liquid to offer in addition to the mandatory water. A couple can consider themselves wine drinkers and therefore not offer spirits or champagne, therefore helping them curtail the number of choices they need to make. However, in the wedding ritual market place, the trend itself is "more is better" (Fairchild, 2014; Ingraham, 2008; Nash, 2013). Directly undermining such market ideas of lifestyle consumption (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Bardhi et al., 2010; Ferreira & Scaraboto, 2016).

An interesting contribution from Chukwuma quote is *"it hurts less",* suggesting that the wedding planning process and spending is not pain free. A concept that will be explored in subsequent themes. The above is partly driven by social media that was previously established, but it illustrates that the hunger for incorporating these numerous artefacts is not purely market driven. When combined with the fact that the number of these artefacts are relatively large, accompanied by a higher price tag due to its association with wedding consumption, it explains why these rituals can be so expensive. Here the tension is between spending significant sums and having a unique and trendy wedding ritual. This is less a tension than described in other themes, being that participants are often willing to expend significant resources; however, this spending creates its own "hurt" as Chukwuma suggests. An experience Chisom would suggest as deep unhappiness.

c. The Process of Reducing Costs, its Gendered and Contextual Inclination

The above sub-themes give an impression that participants are willing to spare no expenses in the pursuit of their ideal wedding ritual. However, cost saving was also a vital part of their planning and execution. When offered a price by a vendor the participants are always anticipating a discount or some form price-reduction.

> *"My fiancé as at then just felt we should ask for the amount that the hall was going for and then he said N250,000, because it was a 200-sitter hall, it was N250,000. and we were like was he not going to reduce the price?" Sola (F)*

In Sola's quote, she was surprised that the vendor was unwilling to reduce the cost. In this case, her father used his social network to help get a N50,000 discount. In other instances, other family members help secure a discount using their own social network. Another method includes paying in instalments, as a way of fixing prices in anticipation of future price increases. This was common for wedding rituals holding during Christmas, whereby, people expect price increases due to increasing demand.

> *"As at February, I had already made deposit for, or January sef, I had already made deposit for the hall for the 24th of December, I had made like 50%. The idea is this, so that the vendor has already agreed to the old price before the thing starts to change." Chukwuma (M)*

Chukwuma paid for his reception hall 10 – 11 months early, to ensure the vendor does not increase the price closer to the Christmas period. More dramatic methods for pursuing cost savings was to consider changing the entire process to reduce overheads. Below are two illustrative examples;

> *"After church, we're not doing a reception, we're just giving food-to-go, then the real party is Saturday, there are some things that you need to take into account, if I was doing two days length, at least I need to feed people twice." Tola (F)*

> *"traditional came first, but we did it the same day. All because of my brother [the Patriarch] [laughs], to cut costs, my brother didn't, [there] wasn't any elaborate wedding, so we did it in the same day, in the morning." Eni (F)*

In Tola's quote, she decided to omit the reception to save costs, a significant change to the wedding process of a reception after the religious exchange of vows. Instead, opted to offer food to attendants of the religious ritual as a take-home package. Eni's traditional and church wedding happened on the same day, against the norm of occurring over two different days, to save costs i.e. to avoid feeding people twice.

Suggesting that cost savings is one of the permissible reasons at altering the wedding ritual script. Following the theme of dramatic cost savings, participants were typical of traveling to a different city to try and secure cheaper wedding fabrics. A more dramatic example is illustrated by Nafisa who went to Dubai to secure cheaper fabrics.

> *"We went to Manchester uni, so there are some things that, we went to Arndale [Manchester, UK]. Some outlets, there are some outlets, there's this furniture, The Range, it's outside. So that's where we went to …Dubai, because, well we get cheap stuff, and they have so many variety of fabrics, we mostly got our bridal fabrics there and tailors." Nafisa (F)*

In this illustrative example, Nafisa is comparing clothes shopping from Dubai, UAE, to Manchester, UK. She therefore suggests she saved money by doing her fabric shopping in Dubai compared to Manchester. Nafisa is likely part of the Nigerian upper class, as she claimed her wedding ritual costs about N30 million. A more common occurrence was travelling to Lagos State in Western Nigeria, to a popular market called 'Eko Idumota', to buy fabrics. For those from the East who could not travel to Lagos, they got their fabrics from Aba in Abia State.

> *"We bought the traditional, we call it Aso Oke, at Lagos, Eko. I think it's much cheaper than Abuja." Akin (M)*

> *"It was in Aba, when we travelled to see my mum, there we got the material[s]." Emeka (M)*

However, how they justified said savings differs in context and gender. Focusing on context, the artefact in question often determines how much effort is put into cost savings. Primarily focusing on clothing and fabrics, participants were willing to pay high costs for unique and high quality outfits, whilst for food, they were more concerned with keeping prices to a minimum.

> *"She was supposed to bill us per plate but it was not really comfortable, so my dad decided that it will be best for us to buy what she needs and give it to her." Bimpe (F)*

To save on costs, Bimpe's father opted to buy the food ingredients himself, whilst the food caterer charges for only preparating and serving of the meals. Contrary to Bimpe's earlier position of pursuing deliberately high-cost fabrics due to her need for individual differentiation and uniqueness. This corresponds with assertions that differentiation is context specific and certain artefacts are more important for pursuing

uniqueness (Coleman & Williams, 2015; Oyserman, 2009; White & Argo, 2009), this therefore translates into which areas cost-cutting are more vigorously pursued. Focusing on a gendered perspective, the men were more likely to pay a larger share of the wedding ritual costs compared to the women, this supports the premise that he needs to *"earn his wife"* (Oladeji & Ariyo, 2014, pg. 19). This also corresponds with previous literature of the bride typically wanting to spend more (Boden, 2003). This often results in some conflict because the groom shoulders more of the expenses, he is keener on cost cutting, whilst the bride is often more inclined on (more) expensive consumer artefacts.

> *"I was trying to dodge giving her the money to buy the material for me, but I know she will want to, I tried to economise …I now start, 'how far?', she said 'I should send the 40 thousand [Naira]', oh god, I'm thinking like 20 thousand[Naira]."* Tunji (M)

In Tunji's case, for the fabric he had in mind, he was expecting to pay half of what his bride suggested. As previously established, N15,000 to N20,000 is for generic items, whilst above this range is for the more unique items. Here, Tunji was comfortable with generic fabrics whilst his wife preferred the more expensive and potentially unique options. It is worth reiterating that Tunji had insisted on a church wedding, against his bride's preference to omit it, due to him not wanting to be perceived as financially lacking. However, in the context of fabrics, he was happy to get something generic. Further emphasising how the two genders conceive cost savings. Below is Emma's quote illustrating the conflict between her and her groom in respect of the venue decorator;

> *"My husband who seems to think that no matter how cheap you get something, you can always get it cheaper, …so, he kept saying 'No, I'm sure we can get it cheaper', now a lot of them, the first decorator I spoke to was asking for one point something million naira, I was like [long pause] and all other decorators were calling quite a bit of money, my sister's friend who I had spoken to had agreed to 600,000 [Naira] which was the best I had seen, I was like ok, great, for what it is, and I want to, I just want it simple, I don't want anything extra, and she had agreed to do it for me and we were already planning that. But then his friend, no, I think she even reduced it to 550 [thousand Naira], she gave us a discount, and then he comes and says he has a friend who does decor, blah, blah, blah, and then she looked at the place and says oh yeah, she can do it for 500, I was like, what's the difference, 50,000, he was like yes, 50,000 is something. So,*

we had so many other arguments about vendors, so I was like ok fine, have your decor vendor." Emma (F)

As Emma's quote suggests, looking for a cheaper option was a mantra that was guiding majority of the decisions of her groom, whilst hers was guided by quality. However, it is interesting that she foreshadowed the interaction by mentioning other vendors who were asking for over a million Naira, to illustrate that N550,000 is cheaper than he (or the interviewer) might think. In some cases, men were keener on cost-savings across contexts, often resulting in conflict with the bride. A less confrontational style of attempting to save costs, by grooms, was to emphasise the money needed for a "happy marriage". The rhetoric employed was to emphasise spending the same cash on their married life, instead of on the wedding ritual itself, below is James' attempt at this style;

"I'll rather prefer to spend the money spoiling you [bride], taking care of you, ...instead of spending 200,000 [Naira], 400,000 [Naira] feeding people that we don't know, I'll rather prefer to get you a car. I'll rather prefer to spend all that money changing your wardrobe, because you're a married woman now, you have to represent." James (M)

James focused on improving his bride's social status after the wedding as an excuse to cut costs, further positioning spending money on the wedding audience as wasteful. He also reiterates the idea that majority of the audience in attendance are in fact strangers to the wedding couple. This idea also goes beyond the wedding ritual itself and extends to the honeymoon. In an attempt of avoiding the additional cost of a honeymoon, the men often frame marriage as honeymoon itself. Below is Abiola's take on honeymoons;

"Honeymoon is everyday ...honeymoon is everyday till you die." Abiola (M)

What Abiola says in essence is, there is no need for a honeymoon, as being married is a form of honeymoon. Some female participants used a similar rhetoric, but, emphasis was on avoiding debt as Sola claimed earlier, instead of James' framing of waste. For the brides, cost-cutting was contextualised and compared to their male partners, brides were often less keen on reducing the overall cost of the wedding ritual. In sum, cost cutting did play an active part of the budgeting and spending activities associated with planning a wedding ritual. Participants often employed a range of tactics depending on the context, whilst grooms seemed keener on reducing the overall costs, whilst brides were more likely to be selective. Further, the gendered variance in cost

savings efforts illustrates the liminal tensions between the marrying couple. Whereby, brides and grooms do not always agree on which contexts are too important for generic consumer artefacts.

4.3.3. Undermining a Successful Wedding Ritual

Individual expression is one of the core motivations in the pursuit of a white wedding ritual (Otnes & Pleck, 2003; Sykes & Brace-Govan, 2015). However, the bride has to surmount multiple obstacles to arrive at a destination she feels that her preferences, aesthetics and tastes have been successfully expressed during the wedding ritual (Sykes & Brace-Govan, 2015). Unfortunately, not all brides achieve this, it becomes more unlikely for low-income and/or racially non-white brides according on Ingraham (2008) and emphasised by Mupotsa's (2015) study on South African weddings. This theme attempts to highlight the major factors that undermine the participants' individual expression. This is mostly from the perspective of the bride, due to gendered arrangements, she is expected to shoulder most of the tasks and therefore is limited by her physical strength and knowledge of wedding rituals and associated consumption (Ingraham, 2008). Second, the stress, physical and emotional, creates a significant barrier to fully reaching participants' desired vision. Both perspectives are closely linked and are elaborated on below.

a. Gendering of Priorities, Labour and Decision Making

As argued by Mupotsa (2015), in a patriarchal society, women can only have the illusion of choice. This was strongly expressed by the ease at which the groom overrules and, in some cases, undermine the bride's preferences (Pepin et al., 2008), contrary to popular saying that "wedding is a woman's affair". To illustrate this point, Folarin had previously explicitly stated that she wanted a small and intimate marriage proposal, and yet, Tunji, her groom, did the exact opposite. Below are his reasons;

> *"...so that she can always remember, it'll stick to the memory, as a surprise, ...I want people to witness it, that's so that they know I can do anything for her... I was just looking for a surprise, I want to do a surprise she'll remember, [to] always prove to her that I can do anything for her" Tunji (M)*

> *"Well, I'm not a public person, so I was quite shy, for me, I would have preferred a private one, where we'll just have the video, or the photographs and all. But since the day he informed me, 'you know you can't inform our partner when*

you want to do something like that', so it was his own opinion, so I felt it was cool" Folarin (F)

Again, the groom, Tunji, focuses on public perception, he is the groom in a previous theme who insisted on a church wedding to publicly show his financial capabilities. Following the premise that most proposals are recorded and presented on social media, the audience he is likely to have in mind goes beyond the physical bodies present. He is likely to have achieved his aim of the proposal being an event that his bride would never forget, albeit for reasons he might not have intended. Folarin further suggests that he used the popular narrative of the proposal being kept a secret from the bride as means of going against her wishes. This occurrence of imposing a proposal on the bride is not limited to the groom's decisions, the audience also plays a part. During Sola's public proposal, she felt pressured into giving a definitive answer, contrary to her opinion that she might have needed more time to come to an answer. Below is a brief description of her proposal;

> *"I had mixed feelings initially, when I saw him kneel down, I actually had mixed feelings that, I didn't know whether to say 'yes' or to say 'no', ...I took my time and my friends were like Sola say 'yes now! Sola if you're going to say no, say no'. So, I eventually thought of it, I took like a minute, he was still on his knees and then I said 'ok, yes'. The truth is, I've never really pictured that moment, fine, I know that every relationship it's either you get married or you don't get married, it's one of the two options and so I said 'yes'." Sola (F)*

The audience did not stop to consider if Sola was not ready to make such a commitment or if she was even ready to be proposed to. Sola's apprehension further suggests the proposal was entirely on the terms of her groom, similar to Tunji's. The audience further legitimised his decision to *"surprise"* Sola with a proposal. Whether consciously or subconsciously, the preference for a public proposal by the grooms was based on the premise of manipulating popular wedding myths to their advantage. This leads into the gendering of labour, of the groom only participating minimally in the actual labour needed to organise a large white wedding ritual (Mupotsa, 2015; Peppin et al., 2008). The following quote establishes how grooms excludes themselves from the wedding planning labour;

> *"My husband was stressed out, so, whatever I asked, he'll just tell me to take care of it. The little way I can. He'll be like, this one, that, he doesn't want to start stressing himself over that, I should get someone to get it for me, or I can go*

with the person, because I was the person in Lagos and he was in Abuja, so the whole market is in Lagos and I have to be the person running around for the whole thing." Chisom (F)

"Interviewer; The colours of your wedding, did you guys have one and who picked it?
Chukwuma; My mum, my wife and siblings and relations. ...That's woman's department, I have no idea how they did that, that they came up with a colour."
Chukwuma (M)

From Chisom's quote her groom excludes himself from planning and procurement activities based on the idea of him being *"stressed"*, ironically, Chisom is the person doing most of the *"running around",* including securing and monitoring an external party to help. The phrase *"the little way I can"* can be interpreted in two interdependent ways, first, to mean her limited financial capacity. As was already established, the groom often contributes more than the bride towards costs. In addition, her little way can also mean by her limited knowledge of the wedding consumer industry. This can further be confounded when the bride knows little about wedding planning and yet has limited financial contribution to see a successful fruition of the wedding ritual. This will be further explored in the next sub-theme. From Chukwuma's perspective, deciding on the wedding ritual colour(s) is a woman's affair, between his bride and mother. And yet, colour is one of the most important parts of the visual aesthetics of a wedding ritual (Ourahmoune & Ozcaglar-Toulouse, 2012). Busayo and Akin summarise how important colour is;

"I think something you're doing once in a life time must be colourful, so the memory will still be... 'ah, remember so, so, time', it's just once in a life time."
Akin (M)

"It makes it beautiful, it makes the event memorable ...if its colourful, it's attractive, ...there's a kind of aura when you pick up something that is colourful, you'll tend to have some kind of excitement when you're looking at it." Busayo
(F)

Akin and Busayo emphasise how a colourful wedding makes it more memorable, particularly, Akin's justification of a wedding ritual being a "once in a lifetime event". Further providing proof that this ideation of "once in a life time" is not limited to women. The ultimate way this gendered labour can be expressed is in the groom completely disregarding the time and effort of the bride to attend to his own priorities. This happens less frequently but enough to significantly undermine the bride's efforts

and vision. Below is an example of this, whereby, the groom arrives four hours late for the pre-wedding photoshoot that was sourced and organised by the bride.

> "It was stressful though, ...I had to close early, the shoot was supposed to start around 3 [PM], ...he didn't come until 7 [PM]. ...I was angry, I was pissed, the photographer was there around 2:30 [PM], me, I didn't get there until 3:10 [PM]. And then my husband didn't get there until 6:30 [PM], he said there was traffic, there was this, there was that, that he had to get his ring, that was the day he got his ring too, he had to do so many things" Sola (F)

It is worth reiterating that this was the groom who publicly proposed to Sola when she had mixed feelings about it. And yet, when it was time to be part of her planning and execution, he was being disruptive. This sub-theme illustrates how most of the wedding ritual planning and procurement is shouldered by the bride with limited support of the groom, compounded by the fact that she is typically a novice of wedding ritual planning and often has less financial capital compared to the groom. This significantly undermines her capacity to fully actualise her envisioned wedding ritual. This is further frustrated by the groom's inherent veto power over her choices. In sum, the bride is paired with a reluctant second party who occasionally undermines her efforts, whilst trying to navigate a novel 'consumptionscape'. Here the liminal tension is the bride occasionally finding herself abruptly isolated from her partner.

b. Weddings as Stressful

During the planning and execution of the wedding ritual, participants especially brides, often go through a rollercoaster of emotional permutations. Overall, most of the negative emotions induced are externally driven except for financial stress. In essence, female participants often found the wedding ritual as significantly stressful, typically more than they anticipated. The next quote by Nafisa attempts to give a glimpse into why and how stressful wedding ritual preparation can be, resulting in as little as 3 hours of sleep;

> "I don't think I actually enjoyed it [her wedding ritual], because I was so tired, I was so tired, I wasn't sleeping, because you know, we get henna done and it was usually the night that we do that and you can't sleep until it dries off, sometimes we do it till 2AM and 3 [AM] and you have to wait till it dries and by then it's usually 5AM, and then you sleep and the makeup artist comes really early, by 8 [AM] she's there. And the house is already noisy, people are coming, so I wasn't getting enough sleep and I didn't have time. You know you're the

bride, you'll think people are meant to treat you [laughs] like an egg and take care of you but no, everyone else is busy and you're so, so busy, you don't even have time to eat or rest. It was stressful honestly and during the event I couldn't eat because so many people were looking at me." Nafisa (F)

"Amaka; you need money and serenity afterwards,
Interviewer; you said money and serenity, why did you add serenity?
Amaka; [laughs].
Interviewer; does the wedding bring non-serenity, I don't know what the opposite is, chaos? Does the wedding bring chaos?
Amaka; yes," Amaka (F)

Amaka and Nafisa frame their wedding ritual as incredibly stressful events, Nafisa goes into detail of contributing factors including minimal sleep and food, multiple activities and general disruption to her daily life. Amaka agrees with the interviewer that wedding rituals can be described as chaotic. The sub-theme (3a) 'gendering priorities, labour and decision making', likely contributes to this chaos. All brides complained of being significantly tired, this was often due to a combination of two or more of the following; being busy, not eating enough, lack of sleep and countless arguments.

"It was amazing, I was so exhausted, I just wanted to rest," Zahrah (F)

"It was very, very, very massively stressful, because I had to do so many things on that day" Sola (F)

As was already established there is a gendering of labour in planning the wedding ritual. A likely direct result of this is that all the female participants, without exception, claimed to shoulder majority of the planning and procurement in respect to their male partners. The only exception amongst the men was Dele, due to his bride not being in Nigeria prior to the wedding ritual, he then had to plan the entire wedding ritual with minimal support from his bride. This further lends credibility to Leeds-Hurwitz (2002) claim that grooms are willing to step-up should the conditions require it. With the brides shouldering most of the responsibilities, the resultant stress sometimes leads into physical illness and occasionally unanticipated weight loss. Again, Dele was the only male participant who fell ill and ascribed his illness to the stress of wedding ritual planning;

"I was kind of sick, for like a month. That's why, I'm so lean now" Bimpe (F)

"My fiancé then, was not here, she was in France, so she just came in like a few days before the wedding, so it was very, very stressful I must say, because it had

> *to [do] with a lot of running around, it was stressful and to the extent I took ill on the night of the wedding, I had malaria. Due to stress I guess, so I was at hospital the next day." Dele (M)*

Sometimes the illness was vague like Bimpe and she simply needed several days of rest to recuperate, whilst in Dele's case, he identified it as Malaria and needed medical attention as a result. However, the researcher did not have the capacity to verify the claims of illnesses, but due to it reoccurring and the general acceptance from the participants that it is stress induced, the researcher therefore accepts this as a social fact. The increased chances of falling ill because of wedding planning simply illustrates the enormity of the physical, mental and emotional energy required. Another likely contribution to this stress is that the brides claim to be so busy that they often forget to eat during the wedding ritual. However, a small number of participants claimed to be shy, as indicated by Nafisa, hence not eating on the day due to the large crowd present during the rituals. Focusing on the general tendency of not eating at their own wedding ritual, below are two illustrative examples;

> *"During that period of the whole thing, maybe that was also part of the reason why I was tired, I didn't have time to eat. And I didn't eat before going to the church, so it's as if I didn't all through, the whole occasion was over by 7 PM."*
> *Chisom (F)*

> *"Whilst all these events were taking place, no one remembered to put food on our table, I didn't even drink water throughout the event …when we were going home we had to go to the pharmacy, because my intestines was burning" Zahrah (F)*

Focusing on Zahrah's quote, she claimed her intestines were burning as a result of not eating throughout the day, similar to Chisom who did not eat till 7PM. When combined with the prior weeks and likely months of significant emotional, physical and mental stress, it becomes logical that these results into medium to longer term illness, as expressed by Dele who needed to visit an hospital after his wedding ritual. This further reinforces why some of the brides like Nafisa, who claimed not to have enjoyed her wedding ritual and Amaka suggesting that her wedding ritual removed her serenity and interpreted by the Interviewer as chaos inducing. It is also worth reiterating the importance of food to Nigerian wedding rituals, whereby, food is still served even if entertainment is not provided as illustrated by John and Tola. Therefore, the wellbeing of participants is secondary to the feeding of the audience, that is, it does not matter if

the bride does not eat, as long as wedding ritual attendees eat. In addition, Amaka also claimed that after her wedding, she needed money, as was already established Nigerian wedding rituals are expensive. Therefore, during planning, brides often face significant financial pressures and constraints trying to execute their preferred wedding ritual.

> *"All through this period, I was not happy, because I felt, I was, we were under a lot of financial pressure …deep inside me, something was troubling me," Chisom (F)*

> *"He already gave me some amount of money, it was supposed to buy anything within that amount of money he gave to me. So that made me really stress myself up in the market, because I was looking for something within that price range" Folarin (F)*

Chisom suggests that financial pressure from the ritual planning caused deep unhappiness. Folarin puts this into some perspective, for her, her groom gave her the money to buy her wedding fabrics, however, trying to match her taste with the range of items she could afford caused her significant stress. This stress is often due to spending significant amount of time looking for a unique fabric whilst trying to stay within the funds provided to her by her groom and/or family. The next quote illustrates the shopping dimension of this financial stress;

> *"I went round the market, how many shops, I really went round the market until I saw what I really liked, that was the one that stressed me the most." Tola (F)*

The market Tola is referring to is Eko Idumota, a large outdoor market in Lagos state. Combining Chisom, Folarin and Tola's quotes, it can be deduced that financial pressure can cause both physical stress i.e. from walking around a large market and emotional distress. Continuing along the perspective of interacting with vendors, participants express that vendors are also a source of significant stress. The important role played by vendors is exemplified by the following quote from Dele;

> *"There's no wedding that you want to do in Nigeria that you won't engage at least, in fact, you have to engage all the vendors, unless you've made up your mind, 'I'm not doing it the usual way', a very small stuff, I know people that do it like that." Dele (M)*

"Engage" in the above implies employing the services of all vendors, including but not limited to cake maker, photo and videographer, food and drinks caterer, ushers,

venue/hall rent agent, decorator, tailor, fabrics and clothes seller, makeup and head tie artist, MC, DJ, live band, religious officiant, car rental, etc. Although Dele stresses on engaging all vendors, as he later admits, it is also possible to deviate from the norm, which is what it is, a deviation from the norm, the norm being employing numerous vendors for the wedding ritual. A general opinion espoused by participants is that they were mostly disappointed by the conduct and services provided by vendors. Typical attitudes they complained about were incompetence, lateness and deceit.

> *"I was angry, we paid for several people that would serve, ushers and stuff, at the end of the day, our family members were the ones serving, our siblings were the ones serving, every single one of them did not do anything" Eze (M)*

> *"The person that was supposed to do my hair didn't come on time, I think he came around, maybe 7:30[AM]? I was even angry with him, he forgot something, he had to go back to his shop to bring something that was going to make my hair stay at the back." Bimpe (F)*

> *"...initially, it was around 15 [million Naira], ...we went back to her, told her we couldn't afford that, ...she cut down to 7 [million Naira], ...we gave half of that ...she sent us a 3D rendering of the hall, she sent us something that wasn't our dream, that wasn't our vision, ...we told her, we want our money, we want to cancel, but she was like, 'nooo, you can't do that, just wait two days, and after two days', she just kept on playing with us. ...we got our money back but we had to make, write a petition to EFCC [Economic and Financial Crimes Commission]." Nafisa (F)*

There are orders of magnitudes to the intensities of the disruptions, from being an hour late, to needing law enforcement to intervene on behalf of a participant. Eze was upset that although he paid for ushers, they were not competent enough to meet the needs of the audience and therefore his family had to step in and play a supporting role. As he mentioned, this caused him significant discomfort and anger. Similar, Bimpe's hair stylist was late and also forgot an item he needed, so needed to return back to his shop to retrieve it. Illustrating gross incompetence and lateness. And Nafisa's, an extreme example of deceit, she had to involve the Nigerian law enforcement to retrieve her deposit after the vendor insisted on delivering a venue decoration they had not agreed to. This process took about 2 months and caused significant distress to her and her family, trying to resolve the issue. Lateness was the most common negative behaviour experienced by participants, all participants had at least one negative experience with a tardy vendor. The worst offenders were tailors, they often missed the deadlines they

agreed with participants for when clothes would be ready for collection. Then in fewer cases, the outfit often needed major adjustments. Below, Kola tries to illustrate how late a tailor can be and what he is doing to counter such behaviour;

> *"So many people are having issues with them, …lemme give you an instance …his wife gave the tailor 3 months before, do you know the tailor delivered the clothe a day before the engagement [traditional wedding ritual]? 3 months, a day before engagement [traditional wedding ritual], look at that, how do you feel? [laughs]. Does it make sense? it doesn't make sense. …you will even give them the wrong date …give them a different date entirely …none of my fashion designers know my date and they are almost done with it." Kola (M)*

The above by Kola and others give meaning to why most Nigerians tend to prefer goods that are not made in Nigeria (Folorunso, 2013; Odia & Agbonifoh, 2015; Ogbadu & Ameh, 2012; Omotosho, 2008), as there is a general dissatisfaction with Nigerian vendors. That is, the vendors rarely deliver as they promised, according to participants, so Nigerians might be more inclined to purchase non-Nigerian goods they believe to be of higher quality. However, unlike goods that can be imported, inviting a non-Nigerian service provider to a wedding ritual will require significant costs, orders of magnitudes higher than local vendor. Due to the focus of research and the absence of data directly from the vendors, it could not be discerned why Nigerian vendors illustrated such attitudes and behaviours. This is not to say all vendors are bad, but a general experience of participants is that they were often disappointing. In summary, stress is induced on the bride by multiple factors and therefore limiting her capacity at performing her envisioned wedding ritual. With the exception of finance, that is, if she had more money she can buy whatever she wants, all the stresses experienced by brides were externally induced. In addition to the liminal tensions espoused in prior themes, this sub-theme demonstrates how these tensions are undergirded by stress, emotional, physical and financial.

4.3.4.   Accelerants of Wedding Fever

The previous theme suggests Nigerian wedding rituals are difficult and gruelling, and yet, people are ever keen on performing one. There is an overall need or want to be married and, in many cases, it trumps the reservations a bride might have. This tendency is typically influenced by two perspectives; personal aspirations & expectations and socio-cultural norms & expectations. It might seem imprudent to spilt

personal from the socio-cultural as they are inter-dependent. However, for the sake simplicity, it is presented as such.

a. Personal Aspirations and Expectations as Internal Accelerant

From a personal perspective, participants pursue wedding rituals for a multitude of reasons, those discussed are frequently recurring from the data. Emotionally, there is a high expectation that positive feelings will be generated during the wedding ritual;

> *"I think I was the most happiest person" Musa (M)*
>
> *"It's a very happy day in your life." Bunmi (F)*

This idea is well documented in the wedding ritual literature (Ingraham, 2008; Otnes & Pleck 2003), that weddings are presented as the happiest day of a person's life. Although this is typically said of brides, from Musa's prior quote, even grooms often feel this way in the Nigerian context. One of the ways this "happiness" is expressed is through dance;

> *"Dancing in itself is an art, dancing is a way of exercise, dancing itself can be spiritual and sometimes you're happy you just [start] dancing. Dancing is something that is part of you, even if you're somebody that you don't believe in dancing, sometimes you find yourself dancing because it's so, sometimes when you're happy you just want to move, I think in Africa, dancing is something associated with happiness. There's dancing, anything associated with celebration, there's dancing, so it's, at any cultural celebration you see people coming out to dance, that's it for them." Bunmi (F)*
>
> *"A lot of people were happy, very happy for me, because they've been waiting, 'ah Eni when are you going to get married, you know, that we're waiting oh, we want to come and dance with you and all that.'" Eni (F)*

Bunmi makes the case explicitly, that dancing is an important part of expressing happiness. Eni's is more implied, that for the audience to share in her happiness of getting married they are looking forward to dancing with her. The next quote by Zahrah further amplifies this, that not only her but her groom and family are also involved in this expression of happiness;

> *"I love to dance, so it was amazing, my husband also, we danced, we were kind of buzzing, you know, whenever there's a wedding, if the couple don't dance everyone is not going to dance but if you dance, everyone, my aunties love to dance, my cousins, my sisters, everyone, we danced a lot. ...I didn't even know I could dance that much till when I was getting married." Zahrah (F)*

"Well, I don't know how to dance, my wife doesn't know how to dance, we just tried our best, but I think I did better than her" Dele (M)

Most striking is Zahrah's use of the word 'buzzing', suggesting a form of euphoria beyond just smiles and laughter, but something more physically encompassing. This is in direct opposition to Chisom who expressed not being happy during the ritual planning period because of financial pressures. Suggesting that peaks and troughs are experienced during the wedding ritual process. From Dele and Zahrah's quotes, it can be suggested that they were indeed happy that day, especially Dele who indicated that he does not know how to dance and yet, he still tried his best and went as far as suggesting he did better than his wife. Both Dele and Zahrah also needed medical attention after their wedding ritual. Following the premise that happiness can be expressed by dance and celebrations, it can be implied that the eagerness to dance regardless of ability is a good indication of the idea of happiness surrounding Nigerian wedding rituals. Another rhetorical expression of happiness is via the need or expectation of fun;

"We had mad …at the weddings that we went, the trad [traditional wedding] and the white [church wedding], everybody had fun." Chukwuma (M)

"I was very excited to be getting married at that point in. I was just so excited and happy and yeah, I just wanted to have fun, I was in a proper you know, wedding is here type mood. Yeah, all the stress was gone, I was just looking forward to the next couple of days and getting married." Aisha (F)

Chukwuma expresses that he had *"mad fun"*, again similar to Zaharah's *"buzzing"*, suggesting something beyond the everyday use and experience of fun. Aisha's quote is emblematic of how the pursuit of fun and happiness overwhelms the significant stresses endured during the planning of the wedding ritual, reinforcing the peaks and troughs suggested earlier. More instructive is the idea that *"wedding is here mood"* can be conceived as a mood of happiness and fun. The above focuses on the potential emotional benefits derived on the day of the wedding ritual, a longer-term focus on the benefits of being married is also a contributary drive for pursuing a wedding ritual. John explains that being married earns him more respect;

"Well, it's, it's erm, a fantastic feeling, physically there's no change, but you know, emotionally and psychologically, erm that is, the sense of responsibility, sense of achievement, you know and around you, you tend to get more respect, you tend to get more respect. that's basically it" John (M)

John acknowledges the wedding ritual as producing *"a fantastic feeling",* he goes further to suggest that he gets more respect as a result. Bunmi puts it in clearer terms by coming at it from the perspective of disrespect about an experience she had after her wedding ritual;

> *"...there was a time I was on a bus, a public bus, and very annoyingly the bus driver was throwing kisses at me, everybody was laughing, then I came into work and my colleagues were like 'yes it's my fault, if I had worn a wedding ring, everybody on the bus would be abusing the bus driver, can't you see her hand, she's married, stupid man'. So I was like ok, I should get my ring. And you have a lot of people walk up to you, telling them you're married, they'll think you're lying because you're not wearing a wedding ring." Bunmi (F)*

Bunmi's experience from a woman's perspective paints a picture of entrenched sexism, but, it emphasises how wearing a wedding ring elevates her status and gangers more respect to avoid public embarrassment and harassment. This follows Mikucka's (2016) study that emphasises that married women are more likely to have a better life satisfaction compared to unmarried women. This also resonates with Ije's insinuation of unmarried women never finding fulfilment.

The wedding ring as a symbol of respect comfortably leads into discussions of status enhancement and maintenance, the wedding ritual consumer artefacts can be used in signalling one's socio-economic status.

> *"I prefer silver to gold, I don't like gold. I don't like it, I just feel like, the fakes are more than the originals, a lot of people wear the fake, how are you so sure that I'm not wearing a fake ring" Sola (F)*

Here, Sola is concerned at ensuring her status is maintained and not reduced by the perception that her ring might be a counterfeit. From a status enhancement perspective, some participants express wedding ritual as an elevation into royalty;

> *"It was the beginning of a new era, ...my wedding day felt like that was the beginning of my ownership of a particular thing, of my reign , my kingdom, if we're supposed to go far, my husband is the king, I'm the queen, so it's now time to have our children and have subjects, if I do like a Game of Thrones thing, yeah, it was a, an inception of beautiful and bigger beginning. In reality, I'm not one who fantasises sheepishly, I know there would be problems and all, but at least I, I'm no longer under the cover or shadow of my parents anymore, because I lived with them up until my wedding day." Amaka (F)*

Most peculiar is the 'Game of Thrones' reference, an American TV show about powerful families jostling for control over a large kingdom (or country). Here, she presents her wedding as the crowning and introduction into the realm of royalty, opulence and sovereignty. Poignantly, the idea of not being *"under the cover or shadow of my parents"* also illustrates why the family has so much influence on the wedding ritual. That, as long as the bride is unmarried she is not sovereign, following the quote *"marriage is for the both of you, wedding is for the family"* by Folarin. Bimpe articulates this further;

> *"My dad was kind of hammering on it that this is the beginning of your life, this is your real life. ...you've been staying with your parents, they kind of do everything, you're starting your life" Bimpe (F)*

From Bimpe's quote, her real life, a life she is in control of, starts after the wedding ritual. Combining the analogies from Bimpe and Amaka, the wedding ritual offers a material enhancement to their status within the Nigerian context, not just limited to the visuals of conspicuous consumption of wedding rituals. Unfortunately, Mupotsa (2015) emphasises that this enhancement is illusory, that the bride simply moves from being subject of her family's patriarch to subject of her groom (and his family's patriarch). Chisom gives a hint at this;

> *"Before I left the house, my elder brother called me, advised me, he told me, one of the things he told me that I took, and I'm still trying to keep, I should never, never ever for one day insult my husband in public. That even if we have issues that I should just keep it to myself, that whenever we get to the house I could just bring it back and discuss with him, and then they expect me to be an obedient wife, more especially, they expect me to contribute financially and to the growth of my husband." Chisom (F)*

These are instructions from Chisom's patriarch, it does not prove that she will adhere to them. But, it is indicative of the type of relationship she is expected to have with her husband. Never insulting her husband in public suggests that if he insults her, she should keep quiet and discuss it in private, i.e. not publicly challenge him. In addition, the idea of the obedient wife has strong resonance with British Victorian era upper class norms of women being subservient house-wives to their husbands (Geller, 2001; Ingraham, 2008). However, it is further complicated by her expectation to financially contribute to her husband's growth, whereas, in Victorian times, she was expected to be entirely financially dependent on her husband, excluding inheritance (Geller, 2001;

Ingraham, 2008). Interestingly, the emphasis is on her husband's growth, not hers. In essence, she does publicly gain an improved status as a result of her wedding ritual but only on the terms set by her husband and likely, the patriarch of his family. In summary, the Nigerian wedding ritual has a strong pull on participants with a mix of joy, happiness, fun and improved social status. However, for female participants, these benefits could come at a cost. Therefore, these benefits are some of the forces that encourage people to enter and exit the liminal space regardless of tensions, consequences or costs.

b. **Socio-Cultural Norms and Expectations as External Accelerant**

This sub-theme emphasises the socio-cultural norms and expectations that drive participants to continue pursuing their wedding ritual regardless of the countless obstacles they face. The following quote from Folarin expresses how she convinced herself to continue towards her wedding ritual despite church delays to approve hosting the Christian exchange of vows;

> "At a time I was just like, 'come, let's just call it off, it's not going to work, even if you've gone to church, god told them, that it's not going to work', then he was like, 'call your mummy, call your brother, that you're not interested again, that you're the one calling it off', I called them and called them, [laughs], they would not pick up, so I was just like, I just have to stop all this childish behaviour, nobody forced me into it, I prayed, before giving him my consent, and so, and, then I think, I don't want to really bring religion into it, ...but for me, I know that marriage is not a child's thing, and it's a forever thing, as long as there is the world still exists. So, I've seen marriages that have crumbled, I've seen marriages that they are just managing, I've seen marriages that are quite sweet and you'll envy them. And then, I was looking at myself, where do I want to fall into, I really want a good marriage, marriage that'll work. Fine, when I got to the marriageable age, I started praying that god should decide for me," Folarin (F)

It is not clear why her family did not answer her phone calls, but what is important is how she took the idea of a 'good marriage' as a reason to press on. The idea of a 'good marriage', as socially prescribed, is a strong pull for participants, more so brides. This is further emphasised on the idea of 'marriageable age', that once participants get to that age, they are expected and anticipate getting married. Although participants differed on a specific age, it ranged between 20 and 40 years old. Dele expresses this rhetoric whilst simultaneously emphasising that there was no pressure to get married;

"Why did I get married? erm, you know, this is where we are in Africa. Apart from the fact that, I was ready to get married, this is Africa, when you're getting to 30, 31, 32, you're expected to, I don't know, it's not, there was no pressure, but when you're getting to [a] certain age, you should be thinking of settling down, and that was what I was thinking." Dele (M)

Although Dele claims he was not under pressure to get married, he was still thinking and willing to fulfil societal expectations of being married as he considered himself being of marriageable age. The idea of being of marriageable age can abstracted into when the individual has the potential of being independent of their parents i.e. graduated from university and ready to join the working population or already having a full-time job. Bimpe puts this succinctly;

"I'm done with school so what else, what else am I waiting for?" Bimpe (F)

"They are mostly guys, cool guys, like I hung around, they're all married, so they were like 'ah, we're waiting', they're all in anticipation to finalize and then join them, you know, do wedding. ...I wish, I would really want people to, young ones or other ones to do, get married on time, you understand. It's good to get it done on time, I didn't used to look at it that way, I used to always look at it like tied down to getting some things on ground first before, you understand. I think, if not for anything, seeing your children grow early and be friends with you, it's a lot of fun." John (M)

Unlike Dele who was not facing pressure, John was under peer pressure from his friends, and he eventually succumbed and joined them. He almost regrets not getting *"married on time"* and is now considering giving advice to younger men to look forward to the fun of parenting, as Bimpe said, *"what else am I [they] waiting for?"*. The idea of marriage being fun is one of the other popular narratives used to encourage and justify wedding rituals, Kola summarises this;

"You wear your native attire on the Engagement [traditional wedding] day, you wear your native attire, maybe your Buba and Soro, Agbada, and all that. That makes it so sweet, and your parents too, what makes it so special is this. ...in my own view for mine, I think marriage is the best, life after wedding, that is marriage is the best." Kola (M)

Kola describes his wedding as sweet, first focuses on the aesthetics, getting to wear cultural Yoruba attires with his parents but goes on further to stress that the marriage itself, after the wedding ritual, is the best part. Here, he presents the potential demarcation between the wedding and the marriage. For the wedding, he emphasises

the bonding opportunity between the couple and the parents, but stresses that *"life after the wedding"*, marriage, *"is the best life"*. Following the narrative of (potential) independence, marriage is framed as an opportunity to emulate participants' parents. Amaka describes this;

> *"My parents did it for 34 years, ...I'm going to make sure that they are my mentors in this, not because I want to please them or anyone, but if my mum could do it, ...why won't I do the same, that, that word divorce will not come into my vocabulary at all." Amaka (F)*

Amaka illustrates how she wants a marriage that lasts as long as her parents, whilst placing them in the role of mentor. It is likely that her parents have been role models for what a married couple should be prior to her getting engaged and/or considering getting married. A more critical interpretation of her antagonism to divorce, is that it plays towards the 'long suffering wife', a narrative of women who endure significant discomfort from a marriage and yet refuses to divorce. (Geller, 2001; Mann, 1985; Mupotsa, 2015). This is similar to the advice given to Chisom about never insulting her husband in public and doing all she can for his growth. The subservience of the bride to the groom is further re-enacted during the wedding ritual itself, this is done at the reception, during the activity of the couple feeding each other the celebratory cake;

> *"I say cake was trivial, it wasn't, because it actually signifies something ...the wife is supposed to feed the husband and kneeling, showing respect to her husband, and the husband is supposed to reciprocate as well ...you feed your husband and your husband feeds you. So, but, another thing is, during the feeding, they want to see how gullible the husband can be, either the husband to kneel down to feed the bride and erm, well most husbands have their people, so, but some might be humble enough to do that so, but he didn't disappoint me anyway" Folarin (F)*

> *"And she advised us and told us, if we wanted to like stand there and me giving him the cake, I said I prefer us to sit down and I knelt down, I gave him the cake and he was sitting down and gave me the cake." Bimpe (F)*

Bimpe and Folarin were happy to enact the role of a subservient wife who will serve her husband on her knees, indicative of what the marriage will be like. Of interest, is Folarin admitting that asking the couple how they want to enact the cake exchange was a public test of how 'gullible' he is. Further, Bimpe and her groom were offered a similar option, albeit not kneeling but standing as equals, but, she declined, preferring the

groom sits to feed her the cake and she kneels to feed him. Of further importance is how the role of cake exchange has been reinterpreted to illustrate the patriarchal and gendered norms of Nigerian culture (Dumbili, 2005). According to Ingraham (2008) and Otnes & Pleck (2003) the cake exchange is meant to be a sign of love, equity and equality between the couple. In the above examples, it is used in a relatively oppositional way regarding equity and equality. This further echoes Turner's (1969) assertion that wedding rituals serves as a vehicle to indoctrinate liminars into their anticipated roles post liminality. Turner (Ibid) expressed that these performed roles are often coerced and/or forced on the liminars, in the Nigerian context, the liminars are keen to take on these roles. This resonates with Adrian (2004) and Geller's (2001) assertions that contemporary consumers take on traditional roles with the belief that it is what they want and not role-playing. Further, following the advice given to Chisom on subservience and Amaka's antagonism for divorce, it is likely this is a socio-cultural norm and expectation. This is further supported by Folarin's statement that a man who opts for a more equitable role will be perceived as gullible and therefore resulting in public embarrassment. In sum there are a number of socio-cultural expectations and anticipations that encourage participants to pursue wedding rituals. Similar to the previous sub-theme, this sub-theme illustrates how due to collective (peer) pressure and (marriageable age) expectations, participants are encouraged to pursue a wedding ritual regardless of tensions and/or costs.

4.3.5.   Religious Wedding Rituals are not the Same

As established in the first interview theme, family exerts significant control on the wedding ritual process, particularly the traditional wedding. However, other institutions and collectives are also vying for influence, namely, religious institutions, the state and vendors (Nguyen & Belk, 2012). The state is beyond the scope of this study and data was not collected on the way the Nigerian state regulates wedding rituals, a longitudinal study might reveal this, as opposed to the cross-sectional nature of this study (Nguyen & Belk, 2012). Vendors as indicated in the prior themes seem to be vacating their typical role of translating consumer culture scripts into personal scripts (Adrian, 2004). Below is Eze's impression of Nigerian wedding vendors;

> *"They just have mouth, I'm serious, they just have mouth, they market themselves, very, very, very well, they package themselves." Eze*

Eze concludes they are all talk i.e. *"they just have mouth"*, as Eze and Amaka previously illustrated when vendors disappoint, it is the family that steps in to fill in the gap. Therefore, the last entity are religious institutions, namely churches and mosques, as these are the two main bureaucratic and institutional religious entities in Nigeria (Adebanwi & Obadare, 2010; Asekun, 2015; Obadare, 2018). This is further enhanced by the increasing role religious institutions and figures are playing in contemporary Nigerian politics (Obadare, 2018). Interestingly, the mosques and Imams played a negligible role in the wedding ritual planning. This is likely emphasised by the participants not being active players in the exchange of vows that occurs in the Mosque;

> *"The official Nikai [Muslim religious wedding ritual], tying the knot. It usually happens in a mosque or in a family home, ours was in a mosque in Plateau [State], but, I don't really know what happens, it's usually they bring your bride price and they pray and say something by, I don't know, just like prayers, when it was done, someone called my aunty to say it's done now, so they told me. And you're usually advised to pray when they tell you, pray for happiness, pray for this, I was getting my makeup done then so, I don't know, when they told me that I was married I was like ok, it still felt the same, I thought I would feel different, but I still felt the same, like normal, I wasn't even crying or happy, I was just the same." Nafisa (F)*

> *"...second prayer of the day, was for 1 [PM] I think 15, so we're already in the mosque for that prayer. So immediately after the prayer was due, that same day, they had about 7 different weddings, ours was the first, so like I said, the two representatives will come and do the rites and subsequently they do the other ones. At the end of the 7th, then they did a general prayer for all us, that got married that same day at the same mosque. Yeah, and then officially at that time we're husband and wife," Musa (M)*

As Nafisa mentions, she was not at the mosque and is not clear on the wedding ritual process itself. It is typically a male only affair. Musa, a man, was present at his Nikai but as he mentioned, the ritual itself was done by representatives of the couple. The above quotes are emblematic of the negligible interaction participants have with the mosque in relation to their wedding ritual. Of importance is Nafisa's conclusion that she did not feel different after being told that the wedding ritual has been completed.

The church could not be more different, they played an integral part for those who wanted a Christian exchange of marriage vows. Church demands are not limited to the

financial as suggested by Dele and the request for N200,000, the demands vary across the board. Below are some examples of church demands;

> *"He's expected to get the apartment ready because of they are coming for inspection and there are some things that must be there before they come for the inspection …everything must be there and be in place. Then they will come and check. …we're going to be running some lab investigations, laboratory investigations, blood tests. …for now hepatitis, HIV and other…. maybe later we're going to be running pregnancy test" Ola (F)*

> *"My parish won't let you have a date and a time, until your marriage file is complete, …your marriage file will take you 3 months to be completed." Ogechi (F)*

Ola's experience with her church illustrates how intrusive the church can be in the lives of participants because they want to exchange vows in their church, of which she and her groom are members of. This directly contrasts with the mosque, whereby, the appointed representatives are the main interactors with the mosque. As suggested by Ogechi, there are also bureaucratic tendencies in the church's demands, Ogechi's file includes a number of evidences and certificates from different hierarchies within the church to prove that they are genuine members of the church. Focusing on Ola's statement that the church wants to inspect her groom's apartment, suggesting that the church is interested in ensuring that the married couple project a positive and desirable image preferred by the church. This is also hinted at, at the possibility of a pregnancy test, to ensure there is no child before marriage (Fernandez et al., 2011*)*. This idea of image control is exemplified in the control of the bride's dress;

> *"So my wedding dress was ready officially, but it was not taken by the church, …so on getting to the church, during the marriage, they were castigating the ball gown, that it's not, it's too long, its overflowing, its sweeping the ground, it's not meant to sweep the ground …the professional tailor had already gummed the, done the finishing touches that no need for adjustments at all, the something came out very nice, but the adjustment, we had to start stitching it, putting it here [laughs], so, that was what we did, a night before. …it was really hectic …it came out, it was manageable" Busayo (F)*

Busayo had to go through significant effort to remodel the bespoke wedding dress to meet the church's specification. As she concluded, the dress went from *"very nice"* to *"manageable"*. Part of the reason the church wields so much influence is that it is

enabled by the family, particularly the parents. Still on the issue of the bride's wedding dress, Bimpe's parents were willing ambassadors for the church;

> *"My dad was just insisting that he wanted to see the wedding gown, that I should not just go and embarrass him ...she [bride's mother] was insisting that she wanted to see my wedding dress too, I was like you guys should not worry that the wedding dress is nice and everything, it is according to gospel standard, according to what you guys want." Bimpe (F)*

Bimpe kept trying to reassure her parents that her wedding dress was according to *"gospel standard"* which can be interpreted as according to the family church's standard. In essence, her parents would approve of the church insisting on modifications if the dress did not meet their preferences as experienced by Busayo. This can further be conceptualised by Fernandez et al., (2011) argument, that women are expected to be the embodiment of socio-cultural norms and face significant pressure to avoid deviance. However, this is based on the visual representation of the church's values, the grooms also face demands, albeit rarely on his appearance but at his financial capacity as illustrated by Ola's church wanting to inspect her groom's apartment. Below is an extended exchange between Kola and the interviewer that attempts to get to the core of this;

> *"Interviewer; Were you familiar with this process, all of it, some of it?*
> *Kola; Not at all, ...I'm not familiar at all. Though I asked a brother, my brother that has gone through that before, he told me little of it. He didn't tell me everything, [laughs], I don't understand, I don't still understand, it was later I called him, 'Bro, what happened? why did you not tell me all these things, I would have prepared myself', he said 'no, it's not the best to tell you, just do it, if you are doing it the proper way, it'll just be easy for you. But if you know it already, you will lie, if you didn't pray, you will just keep on lying'. [laughs], so that's it.*
> *Interviewer; Wow, I was about to ask that even the singles conference, the marriage conference, they never broke it down?*
> *Kola; No, they won't, they will just give you insight of relationship, courtship and praying through and all of that, everything about relationship, marriage, about marriage that is ...but they won't tell you all these things. They don't say it." Kola (M)*

Kola's exchange with his elder brother indicates that his brother deliberately hid the process from him, to ensure he is honest with the church of his intentions and to allow the church have the best capacity at interrogating him. As he further expressed, during

singles and marriage conferences, meetings held by the church to teach young adults about relationships and marriage, the church deliberately hides the wedding process itself from their young adult church members. As indicated by Kola, Ogechi and Busayo, it is near impossible for non-members to get married in the church, as the requirements take significant effort to fulfil. Further, these demands are also encouraged and occasionally enforced by family members who are also part of the same church. In addition to improving the chances of honesty, a potential reason for hiding the process from young adults is to avoid discouraging them on embarking on a church wedding. Although participants claim that hosting a wedding ritual in a church is part of their own expression of their faith and values, Bunmi's experience illustrates that her preference for a church wedding ritual was also about not being perceived as deviant;

> "My dad won't come to your wedding if it's not in church, he's very [church]ish, he, everything, he does everything the [church] way, so if it's not church, it's not a wedding, it's not his business. So, you have to get married to a church member, you have to get married in church. …It has to be, that's the way, if it's not that way it means, it looks like you're being rebellious …my mum feels the same way, she supports her husband in everything," Bunmi (F)

Bunmi's dad would not acknowledge a wedding ritual that is not conducted in a church, in essence, to get her father's consent and commitment to the wedding ritual, she has to marry a church member and get married within the family church's premises. Therefore, she will be willing to acquiesce to almost all demands by the church if she wants her father's consent. This illustrates how family and church collude to ensure that the wedding ritual meets their own imposed criteria. The idea of avoiding being perceived as rebellious further normalises the church's preferences by incorporating the family into its enforcement. However, there are instances of the church being in opposition with the family, this occurs when the church invades the space of the traditional wedding ritual. Typically, this is focused on the bridal list. Dele gives an exposition of the church's reasoning behind this;

> "During counselling at some point our pastor mentioned that when they give list like that, there are some things that are attached to it, some tradition that descended from way back [clicks fingers] from your ancestors, some people ask for, what do they call it? Some things that are attached to maybe idol worship, the pastor mentioned that there are some things that must not be on the list,

like if they put it on the list we have to tell them that 'no, this one, we can't do this one, maybe they should replace it with something else' ...because they don't want as Christians, you wouldn't want to be seen just like following the traditions, we don't even know where the traditions came from." Dele (M)

It is interesting that Dele's pastor claims that people do not know where their own traditions come from, whilst simultaneously claiming it came from *"way back"*. This suggests a rhetorical attempt of discrediting traditions that the church does not agree with. Of importance is that the intrusion of the church into the traditional wedding ritual is focused on making sure that participants keep a Christian appearance i.e. *"...as Christians, you wouldn't want to be seen just like following the traditions".* Specifically, traditions that can be associated with idol worshipping, that is, the worship of non-Christian god(s). Abiola's next quote illustrates how this might play out, whereby, he uses a church minister to help resist demands from the bride's family;

"...on the day we brought what we have discussed before, 'why didn't you bring this, what of this, what of that, what of this?' And that paused the events for some minutes ...we are coming from the side of Christendom per say, we are bound to have kind of differences, there are things that will not go well with us. So we had to remove and they were demanding for it, we kind of, said, 'please this is what we can do, so let's remove this and take care of this'. Eventually they accepted and the events came. ...it's just one of our overseers and pastors ...they played a very big role ...an overseer here will connect us to an overseer there, automatically that person becomes my second dad, [laughs]" Abiola (M)

Abiola claiming that the church 'overseer' becomes his second dad illustrates the close link between the church and family dynamics. In essence, Abiola invited the church into the bridal list negotiations to allow him to maintain Christian values he felt contradicted with the bride's family's traditional norms and expectations. If the church is increasingly exerting its influence on the traditional wedding, what is the relevance of having both? Busayo tries to answer this below;

"Yoruba culture, you have to seek the consent of the parents because, I think the church wedding is the consent of the church, you know, as, as humans we have different facets of our lives, we have our family facet, we have the church facet, we have our occupational facet, we have our social facet, so, being that family facet, we have to seek the consent of the members of the family, both the nuclear and extended, and the well-wishers too of the family ...that is basically the traditional [wedding] aspect." Busayo (F)

"The traditional marriage receives the parental consent, the church receives your spiritual fathers and mothers consent. And god consent" Abiola (M)

Busayo and Abiola's quotes can be summarised as the church wedding ritual is seeking the consent of the church and aligning with one's faith, whist the traditional wedding ritual seeks the consent of the family. Again, Abiola uses a paternalistic perspective to justify the church wedding ritual as seeking the consent of his spiritual parents. Suggesting that both within and outside the church, participants are perceived as children ready to become adults and to do that, they need the consent of their family, biological or Kin and spiritual, the faith-based family.

The Nigerian context suggests multiple roles of subordination, with different sections vying for supremacy over the life of participants, played out via the wedding ritual. In addition, this powerlessness is not all encompassing, participants do exhibit multiple forms of agency, but, what is most interesting in the Nigerian case, is that they are already somewhat disempowered prior to the wedding ritual itself. This is mostly true for the women, especially considered from the quotes of Amaka and Bimpe, about how their real lives do not begin until after the wedding ritual. Therefore, participants are not just treated like children, they see themselves as children and the wedding ritual as a vehicle to adulthood and independence. This also lends support to Kalmijn's (2002) conclusions that the more important role transition is for the marrying couple, the more lavish the wedding is going to be. Nigerian weddings therefore differ to their Western counterparts who view wedding rituals as rite of distinction as opposed to a rite of passage (Baker & Elizabeth, 2013; Kalmijn, 2002; Sykes & Brace-Govan, 2015). There are still sentiments that the church wedding is an imported tradition, below is a quote that captures this;

"The white [church] wedding, you know, those things we got, this ones from the white men, where you wear your suit and the woman wears the gown, the bridal gown, we got that from the, but the main one, we got that from the, though, even the certificate with which the federal government gives and all that, we got it from the white men. Where we go to church and they said that, they will say that thing, 'they are using this whatever, Federal Republic of Nigeria, we are using' and all that. So, we got it from the white and it has now become one of our traditions too." Kola (F)

As Kola puts it, the church wedding ritual has become a Nigerian tradition in its own right, this was further supported by the fact that none of the participants or their

families were against the church wedding. In essence, church wedding rituals has become indigenised. As Mann (1985) demonstrated, Nigerian wedding rituals were not typically lavish, the pursuit of the lavish white wedding developed amongst the Elites living in colonial Lagos. Now, it has become a completely Nigerian affair (Mann, 1985). This is further proven by the sermon often given by the officiating minister, whereby, he reaffirms (patriarchal) socio-cultural norms in the midst of a church wedding;

> *"Interviewer; Was there a sermon?*
> *Chisom; of course now ...wife being obedient to your husband, wife submitting to your husband and being obedient to your husband, husband treating your wife with respect and all that. I think that was basically what the sermon was centred around. ...it's something I already knew about, they've already told us all those things during the marriage course, they just wanted to remind us again." Chisom (F)*

This is a common narrative used by Christians to defend the subordination of women to their husbands, focusing on obedience from the wife and respect from the husband (Geller, 2001). As Chisom made clear, this was already mentioned during the marriage course, a compulsory session for participants wishing to get married in a church. The lengths and content of the courses vary, but the content is often focused on teaching participants how to live as a Christian couple and/or family, according to the church's preferred standards. The following quotes exemplify the nature of the courses;

> *"We did about three months counselling ...once a week, one hour per week. First, we were given three counsellors, for each month." Bimpe (F)*

> *"They keep [saying] the same thing over and over, but I learnt, I won't lie, I learnt a lot. There are some things that if not [for] marriage class I won't know. Today, let me say the sex part, the Billings method, how to prevent pregnancy, without using birth control ...Because according to the catholic church, marriage, is for two reasons, to give birth and for union ...if you stop that god's plan, it's a sin, that's why they include all those condoms, pilling, we didn't know all that, most of us, until we got to the marriage class. That's even the Billings method, I didn't know anything about the billings method until we got there." Eze (M)*

From Bimpe's quote, the classes are not casual and are taken seriously, with regular contact. As Eze suggests, the content can be repetitive but goes into detail regarding how they are expected to uphold the church's values as a married couple. His church,

a catholic church, were opposed to the use of contraception, therefore, the marriage class taught him methods of preventing pregnancy without contraception. The validity of this method is beyond the scope of this study, but, it illustrates how intimately the church attempts to regulate the lives of participants. This is slightly different from the family, whereby, participants are expected to be independent after the wedding ritual. In contrast, using marriage classes, conferences and sermons, the church attempts to extend its influence into the married life of participants. Tola gives a brief overview of the different aspects the marriage classes cover;

> *"Who those the laundry, when you guys get married all those kind of rules, ...money management, who does this, who pays for this, then child, raising your children...Then we also learnt to still date your spouse, always have a date night within every month, so many things that they teach you, on a normal day you'll not realise that it's important, so, it was worth it. It was worth it. And also, conflict resolution, there's also, they're also steps to take, it was really nice, it was a good experience."* Tola (F)

According to Tola's quote, marriage classes attempts to cover almost every aspect of participants' lives, giving them the rules and values to follow. Ranging from innocuous activities of laundry to child rearing. As was previously mentioned, participants did not have any resistance or unease with these teachings and as Tola mentioned, she enjoyed and considered it valuable. This further reinforces the idea that the church is reinforcing socio-cultural norms, that is, if these ideas were foreign to participants they should have been some form of resistance or misgivings. That fact that they are fully embraced shows the extent of indigenization of Christianity amongst the Christian participants. In sum, compared to Muslims, the church plays an intimate role in the wedding ritual process, and, through several teachings, attempts to shape the married life of participants. However, it is not clear from the data the reason behind the stark differences between the two religions. An anthropology inclined thesis might be best suited for such a pursuit. Liminal tension via interaction with church comes in the form of image control, with participants struggling to assent to the church's requests.

4.4. Contextualising the Online and Offline Themes

Online themes (1) 'validation and clarification of the wedding choices' and (3) 'Nairaland as champions of global white weddings', can be linked to the underplayed role of Nigerian vendors as expressed in sub-theme (3b) 'weddings as stressful'. As

sub-theme 3b clearly demonstrates, Nigerian vendors generally do not meet the expectations of participants, whilst some actively undermined the bride for personal (selfish) reasons. Combined with the typical naivety of liminars, Nairaland becomes a safe space for members to get consumption advice from their peers. In addition to explicitly asking for advice, they also seek validation of their choices, hinting at a need for camaraderie. NL5's comment also demonstrates that Nairaland as a community is not unaware of incompetent Nigerian vendors, in addition, the NL5's comment takes for granted how distressing a cake-less wedding could be, further suggests such behaviour is not unfamiliar to the NL community. This resonates with Leal et al., (2014) (Brazil) and Nguyen & Belk (2012) (Vietnam) who document how participants went looking for other sources of validation when vendors were acting in disappointing and unanticipated ways. It is also interesting that both studies are from participants in the Global South. As demonstrated by Ingraham (2008) and Nash (2013) wedding vendors and marketers are the primary purveyors of bridal identity and consumption led wedding rituals. Again, as Nigerian vendors are not fulfilling this role, it falls on a secondary party to take up the mantle (Leal et al., 2014; Nguyen & Belk, 2012).

Online theme (2) 'the all-important colour theme selection' can be explained by the need to assert control in areas the participant is given authority over as a reaction the agency culling nature of Nigerian wedding planning itself (Ingraham, 2008; Nash, 2013; Slater, 1997). Due to most of the important decisions being made the family (patriarch in particular), as expressed in offline theme (1) 'wedding is for the family', colour selection and coordination is one of the few areas participants are given near autonomy. Therefore, they seem to over-indulge in the selection, matching and coordination of the wedding colours, i.e. wedding colour consumption. Due to NL being their safe space as illustrated in the earlier paragraph, they use it as a medium for planning the colour execution, which NL members happily oblige. Less obvious, is that the idea of avoiding matching with the audience can be stretched to mean matching with participants' families. In their pursuit to demarcate themselves from the wedding audience, which the family is technically a part of, they also try to stand out from what looks like overbearing family (and parents).

NL is mostly presented as an outlet and safe space for brides from disappointing vendors and demanding family. However, there are instances where the norms of NL coincide with the of the family. Offline theme (2) 'the exorbitant costs of weddings' demonstrate how the demands of family and religious institutions systematically increase the costs of Nigerian weddings. Yet, on NL, where participants individual preferences are encouraged, affirmed and celebrated, the tendency is also to encourage increased consumption. This is best illustrated by NL16, who encouraged a groom to spend as much as he can 'afford', to ensure the wedding is "one-in-town". The difference being NL emphasises a unique wedding ritual expressing the bride's consumer identity whilst family emphasises a collective (consumer) identity. Another area of intersection is expectations from the groom. From both NL and interview data, there was no direct indication that grooms were expected to undertake equal share of the wedding preparations and labour. The few times the groom's input is considered on NL, is when his position is needed to resist changes demanded by his family that are unpalatable to the bride. However, interview participants go further to detail instances of the groom being deliberately disruptive. In respect to disruptive vendors, both NL and interview participants emphasise the need to have family members step-in, monitor and/or relieve said vendors. This then lead into the stress interview participants experienced during the wedding ritual and planning. NL15 of NL seems to suggest using the services of a wedding planner would reduce the stress experience by the bride. But as interview participants have demonstrated vendors themselves are one of the core causes of wedding related stress.

4.5. Summary

Combining findings from the online and offline data, the Nigerian wedding ritual appears to be steeped in traditional institutions of family and religion, leaving little room for consumer agency. There were pockets of resistance as illustrated by Nafisa, but the consequences can be high. Of the spaces that give freedom to participants, they are still expected to operate within normative guidelines. It also shows that these guidelines are flexible as seen in the way sub-rituals are performed, omitted and blended. For example, the traditional wedding can be omitted as long as the bride price is paid, or the wedding reception can be skipped but food is still offered. Suggesting that the guidelines can be modified but core components are still adhered to. The

chapter also shows how aesthetic decisions and core components are debated, from the aesthetic perspective, outside help is welcome, as long as it does not obstruct in the machinations of the family. That is, the bride can seek style and fabric advice online or from vendors, only if the decision does not interfere with the expectations set out by the family. Focusing on core components, these are near non-negotiable, limited to only the patriarch in making such decisions, particularly when the bride price can be paid. This therefore hints at consumer agency is not limited to the individual, rather, context, power and social structure also play influencing roles. Due to exorbitant costs of the wedding, the family often contributes to the wedding ritual and therefore offering them a say due to their contributions, not limited to economic, social and cultural knowledge/capital. Although religion and family are treated as two separate themes, in reality they are interlinked and reinforce each other. Both occupying high social status within the same traditional institutions, particularly along the lines of spiritual and biological parents. This institution is further expressed by the gendered dynamics of weddings, which often results in the bride taking on most the labour in planning and executing the wedding ritual, typically resulting in significant stress. Stress that can result in hospitalisation, involuntary weight loss and emotional distress. Regardless, participants still vigorously pursue a successful wedding ritual, with the hope of adulthood, joy, freedom and fun as potential benefits.

5. Discussion

5.1. Introduction

This chapter will explore the intersections of the findings and literature review, contributions, extensions and contradictions with established theories and perspectives. It starts with an updated conceptual framework and how it demonstrates Nigerian wedding rituals in a snapshot. Further discussion is on how consumer identity strategies are pursued, with specific attention to the four strategies identified in the literature review. It emphasises how the findings reinforce, contextualise and undermine these consumer identity strategies. Each of these strategies will be attended to individually, including:

1. 'being in control',
2. 'resolving identity conflicts',
3. 'consuming to be different'
4. and 'consumption as transformation'.

Followed by a contextual positioning of Nigerian weddings and her dynamisms within the liminal consumption literature. This will include conversations around social capital, the use and purpose of ritual scripts and (re)production of social structures. In particular, it describes how the gaining and expansion of social capital is based on the premise of further integration into the traditional institution of family. The specific type and definition of social capital referred to in this study will be expanded on in subsequent sections (section 5.4.1). Further elaboration is made on how available ritual scripts are limited to religo-familial norms. Illustrating why the desire to employ scripts ascribed to white weddings of individualism are not given the social space for performance or recognition. That is, there is resistance to the conduction of a wedding ritual completely to the consumer preferences of the bride and groom. This ultimately leads to the conclusion that Nigerian wedding rituals simply serve to (re)produce norms and structures already in existence and their resistance to change. The aim of this is to embed Nigerian weddings into the milieu of theoretical conversations around consumption, liminality and social processes. Detail is also given on a new wedding identity, groom identity, which attempts to combine the typical managerial role assigned to grooms and their need to save money, resulting into the 'pragmatic groom'.

The pragmatic groom uses his authority and knowledge of the wedding ritual process to centre his needs to minimise expenditure whilst simultaneously saving face.

5.2. Updated Conceptual Framework

Figure 2.1 of the original conceptual framework presents a simple pictorial illustration of the process of an individual, typically a woman, going from bride-to-be to bridal perfection based on a literature review of wedding rituals. However, the Nigerian context complicates this framework. Below is the updated framework;
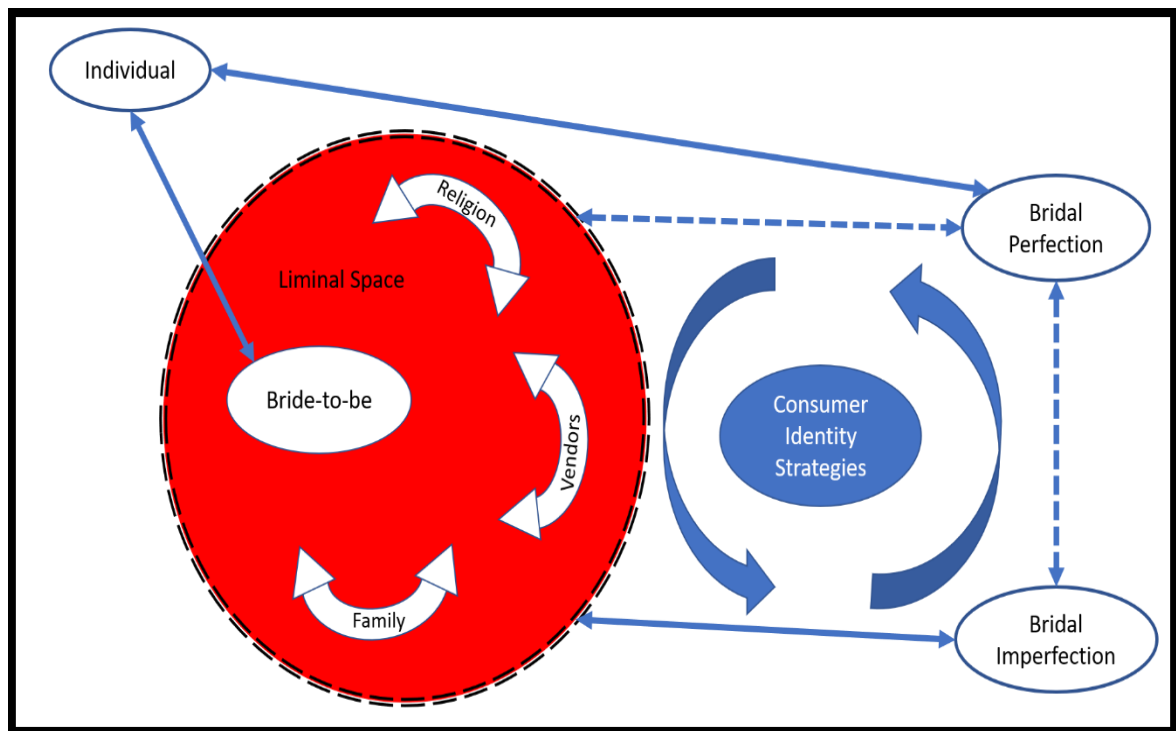
Figure 5.1 Updated Conceptual Framework

This version of the conceptual framework introduces a number of changes to the original, figure 2.1. First, it recognises the transition from individual to bride-to-be. The original diagram took for granted the conditions attached to being socially recognised as 'engaged/betrothed'. In the Nigerian context, certain socio-cultural norms need to be met, receiving the patriarch's approval being the most important. Therefore, the individual needs overt permission to step into the liminal space of wedding planning and execution. In the Global North, less overt mechanisms are used, but more covert boundaries like class, race, age, sexuality, religion etc. play a limiting role in determining who can be married to whom (Boden, 2003; Ingraham, 2008). The arrow

connecting the bride and individual is also deliberately two way, as there are certain transgressions that can potentially cause the individual to lose their bride status. For example, instances of pregnancy before marriage could be such an occasion (Fernandez et al., 2011), or the groom coming from a lineage considered undesirable by the bride's family as mentioned by Amaka. In a way, creating a precarious notion to the bridal status, that is, it is not automatic and can be reversed by liminal gatekeepers (Mupotsa, 2015; Geller, 2001). The liminal space has also been expanded to explicitly illustrate the gatekeepers and their role in keeping the liminal space in perpetual motion via a curved and double arrowed labels. This perpetual motion is not a change in the structuring of the liminal norms, rather, in the continuous evolution of the aesthetics and preferences. This is best illustrated in how families allow for the conversion of items requested on the bridal list into cash sums, hence keeping the symbolic essence of the items but presenting them in a more liquid/ephemeral form. Or the negotiations participants have to have with the church to bend certain rules to their advantage. Similarly, the liminal boundary is also deliberately porous, to emphasise the possibility of foreign artefacts entering and exiting the liminal space, as dictated by gatekeepers. Examples include the consumer artefacts of a wedding cake being used and yet, what it represents can be inverted to suit socio-cultural norms (Lumbwe, 2013; Nguyen & Belk, 2012). It is worth reiterating that in the Nigerian context, vendors are not as influential as family or religious institutions, more research could be done to discern why.

Commercial wedding literature often emphasise the need and pursuit for perfection as the main aim of a bride (Ingraham, 2008; Otnes & Pleck, 2003), the findings suggests that there is often a gap in the bride's expectation and reality. This reality can be considered an imperfect rendering of the bride's vision(s), whilst the bride goes through great effort in reducing the disparity between the two. This reality of imperfection is evidenced in the theme 'wedding is for the family', illustrating how majority of the wedding ritual decisions are made in respect to the family's wishes. Further hindered by the 'exorbitant costs of weddings'. This will be expanded on in section 5.4.2 of this chapter, 'available Nigerian wedding ritual scripts are traditional'. Most academic literature on wedding consumption do not make explicit contributions to this perspective, but, Ingraham (2008) and Nash (2013) suggests that the eventual

wedding ritual is often more to the demands of vendors and less the preferences of brides. This is emphasised by Sykes & Brace-Govan (2015) who claims that Global North brides often reluctantly embrace market led bridal identities and do so due to the need of completing wedding preparations. Hence, figure 5.1 illustrates a back and forth motion between bridal perfection and imperfection, that the bride needs to constantly modify her vision as she continues the wedding planning process. Even if she eventually achieves a form of perfection, it is likely different from the initial vision she started with. This imperfection is a consequence of the combination of the limited knowledge the bride has of the wedding ritual process and consumption (Boden, 2003; Nash, 2013), in addition to the collective demands of gatekeepers. In reducing the gap between bridal perfection and imperfection, the bride employs a mixture of the consumer identity strategies, which will be elaborated on in the next section. The cyclic nature suggested in the figure 5.1 implies that the use of these consumer identity strategies are neither linear nor static, rather, a creative mixing and continuous modification before, during and after the wedding ritual. Figure 5.1 also suggests a direct relationship between the individual and bridal perfection, changing as the individual continuously interacts with the market. The relationship between the individual and the imperfect bridal identity is indirect due to passing through the liminal space, hence distortion by the gatekeepers. A possible visualisation is the liminal space, as broadly controlled by gatekeepers, rotates clockwise, towards bridal imperfection. Whilst the consumer identity strategies try to minimise this motion or rotate counter clockwise towards bridal perfection. More details will be provided on subsequent sections of the discussion chapter, but, it seems consumer identity strategies are rarely enough to stem the tide of the liminal space's clockwise motion.

The liminal space is coloured red to illustrate tension, discomfort and stress. The discomfort and stress associated with Nigerian wedding rituals has already been discussed in-depth sub-theme (4.3.3) 'weddings as stressful' in the findings chapter. The following is further elaboration on the liminal tensions experienced by participants, with emphasis on brides. Within the liminal space itself, there are a number of liminal tensions being experience by participants (especially brides), influenced by the relationships mentioned above. The main liminal tension is the pursuit for individuality in a ritual process defined by collectivism. That is bridal

identity as an individual consumer identity in contrast to the wedding ritual being an opportunity for family and religious identity management (Sykes & Brace-Govan, 2015). An interdependent liminal tension is the further reduction of agency of an already disempowered individual. Within the family, unmarried individuals as seen as children and treated as such, socio-culturally at least. Evidenced by Abiola referring to himself as a child of his "spiritual parents" i.e. child of his pastor and other women explaining that their adult life begins only after marriage. However, to become an adult, i.e. pass through the rite of passage, they need to relinquish more of the limited autonomy they currently possess, for the promise of future uninhibited agency. Here, the tension becomes how much of a valuable and scare resource (agency) can be traded-in for the promise of more in the future? A different tension is the oscillation between isolation and partnership, here, the bride is expected to shoulder most of the wedding planning labour. When she does reach out to the groom, there is often a reluctance in his demeanour and the occasional outright rejection. And yet, in different contexts, the bride and groom are treated as a singular unit, ready to begin their 'real life'. Finally, finance, a difficult subject even outside liminal space. However, the tension resolves around which consumer artefacts are worth significant financial resources and which are generic requiring minimal investment. This tension typically cuts across all parties, between the couples themselves, the couple & the church, couple & vendors and couple & family. The above surmises the major liminal tensions in a Nigerian wedding ritual, which should be treated as emphasising where the liminal tensions appear to be most visible. In reality, these tensions overlap and manifest in different and subtle ways, depending on social, cultural and economic status(es). In summary, the liminal space in figure 5.1 is not as stable as represented, rather a dynamic space of the bride being pulled in multiple directions with the endpoint being bridal imperfection. This also attends to research question 1 'How is liminality experienced via the consumption patterns of Nigeran brides and grooms?'

5.3. Consumer identity Strategies

5.3.1. Being in control

One of the four themes that captures the way consumer identity is deployed is that of 'being in control'. From the literature, consumer 'excessive' debt appears to be

conceived as a personal failing and much is done to avoid it, at least minimise the possibility of debt default (Slater, 1997; Gil et al., 2012). This attitude is epitomised in sub-theme (4.3.1d) 'family support (economic, cultural and social support)'. As captioned by Akin, he was not interested in over-consumption and/or moderation per se, but, was repeatedly warned by his advisers to avoid debt; *"Not to borrow …no matter any expenses …you must not borrow"*, Akin (M). Sola also expressed a similar sentiment, positing avoidance of debt as a personal (moral) triumph. However, this approach of needing family to fill the gaps that debt might have, undermined the 'consumer as sovereign' position. Being in control i.e. avoiding debt, is an expression of sovereignty, but to do that in the Nigerian context means financial contribution from the family, which is tied to increase in family influence (Kalmijn, 2002). Thereby, undermining said individual sovereignty. This suggests that the consumer identity projects pursued by participants are complex and do not follow the (linear) path as suggested by the literature review. This suggestion was that consumers often avoid overconsumption and debt simultaneously (Slater, 1997; Gil et al., 2012). This is implicated by their ambivalence to overconsumption, a strong motivation for control, yet their outright antagonism towards consumer debt. Over-consumption and debt are often linked, as undesirable traits of lacking consumer control and an inability to perform sovereignty (Slater, 1997; Gil et al., 2012). In this context, they are de-coupled and only debt is seen in the negative light. In addition, the reason to avoid debt is tied to having a 'happy marriage', i.e. post-wedding, and less about how the shame of being in 'excessive' debt.

Sub-theme (4.3.2b) 'the bewildering number of obligatory consumer artefacts', suggests an increasing number of artefacts needed to successfully perform a white wedding ritual, which confirms prior wedding ritual studies (Nguyen & Belk, 2012; Roche & Hohmann, 2011). However, as Chukwuma's lengthy quote suggests, trying to pick from the endless lists and suggestions can be tedious and a lifestyle approach could be employed to simplify such decisions. This further resonates with consumer identity as 'being in control', whereby, consumer goods are used as stable points in an otherwise unstable world. These consumer goods serve as anchors for the expression of a consistent and patterned consumer identity (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Bardhi et al., 2010; Ferreira & Scaraboto, 2016). Here, the problem is not stability, it is over-

saturation of choice. When paired with a need to minimise costs, lifestyle informed choices become more important, and allows participants to justify omitting certain elements that do not conform to their lifestyle. Going a step further, it can be assumed that brides in particular deliberately pursue unique fabrics and venue designs as a form of agentic expression. Rather than remodelling the entire wedding ritual script, brides focus on micro expressions to allow some exertion of control on the wedding process. This was best illustrated by Sola and Bimpe insisting on buying fabrics significantly more expensive than the norm. Sola in particular, her wedding like most other participants had been largely dictated by her family, and yet, when it was time for fabric purchase, she was 'allowed' to spend more than was required and expected. This resonates with Ingraham and co's assertions (Ingraham, 2008; 2015; Nash, 2013; Sykes & Brace-Govan, 2015), that brides are given the power to tweak aspects of the wedding aesthetics, but the overall script is kept relatively rigid. Therefore, participants are allowed niches of control, but the overall (collectivised) consumer identity presented is likely out of their hands. This is highlighted by Chisom and Eni, whose siblings completely overruled the size of audience they wanted. In Chisom's experience, she wanted a small and intimate affair, her brother said 'no' and insisted on a large audience, and in Eni's case, she wanted a large audience and her brother implemented a small affair.

The absence of wedding planners was also telling, this role was mostly occupied by family. A good example is Amaka's mother's 'committee of friends', who were the primary organisers of the religious wedding's reception, in direct response to the lacklustre performance of vendors at the traditional wedding. This absence of consumption experts likely further reduces the amount of control participants have over the consumption process. As consumption experts are often tasked with the role of interpreting and actualising the wishes and vision of the bride (Ingraham, 2008; Nash, 2013). The lacklustre performance by vendors also contributes to the claim of Nigerian distrust of local producers, marketers and vendors (Folorunso, 2013; Odia & Agbonifoh, 2015; Omotosho, 2008; Ogbadu & Ameh, 2012). Of the multiple negative experience with Nigerian vendors, Nafisa was the only participant who received some form of retribution. This was via a financial crime investigation state agency, by request of an official petition written by her family's lawyer. Nafisa is likely a member

of the Nigerian elite as indicated by her N30 million wedding and access to a family lawyer. It suggests middle- and lower-class Nigerians are unlikely to have access to justice when vendors misbehave, especially for those without access to a lawyer. Amaka, whose wedding cost N6 million (likely middle-class) did not consider pursuing any form of retribution from her "greedy" vendors. Both Nafisa and Amaka's experiences reinforce the assertion of the lack of faith in Nigerian consumer protection (Ibid).

The above suggests that the use of ritual consumption for 'being in control' is highly negotiable. Importantly, it suggests that participants are acutely aware of their lack of control within the overall ritual and would therefore pursue niche areas (typically aesthetics) that allows modification, as a means of expressing consumer agency. This echoes similar suggestions by Slater (1997), that consumers actively seek and insert themselves into established social positions but express creativity in how they occupy and reflect said positions. It also considers how available consumer identities are socially determined, mediated by gender and socio-economic capital. As established in the literature review, consumers are rarely in absolute control of their consumption preferences including the performed and perceived consumer identity. From the Western oriented literature, it appears consumption experts i.e. vendors and marketers, play an over-represented role in shaping consumer identity, on behalf of consumers. In the current research context, the family plays this role. In essence, consumer identity projects pursued for the purpose of 'being in control' rarely results in purely agentic decisions. Rather, comes from a place of anxiety and lower socio-cultural power status. In Nigeria, the family tells them how to consume, in the West market agents do the same (Slater, 1997, Ingraham, 2008). The primary difference being the market agents claim to act in the interest of consumers. The family rarely makes such claims, collective identity management being their motivating force. This will be discussed in further detail in subsequent sections.

5.3.2.   Resolving Identity Conflicts

In respect to resolving conflicts, the primary conflicts participants appeared to be engaged in follows an agentic consumer identity of sovereignty and self-determination, versus the socially determined family control of the ritual process. This conflict of individual wants and social expectations is most amplified during the planning phase

of the ritual process. Here, the participant is keen on expressing a specific consumer identity and is in opposition or confrontation with that envisioned by the family. Ihuoma's interaction with her father is emblematic of this, whereby, he prefers to follow traditions to the letter, to present his daughter's wedding as befitting of his chieftaincy status. In opposition, Ihuoma was keen to exclude certain activities that she perceived to be conflict inducing and disruptive of the wedding ritual process. To convince her father, she had to entice the help of her uncle to speak to him, to limited success. This suggests Ahuvia's (2005) demarcation strategy for conflict resolution, whereby, Ihuoma chooses her preference for a smooth and orderly traditional wedding, instead of a compromise or synthesis with her father's vision of a ritual steeped in tradition. Other examples of how participants often demarcate during conflicts can be found in theme 'wedding is for the family', theme 'the exorbitant costs of weddings', theme 'undermining a successful wedding ritual' and theme 'religious wedding rituals are not the same'. A simple explanation for the preference for demarcation as opposed to compromising and/or synthesising, can be explained by the power distance between the opposing parties. First, from the liminal perspective proposed by Turner (1969) and updated by other consumer researchers (Kerrane et al., 2018; Ogle et al., 2013; Thomsen & Sørensen, 2006; Tonner, 2016), liminars are often in a lower power status compared to the gate keepers. This lower power status is significantly influenced by a combination of limited socio-cultural knowledge of the process and the agency stripping character of liminal spaces. From the specific context of this research, as was established in theme 'wedding is for the family', the family wields significant power over the ritual process, therefore there is little room for compromise. Participants often have to bend to the will of the family (particularly the patriarch). For the creative, synthesis is a possibility, as illustrated by Bimpe, whereby, she modified a wedding dress to meet the expectations of the church, her parents and her own preferences. Unsurprisingly, this dress is therefore more expensive than usual, and required additional adjustments to meet the multiple requirements.

Resolving conflicts and acts of liberation are interesting associations of consumer culture. In particular, the increase of consumer choice is heralded as an avenue of increasing consumer agency, and for consumers to resist the all-encompassing influence of traditional institutions (Lin et al., 2012; Saren, 2007; Slater, 1997).

However, in this study these resolutions to conflicts and successful resistance often lead to a reduction in the agency of participants. These occurs on three levels; 'bride versus groom', 'bride versus family' and 'church versus family'. The first two levels are asymmetric power relationships, it is intuitive to assume that these resolutions are likely to be resolved in a way that disadvantages the weaker party. For example, Tunji overruling his bride's preference for a quiet proposal, instead, opting for a loud and public one. This resonates with the literature of the groom wielding complete authority over the outcome of the wedding ritual planning and process (Besel et al., 2009; Boden, 2003; Pepin et al., 2008), in respect of the 'bride versus groom' conflict. In the 'bride versus family' scenario, a similar outcome is observed. Eni and Chisom's interaction with their brothers give a clear illustration of this. In addition, the fines and penalty system elaborated on by Ihuoma and Emeka give further evidence to the unlikely event of participants placing their preference over that of their family. This is further emphasised by the high costs of disregarding instructions by family as illustrated by Nafisa and the tearful encounter with her aunties. Finally, the church versus family scenario is the only instance that suggests relatively equal parties. In Emma's experience of her mother making the church bend its rules and Dele's preference for keeping his Christian identity over his cultural one, both show how contextual the outcomes can be. However, in both cases, either the church or family coming out on top, there is little room for the bride of increasing or exerting their own individual agency.

This solicits the question, do Nigerian wedding rituals liberate Nigerian women? Mupotsa (2015) answers, for Black women, in Africa, the answer is 'no'. A social space that operates on turning women into liminal bodies, i.e. brides, that comes with all the typical desexualisation, identity stripping and lack of agency typically associated with liminal spaces (Turner, 1969; Tonner, 2016), cannot offer liberation. This is also encouraged by the vacuum created by Nigerian (incompetent) vendors and market actors, further concentrating the power in the current traditional institutions. Focusing on the use of rituals in social reproduction, rituals are also used for collective identity management via the dissemination and creation of common knowledge (Jenkins, 2008; Zukin & Maguire, 2004). This is best illustrated in the use of the bridal list, of requests being delivered to various sub-groups within the family to signal the joining

of the bride and groom's families. Following the view of wedding rituals as collective identity management (Nguyen & Belk, 2012; 2013), it casts doubt that collectives involved are interested in weakening their socio-cultural power position, particularly as both church and family are often headed by men (Adebanwi & Obadare, 2010; Agbiboa, 2013; Akanji, 2011; Asekun, 2015; Hutchinson & Smith, 1996; Lenshie & Johnson, 2012). The reduced possibility for liberation is also illustrated by how keen these institutions are in influencing the married lives of participants. For example, Chisom's brother instructing her to be *"an obedient wife"* and marriage counselling at church giving lessons on *"who those the laundry, when you guys get married"* as narrated by Tola. This can be seen as the re-invention, re-establishment and reinforcement of local traditional norms and hierarchies (Jackson, 2005; Nguyen & Belk, 2013; Oyedele & Minor, 2012; Saren, 2007). The study did not interact with either institutions directly, church or family, but the eagerness of Bimpe and Folarin to demonstrate their willingness to become the subservient wife, suggests that they are playing a role expected of them. A role that does not suggest liberation (Geller, 2001; Mupotsa, 2015).

From a Western perspective, it is easy to assume that the patriarchal and collectivist nature of Nigerian society alone accounts for the tendency for participant demarcation. However, looking at examples of Western liminars, particularly Tonner's (2016) study on recent mothers, shows that marketers and vendors often demand demarcation of consumers. Whereby, a new mother's needs are dictated to her and she has limited capacity to resist (Tonner, 2016). Similar cases are illustrated by Boden (2003) and Nash (2013), of brides limited to market offerings in their preference for a wedding dress. Whilst the only opportunity for modifications of dresses closer to their preference hinged on paying significantly more, typically via a costly bespoke purchase. Similar findings were observed in this study, an example being Bimpe's wedding dress, which had to fit into socio-cultural norms. In essence, in the liminal space of Nigerian weddings, due to the diminished agency of consumers, demarcation is often the primary option during identity conflicts, typically choosing the option offered by gatekeepers over liminars' own preferences. There were negligible contributions from participants about the disposal of the consumer goods after use, this absence is peculiar, as most of the goods are to be used only once (Ingraham, 2008;

White, 2011). A follow up study will be essential in understanding how consumer goods are disposed after the wedding day and how it is influenced by the conflicts experienced during the wedding ritual planning and execution. For example, will a bride be less willing to keep a wedding dress if she had to make modifications she was not happy with?

5.3.3.   Consuming to be Different.

As established in the literature review, pursuing uniqueness was secondary to fitting in (Arsel & Thompson, 2011; Barnhart & Penaloza, 2013; Berger & Heath, 2007; Bhattacharjee, et al., 2014). Similar was observed in this study, participants were keen on fitting into socio-cultural norms. A prime example is Bunmi hosting a church wedding ritual to avoid being perceived as *"rebellious".* After attempting to fit into social norms, clothing was the primary consumer artefact used for differentiation, bespoke being the ultimate form. As it signals 'one of a kind' and in most cases, often more expansive than mass produced clothing (Baker & Elizabeth, 2013; Nash, 2013; Sykes & Brace-Govan, 2015). This was adequately expressed by Dele, referring to the tailor he used for his bespoke wedding suit; *"...although he was more expensive than the others ...I got a lot of compliments. So I was comfortable."* The focus on clothing for differentiation is well documented in consumer fashion literature (Ourahmoune & Ozcaglar-Toulouse, 2012). Focusing on the colours used for the clothing, these colours are also extended into how the venue is decorated. The colours were often synchronised with that worn by the bride and/or couple. This was most observable in the Nairaland conversations, whereby, majority of the questions and images supplied (as answers) focused on how to suitably blend the chosen colours of the venue decoration with that of the clothing. Here, colour is not limited to decoration, but as a tool to demarcate the wedding couple from the audience. As commonly used in NL conversations, they do not want to be *"matchy, matchy"*, however this is still within a synchronised colour scheme that presents the wedding visually as a coherent whole.

Focusing on the 'othering' perspective mentioned in the literature review, of consumers associating negative and/or unwanted ideas with an 'othered' identity (individual or collective). This was observed from Nguyen & Belk's (2012) informants, of them excluding Chinese artefacts that are commonly embedded in Vietnamese culture, to illustrate authentic "Vietnameseness". 'Othering' in this study is illustrated

by Ije's example of women who live with their partner without the payment of their bride price being labelled as *"cheap girl[s]"*. Therefore, differentiating herself from these supposedly lower socio-cultural status ('cheap girls') women. By calling such women 'cheap', she positions herself as more valuable as a result of having her bride-price paid. Similarly, using the word 'girl', she contrasts herself as an adult woman i.e. 'girl' can be associated with 'child', that is 'not-adult'. This 'child' status will be discussed in subsequent sections. This also resonates with the idea that wedding rituals are a passage into (socially recognised) adulthood (Akintoye, 2010; Nwafor, 2013; Turner, 1969). There is also an additional layer of anxiety within this 'othering' process. Following Ije's quote, she further expresses that such women *"can receive any insult"*. This reality is experienced by Bunmi who received (sexual) harassment as a result of not wearing her wedding ring on a public bus. Suggesting adult women who are unmarried are 'fair game'. Therefore, 'othering' is one of the ways participants seek differentiation, by emphasising the perceived boundary between their perceived social group and 'others'.

5.3.4. Consumption as Transformation

Identity transformation can be achieved via consumption, including intensifying consumption, consuming in new contexts, consuming new goods or stopping consumption of certain goods (Bardhi et al., 2010; Ferreira & Scaraboto, 2016; Ourahmoune, 2016; Seo, 2016; Zukin & Maguire, 2009). Intensifying consumption was easily observed, a good example is Chukwuma's 750-word quote of trying to capture the (core) *"skeleton"* artefacts needed for a 'basic' wedding ritual. This intensification as explained by Kalmijn (2002), can primarily be linked to how large the status change is for the marrying couple. For the thesis participants, their wedding ritual acts in the traditional sense of a rite of passage into adulthood. This is best illustrated by Amaka and Abiola referring to themselves as children, children of their biological and spiritual (i.e. religious) parents. Amaka in particular, who views her wedding ritual as *"...the beginning of my ownership... of my reign , my kingdom, ...my husband is the king, I'm the queen"*. Amaka's quote illustrates a stark transition from being *"daddy's girl"* to overseeing her own kingdom, which contradicts the fairy tale perspective employed in the Western context. Whereby, the bride reverts into a childlike mindset of becoming a princess and fulfilling a fantasy (Arend, 2016; Boden, 2003; Otnes & Pleck, 2003). In

Amaka's example, she is growing into an (full) adult, with more agency than she currently enjoys. This is reinforced by quotes from Bimpe and Chisom who claimed that their wedding was leading into their *"real life"*. In addition, sub-theme (4.3.2a) 'competing preferences significantly increase wedding costs', attempts to capture the different forces that cause an ever-increasing number of consumption artefacts needed for Nigerian wedding rituals. This suggests that the combination of the numerous, often contradictory demands and the significant status and role change of Nigerian weddings contribute to the intensification of consumption. Yet, the common justification for the cost and quantity of artefacts incurred for the wedding ritual sits at the altar of the 'once in a lifetime' narrative (Ingraham, 2008; Otnes & Pleck, 2003). Boden's (2003) approach via the romantic ethic perspective suggests that wedding rituals offers British brides the impression that anything they conceive in their minds can be brought to fruition, only limited by financial capital. In a sense, this is a strong narrative along the sovereignty line, though, it requires a reversion into a childlike state of the 'princess-bride' (Ingraham, 2008). In the Nigerian context, the brides are stripped of most of their agency during the planning and execution of the wedding ritual. However, as Amaka suggests, the wedding ritual gives her the keys to her 'kingdom', that is, (consumer) sovereignty comes after the wedding, not during.

Consuming in new contexts and new goods are inherent to liminal consumption (Ogle et al., 2013; Thomsen & Sørensen, 2006; Tonner, 2016). This is documented in detail by Boden (2003) and Sykes & Brace-Govan (2015), how brides need multiple exposures to the wedding industry before they acquire the necessary social and cultural capital to perform their desired wedding ritual. Nigerian brides go through a similar process, in some cases, having a compressed version due to shopping in cities they do not live in. In Tola's experience, she *"...went round the market, how many shops, I really went round the market"* in a single day, until she became familiar with the stores. The consumer goods are not always new to participants, but the wedding ritual context renders their prior understanding inadequate. For example, when Amaka wanted a wedding photographer, she was already aware of the celebrity status of the photographer she had in mind, but, upon contacting him, his initial bill was shocking to her. In Amaka's own words, *"...he said its 'N1.5 million', hello! ...do I earn N1.5 million a year?"*. Therefore, understanding the status of the photographer and

anticipating higher costs did not still prepare her for how much he would charge. There was no direct reference to stopping consumption of certain goods during transformation.

Post-liminal consumption is an interesting facet within liminal consumption, here, honeymoon is popular of such consumptions. Many already consider the honeymoon as a core part of the global white wedding, so it is not entirely post-ritual (Ingraham, 2008; Otnes & Pleck, 2003). The honeymoon is often regarded as a period for the marrying couple to recuperate from the fun and stress accumulated before and during the wedding. In the Nigerian context, with this stress significantly heightened, a number of participants had to seek medical services and products. Spending a night at the hospital in Dele's experience and visiting a pharmacist in Zahrah's. Medical services are not novel consumptions, but it is consumption induced by the wedding ritual. This can be compared to women getting cosmetic surgeries (e.g. Abdominoplasty AKA 'tummy tuck') in attempt to 'correct' their body form/shape after child birth. Abdominoplasty is likely infrequent, but more common, is intensification of gym and healthier foods to get 'back in shape' (Lurry, 1996; Slater, 1997; Zukin & Maguire, 2009). However, the need for medical services suggests a darker side of post-liminal consumption. In essence, Nigerian wedding rituals offers the novel post-liminal consumption of non-cosmetic medical services.

5.4. *The Dynamisms of the Nigerian Wedding*

5.4.1. Social Capital as a Benefit of a Successful Wedding Ritual

This section focuses on the concept of social capital as defined by Bourdieu (1986) as the connections an individual has with other people and institutions which can be used to gain preferment. Nigerian wedding rituals allow for the participants to gain new connections to numerous individuals, particularly those in attendance of the wedding ritual. When viewed from the perspective of a wedding being the merging of families; family in the sense of nuclear, extended relatives and kin. This number can vary from 200 to 2000 in attendance, therefore, participants can grow their social network depending on how many people they invite and their capacity to sufficiently host the audience. This new social network extends beyond the audience physically present at the wedding ritual (some family members might be absent), in addition, it also forms

an invisible bond to other married people (Ingraham, 2008). This bond is made manifest in Bunmi's experience on the bus, whereby, she (apparently) would have been defended from the driver's inappropriate advances by other users had she worn her wedding ring on to signal her place within 'marriagehood', adulthood or 'coupledom'. An experience John describes as getting more respect, that is, having others recognise his new-found social group, which also happens to be the dominant social group (Akintoye, 2010; Ingraham, 2008; Nwafor, 2013; Turner, 1969).

Acceptance into the dominant social group is not always automatic, in Fernandez et al., (2011) research, gifts offered to Indian brides are used to communicate and negotiate this process. In the Nigerian and South African context, these gifts are explicitly requested by the bride's family to the groom's. Acceptance of these gifts symbolises acceptance of the union of the couple and their entrance into adulthood (Mazibuko, 2016; Parker, 2015; Posel et al., 2011; Rudwick & Posel, 2015). As highlighted by Ije and Amaka, these gifts are requested by different sub-groups within the bride's family, therefore, said acceptance is a collective process. That is, linking the groom (and his family) to the different sub-groups within the bride's family. Although not explicitly communicated by participants, it can be suggested that the type and cost of items on the list also communicates a status position and expectation. Similar to Fernandez et al., (2011), the quality, cost and weight of the gold gifts signals the new status of the bride within the groom's family.

It can be inferred that the size of the wedding ritual suggests the socio-economic status of the marrying families. Nguyen & Belk (2012; 2013), further suggests that the quality, price tag and symbolic associations of the consumer artefacts used during the wedding ritual further reinforce this status. In the Nigerian context of debt being discouraged and frowned upon, this locks-in participants into their socio-economic status. Without the use of debt, both commercially and via social network, participants are limited to hosting a wedding ritual illustrative of their economic capacity. However, this offers the advantage that family is obligated to contribute financially, socially and culturally to the wedding ritual planning and execution. Consequently, the lavishness of the wedding ritual signals not just the socio-economic status of the participants but that of the collective status of their families, further reinforcing why collective identity management takes precedent. This further reduces the barrier of lower income men

from getting married, that is, said men not being able to afford the bride price (Mazibuko, 2016; Parker, 2015; Posel et al., 2011; Rudwick & Posel, 2015). In rarer instances, the bride's family as narrated by Eni returns the bride price to the groom's. Therefore, only the costs of the wedding ritual itself is borne by the groom and his family, which simplifies the route to 'marriagehood'. By ensuring that the wedding cannot proceed without the consent of the family and funding external to the family is rejecting, it ensures social capital gained is from within and of the family. This further encourages interdependency within the family, minimising contributions from external factors and actors (Thomas et al., 2013).

5.4.2.   Available Nigerian Wedding Ritual Scripts are Traditional

Sykes & Brace-Govan (2015) categorise wedding ritual scripts into two broad sections, those mediated by vendors and predominately represented in mass media, and those mediated by the family as expressions of historic, cultural, religious and/or ethnic affiliations. In the Nigerian context, this cannot be so easily split. This is evident in Amaka's experience, of her family having to step in to fill the void left by incompetent vendors, showing the overlap between market and family. To further blur this binary, several vendors are family and friends of participants. This is best illustrated in Emma's quote of the argument between her and her groom about their preferred venue decorator, in both preferences, the vendors are from within their own social network. Therefore, it would not do to split wedding scripts in the Nigerian context along Sykes & Brace-Govan's (2015) binary. Rather, wedding ritual scripts are adopted and implemented via a complex web of needs and demands by the ritual participants, both core and periphery.

In the West, for consumer artefacts to contain transformational power, especially when they have been detached from their original institutions or completely invented, they need to be grounded in a form of tradition and historicity (Doerr, 2008; Ingraham, 2008; Kjeldgaard & Askegaard, 2006). See the invention of the engagement ring for a detailed example (Otnes & Pleck, 2003; Ingraham, 2008). In the Nigerian experience, when these artefacts are pulled into the local socio-cultural institutions, rather than having to give them their own unique history, they are simply used to fulfil localised needs. This is best illustrated by use of the wedding cake as suggested by Bimpe and Folarin, to project the image of the subservient wife as opposed to the Western

association to love, equity and equality (Otnes & Pleck, 2003). Rather than the consumer goods containing their own transformational power, the usage of the goods for specific acts is what is transformational. The bridal list encapsulates this perfectly. Though they are relatively generic items such as honey, fish, rice, stew etc., their transformational power comes from who they are given to, when and in what context, not just the history they are imbibed with. This is reinforced by some lists being turned into a cash value, therefore, the items become even more symbolic and ephemeral, as in Ogechi's experience.

There are two possible interlinked explanations for this, first, a simple difference of context, that is, democratisation of tradition in the West (Slater, 1997) and entrenchment in Nigeria. Obadare's (2018) recent book illustrates how Pentecostalism increasingly plays an outsized role in Nigerian politics, providing evidence of the further entrenchment of religion in the Nigerian polity. Therefore, consumer artefacts do not need to be transformational, rather the (traditional) institutions give authority for who can be transformed. This directly opposes the democratisation of traditional institutions thesis (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Leeds-Hurwitz, 2002; Otnes & Pleck, 2003). The other, follows (neo) feminist assertions, that rather than consumer culture freeing individuals from the shackles of tradition, it simply changed the authorities from priests and patriarchs to marketers and vendors (Adrian, 2004; Boden, 2003; Nash, 2013). Therefore, in the Nigerian context, marketers and vendors do not (yet?) have the power to displace the old order. In the sense that the family and church set the pace of the wedding ritual, contrary to the Western process of the market having significant influence over the ritual script (Ingraham, 2008; Geller, 2001). Instead, traditional institutions are absorbing consumer culture in, as opposed to the inverse experienced in the Western context. In the Western context, the market pulls in ritual artefacts into the market and (typically) modify their associated meaning (Boden, 2003). Although significant consumer choices are offered in the West, the structures that produce the choices are rigid (Arend, 2016; Ingraham, 2008; Nash, 2013). It can then be inferred that a more direct expression of this rigidity is seen in Nigeria.

Further proof of this similarity is the centring of the bride in the wedding ritual process. In both Western and Nigerian context, the bride is the primary focus of the

ritual and the groom is often on periphery. Boden (2001; 2003) documents in detail how the wedding industry 'sets-up the bride' to be at the centre of decision making whilst restricting her choices to a pre-approved list of preferences. Sykes & Brace-Govan (2015) also documents participants being initially resistant to market imposed bridal identity, but, eventually giving-in as they approach the ritual date. Of additional importance is that the groom is given veto power over the bride's choices (Pepin et al., 2008). Therefore, challenging the narrative that she is really in control of the process. In the Nigerian context, a similar case is observed, whereby the family sets the parameters for the wedding ritual with limited input of the bride's preferences. This is further heightened by the request of the wedding list, whereby the bride is commodified, and a *"token"* is requested in respect of the *"things invested [in her]"* (Chisom, F). Regardless of whether she is being sold or not, this transactional process places her (value) at the centre of the Nigerian (traditional) wedding process. This is further amplified in instances of her absence during the exchange of the bride price. In essence, she is the centre of the ritual, but her agency within the ritual is severely curtailed, similar to the curtailment by vendors and grooms in the market led wedding ritual (Adrian, 2004; Pepin et al., 2008). It is important to note that the Western bride is a willing participant in this process. She actively attempts to reconcile the multiple scripts available to her, whilst simultaneously expressing her own aesthetic preferences (Adrian, 2004; Sykes & Brace-Govan, 2015). In a similar vein, Nigerian brides are keen to demonstrate their acceptance of the socio-cultural norms albeit with discreet deviations. This can be gleaned from Bimpe, who was *"sneaking out"* despite agreeing with her father that *"...it's not good for a bride to be going out the week of her wedding"*.

However, this does not answer the question of how brides reconcile the urge that the wedding should be an expression of their tastes and preferences and yet, performing a wedding ritual according to the strictures of family and religious institutions. This is most observable in Bunmi's quote, she asserts that *"you can't afford for anybody to ruin [your wedding], not even the church"*. However, she goes on to explain that the primary reason for hosting a church wedding is to avoid being perceived as *"rebellious"*. This suggests a contradictory urge to fit in. This reinforces earlier studies that concludes brides are motivated to fit into the norms of wedding rituals, regardless

of personal preferences (Fairchild, 2014; Ingraham, 2008; Winch & Webster, 2012). Prior studies often omit or under-represent the consequences of deviation with the exceptions of Fernandez et al., (2011) and Nguyen & Belk (2012) who mention embarrassment. In the Nigerian context, such consequences are often high. They can be experienced in the form of embarrassment, marginalisation and dishonour, illustrated in sub-theme (4.3.1b) 'wedding haste as a response to liminal uncertainty'. The findings suggest that there is no reconciliation, rather, unresolved contradictions are minimised by personal aspirations, as Bimpe puts it is *"the beginning… of your real life"*.

By following the claim that the wedding ritual is for the family, both brides and grooms are more willing to give-in to the demands of the family i.e. demarcation. Combined with the assumption that "real life" begins after the wedding, it removes the need for reconciliation. Instead, participants focus on having "fun" and more importantly on having a happy post-wedding marriage. These are elaborated on in sub-theme (4.3.4a) 'personal aspirations and expectations as internal accelerant'. In essence, regardless of how much of the wedding ritual deviates from their vision and expectations, they still get the benefit of being married, which is the ideal outcome, as Abiola said *"honeymoon is everyday",* in addition to the social capital they stand to gain. The general premise over finding perfection in the wedding ritual is based on the reconciliation of multiple ritual scripts (Ingraham, 2008). As elaborated this reconciliation is unlikely to occur, suggesting that Nigerian weddings do not reach perfection from the perspective of the bride. This refers to bridal imperfection in figure 5.1, as the most likely outcome of Nigerian wedding rituals.

Following earlier established notion that Nigerian wedding rituals are not a social space for the liberation of Nigerian women, it further suggests that these rituals as a liminal space have become institutionalised and losing their power of inverting and challenging socio-cultural norms (Tumbat & Belk, 2011; Turner, 1969). They have instead become social spaces for the reification of social norms. This is evidenced further in the use of wedding rituals as 'rites of distinction', because, the capacity to achieve this consumption focused distinction is based on access to capital, therefore reflecting the socio-economic position of the liminars (and their families) (Adrian, 2004; Nguyen & Belk, 2012; Roche & Hohmann, 2011). Similar to the South African

'Ilobolo', a bride price paid to the bride's father from the groom (Mazibuko, 2016; Parker, 2015; Posel et al., 2011; Rudwick & Posel, 2015), the bridal list in Nigerian wedding rituals can also be used to signal socio-economic status. The institutionalisation of the wedding ritual is further expressed by its creation based on the input of the different sub-groups within the family. Therefore, for the Nigerian wedding ritual to take place, the consent of (important) sub-groups within the family is given. That is, not just the head of the family as in the South African instance, but the entirety of the family is involved. Echoes of which are found in the church, according to the payment incident narrated by Ogechi in the findings section, who needed to pay a number of levies to different groups within the church.

5.5. Salient Identities Performed in Nigerian Wedding Rituals

The identities performed in Nigerian weddings are typical of wedding rituals, including ethnic, religious, classed etc. Of importance is the bridal identity, a type of consumer identity unique to the wedding ritual industry, which is an expression of the bride's aesthetics preferences through consumer artefacts (Boden, 2003). As Boden (2003) and Broekhuizen & Evans (2016) show, brides can rarely implement this identity without the intimate help of vendors. In the Nigerian context, the role of vendors as consumption experts, guides and mentors is occupied by the family. Therefore, instead of a bridal identity implemented according to the syncretisation of personal preferences and market forces, the Nigerian context adds a strong element of family and cultural preferences. In essence, bridal identity is performed in Nigeria, but the way it is performed and shaped differs from that recorded in the literature. It has some resonance with Skyes & Brace-Govan's (2015) study on the involvement of Australian brides' mothers in the wedding dress buying process. However, they highlight the mother's role as a final arbiter, as she helps guide the bride towards what she believes to be the bride's own genuine tastes. The Nigerian family's involvement goes deeper than that, family is intimately involved in the delivery of services and in most cases the bride has to forgo her preferences to accommodate theirs.

In addition to how bridal identity is performed, the Nigerian context further suggests that men can also perform bridal identity. Focusing on bridal identity as the expression of centralised (perceived) managerial control over the wedding ritual planning

process, then any gender can take on this role. In Dele's experience, his wife was absent for most of the planning, so he had to take on the role of primary planner. A similar experience is recorded by Leeds-Hurwitz (2002), of USA men marrying women from other cultures and having to take on the planning of the American aspect of the wedding planning. This is also emphasised by same sex weddings between men (Kimport, 2012). Therefore, in absence of a woman, men can also perform bridal identity.

Linked to bridal identity but can be considered an identity by itself is that of 'child'. Within wedding literature, the bride can be presented as childlike, a princess, who is about to have her dream/fantasy wedding come true (Besel et al., 2009; Otnes & Pleck, 2003). This also has an individualised perspective, that this child identity is unique to each bride and allows her access her full creative reservoir (Arend, 2016; Besel et al., 2009). In the Nigerian context, this differs, as the child identity is less an identity and more a social and structural position, with the wedding ritual being a rite of passage into adulthood. The Western bridal princess (i.e. child) often comes with limitless creativity, ingenuity and fantasy (Besel et al., 2009; Otnes & Pleck, 2003), the Nigeria version is experienced via disempowerment, coercion and restricted agency. Similar to the bridal identity, this childlike princess disposition has a strong market drive, the Nigerian experience is less so and more family (and church for Christians) driven. This is likely tied to the wedding ritual still posing as a rite of passage, whilst simultaneously a rite of distinction. There are echoes of this found in the literature, less intense but with overlapping tendencies. This was elaborated on by Boden (2003) and Pepin et al., (2008) who assert that the groom's role is that of a matured adult who manages the childlike bride. In the Nigerian case, both bride and groom are childlike within their religious and familial relations. Muslim participants do not describe themselves as children of their mosque or religious leader. However, the fact that the bride and groom are represented by 'guardians' in the Nikai, reinforces their child like status.

To give further context, three distinct bridal identities will be discussed; embedded, synthesised and rebel, followed by a groom identity. The embedded bridal identity is when the bride is fully immersed in the religious and familial ways of conducting a wedding ritual. Here, her agency is near absent and simply executes the needs and demands of her church and family. As mentioned in prior sections, the relationship

brides have with mosques are likely similar to those with Christian weddings, but not enough information is available to fully substantiate this claim. Therefore, church would be used as a stand-in for both church and mosque. Synthesised bridal identity suggests a mixed approach, whereby, the bride attempts a balancing act of her own preferences in conjunction with the varying religious and familial demands. Here, the main tension is how much of her own preferences can she express in the wedding ritual without offending or upending religious and familial relations. The rebel is as the name suggests, a bride who sets out to have her way, an approach most similar to the typical bridal identity of the wedding literature being an expression of the bride's vision. Unfortunately, in the Nigerian context, this resolves into often a thwarted attempt at self-expression, similar to Ustuner & Holt's (2007) 'shattered identity'. Or, a return to the more suitable embedded and synthesised bridal identities.

5.5.1.   Embedded Bridal Identity

The embedded bride is likely considered the ideal bride by her family, she follows their instructions and carries out activities that do not need to be stated. Eni is a good example of this, her brother decided almost every aspect of her wedding, she even decided to go with mild makeup so as to avoid upsetting her church, though, she had not been instructed to do so. In essence, she plays her part to almost perfection, she has little input on decision making, and areas that she does, she makes decisions that are not necessarily her preference. Demarcation is the norm here, whenever her preferences opposes that of her family or church, hers gets dropped. However, a major upside to this is that it often results in the least post-ritual stress. Since family is deeply involved and she is simply following the path set for her, less things are likely to go wrong. And should they, the family is more than keen to step-in. Resonating with Kalmijn (2002), that family involvement reduces stress associated with wedding rituals.

Whilst attempting to follow religious and familial norms, such brides are often keener on hardening and monitoring social boundaries. Similar to Ije, who is keen to 'other' brides/women who are not like her, she implicitly threatens 'other' women with public humiliation and scorn. That is, if a woman is married or living with her partner and did not go through the socio-cultural norm of bride price, she is not welcome amongst the circle of traditionally married women. This boundary monitoring and hardening is

common amongst people deeply embedded in traditional customs (Cherrier & Belk, 2015; Sobh et al., 2014). In essence, they are willing to defend their hard-worn privileges i.e. adulthood, from those who did not pay a similar price. In addition, there is a strong moral undercurrent to this consumer identity. In Ije's example, she believed that the bride price means that she has received the blessing of her parents, a strong moral imperative of respect and homage to tradition. Therefore, her decisions are less guided by more mundane reasons of self-expression, uniqueness or beauty.

The embedded bridal identity appears to have the least tolerance for embarrassment. Referring to Amaka, the reason she gave for requiring the Introduction ritual before the ring proposal was to avoid the embarrassment of cancelling the wedding should their families be incompatible. A similar case is illustrated by Folarin being happy about her groom not kneeling to feed her cake at the reception due to the embarrassment this might cause. In both cases, their preference for minimal deviation from established norms appears to be motivated as a means of minimising embarrassment and uncertainty. It might seem to be a fear motivated identity, but the family also aims for similar, illustrated in sub-theme (4.3.1a) 'wedding haste as a response to liminal uncertainty', which highlights the strategies family employs to minimise embarrassment and uncertainty. Should participants' motivations align with the family, it is easy to see how she might follow their guidance without the need for coercion. In relation, emulation of her parents' long marriage was a motivating feature for Amaka. Most marrying couple want a long marriage as a default, but in the embedded bridal identity, the bride tries to emulate her predecessors, who stand as role models of a 'good' marriage. Following on from the fear of embarrassment, there was also a fear of being left out. Amaka claims that she does not care 100% for trends but at the same time she did not want to be the one who's wedding was not 'nice'. This can also be a form of embarrassment, i.e. being the odd one out, but by itself, it shows that Amaka's bridal identity is strongly influenced by collective norms. The importance of collective norms and wellbeing is exemplified by participants who do not eat but ensure the audience are adequately feed. Here, they are willing to sacrifice their own wellbeing for the benefit of the collective.

5.5.2. Synthesised Bridal Identity

This is the most common type of bridal identity; the bride attempts a mix of often contradictory needs and demands in the execution of her wedding. Here, she selectively decides which roles family plays and which she takes full ownership of. As expected, this often results in conflict, which further heightens post-ritual stress. Bimpe's experience with her parents, their Christian sensibilities and her dress is a good example. After buying her preferred wedding dress, she paid extra to have it modified, to cover the open cleavage and also bought a separate jacket to cover her shoulders. She therefore, mixed her own preference with that of religious and familial expectations and created a new wedding outfit. This is more aligned with the assumption of bridal identity being the product of multiple scripts and aesthetic inclinations (Boden, 2003). However, this synthesised bridal identity still differs from those recorded in the literature due to the diminished role wedding vendors play in Nigerian weddings in general. That is, the Nigerian bride is still combining multiple scripts, but, the available scripts differ and occur with varying socio-cultural power and impositions.

Similar to the embedded, synthesised bridal identity is also keen on boundary monitoring, however, this has a more materialistic bent, opposed to the socio-cultural of the former. Sola's insistence on having a silver ring, to minimise the possibility of it being perceived as counterfeit ('fake'), suggests she is keen on maintaining a middle-class aesthetic boundary. Rather than 'othering' as Ije did, Sola's focus is on herself and the image she emits. This is also linked to the need for uniqueness within the collective. Here, the bride still follows the general socio-cultural guidelines, but, she still has a need to standout within these guidelines. Back to Bimpe, she stayed within the expectations of an outfit covering her cleavage and shoulders, but, she still insisted on fabrics and patterns that are unique (and expensive). This however, produces significant post-ritual stress for the bride, as Bimpe claimed to have lost weight after her wedding. This stress is likely due to the constant battle for supremacy between her preferences and the religious and familial demands, demands that often come from individuals higher up the typical socio-cultural hierarchy. In Ihuoma's negotiation with her father, she explicitly describes this protracted conflict as 'exhausting'.

A common motivation for following the synthesised route is how the importance of the wedding ritual is conceptualised. Brides like Bunmi view the wedding as an individual life cycle event, that allows the collective to celebrate the bride. Here it slightly differs from the rite of passage and distinction route but uses the wedding ritual as an opportunity to be celebrated, to be the centre of attention within the collective. This allows the emergence of individual distinction rooted within the collective. This aim for individual distinction within the collective creates a different scale for measuring and understanding embarrassment. For Sola and Bimpe, embarrassment is having a wedding that is generic or similar to their peers. This differs from Amaka, who sees embarrassment as not fitting in, for the embedded bridal identity. Sola and Bimpe's urge for (contextual) distinction directs their gaze in opposition to their families, who typically emphasise similarity. This was expressed in sub-theme (4.3.2a) 'competing preferences significantly increase wedding costs', about how Sola's mother considered purchasing a unique fabric as unnecessary and wasteful. Unsurprisingly, market vendors supported Bimpe's drive for unique (and expensive) fabrics. This culminates into how Sola and Bimpe want their wedding to be perceived by others, they use words like exciting, colourful, fun etc. words that suggest high energy. In contrast, Amaka is more concerned about having a wedding that meets the expectations of her peers, i.e. she wants to be perceived as "cool".

5.5.3. Rebel Bridal Identity

This is more or less a failed attempt at synthesis, rather than outright rebellion. Here, the bride failed in reconciling her own preferences with religious and familial demands. Nafisa's experience is instructive, due to her incapacity to control the wedding vendor and having no back-up plans, she could not appease the demands of her aunties. After the Gele (head tie) vendor arrived, she was no longer emotionally invested in the wedding ritual and simply withdrew at the earliest opportunity. This can be described as 'thwarted agency'. There are no strong indications of boundary monitoring and hardening, here, the bride is simply insistent on expression of her aesthetics, particularly those in contradiction to religious and familial demands. This follows the logic that rebelling against socio-cultural norms often means the expansion and creation new of boundaries and not their reinforcement. Folarin is another bride that showed a rebellious inclination, she wanted to omit the church wedding owing to

their delays, but, due to pressure from her groom and (covert) acquiesce from her family, she changed her decision. Although not explicit in the findings section, she reverted to an embedded bridal identity, as illustrated in her preference to kneel to feed her groom cake during the reception. In essence, the rebel bridal identity is hard to maintain, either resulting in thwarted agency as in Nafisa or revert into a more palpable identity as in Folarin.

5.5.4. Prudent groom

In addition to bridal identity, grooms also perform a consumer identity which can be labelled the 'prudent groom'. This consumer identity follows a trajectory of the groom trying to reduce the overall costs of the wedding but within is how they position themselves as prudent, long term planning and following the bride's own interest. As established in the findings, the groom often bears a significant portion of financial responsibility of the wedding, typically larger than the bride's. So, their inclination towards cost reduction is palpable. However, they project this idea via a veneer of prudence, here Emma says, *"My husband who seems to think that no matter how cheap you get something you can always get it cheaper,"*. He does not express that he is trying to save his own funds, which is understandable, but he presents himself as pragmatic, almost all-knowing of market prices and dynamics, with a special capability to always get a lower price. This prudent attitude projects an image of wisdom and insight, whilst minimising the possibility of the groom being viewed as financially incapable.

This wisdom is further enhanced by comments like this from James; *"…instead of spending 200,000 [Naira], 400,000 [Naira] feeding people that we don't know, I'll rather prefer to get you a car. I'll rather prefer to spend all that money changing your wardrobe, because you're a married woman now, you have to represent"*. Here, James takes ownership of the funds, but suggests a better way to spend the funds, with longer term benefits. James emphasises the bride's need to display her new status of being married via a new wardrobe. This feeds into earlier literature of the groom assuming mature and clear minded control of the planning process (Boden, 2003; Ingraham, 2008; Pepin et al., 2008). However, James is not taking direct ownership of the wedding planning process, rather, diverting how to use his own funds. Interestingly, he still presents his case for saving money on the wedding ritual as a way to spend more funds on his bride. She, remains the primary focus, as he attempts to de-centre

the ritual audience. He takes on the role of informed adult, whereby he (intuitively) knows what is best for the bride. This can be said to be a groom consumer identity, that centres the bride but, performed in a way to save the groom money whilst minimising potential embarrassment on his part. It is important to avoid the embarrassment of being perceived as financially incapable, as he would be viewed as not being up to the task of being married (Adrian, 2004; Oladeji & Ariyo, 2014).

5.6. Summary

This chapter attempted a synthesis of the research findings and the literature review, with the aim of answering the research questions. However, an updated conceptual framework as presented, to give a pictorial summary of the thesis' theoretical thrust. This is followed by a discussion on how consumer identity strategies are implemented in the Nigerian context. The next section laid emphasis on updating contemporary understanding of Nigerian (consumer) culture. Finally, the chapter presents a breakdown of bridal identity into further sub-divisions, accompanied by a novel groom identity.

6. Conclusion

This chapter presents an overview of the study. First it provides a summary, detailing the theoretical thrusts and foundations of the study, followed by a brief description of the research methodology, then a concise elucidation of the research findings and discussion. This then leads into the presentation of the research contributions, which provides a succinct exposition of how the thesis contributes to theories on rituals and liminal consumption. Finally, a general attestation of the research limitations are highlighted, attending to both theoretical and methodological limitations. In addition, future orientations and potential market implications are presented.

6.1. Research Conclusions

6.1.1. Study Synopsis

In the literature review chapter, a critical evaluation on consumption, liminality and wedding rituals was illustrated. First, the literature review attempted an overview of consumption and the assumptions this thesis employs when considering consumption. This was done by critically evaluating the perspective of consumption as a social phenomenon, enacted by individuals with respect to their social group(s). The review went on to identify the strategies individuals enact when performing a consumer identity. This is followed by an overview of Nigerian identities and the absence of a national identity, with focus on ethnic and religious identities. This buttressed by the collectivised consumption preference of Nigerians, who only consumer within socially sanctioned consumptionspheres and products. Finally, wedding rituals, theories, perspectives and histories are considered in detail. This is divided into three main sections; rituals, liminality and global white weddings. An overarching theme drawn from the wedding ritual subsection is the important role gatekeepers play within liminal spaces and their power over liminars (Bell, 1997; Turner, 1969). This is further exacerbated by liminars' typical naïve understanding of liminal consumptionspheres (Tonner, 2016). Also, the literature review fails to resolve the tension in which perspective reigns supreme within the performance of wedding rituals; wedding rituals as a rite of passage or, as a rite of distinction. The findings and discussions chapters appear to suggest that context determines which perspective is most suitable.

The next chapter considers data collection, that is, research methodology. This was achieved by blending of offline and online data collection methods. Due to the increasing role the internet plays in the wedding planning process, particularly social media, an online research method was employed. An inductive method called Netnography was used, whereby, the researcher inserts himself into an existing online community. This was done with the aim of providing an emic interpretation of the online community's internal dynamics. Netnography's inclination for online communities also gives the advantage of studying a bounded social group (Kozinets et al., 2010; Kozinets, 2015; Nelson & Otnes, 2005), rather than the open-ended approach typical of online content analysis and other digital trends analysis methods, that applies a catch-all approach to certain keywords and phrases (Kozinets, 2015). The chosen community is Nairaland.com (NL), a popular online Nigerian forum, with a vibrant wedding and events section. To supplement, the more popular semi-structured interview method was conducted to add depth to insights gleaned from NL (Belk et al., 2013; Nelson & Otnes, 2005). Typically, the interviewees are often sourced from members of the online community group (Leal et al., 2014; Nelson & Otnes, 2005), however, due to time constraints, interviewees were sourced from the researchers own social network. The sample size was further expanded via snowballing sampling. Data from NL and interview transcripts were analysed separately, as the data collection method were different, so it was deemed appropriate to treat each individually albeit as complementary. Both were analysed using thematic analysis, that is, coding, clustering and theming (Clarke & Braun, 2006; 2017). Keeping in line with an inductive approach to data analysis.

In a similar fashion, the findings are split, first the NL themes were presented, followed by the interview themes. Again, both findings are complementary of the same subject, Nigerian wedding rituals. The themes from NL focused mainly on the aesthetics of a Nigerian wedding and the best way for brides to fulfil their desires. Occasionally, there was talk of how best to deal with other main characters of the wedding ritual, including parents, vendors and marrying partners. The possible reason for this focus on aesthetics is later answered in the interviews, due to aesthetics, that is venue decoration and clothing, being of the few areas brides are given control over. Other decisions are often influenced and sometimes forced on the bride by the family and the

church. The findings from the interviews go on to illustrate the severely limiting experience of planning a Nigerian wedding, particularly from the perspective of the bride. The groom sometimes enjoys more agency, but he is still subject to the rigid norms and hierarchies of Nigerian traditional institutions of family and religion.

The market's role is under-represented, limited to supplying consumer artefacts and minimal input of consumer experts. With the exception of clothing and decoration, the bride's preferences are often secondary to that of family and religion. Therefore, creating a bridal identity of the bride's consumer sensibilities being one of three main ingredients, with a limited role played by the market. Focusing on the groom identity, i.e. pragmatic groom, the discussion showed how this identity is used to reduce the overall cost of the wedding, whilst simultaneously upholding the groom's social status. Similar examples are provided in the discussion of the different variations of the Nigerian bridal identities and influence on the wedding ritual execution.

6.1.2. Attending to Research Questions

In specific respect to the research questions; research question 1, 'how is liminality experienced via the consumption patterns of Nigeran brides and grooms?' is summarised in section 5.2 of the 'updated conceptual framework'. This details the multiple forms of liminal tensions participants experience during Nigerian wedding rituals, as scattered in different parts of the findings chapter but itemised in section 5.2. First, the individual-collective tension of a wedding ritual, i.e. the participants' consumer tastes versus their family and church. The second liminal tension is how much is the bride willing to give up further control of her consumer agency, based on the promise of full post-wedding consumer sovereignty. That is, trying to balance short term wants for long term gains. A third liminal tension revolves around isolation and partnership, whereby the bride is often expected to shoulder majority of the wedding planning labour alone and yet, still having to see her decisions as partnership with her groom. And finally, a financial tension, not unique to weddings, but nuanced in the way of prioritising which consumer contexts require significant resources and which need only the bare minimum of funds.

Research question 2, 'How does bridal identity, as a consumer identity, affect the agentic experience of Nigerian brides and grooms?', is fully illustrated in subsection

5.5 'salient identities performed in Nigerian weddings'. Again, this is illustrated across the findings, but subsection 5.5 gives a systemic elucidation regarding the 3 variations of performed bridal identities. Including embedded, synthesised and rebel bridal identity. In particular it stresses how Nigerian bridal identity is limited by socio-cultural norms and expectations of collectivism. This is fully appreciated in section 5.2 of the 'updated conceptual framework', where the relationship between the perfect and imperfect bridal identity is mediated by the liminal space and its gatekeepers. A direct answer to research question 2 is that the more an idealised bridal identity is pursued the more likely attempts to curtail the agency of participant is pursued. This is fully realised in the rebel bridal identity, of Nafisa's aunties trying to force her out before she was ready to face her in-laws.

Finally, research question 3 'How do Nigerian brides and grooms perform their preferred consumer identities?' is answered in both discussion and findings chapters. With the exception of the embedded bride who is motivated with fitting in and pleasing family, most brides and grooms do not perform their preferred consumer identities. As illustrated in the updated conceptual framework (figure 5.1), participants use a mix of consumer identity strategies to close the gap between their preferred consumer identity to those available to them. That is using consumer identity strategies to close the gap between bridal perfection and imperfection.

6.2. Thesis Contributions

This study contributes to extant literature on two fronts, theoretically and methodologically. From a theoretical perspective the study reinforces contemporary conceptualisations of liminality as the space between parallel and/or opposing ideologies, occupied by an entity (subject or object) (Cody, 2012a; 2012b; Cody & Lawlor, 2013; Ogle et al., 2013; O'Loughlin et al., 2017; Thomsen & Sørensen, 2006; Tonner, 2016). It does this by interrogating the consequences of the insertion of consumer identity into liminal spaces. Although liminars manage to perform variations of their desired consumer identity, the very nature of liminal spaces strongly resists their attempts at consumer agency. This was expanded upon in detail in the discussion chapter on how Nigerian wedding rituals via family and the church systematically undermine participants' consumer identity strategies. In general, participants do not

typically have the needed economic, social and cultural capital to fully realise their intended consumer identity. For example, the fine and penalty system embedded within Emeka's wedding ritual ensures that the liminal space still adheres to Turner's original conceptualisation of agency stripping (Bell, 1997; Turner, 1969). Yet, via the bridal and groom consumer identities, participants still attempt subverting strategies to those instituted by family and the church. In sum, as the continuous insertion of consumer artefacts and ideals into liminal spaces encourages their democratisation, the Nigerian context still holds dearly to the agency stripping aspects of liminal occupancy (Akintoye, 2010; Bell, 1997; Turner, 1969).

Turner (1969) also describes four other conditions imposed on liminars including humility, marginalisation, isolation and passivity. All of which are present in the Nigerian context to varying degrees, evidenced in theme (4.3.3) 'undermining a successful wedding ritual'. More interesting is the current turn of liminal studies that emphasise ideological conflict in the space between multiple parallel and/or opposing identities. As emphasised by several authors (Cody, 2012a; 2012b; Cody & Lawlor, 2013; Mupotsa, 2015; Ogle et al., 2013; O'Loughlin et al., 2017; Thomsen & Sørensen, 2006; Tonner, 2016) liminality is goes beyond anti-structure, rather, we see individuals struggling at aligning themselves with 2 or more identity points. In Cody's (2012a; 2012b) study it is between child and teen, O'Loughlin et al., (2017) it is oscillating between middle and lower social class status, in Harrison et al., (2015), participants experience struggle between white and Black racial categories and in Hirschman et al (2012) participants experience ownership and dis-ownership of beloved items. As mentioned in the prior sub-section (6.1.1), participants of this study undergo multiple levels of liminal tensions, straining at balancing irreconcilable identities, status ideas and positions. This study therefore contributes to liminal theory by asserting that liminality is not limited to identity transition, but also includes mid-points between two or more irreconcilable points, identities, statuses or positions.

In Turner's (1969) study of the Ndembu people of Zambia, he did not observe a consumer identity, it could even be said that a consumption orientation was absent. Hence his assertion that his approach to liminal theory is confined to pre-industrial societies, i.e. societies that have minimal footprints of a consumer identities (Tuner, 1969; 1974). Looking at sub-theme (4.3.4a) 'personal aspirations and expectations as

external accelerants', it is obvious that participants are willing to pay the price i.e. liminal humility, marginalisation, passivity etc., for the opportunity of adulthood, prestige and increased social status. The real liminal conflict seems to be anchored around the need for consumer agency, identity and expression. Therefore, the insertion of consumer identity and culture into Nigerian wedding ritual liminal space is the complicating factor. In a sense, the Nigerian participants consent to the loss of social and cultural identities and status as consequence for occupying the liminal wedding ritual. However, they are not willing to completely give up on their consumer identities.

This study reinforces the recent direction of liminal studies away from the passive isolation described by Turner (1969), towards the exploration of conflict that occurs in spaces of transition (Mupotsa, 2015; O'Loughlin et al., 2017). In the specific context of Nigerian wedding rituals, the main conflict is in the parallel visions of an individual consumer identity and that of a collective cultural identity. Best illustrated by rebel bridal identity, whereby, brides spend significant effort at unsuccessfully reconciling their preferences with that of their familial and religious collectives. Here, liminality takes on a more ephemeral nature, rather than the space between and betwixt multiple social positions, it becomes the space between and betwixt multiple irreconcilable ideologies. However, it is important to place some boundary conditions, if not, liminality as a concept could lose its meaning and analytic usefulness. For this expression of liminality to apply, there needs to be a compulsion involved. It is not enough to identify such a space, there must be a motivating factor that compels and/or coerce individuals, collectives and/or objects to occupy such a space in the first instance. In this context, the motivating factor is the need to be married and accrue the needed socio-cultural capital to be socio-culturally recognised as an 'adult' (Nguyen & Belk, 2012). Other compulsions include natural aging (Cody, 2012a; 2012b), childbirth (Kerrane et al., 2018; Tonner; 2016), loss of income (O'Loughlin et al., 2017) etc. This study further adds to liminal theory by the inclusion of a boundary conditions as prerequisite for the existence of a liminal space. The above focused on the extension style of adding to theory. The next contribution is more on the gap-spotting approach.

An under-theorised field is groom identity, much of the wedding literature present the groom as bored, passive and often coerced (Adrian, 2004; Geller, 2001; Ingraham,

2008; Pepin et al., 2008). This thesis addresses this neglect by introducing the pragmatic groom, a groom that is adept at using popular tropes and socially sanctioned rhetoric to reduce the overall cost of the wedding to himself whilst simultaneously saving face. Here, the groom is not passive, but as an agentic actor within the wedding ritual process with in-depth understanding of the needs of the bride and that of the wedding ritual itself, as suggested by Leeds-Hurwitz (2002). This contribution follows the popular path of identifying a neglected theoretical perspective and adding it to i.e. gap-spotting (Nicholson et al., 2018).

A different set of theoretical contributions is that defined by (in)validating existing theory via application to new or different contexts (Nicholson et al., 2018). The following are such key contributions; compared to the norm of weddings within GWW being rites of distinction (Baker & Elizabeth, 2013; Kalmijn, 2002; Sykes & Brace-Govan, 2015), weddings in Nigeria are firmly rites of passage. Here, a Nigerian is socio-culturally an adult only after a publicly recognised wedding ritual. A similar contradiction is the way 'child' is experienced in Nigeria compared to the GWW norm of princess. In the Nigerian context, 'child' means curtailed agency and the rite of passage usage of wedding rituals permit the 'child' into adulthood. This significantly differs from the agentic princess, who uses the wedding ritual as a means of actualising her dreams and vision, typified in GWW studies (Besel et al., 2009; Boden, 2003; Otnes & Pleck, 2003). A reason for this is that the thesis reinforces Turner's (1969) assertions that liminal spaces that become institutionalised simply reproduce social norms. And the social norm of Nigeria is that marriage is the means of earning adulthood, whilst age is used more for legal than social interaction (Akintoye, 2010; Mann, 1985; Nwafor, 2013).

Focusing on the overlap between GWW and Nigerian weddings, is how the bride is placed at the centre of the wedding ritual planning process. In both contexts, the bride is expected to take on a managerial role of planning and executing the wedding ritual, whilst others play their expected roles, based on established socio-cultural norms and expectations (Ingraham, 2008; Nelson, 2013; Otnes & Pleck, 2003; Winch & Webster, 2012). The thesis also reinforces GWW assertions that wedding rituals are increasingly being used to signal social standing and socio-economic status (Boden, 2003; Ingraham, 2008). Particularly when considered in relation to the prohibitive costs

needed for a successful wedding ritual, success according to peer and family review (Geller, 2001; Kalmijn, 2002). Collectively, the above theoretical contributions aim to deepen the collective understanding on how a country in the Global South, Nigeria, experiences and reacts to globalisations and its offspring, global white wedding.

In regard to marketing practice, Ogbadu et al., (2012) and Ogbadu & Ameh (2012) has already established the absent consumer ethnocentrism amongst Nigerian consumers. Ogbadu et al., (2012) first suggests that this is likely a result of lack of trust that consumers have of Nigerian vendors and marketers, a lack of trust propagated by inadequate consumer protection. The thesis reinforces this perspective, that indeed, Nigerian consumers do not trust Nigerian vendors, and for good reason. Reasons elaborated in the chapter 3, findings, sub-theme 'weddings are stressful', including deceit, lateness and incompetence. This lack of consumer protection is further illustrated by only one of the 32 interview participants gaining some form of state justice via the employment of a family lawyer. The potential implications for market vendors is that they are not serving their target audience effectively, therefore a loss in revenue is likely. This also suggests that securing a steady stream of clients via referrals is relatively easy, due to simply meeting promised obligations, as suggested by Gbadamosi et al.'s (2009) "bandwagon effect". Bandwagon effect' refers to the collectivist inclination of Nigerian consumer culture, whereby, majority of consumption is engaged within the narrow parameters of socially sanctioned consumption guidelines. Being truthful and on-time are relatively low expectations that most vendors should be able to meet.

A methodological contribution is about the limitations of Netnography in a Global South context. Specific to this study, there was significant resistance to an outsider successfully joining the online community. This is likely due to the author self-identifying as a researcher, therefore, not a typical user of the online forum. Members would not engage directly with the author as there was a general distrust for the roving eyes of scrutiny. In addition, it also expresses the limitations of doing study in a space that mostly condones trolling and bullying. The study does not offer solutions to these limitations of Netnography in a less than ideal online space, but it identifies tangible barriers that future studies might face.

6.3. Limitations and Future Research

Theoretically, the study could have benefitted by including an ethnic consumption theoretical lens. Due to consumption habits being collectivised and primary Nigerian identity being at the ethnic rather than national level, an ethnic lens might have produced further insight. Typical ethnic studies often focus on minority groups and/or immigrants, an ethnic perspective on a majority group might also have tangible revelatory theoretical contributions. Ethnic consumption tends to have a deeper appreciation for history and tradition contrary to the theoretical lenses used in this study being mostly contextual, consumer identity, and transient, liminal consumption. Methodologically, the sample used has a number of limitations, the study focused on the marrying couple, which makes up a third of the core participants of a Nigerian wedding ritual. This limits the research to one of three interdependent perspectives on the internal mechanics of Nigerian weddings.

Future research should consider interacting with the family and religious institutions involved. In particular, the mosque, as participants had negligible direct interaction with it, compared to the church and family. This would also provide useful data in contrasting (Nigerian) Christian with Muslim weddings. This also has the added benefit of how Nigerian religions are positioned within a global sphere, due to both religions having a visible global presence. Focusing on the participants of this study, participants were typically middle to upper class Nigerians, who represent a minority, and are not reflective of the majority who are in the bottom (D and E) socio-economic brackets. To get a more representative insights on Nigerian consumer culture, focusing on lower income participants should provide useful contributions. Following the stereotype that lower incomed people are more likely to be dependent on family and more religious, it could also provide a broader understanding of how embedded Nigerian traditional institutions are in its consumer culture.

Market vendors are potentially going to increase their influence in Nigerian wedding rituals, following their Western counterparts. It is therefore worth understanding why their role is currently under-represented and provide potential solutions. Should their influence remain stagnant or diminish, it would still be of theoretical value to consider their perspective on Nigerian weddings, since they are the primary suppliers of the

consumer artefacts, both global and local. This also gives the avenue for comparison with Western wedding market vendors.

6.4. Summary

This chapter has attempted to give an overview of the thesis. First, it started with the research conclusions, emphasising how the research questions have been answered. This is in reference to the text provided in chapter 2, literature review, chapter 4; findings and chapter 5; discussion, on how these various chapters link up to answer the research questions established in chapter 1, introduction. In doing so, it provides a summary focusing on the important aspects of the above-mentioned chapters, a further summary of the methodology (chapter 3) is added to give further context on how the research findings were arrived at. The next subsection focused on the thesis' contributions. Here, emphasis is on expanding the theoretical contributions hinted at in the research overview. Here, importance is given to how established theory is extended, reified and inverted. This was achieved using Nicholson et al., (2018) framework for articulating theoretical contributions. Finally, the limitations of the thesis were presented, focusing on which theoretical lens could be added to deepen the insights gleaned from the data. Further avenues for research was also presented via the extension of the sample, i.e. including other members of the wedding planning group. Finally, a prediction of the Nigerian wedding industry is presented to augment how future research could anticipate the evolving wedding market.

7. References

Adebanwi, W. (2005). The Carpenter's Revolt: Youth, Violence and the Reinvention of Culture in Nigeria. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, *43*(3), 339–365. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X0500100X

Adebanwi, W., Obadare, E. (2010). Introducing Nigeria at Fifty: The Nation in Narration. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies.* 28(4), 379-405. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02589001.2010.512737

Aderinto, S. (2015). Modernizing Love: Gender, Romantic Passion and Youth Literary Culture in Colonial Nigeria. *Africa*, *85*(3), 478–500. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0001972015000236

Adesokan, A. (2011). Anticipating Nollywood: Lagos circa 1996. *Social Dynamics: A Journal of African Studies*, *37*(1), 96–110. https://doi.org/10.1080/02533952.2011.569998

Adrian, B. (2004). The Camera's Positioning: Brides, Grooms, and Their Photographers in Taipei's Bridal Industry. *Ethos*, *32*(2), 140–163. https://doi.org/10.1525/eth.2004.32.2.140

Agbiboa, D. E. (2013). Ethno-religious Conflicts and the Elusive Quest for National Identity in Nigeria. *Journal of Black Studies*, *44*(1), 3–30. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934712463147

Agbiboa, D. E., & Maiangwa, B. (2013). Boko Haram , Religious Violence , and the Crisis of National Identity in Nigeria Towards a Non-killing Approach. *Journal of Developing Societies*, *29*(4), 379–403. https://doi.org/10.1177/0169796X13503198

Ahuvia, A. C. (2005). Beyond the Extended Self: Loved Objects and Consumers' Identity Narratives. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *32*(June), 171.

Akanji, O. O. (2011). "The Problem of Belonging": The Identity Question and the Dilemma of Nation-Building in Nigeria. *African Identities*, *9*(2), 117–132. https://doi.org/10.1080/14725843.2011.556788

Akintoye, S. A. (2010). *A History of the Yoruba People*. Dakar: Amalion Publishing.

Akudinobi, J. (2015). Nollywood: Prisms and Paradigms. *Cinema Journal*, *54*(2), 133–141.

Alexa.com. (2017). Nairaland.com. Retrieved January 30, 2017, from http://www.alexa.com/siteinfo/nairaland.com

Alimi, M. Y. (2014). Islam as Drama: Wedding Rites and the Theatricality of Islam in South Sulawesi. *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, *15*(3), 265–285. https://doi.org/10.1080/14442213.2014.915875

Alozie, E. C. (2003). Reflections of Culture: An Analysis of Nigerian Mass Media Advertising. *Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies*, *24*(2), 157–180.

Ammaturo, F. R. (2016). Spaces of Pride: A Visual Ethnography of Gay Pride Parades in Italy and the United Kingdom. *Social Movement Studies*, *15*(1), 19–40. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2015.1060156

Andrews, M., Scalter, S. D., Squire, C., & Tamboukou, M. (2004). Narrative Research. In C. Seale, G. Gobo, J. Gubrium, & D. Silverman (Eds.), *Qualitative Research Research Practice* (p. 97). London: Sage Publications.

Anyanwu, J. C. (2014). Marital Status, Household Size and Poverty in Nigeria: Evidence from the 2009/2010 Survey Data. *African Development Review*, *26*(1), 118–137. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8268.12069

Arend, P. (2016). Consumption as Common Sense: Heteronormative Hegemony and White Wedding Desire. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, *16*(1), 144–163. https://doi.org/10.1177/1469540514521076

Arnould, E. (1989). The Romantic Ethic and Spirit of Modern Consumerism - Campbell, C. *Journal of Marketing*, *53*(3), 131–133.

Arnould, E., & Thompson, C. (2005). Consumer Culture Theory (CCT): Twenty Years of Research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *31*(4), 868–882.

Arsel, Z., & Thompson, C. (2011). Demythologizing Consumption Practices : How Consumers Protect Their Field- Dependent Identity Investments from. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *37*, 791. https://doi.org/10.1086/656389

Artner, L., & Stanislawski, A. (2013). From "African" National Identity to the "Afropolitan:" Modes of Narrating "Transnational" Identities. *Transnational Social Review*, *3*(2), 47–51. https://doi.org/10.1080/21931674.2013.10820758

Asekun, W. (2015). Formation of National Identity among Children in Southern Nigeria and the Analysis of their Attitude of In-group/Out-group: An Experimental Study. *Ife PsychologIA*, *23*(1), 43–51.

Askegaard, S., & Eckhardt, G. M. (2012). Glocal yoga: Re-Appropriation in the Indian Consumptionscape. *Marketing Theory*, *12*(1), 45–60. https://doi.org/10.1177/1470593111424180

Askegaard, S., & Linnet, J. T. (2011). Towards an epistemology of consumer culture theory: Phenomenology and the context of context. *Marketing Theory*, *11*(4), 381–404. https://doi.org/10.1177/1470593111418796

Augustine, (2014). Wedding In Nigeria: At What Cost. *Leadership.* Retrieved 20th, June, 2017 from http://leadership.ng/style/369301/wedding-nigeria-cost

Babalola, Y. T., Opeke, R. O., & Aja, G. N. (2014). Use of Food Product Information in Consumption Decision among Female Workers in Nigerian State Universities. *Information Development*, *30*(3), 247–255. https://doi.org/10.1177/0266666913489699

Baker, M., & Elizabeth, V. (2013). Tying the Knot: The Impact of Formalization after Long-term Cohabitation. *Journal of Family Studies*, *19*(3), 254–266. https://doi.org/10.5172/jfs.2013.19.3.254

Bambacas, C. (2002). Thinking about White Weddings. *Journal of Australian Studies*, *26*(72), 191–200. https://doi.org/10.1080/14443050209387752

Bardhi, F., Ostberg, J., & Bengtsson, A. (2010). Negotiating Cultural Boundaries: Food, Travel and Consumer Identities. *Consumption Markets & Culture*, *13*(2), 133–157. https://doi.org/10.1080/10253860903562148

Barnhart, M., & Penaloza, L. (2013). Who Are You Calling Old? Negotiating Old Age Identity in the Elderly Consumption Ensemble. *Journal of Consumer Re*, *39*, 1133. https://doi.org/10.1086/668536

Bartikowski, B., & Cleveland, M. (2017). "Seeing is being": Consumer Culture and the Positioning of Premium Cars in China. *Journal of Business Research*, *77*, 195–202. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.12.008

Beck, U. (2000). *What is Globalization?* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Beckett, A., & Nayak, A. (2008). The Reflexive Consumer. *Marketing Theory*, *8*(3), 299–317. https://doi.org/10.1177/1470593108093558

Belk, R., Fischer, E., & Kozinets, R. (2013). *Qualitative Consumer & Market Research*. London: Sage Publications.

Bell, C. (1997). *Ritual: Perspective and Dimensions*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Benton, T., & Craib, I. (2001). *Philosophy of Social Science: The Philosophical Foundations of Social Thought*. New York: Palgrave.

Berger, J., & Heath, C. (2007). Where Consumers Diverge from Others: Identity Signaling and Product Domains. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *34*, 121–135.

Besel, A., Zimmerman, T. S., Fruhauf, C. a., Pepin, J., & Banning, J. H. (2009). Here Comes the Bride: An Ethnographic Content Analysis of Bridal Books. *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy*, *21*(2), 98–124. https://doi.org/10.1080/08952830902952267

Bhattacharjee, A., Berger, J., & Menon, G. (2014). When Identity Marketing Backfires: Consumer Agency in Identity Expression. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *41*, 294. https://doi.org/10.1086/676125

Blanton, R., Mason, T. D., & Athow, B. (2001). Colonial Style and Post-Colonial Ethnic Conflict in Africa. *Journal of Peace Research*, *38*(4), 473–491. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343301038004005

Boden, S. (2001). 'Superbrides': Wedding Consumer Culture and the Construction of Bridal Identity. *Sociological Research Online*, 6 (1). http://www.socresonline.org.uk/6/1/boden.html

Boden, S. (2003). *Consumerism, Romance and the Wedding Experience.* London: Palgrave Macmillan

Boellstroff, T., Nardi, B., Pearce, C., & Taylor, T. (2012). *Ethnography and Virtual Worlds*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The Forms of Capital. In *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education.* Ed. Richardson, J. Stanford; Stanford University Press. Pp. 241-258.

Bowler Jr, G. M. (2010). Netnography: A method specifically designed to study cultures and communities online. *The Qualitative Report*, *15*(5), 1270–1275. Retrieved from http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR15-5/kozinets.pdf%5Cnfiles/10775/Bowler Jr - 2010 - Netnography a method specifically designed to stu.pdf

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology ISSN:*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2017). Thematic analysis. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, *12*(3), 297–298. https://doi.org/10.1037/13620-004

Brennan, L., Fry, M. L., & Previte, J. (2015). Strengthening Social Marketing Research: Harnessing "Insight" through Ethnography. *Australasian Marketing Journal*, *23*(4), 286–293. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ausmj.2015.10.003

Broderick, A., MacLaran, P., & Ma, P.-Y. (2003). Brand meaning negotiation and the role of the online community: A Mini case study. *Journal of Customer Behaviour*, *2*(1), 75–103. https://doi.org/10.1362/147539203764935390

Broekhuizen, F., & Evans, A. (2016). Pain, Pleasure and Bridal Beauty: Mapping Postfeminist Bridal Perfection. *Journal of Gender Studies*, *25*(3), 335–348. https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2014.959478

Brown, P., & Capozza, D. (2000). Social Identity Theory in Retrospect and Prospect. In P. Brown & D. Capozza (Eds.), *Social Identity Procesess* (p. vii). London: Sage Publications.

Bryce, J. (2012). Signs of Femininity, Symptoms of Malaise: Contextualizing Figurations of "Woman" in Nollywood. *Research in African Literatures*, *43*(4), 71–87. https://doi.org/10.2979/reseafrilite.43.4.71

Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods* (4th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bryman, A., & Bell, E. (2015). *Business Research Methods* (4th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Buchanan, E., & Markham, A. N. (2012). *Ethical Decision-Making and Internet research: Version 2.0. AoIR Ethics Working Committee*. Retrieved from http://www.aoir.org/reports/ethics2.pdf

Bucic, T., Harris, J., & Arli, D. (2012). Ethical Consumers Among the Millennials: A Cross-National Study. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *110*(1), 113–131. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-011-1151-z

Cannadine, D. (1983). The Context, Performance and Menaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the "Invention of Tradition', c. 1820-1977. In *The Invetion of Tradition* (pp. 101–164).

Cappellini, B., & Parsons, E. (2014). Constructing the Culinary Consumer: Transformative and Reflective Processes in Italian Cookbooks. *Consumption Markets & Culture*, *17*(1), 71–99. https://doi.org/10.1080/10253866.2012.701893

Castilhos, R. B., & Fonseca, M. J. (2016). Pursuing upward Transformation: The construction of a Progressing Self among Dominated Consumers. *Journal of Business Research*, *69*, 6–17. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.07.015

Catterall, M., & Maclaran, P. (2002). Researching Consumers in Virtual Worlds: A Cyberspace Odyssey. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, *1*(3), 228–237.

Chan, C., Berger, J., & Van Boven, L. (2012). Identifiable but Not Identical: Combining Social Identity and Uniqueness. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *39*(October), 561. https://doi.org/10.1086/664804

Chattaraman, V., Rudd, N. A., & Lennon, S. J. (2009). Identity salience and shifts in product preferences of Hispanic consumers: Cultural relevance of product attributes

as a moderator. *Journal of Business Research*, *62*(8), 826–833. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2008.04.002

Cheah, P. (1997). Given Culture: Rethinking Cosmospolitical Freedom in Transnationalism. *Boundary 2*, *24*(2), 157–197. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/303767

Chen, J., & Shen, X. L. (2015). Consumers' Decisions in Social Commerce Context: An Empirical Investigation. *Decision Support Systems*, *79*, 55–64. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2015.07.012

Cherrier, H. (2009). Anti-Consumption Discourses and Consumer-Resistant Identities. *Journal of Business Research*, *62*, 181–190. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2008.01.025

Cherrier, H., Belk, R. (2015). Setting the Conditions for Going Global: Dubai's Transformations and the Emirati Women. *Journal of Marketing Management.* 31(3-4), 317-335. https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2014.957713

Chete, L. N., Adeoti, J. O., Adeyinka, F. M., & Ogundele, O. (2014). Industrial development and growth in Nigeria : Lessons and challenges, (8), 1–40. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/L2C_WP8_Chete-et-al-1.pdf

Chukwuezi, B. (2001). Through Thick and Thin: Igbo Rural-Urban Circularity, Identity and Investment. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, *19*(1), 55–66. https://doi.org/10.1080/02589000124437

CIA. (2010). The World Factbook: Nigeria. *Central Intelligence Agency*. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Retrieved from https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2046.html

Cislo, A. (2008). Ethnic Identity and Self Esteem. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, *30*(2), 230–250. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-0465-2_1715

Clark, L. S. (2011). Considering Religion and mediatisation through a case study of J+K's big day (The J K wedding entrance dance): A response to Stig Hjarvard. *Culture and Religion*, *12*(2), 167–184. https://doi.org/10.1080/14755610.2011.579717

Cody, K. (2012a). "' BeTween two worlds '": critically exploring marketing segmentation and liminal consumers. *Young Consumers*, *13*(3), 284–302. https://doi.org/10.1108/17473611211264068

Cody, K. (2012b). "No longer, but not yet": Tweens and the mediating of threshold selves through liminal consumption. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, *12*(1), 41–65. https://doi.org/10.1177/1469540512438155

Cody, K., & Lawlor, K. (2011). On the borderline: Exploring liminal consumption and the negotiation of threshold selves. *Marketing Theory*, *11*(2), 207–228. https://doi.org/10.1177/1470593111403220

Coleman, N., & Williams, P. (2015). Looking for my self: Identity-Driven Attention Allocation. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *25*(3), 504–511. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2015.01.001

Collins, R. (2004). *Interaction Ritual Chains*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Cooper, G. (2008). Conceptualising Social Life. In N. Gilbert (Ed.), *Researching Social Life* (3rd ed., pp. 5–19). London: Sage Publications.

David, O. O., Abina, B. M., & Oyeniran, I. W. (2015). Advertising and Consumer Choice of Telecommunication Services in Nigeria. *Journal of Competitiveness*, *7*(3), 37–49. https://doi.org/10.7441/joc.2015.03.03

Davies, C. (1999). *Reflexive Ethnography: A Guide to Researching Selves and Others*. London: Routledge.

Davis, T., & Francis, J. E. (2014). The Young Consumer-Citizen: Nationhood and Environmentalism in Children's Identity Narratives. *Marketing Theory*, *14*(4), 417–429. https://doi.org/10.1177/1470593114533231

Desmond, J. (2003). *Consuming Behaviour*. London: Palgrave.

Dey, I. (2004). Grounded Theory. In C. Seale, G. Gobo, J. Gubrium, & D. Silverman (Eds.), *Qualitative Research Research Practice* (p. 80). London: Sage Publications.

Dimofte, C., Goodstein, R., & Brumbaugh, A. (2015). A Social Identity Perspective on Aspirational Advertising : Implicit Threats to Collective Self-Esteem and Strategies to

Overcome them. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *25*(3), 416–430. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2014.12.001

Doerr, N. M. (2008). Global Structures of Common Difference, Cultural Objectification, and Their Subversions: Cultural Politics in an Aotearoa/New Zealand School. *Identities*, *15*(4), 413–436. https://doi.org/10.1080/10702890802201719

Douny, L. (2011). Silk-Embroidered Garments as Transformative Processes: Layering, inscribing and Displaying Hausa Material Identities. *Journal of Material Culture*, *16*(4), 401–415. https://doi.org/10.1177/1359183511424197

Dowd, R. A. (2016). Religious Diversity and Religious Tolerance. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *60*(4), 617–644. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002714550085

Dumbili, E. W. (2015). "What a man can do, a woman can do better": Gendered Alcohol Consumption and (De)Construction of Social Identity among Young Nigerians. *BMC Public Health*, *15*, 167. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-015-1499-6

Dunning, D. (2007). Self-Image Motives and Consumer Behavior: How Sacrosanct Self-Beliefs Sway Preferences in the Marketplace. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *17*(4), 237–249. https://doi.org/10.1016/s1057-7408(07)70033-5

Earley, A. (2014). Connecting Contexts: A Badiouian Epistemology of Consumer Culture Theory. *Marketing Theory,* 14(1), 73-96

Easton, G. (2010). Critical Realism in Case Study Research. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *39*(1), 118–128. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2008.06.004

Edwards, T. (2000). *Contradictions of Consumption: Concepts Practices and Politics in Consumer Society*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Ejye Omar, O., & Owusu-Frimpong, N. (2007). Life Insurance in Nigeria: An Application of the Theory of Reasoned Action to Consumers' Attitudes and Purchase Intention. *The Service Industries Journal*, *27*(7), 963–976. https://doi.org/10.1080/02642060701570891

Elman, C., Gerring, J., & Mahoney, J. (2016). Case Study Research: Putting the Quant Into the Qual. *Sociological Methods & Research*, *45*(3), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1177/0049124116644273

Emielu, A. (2011). Some Theoretical Perspectives on African Popular Music. *Popular Music*, *30*(3), 371–388. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261143011000249

Erhun, W. O., & Erhun, M. O. (2003). The Qualitative Impact of Broadcast Media Advertisement on the Perception of Medicines in Nigeria. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, *3*(1), 8–19. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/195034823?accountid=15533

Euromonitor. (2015). Middle East and Africa: Regional Profile. Passport.

Euromonitor. (2016a). *Consumer Lifestyles in Nigeria*. Passport.

Euromonitor. (2016b). *Households: Nigeria*. Passport.

Euromonitor. (2016c). *Nigeria in 2030: The Future Demographic*. Passport.

Euromonitor. (2017). *Nigeria: Country Profile*. Passport.

Eze, C. (2014). Rethinking African Culture and Identity: The Afropolitan Model. *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, *26*(2), 234–247. https://doi.org/10.1080/13696815.2014.894474

Eze, C. (2016). "We, Afropolitans." *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, *28*(1), 114–119. https://doi.org/10.1080/13696815.2015.1100065

Ezeh, C. I., Obioma, N. Q., & Onuabuobi, J. C. (2011). Consumer Behaviour and Preferences to Cassava Value Added Products in Ikwuano Local Government Area (L.G.A) of Abia State , Nigeria. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, *1*(4), 274–277. https://doi.org/10.7763/IJSSH.2011.V1.50

Fairchild, E. (2014). Examining Wedding Rituals through a Multidimensional Gender Lens: The Analytic Importance of Attending to (In)consistency. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 891241613497750. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241613497750

Fasan, R. (2015). "Wetin dey happen?": Wazobia, Popular Arts, and Nationhood. *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, *27*(1), 7–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/13696815.2014.977852

Fennell, D. (2009). Marketing Science: The Corporate Faces of Genetic Engineering. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, *33*(1), 5–26.

Ferguson, S. (2011). Young Consumers A global Culture of Cool? Generation Y and their Perception of Coolness. *Young Consumers*, *12*(3), 265–275. https://doi.org/10.1108/17473611111163313

Fernandez, K. V, Veer, E., & Lastovicka, J. L. (2011). The Golden Ties that Bind: Boundary Crossing in Diasporic Hindu Wedding Ritual. *Consumption Markets & Culture*, *14*(3), 245–265. https://doi.org/10.1080/10253866.2011.574826

Ferreira, M. C., & Scaraboto, D. (2016). "My Plastic Dreams": Towards an Extended Understanding of Materiality and the Shaping of Consumer Identities. *Journal of Business Research*, *69*, 191–207. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.07.032

Flyvbjerg, B. (2004). Five Misunderstanding about Case-Study Research. In C. Seale, G. Gobo, J. Gubrium, & D. Silverman (Eds.), *Qualitative Research Research Practice* (p. 390). London: Sage Publications.

Folorunso, R. (2013). Consumers' Buying Decisions of Foreign and Domestic Products in Nigeria: An Analysis. *European Journal of Business Management*, *5*(25), 209.

Foxall, G. R. (2013). Intentionality, Symbol, and Situation in the Interpretation of Consumer Choice. *Marketing Theory*, *13*(1), 105–127. https://doi.org/10.1177/1470593112467270

Gabriel, Y. (2015). Identity, Choice and Consumer Freedom—The New Opiates? A Psychoanalytic Interrogation. *Marketing Theory*, *15*(1), 25–30. https://doi.org/10.1177/1470593114558525

Gbadamosi, A., Iwaloye, O., & Bamber, D. (2009). An Exploratory Study of Students' Consumption of Non-Alcoholic Beverages in Nigeria: A Qualitative Perspective. *Nutrition & Food Science*, *39*(6), 609–618. https://doi.org/10.1108/NFS-05-2016-0067

Geller, J. (2001). *Here Comes the Bride: Women, Weddings and the Marriage Mystique*. New York: Four Walls Eight Windows

Gentina, E., Palan, K., & Fosse-Gomez, M. . (2012). The Practice of using Makeup: A Consumption Ritual of Adolescent Girls. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, *11*, 115–123. https://doi.org/10.1002/cb

Ger, G., & Belk, R. W. (1996). I'd like to buy the world a Coke?: Consumptionscapes of the "Less Affluent World." *Journal of Consumer Policy*, *19*(3), 271–304. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00411411

Giddens, A., & Sutton, P. (2013). *Sociology* (7th ed.). Cambridge: Wiley.

Gil, L. A., Kwon, K. N., Good, L. K., & Johnson, L. W. (2012). Impact of Self on Attitudes toward luxury Brands among Teens. *Journal of Business Research*, *65*(10), 1425–1433. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.10.008

Gobo, G., & Marciniak, L. (2016). What is Ethnography. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative Research* (4th ed., p. 103). London: Sage Publications.

Gomez, P., & Torelli, C. (2015). It's not just numbers: Cultural Identities Influence how Nutrition Information Influences the Valuation of Foods. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *3*(3), 404–415. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2015.01.005

Goodkind, D. (1996). State Agendas, Local Sentiments; Vietnamese Wedding Practices amidst Socialist Transformations. *Social Forces*, *75*(2), 717–742.

Guigova, R. (2013). Anthropological Interpretation of Meaning of Ritual Objects in Contemporary Bulgarian Urban Wedding. *Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics*, *7*(1), 83–104.

Guo, X. (2013). Living in a Global World : Influence of Consumer Global Orientation on Attitudes Toward Global Brands from Developed Versus Emerging Countries. *Journal of International Marketing*, *21*(71101080), 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1509/jim.12.0065

Gusfield, J., & Michalowicz, J. (1984). Secular Symbolism: Studies of Ritual, Ceremony, and the Symbolic Order in Modern Life. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *10*(1984), 417–435. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.10.1.417

Halabi, S., Dovidio, J. F., & Nadler, A. (2014). Seeking Help from the Low Status Group: Effects of Status Stability, Type of Help and Social Categorization. *Journal of*

Experimental Social Psychology, *53*, 139–144.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2014.03.010

Hales, S. (2006). *Relativsim and the Foundations of Philosophy*. Cambridge: The MIT
Press.

Hall, S. (2000). Who Needs "Identity"? In *Identity: A Reader* (p. 15). Eds du Gay, P.
Evans, J. Redman, P. London: Sage Publications.

Harrison, R. L., Thomas, K. D., & Cross, S. N. N. (2015). Negotiating cultural ambiguity:
the role of markets and consumption in multiracial identity development.
Consumption Markets & Culture, 18(4), 301–332.
https://doi.org/10.1080/10253866.2015.1019483

Heath, S., & Street, B. (2008). *Ethnography; Approaches to Languuage and Literacy
Research*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Hine, C. (2000). *Virtual Ethnography*. London: Sage Publications.

Hirschman, E. C., Ruvio, A., & Belk, R. W. (2012). Exploring Space and Place in
Marketing Research: Excavating the Garage. *Marketing Theory*, *12*(4), 369–389.
https://doi.org/10.1177/1470593112457736

Hoang, K. K. (2014). Competing Technologies of Embodiment. *Gender & Society*,
28(4), 513–536. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243214523122

Hobsbawm, E. (1983). Introduction: Inventing Tradition. In E. Hobsbawm & T.
Ranger (Eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (pp. 1–14).
https://doi.org/10.2307/1159843

Hockey, J. (2001). Changing Death Rituals. In J. Hockey, J. Katz, & N. Small (Eds.),
Grief, Mourning and Death Ritual (p. 185). Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Hopkins, C., Wood, C., Siemens, J., Raymond, M. A., Hopkins, C., Siemens, J., &
Raymond, M. A. (2014). A multi-method investigation of consumer response to
marketing activities during life transitions. *Journal of Consumer Marketing.* 31(1).,
29-53. https://doi.org/10.1108/JCM-09-2013-0720

Houston, H. R. (1999). Through Pain and Perseverance: Liminality, Ritual Consumption, and the Social Construction of Gender in Contemporary Japan. *Advances in Consumer Research*, *26*, 542–548.

Hung, K. H., Li, S. Y., & Belk, R. W. (2007). Glocal Understandings: Female Readers' Perceptions of the New Woman in Chinese Aadvertising. *Journal of International Business Studies*, *38*(6), 1034–1051. https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8400303

Hutchinson, J., & Smith, A. (1996). *Ethnicity*. Oxford: Oxford Readers.

Ifeka, C., & Flower, E. (1997). Capturing the Global: Identities, Kinship and Witchcraft Trials in Boki Society, Nigeria. *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford*, *28*(3), 311–338.

Ijewere, A., & Odia, E. (2012). Cultural Influences on Product Choice of the Nigerian Consumer. *Indian Journal of Economics & Business*, *11*(1), 139–155.

Ingraham, C. (2008). *White Weddings: Romancing Heterosexuality In Popular Culture* (2nd ed.). Oxon: Routledge.

Jafari, A. & Goulding, C. (2008). "We are not terrorists!" UK-Based Iranians, Consumption Practices and the "torn self". *Consumption Markets & Culture. 11(2),* 73 – 91. https://doi.org/10.1080/10253860802033605

Janson, M., & Akinleye, A. (2015). The Spiritual Highway: Religious World Making in Megacity Lagos (Nigeria). *Material Religion*, *11*(4), 550–562. https://doi.org/10.1080/17432200.2015.1103484

Jenkins, R. (2008). *Social Identity* (3rd ed.). London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203292990

Kalmijn, M. (2015). Marriage Rituals as Reinforcers of Role Transitions: An Analysis of Weddings in The Netherlands. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *66*(3), 582–594.

Kalua, F. (2009). Homi Bhabha's Third Space and African identity. *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, *21*(1), 23–32. https://doi.org/10.1080/13696810902986417

Kapur, J. (2009). An "Arranged Love" Marriage: India's Neoliberal Turn and the Bollywood Wedding Culture Industry. *Communication, Culture & Critique*, *2*, 221–233. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1753-9137.2009.01036.x

Kendall, G., & Wickham, G. (2004). The Foucaultian Framework. In C. Seale, G. Gobo, J. Gubrium, & D. Silverman (Eds.), *Qualitative Research Research Practice* (p. 129). London: Sage Publications.

Kerrane, K., Lindridge, A. & Dibb, S. (2018). Liminality and the Transition to Motherhood for Ethnic Minority Consumers: Examining the Experiences of South Asian Mothers in the UK. *European Association for Consumer Research 2018 (EACR)*. Ghent, 2018. 11, 116-117

Kiang, L., Gonzales-Backen, M., Yip, T., Witkow, M., & Fuligni, A. J. (2006). Ethnic Identity and the Daily Psychological Well-Being of Adolescents from Mexican and Chinese Backgrounds. *Child Development*, *77*(5), 1338–1350. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2006.00938.x

Kimport, K. (2012). Remaking the White Wedding? Same-Sex Wedding Photographs' Challenge to Symbolic Heteronormativity. *Gender & Society*, *26*(6), 874–899. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243212449902

Kirmani, A. (2009). The Self and the Brand. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *19*(3), 271–275. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2009.05.011

Kitzinger, C. (2004). Feminist Approaches. In C. Seale, G. Gobo, J. Gubrium, & D. Silverman (Eds.), *Qualitative Research Research Practice* (p. 113). London: Sage Publications.

Kjeldgaard, D., & Askegaard, S. (2006). The Glocalization of Youth Culture: The Global Youth Segment as Structures of Common Difference. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *33*(2), 231–247. https://doi.org/10.1086/506304

Kjeldgaard, D. & Nielsen, K. (2010). Glocal Gender Identities in Market Places of Transition: *MARIANISMO* and the Consumption of the Telenovela Rebelde. *Marketing Theory. 10(1),* 29-44. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1470593109355249

Koc, E. (2013). Inversionary and Liminoidal Consumption: Gluttony on Holidays and Obesity. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, *30*(8), 825–838. https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2013.835669

Kochuyt, T. (2012). Making Money, Marking Identities: On the Economic, Social and Cultural Functions of Moroccan Weddings in Brussels. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *38*(10), 1625–1641. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183x.2012.711061

Kozinets, R. (2002). The Field Behind the Screen: Using Netnography for Marketing Research in Online Communities. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *39*, 22–61.

Kozinets, R. (2015). *Netnography: Redefined* (2nd ed.). London: Sage Publications.

Kozinets, R., de Valck, K., Wojnicki, A., & Wilner, S. (2010). Networked Narratives: Understanding Word-of-Mouth Marketing in Online Communities. *Journal of Marketing*, *74*, 71–89.

Kozinets, R. V, Sherry, J. F., Storm, D., Duhachek, A., Nuttavuthisit, K., & DeBerry-Spence, B. (2004). Ludic Agency and Retail Spectacle. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *31*(3), 658–672. https://doi.org/10.1086/425101

Kraidy, M. (2002). The Global, the Local, and the Hybrid: A Native Ethnography of Glocalization. In S. Taylor (Ed.), *Ethnographic Research: A Reader* (pp. 187–210). London: Sage Publications.

Kunnanatt, J. (2013). Globalization and Developing Countries: A Global Participation Model. *Economics, Management, and Financial Markets*, *8*(4), 42–58. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1813-6982.1998.tb01263.x

Kunst, J. R., & Sam, D. L. (2013). Expanding the Margins of Identity: A Critique of Marginalization in a Globalized World. *International Perspectives in Psychology: Research, Practice, Consultation*, *2*(4), 225–241. https://doi.org/10.1037/ipp0000008

Lamont, M., & Aksartova, S. (2002). Ordinary Cosmopolitanisms. *Theory, Culture & Society*, *19*(4), 1–25. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276402019004001

Lang, K. C. (2006). Chimpanzee: Pan Troglodytes. Retrieved June 30, 2017, from http://pin.primate.wisc.edu/factsheets/entry/chimpanzee/behav

Lanier, C. D., & Rader, C. S. (2017). Deconstructing symbolic consumption: exploring the anti-synthetic space between meaning and meaninglessness. *Consumption Markets & Culture*, *20*(3), 215–244. https://doi.org/10.1080/10253866.2016.1217198

Lankauskas, G. (2002). On "Modern" Christians, Consumption, and the Value of National Identity in Post-Soviet Lithuania. *Ethnos*, *67*(3), 320–344. https://doi.org/10.1080/0014184022000031

Lawler, S. (2014). *Identity: Sociological Perspectives* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Lawson, R., & Todd, S. (2002). Consumer Lifestyles: A Social Stratification Perspective. *Marketing Theory*, *2*(3), 295–307. https://doi.org/10.1177/1470593102002003278

Leal, G., Hor-Meyll, L., & Pessoa, L. (2014). Influence of Virtual Communities in Purchasing Decisions: The Participants' Perspective. *Journal of Business Research*, *67*(5), 882–890. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2013.07.007

Leeds-Hurwitz, W. (2002). *Wedding as Text: Communicating Cultural Identities through Ritual*. London: Routledge.

Lenshie, E., & Johnson, A. (2012). Ethnicity and citizenship crisis in Nigeria: Interrogating inter ethnic relations in Sardauna Local Government Area, Taraba State. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, *6*(3), 48–61. https://doi.org/10.5897/AJPSIR11.069

Lewins, A., & Silver, C. (2007). *Using Software in Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications.

Lewins, A., Silver, C., & Bulloch, S. (2016). Choosing an appropriate CAQDAS Package. Retrieved July 10, 2017, from https://www.surrey.ac.uk/sociology/research/researchcentres/caqdas/support/choosing/

Liadi, O. F. (2012). Multilingualism and Hip Hop Consumption in Nigeria: Accounting for the Local Acceptance of a Global Phenomenon. *African Spectrum*, *47*(1), 3–19.

Liadi, O. F., & Omobowale, A. O. (2011). Music Multilingualism and Hip Hop Consumption among Youths in Nigeria. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, *3*(12), 469–477.

Lin, C.-L., Yeh, J.-T., & Lan, P.-C. (2012). A Coming-Out Party for Women: Empowerment through Bridal Photography. *Social Behavior and Personality*, *40*(2), 339–351. https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2012.40.2.339

Loaiza, E., & Wong, S. (2012). *Marrying Too Young - End Child Marriage*. *UNFPA*. New York: United Nations Population Fund. Retrieved 2/1/2017 from https://www.unfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/publications/2012/MarryingTooYoung.pdf

Lozada, E. P. (2006). Framing Globalization: Wedding Pictures, Funeral Photography, and Family Snapshots in Rural China. *Visual Anthropology*, *19*(1), 87–103. https://doi.org/10.1080/08949460500374049

Lumbwe, K. (2013). Indigenous Mfunkutu and Contemporary Ubwinga (Wedding) Music of the Bemba-speaking people of Zambia: Continuity and Change. *Journal of the Musical Arts in Africa*, *10*(1), 71–101.

Lurry, C. (1996). *Consumer Culture*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Maclaran, P., & Catterall, M. (2002). Analysing qualitative data: computer software and the market research practitioner. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, *5*(1), 28–39. https://doi.org/10.1108/13522750210414490

Madichie, N. (2010). The Nigerian movie industry "Nollywood" – a nearly perfect marketing case study. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, *28*(5), 625–649. https://doi.org/10.1108/MIP-09-2014-0169

Makhubu, N. (2016). Interpreting the Fantastic: Video-Film as Intervention. *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 28(3), 299–312. https://doi.org/10.1080/13696815.2016.1164028

Markham, A., & Stavrova, S. (2016). Internet/Digital Research. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative Research* (4th ed., p. 229). London: Sage Publications.

Mann, K. (1985). *Marrying Well: Marriage, Status, and Social Change among the Educated Elite in Colonial Lagos.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Matusov, E., Smith, M., Candela, M., & Lilu, K. (2007). "Culture Has No Internal Territory": Culture as Dialogue. In J. Valsiner & A. Rosa (Eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Sociocultural Psychology* (pp. 460–483). Cambridge: Cambridge Unversity Press.

May, T. (2001). *Social Research: Issues, Methods and Process* (3rd ed.). Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Mayah, E. (2017). *Inequality in Nigeria: Exploring the Drivers*. Oxfam International. Retrieved from https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/cr-inequality-in-nigeria-170517-en.pdf

Mazibuko, N.C. (2016) Ilobolo, The Bride Price that Comes 'At a Price' and the Narratives of Gender Violence in Mamelodi, a South African Township. *Gender & Behaviour.* 14(2), 7373-7378.

Mbunyuza-Memani, L. (2018). Wedding Reality Bites Black: Subordinating Ethnic Weddings in South African Black Culture. *Journal of Consumption Inquiry*. 42(1), 26-47. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0196859917726047

McDonald, M., & Wearing, S. (2013). *Social Psychology and Theories of Consumer Culture*. Hove: Routledge.

Mckinney, E., & Eicher, J. B. (2009). Unexpected luxury: Wild silk textile production among the Yoruba of Nigeria. *Textile: The Journal of Cloth and Culture*, *7*(1), 40–55. https://doi.org/10.2752/175183509X411753

McLeay, F., & Oglethorpe, D. (2013). Social Marketing, Parental Purchasing Decisions and Unhelathy Food in Developing Countries: A Nigerian Typology. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, *12*, 232–242. https://doi.org/10.1002/cb

Mcneill, L., & Graham, T. (2014). Mother's choice: An exploration of extended self in infant clothing consumption. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour.* 410(July), 403–410.

Mikucka, M. (2016). The Life Satisfaction Advantage of Being Married and Gender Specialization. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *78*(3), 759–779. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12290

Miller, D. (2016). *How the World Changed Social Media*. London; UCL Press.

MRS. (2014a). *Code of conduct*. Market Research Society (MRS).

MRS. (2014b). *Guidelines for Online Research*. Market Research Society (MRS).

MRS. (2019). *Code of conduct (Draft)*. Market Research Society (MRS).

Mupotsa, D. S. (2015). Becoming Girl-Woman-Bride. *Girlhood Studies*, *8*(3), 73–87. https://doi.org/10.3167/ghs.2015.080307

Nash, M. (2013). Brides N' Bumps. *Feminist Media Studies*, *13*(4), 593–612. https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2012.678877

National Bureau of Statistics. (2012). Nigerian Poverty Profile 2010. National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria. Retrieved from http://nigerianstat.gov.ng/

Nelson, M., & Deshpande, S. (2003). An Examination of Cross Cultural Wedding Rituals. In C. Otnes & T. Lowrey (Eds.), *Contemporary Consumption Rituals: An Interdisciplinary Research Anthology* (pp. 125–148). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Nelson, R., & Otnes, C. (2005). Exploring Cross-Cultural Ambivalence: A Netnography of Intercultural Wedding Message Boards. *Journal of Business Research*, *58*, 89–95. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963(02)00477-0

Nguyen, T.-D. T., & Belk, R. (2012). Vietnamese Weddings: From Marx to Market. *Journal of Macromarketing*, *32*(1), 109–120. https://doi.org/10.1177/0276146711427302

Nguyen, T.-D. T., & Belk, R. W. (2013). Harmonization Processes and Relational Meanings in Constructing Asian Weddings. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *40*(October), 518–538. https://doi.org/10.1086/671464

Nicholson, J. LaPlaca, P. Al-Abdin, A, Breese, R. & Khan, Z. (2018). What do Introduction Sections tell us about the Intent of Scholarly Work: A Contribution on Contributions. *Industrial Marketing Management. 73(2018),* 206 – 219. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2018.02.014

Noble, C., & Walker, B. (1997). Exploring the Relationships among Liminal Transitions, Symbolic Consumption, and the Extended Self. *Psychology & Marketing*, *14*(1), 29–47. https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1520-6793(199701)14:1<29::AID-MAR3>3.3.CO;2-I

Nwafor, O. (2012). Of mutuality and Copying: Fashioning Aso Ebi through Fashion Magazines in Lagos. *Fashion Theory - Journal of Dress Body and Culture*, *16*(4), 493–520. https://doi.org/10.2752/175174112X13427906403840

Nwafor, O. (2013). The Fabric of Friendship: Aso Ebi and the Moral Economy of Amity in Nigeria. *African Studies*, *72*(1), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/00020184.2013.776195

Obadare, E. (2018). Pentecostal Republic; Religion and the Struggle for State Power in Nigeria. London: Zed Books.

Obiaya, I. (2010). Nollywood on the Internet : A Preliminary Analysis of an Online Nigerian Video-Film. *Journal of African Media Studies*, *2*(3), 321–338. https://doi.org/10.1386/jams.2.3.321

Obinna, E. (2012). Contesting identity: the Osu caste system among Igbo of Nigeria. *African Identities*, *10*(1), 111–121. https://doi.org/10.1080/14725843.2011.614412

Odia, E. O., & Agbonifoh, B. A. (2015). Public Image of the Nigerian Branded Exports. *Indian Journal of Economics & Business*, *14*(1), 1–19.

Ogbadu, E., & Ameh, A. (2012). Globalisation and Nigeria's Involvement in International Marketing. *Kuwait Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, *2*(1), 44–58.

Ogbadu, E., Bagaji, A., & Shaibu, M. (2012). An Assessment of the Influence of Advertisement on Patronage of Beauty Care Products in Lokoja Metropolis, Kogi State, Nigeria. *Canadian Social Science*, *8*(2), 160–164. https://doi.org/10.3968/j.css.1923669720120802.1015

Ogle, J. P., Tyner, K. E., & Schofield-Tomschin, S. (2013). The role of maternity dress consumption in shaping the self and identity during the liminal transition of pregnancy. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, *13*(2), 119–139. https://doi.org/10.1177/1469540513480161

O'Grady, P. (2002). *Relativism*. Chesham: Acumen Publishing Limited.

Okechuku, C., & Onyemah, V. (2000). Ethnic Differences in Nigerian Consumer Attitudes Toward Foreign and Domestic Products. *Journal of African Business*, *1*(2), 37–41. https://doi.org/10.1300/J156v01n02

Okome, O. (2012). Nollywood, Lagos, and the Good-Time Woman. *Research in African Literatures*, *43*(4), 166.

Oladeji, D. and Ariyo, A. (2014). Socio-Economic Factos influencing Mate Selection among Adolescents of Reproductive Age in Nigeria. *Gender & Behaviour,* 12(1). 6145-6155

Olarinmoye, O. (2013). Negotiating Empowerment: Women and Identity in Nigeria. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, *5*(3), 59–65. https://doi.org/10.5897/IJSA10.115

Olatunji, R. W., & Akhagba, O. (2013). Children and Advertising Literacy: A study of Selected Schools in Lagos , Nigeria. *Global Advanced Research Journal of Social Sciences*, *2*(6), 134–142.

Olumakaiye, M. (2007). An Assessment of Food Consumption within Urban Households in Osun State, Nigeria. *Nutrition & Food Science*, *37*(2), 123–129. https://doi.org/10.1108/NFS-05-2016-0067

Olumakaiye, M. F., Atinmo, T., & Olubayo-Fatiregun, M. A. (2010). Food Consumption Patterns of Nigerian Adolescents and Effect on Body Weight. *Journal of Nutrition*

Education and Behavior, *42*(3), 144–151.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jneb.2008.12.004

Olutayo, A. O., & Akanle, O. (2009a). Aso-oke (Yoruba's Hand Woven Textiles) Usage among the Youths in Lagos, Southwestern Nigeria. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, *1*(3), 62–69.

Olutayo, A. O., & Akanle, O. (2009b). Fast Food in Ibadan: An Emerging Consumption Pattern. *Africa*, *79*(2), 207.

Omenugha, K. A., Uzuegbunam, C. E., & Ndolo, I. S. (2016). Celebrity Culture, Media and the Nigerian Youth: Negotiating Cultural Identities in a Globalised World. *Critical Arts*, *30*(2), 200–216. https://doi.org/10.1080/02560046.2016.1187791

Omobowale, A. O., & Olutayo, A. O. (2009). Social Capital and Human Development in Nigeria: The Case of Lalupon Community, Ibadan, Oyo State. *African Identities*, *7*(1), 77–88. https://doi.org/10.1080/14725840802583348

Omoniyi, T. (2006). Hip-hop through the world Englishes lens: A response to globalization. *World Englishes*, *25*(2), 195–208. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0083-2919.2006.00459.x

Omotosho, B. J. (2008). Consumers' Knowledge of Warning and Information Labels on Products Among Southwestern Nigerians. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, *43*(6), 642–662. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021909608099429

Onuoha, G. (2013). The Fractured Multi-Ethnic State: Contemporary Igbo Quest for Self-Determination in Nigeria. *African Identities*, *11*(1), 19–32. https://doi.org/10.1080/14725843.2013.775838

Onuoha, G. (2013). The Presence of the Past: Youth, Memory making and the Politics of Self-Determination in SouthEastern Nigeria. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *36*(12), 2182–2199. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2012.699087

Osaghae, E. E., & Suberu, R. T. (2005). A History of Identities, Violence, and Stability in Nigeria. *CRISE Working Paper Series*, *1*(6), 1–27.

Oswald, R. (2000). A Member of the Wedding? Heterosexism and Family Ritual. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *17*(3), 349–368.

Otnes, C., & Pleck, E. (2003). *Cinderella Dreams: The Allure of the Lavish Wedding*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Otnes, C., & Scott, L. (1996). Something Old, Something New: Exploring the Interaction Between Ritual and Advertising. *Journal of Advertising*, *25*(1), 33–50.

Ourahmoune, N. (2016). Narrativity, Temporality, and Consumer-Identity Transformation through Tourism. *Journal of Business Research*, *69*, 255–263. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.07.038

Ourahmoune, N., & Ozcaglar-Toulouse, N. (2012). Exogamous Weddings and Fashion in a Rising Consumer Culture: Kabyle Minority Dynamics of Structure and Agency. *Marketing Theory*, *12*(1), 81–99. https://doi.org/10.1177/1470593111424182

Oyedele, A., & Minor, M. S. (2012). Consumer Culture Plots in Television Advertising from Nigeria and South Africa. *Journal of Advertising*, *41*(1), 91–108. https://doi.org/10.2753/JOA0091-3367410107

Oyekunle, R. A., & Tiamiyu, A. M. (2010). Patterns of Information Products Advertising in Newspaper Media in Nigeria. *African Journal of Library Archives and Information Science*, *20*(2), 71–81.

Oyeniyi, O. (2009). Analysis of Nigerian Consumers' Perception of Foreign Products. *Manager*, *10*, 32.

Oyserman, D. (2009). Identity-Based Motivation and Consumer Behavior. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *19*, 276–279. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2009.06.001

Ozcaglar-Toulouse, N., Beji-Becheur, A., & Fosse-Gomez, M. . (2009). Ethnicity in the Study of the Consumer: An Overview. *Recherche et Applications En Marketing*, *24*(4), 57.

Park, C. (1997). Consumption in the Korean Wedding Ritual: Wedding Ritual Values, Consumer Needs, and Expenditures. *Journal of Family and Economics Issues*, *18*(2), 191–209.

Pascoal, P. M., de Santa Bárbara Narciso, I., & Pereira, N. M. (2014). What is Sexual Satisfaction? Thematic Analysis of Lay People's Definitions. *Journal of Sex Research*, *51*(1), 22–30. https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2013.815149

Patterson, M., & Schroeder, J. (2010). Borderlines: Skin, Tattoos and Consumer Culture Cheory. *Marketing Theory*, *10*(3), 253–267. https://doi.org/10.1177/1470593110373191

Penaloza, L., (1994). Atravesando Fronteras/Border Crossings: A Critical Ethnographic Exploration of the Consumer Acculturation of Mexican Immigrants. *Journal of Consumer Research,* 21(1), 32-54

Pepin, J., Zimmerman, T. S., Fruhauf, C. A., & Banning, J. H. (2008). An Analysis of Wedding Books for Grooms: A Feminist Perspective. *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy*, *20*(4), 328–356. https://doi.org/10.1080/08952830802382169

Phinney, J. S., & Chavira, V. (1992). Ethnic Identity and self-esteem: An Exploratory Longitudinal Study. *Journal of Adolescence*, *15*, 271–281. https://doi.org/10.1016/0140-1971(92)90030-9

Posel, D., Rudwick, S., & Casale, D. (2011). Is Marriage a Dying Institution in South Africa? Exploring Changes in Marriage in the Context of Ilobolo Payments. *Agenda*, *25*(1), 102–111. https://doi.org/10.1080/10130950.2011.575589

Rao, V. (2001). Poverty and Public Celebrations in Rural India. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *573*(1), 85–104.

Rapley, T. (2016). Some Pragmatics of Qualitative Data Analysis. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative Research* (4th ed., p. 331). London: Sage Publications.

Reed-Danahay, D. (1996). Champagne and Chocolate: "Taste" and Inversion in a French Wedding Ritual. *American Anthropologist*, *98*(4), 750–761. https://doi.org/10.2307/681883

Robards, B., & Bennett, A. (2011). MyTribe: Post-subcultural Manifestations of Belonging on Social Network Sites. *Sociology*, *45*(2), 303–317. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038510394025

Roche, S., & Hohmann, S. (2011). Wedding Rituals and the Struggle over National Identities. *Central Asian Survey*, *30*(1), 113–128. https://doi.org/10.1080/02634937.2011.554065

Rook, D. (1985). The Ritual Dimension of Consumer Behavior. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *12*(3), 251–264. https://doi.org/10.1007/sl0869-007-9037-x

Rose, J. (2000). Feminine Sexuality. In *Identity: A Reader* (p. 51). Eds du Gay, P. Evans, J. Redman, P. London: Sage Publications.

Rudwick, S., & Posel, D. (2015). Zulu Bridewealth (ilobolo) and Womanhood in South Africa. *Social Dynamics*, *41*(2), 289–306. https://doi.org/10.1080/02533952.2015.1060683

Rumford, C. (2013). *Globalization of Strangeness*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004

Rumford, C. (2014). *Cosmopolitan Borders*. *Mobility & Politics*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137351401.0001

Ryan, C. (2015). New Nollywood: A Sketch of Nollywood's Metropolitan New Style. *African Studies Review*, *58*(3), 55–76. https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2015.75

Saren, M. (2007). To have is to be? A Critique of Self-Creation through Consumption. *The Marketing Review*, *7*(4), 343–354. https://doi.org/10.1362/146934707X251100

Schinke, R. J., McGannon, K. R., Battochio, R. C., & Wells, G. D. (2013). Acculturation in Elite sport: A Thematic Analysis of Immigrant Athletes and Coaches. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, *31*(15), 1676–86. https://doi.org/10.1080/02640414.2013.794949

Scott, S. (2015). *Negotiating Identity: Symbolic Interactionist Approaches to Social Identity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Seo, Y. (2016). Professionalized Consumption and Identity Transformations in the Field of eSports. *Journal of Business Research*, *69*, 264–272. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.07.039

Seraj, M. (2012). We Create, We Connect, We Respect, Therefore We Are: Intellectual, Social, and Cultural Value in Online Communities. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, *26*(4), 209–222. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2012.03.002

Seun. (2013). How To Place Targeted Ads On Nairaland. Retrieved January 25, 2017, from http://www.nairaland.com/1049481/how-place-targeted-ads-nairaland

Shankar, A., Elliott, R., & Fitchett, J. A. (2009). Identity, Consumption and Narratives of Socialization. *Marketing Theory*, *9*(1), 75–94. https://doi.org/10.1177/1470593108100062

Sharpe, D. (2004). The Relevance of Ethnography to International Business. In R. Marschan-Piekkari & C. Welch (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods for International Business* (pp. 306–323). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Shih, M. Y., & Kubo, C. (2002). Body Shape Preference and Body Satisfaction in Taiwanese College Students. *Psychiatry Research*, *111*(2–3), 215–228. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0165-1781(02)00138-5

Sinha, J. (2016). We are where we eat: How Consumption contexts Induce (un)Healthful Eating for Stigmatized Overweight Consumers. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *26*(2), 289–297. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2015.06.015

Skey, M. (2013). What does it mean to be Cosmopolitan? An Examination of the varying Meaningfulness and Commensurability of Everyday "Cosmopolitan" Practices. *Identities*, *20*(3), 235–252. https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2013.799476

Skrbis, Z. (2004). Locating Cosmopolitanism: Between Humanist Ideal and Grounded Social Category. *Theory, Culture & Society*, *21*(6), 115–136. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276404047418

Skrbis, Z., & Woodward, I. (2007). The Ambivalence of Ordinary Cosmopolitanism: Investigating the limits of Cosmopolitan Openness. *Sociological Review*, *55*(4), 730–747. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2007.00750.x

Slater, D. (1997). *Consumer Culture & Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Smith, J. D. (2001). "The Arrow of God": Pentecostalism, Inequality, and the Supernatural in South-Eastern Nigeria. *Africa*, *71*(4), 587.

Sobh, R. Belk, R. & Gressel, J. (2014). Mimicry and Modernity in the Middle East: Fashion Invisibility and Young Women of the Arab Gulf. *Consumption Markets & Culture. 17(4),* 392 – 412. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10253866.2013.865166

Soucy, A. (2014). Wedding Invitations and Relationship Management in Hanoi. *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, *15*(2), 141–157. https://doi.org/10.1080/14442213.2014.892527

Stanfield, M. a., & Kleine, R. E. (1990). Ritual, Ritualized Behavior, and Habit: Refinements and Extensions of the Consumption Ritual Construct. *Advances in Consumer Research*, *17*, 31–28. Retrieved from http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=1ae89de0-ffc6-4313-8d6a-bfacae6ca2e5%40sessionmgr4006

Strong, K., & Ossei-Owusu, S. (2014). Naija boy remix: Afroexploitation and the New Media Creative Economies of Cosmopolitan African Youth. *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, *26*(2), 189–205. https://doi.org/10.1080/13696815.2013.861343

Strubel, J. (2012). Get Your Gele: Nigerian Dress, Diasporic Identity, and Translocalism. *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, *4*(9), 24–41.

Sullivan, L. (1984). Victor W. Turner (1920-1983). *History of Religions*, *24*(2), 160–163.

Sykes, K., & Brace-Govan, J. (2015). The bride who decides: Feminine rituals of bridal gown purchase as a rite of passage. *Australasian Marketing Journal*, *23*(4), 277–285. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ausmj.2015.10.009

Syrjälä, H. (2016). Turning point of transformation: Consumer communities, identity projects and becoming a serious dog hobbyist. *Journal of Business Research*, *69*, 177–190. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.07.031

Tade, O., & Aiyebo, O. E. (2014). Commodifying the Fabric of Solidarity: Aso-ebi and Dynamics of Social Relations in Ibadan. *South African Review of Sociology*, *45*(1), 66–82. https://doi.org/10.1080/21528586.2014.887915

Tade, O., & Nnamani, M. A. (2015). Symbolic Status of Space: Event Centre Culture and Patronage in Nigeria. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, *50*, 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021909615605530

Taheri, B., Gori, K., Gorman, K. O., Hogg, G., & Farrington, T. (2016). Experiential liminoid consumption : the case of nightclubbing. *Journal of Marketing Management*, *32*(1–2), 19–43. https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2015.1089309

Takhar-Lail, A., & Chitakunye, P. (2015). Reflexive Introspection: Methodological Insights from Four Ethnographic Studies. *Journal of Business Research*, *68*(11), 2383–2394. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.03.020

Targ, H. (1976). Global Dominance and Dependence, Post-Industrialism, and International Relations Theory: A Review. *International Studies Quarterly*, *20*(3), 461–482.

Thomas, T., Price, L. & Schau, H. (2013). When Differences Unite: Resources Dependence in Heterogeneous Consumption Communities. *Journal of Consumer Research. 39(5)*, 1010-1033.

Thomas, V., Johnson, J., & Jewell, R. (2016). The tangled web we weave: Deceptive Consumption Behaviors as a Means to cope with Identity Threat. *Marketing Theory*, *16*(4), 493–512. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1754-4548(07)70043-8

Thompson, C. J., Arnould, E., & Giesler, M. (2013). Discursivity, Difference, and Disruption: Genealogical Reflections on the Consumer Culture Theory Heteroglossia. *Marketing Theory*, *13*(2), 149–174. https://doi.org/10.1177/1470593113477889

Thomsen, T. U., & Sørensen, E. B. (2006). The First Four-wheeled Status Symbol: Pram Consumption as a Vehicle for the Construction of Motherhood Identity. *Journal of Marketing Management*, *22*(9–10), 907–927. https://doi.org/10.1362/026725706778935619

Tonner, A. (2016). Liminal mothers' Negotiation of Conflicting Service Consumption. *Journal of Marketing Management*, *32*(1–2), 100–120. https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2015.1089306

Trudel, R., Argo, J., & Meng, M. (2016). The Recycled Self: Consumers' Disposal Decisions of Identity-Linked Products. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *43*, 246–265. https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucw014

Tumbat, G., Belk, R. (2011) Marketplace Tensions in Extraordinary Experiences. *Journal of Consumer Research.* 38, 42-61. DOI: 10.1086/658220

Turner, V. (1969). *The Ritual Processes: Structure and Anti-Structure*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Turner, V. (1974). Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow, and Ritual: An essay in Comparative Symbology. *Rice University Studies*, *60*(3), 53–92.

Ubong, B. (2010). Traditional Marriage Ceremonies Among the Ibibio People of Nigeria: A Study in Theatrics. *Venets: The Belogradchik Journal for Local History, Cultural Heritage and Folk Studies*, *1*(3), 330–346.

Udeagha, A. ., Udofia, S. ., & Jacob, D. (2013). Cultural and Socio-Economic Perspectives of the Conservation of Asanting Ibiono Sacred Forests in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Biodiversity and Conservation*, *5*(11), 697–703. https://doi.org/10.5897/IJBC2013.0580

Underthun, A., & Jordhus-Lier, D. C. (2017). Liminality at work in Norwegian hotels. *Tourism Geographies*, *6688*(May), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2017.1314546

UNICEF. (2007). *The Child'S Rights Act*. Retrieved from https://www.unicef.org/wcaro/WCARO_Nigeria_Factsheets_CRA.pdf

Ustuner, T. (2000). Consuming Ritual : Reframing the Turkish Henna- Night Ceremony. *Advances in Consumer Research*, *27*, 209–214.

Ustuner, T., & Holt, D. (2007). Dominated Consumer Acculturation: The Social Construction of Poor Migrant Women's Consumer Identity Projects in a Turkish Squatter. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *34*(June), 41.

Ustuner, T., & Holt, D. (2010). Toward a Theory of Status Consumption in Less Industrialized Countries. *Journal of Consumer Research. 37(1),* 37 – 56. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/649759

Varman, R., & Belk, R. W. (2008). Weaving a Web: Subaltern Consumers, Rising Consumer Culture and Television. *Marketing Theory*, *8*(3), 227–252. https://doi.org/10.1177/1470593108093555

Vergès, F. (2001). Vertigo and Emancipation, Creole Cosmopolitanism and Cultural Politics. *Theory, Culture & Society*, *18*(2–3), 169–183. https://doi.org/10.1177/02632760122051698

Walters, T. (2016). Using Thematic Analysis in Tourism Research. *Tourism Analysis*, *21*(1), 107–116. https://doi.org/10.3727/108354216X14537459509017

Weimann, G. J. (2010). An Alternative Vision of Sharia Application in Northern Nigeria: Ibrahim Salih's Hadd Offences in the Sharia. *Journal of Religion in Africa*, *40*(2), 192–221. https://doi.org/10.1163/157006610X500865

White, K., & Argo, J. J. (2009). Social Identity Threat and Consumer Preferences. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *19*(3), 313–325. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2009.03.007

White, K., Argo, J. J., & Sengupta, J. (2012). Dissociative versus Associative Responses to Social Identity Threat: The Role of Consumer Self-Construal. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *39*, 240.

White, K., & Dahl, D. W. (2006). To Be or Not Be? The Influence of Dissociative Reference Groups on Consumer Preferences. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *16*(4), 404–414.

White, M. (2011). Engaged with eBay. *Feminist Media Studies*, *11*(3), 303–319. https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2010.535314

Wilkinson, S. (2016). Analysing Focus Group Data. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative Research2* (4th ed., p. 83). London: Sage Publications.

Williams, M., & May, T. (1996). *Introduction to the Philosophy of Social Research*. London: UCL Press.

Woodak, R. (2004). Critical Discourse Analysis. In C. Seale, G. Gobo, J. Gubrium, & D. Silverman (Eds.), *Qualitative Research Research Practice* (p. 168). London: Sage Publications.

Yeku, J. (2015). Akposdoncome again: Nigerian cyberpop hero as trickster. *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/13696815.2015.1069735

Zukin, S., & Maguire, J. (2004). Consumers and Consumption. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *30*(2004), 173–197. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.30.012703.110553

8. Appendices

Appendix 1 Interview Guide

1. Proposal

   - ♣ What and how did it happen?
   - ♣ Was it a surprise?
   - ♣ Where other people involved in the proposal? If yes, what role did they play?
   - ♣ Did you have an engagement party/dinner?
   - ♣ How did you tell people about the engagement? (family, friends and acquaintances, in   that order)

2. Planning
   - ♣ Budget;
       - i.   Who & how much was involved?
       - ii. How did you decide on allocating the funds?
   - ♣ Vendors
       - i.   Which vendors did you hire and how did you contact/find them?
   - ♣ Help & Advice
       - i.   Who & what did you consult?

3. Influences, Inspiration & Aspiration
   - ♣ Family
   - ♣ Mass media (celebs, movies, social media, tv shows, magazines etc.)
   - ♣ Previously attended weddings
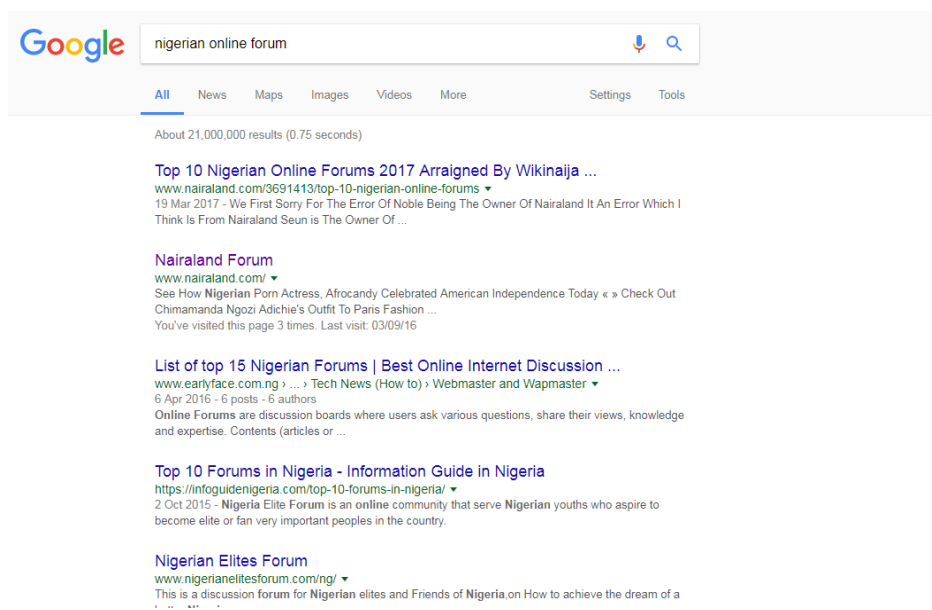   - ♣ Cultural and societal expectations

4. The Day
   - ♣ Minute details what happened on the day, (from when you woke up to when you went to bed)
   - ♣ Including traditional, white/religious wedding and reception.

5. Reflections
   - ♣ What did you enjoy and didn't enjoy (including traditional & white)?
   - ♣ Any surprises?
   - ♣ Who represented you?

Appendix 2 Google Ranking for Nairaland.com

Google

nigerian online forum

All · News · Maps · Images · Videos · More · Settings · Tools

About 21,000,000 results (0.75 seconds)

Top 10 Nigerian Online Forums 2017 Arraigned By Wikinaija ...
www.nairaland.com/3691413/top-10-nigerian-online-forums ▼
19 Mar 2017 - We First Sorry For The Error Of Noble Being The Owner Of Nairaland It An Error Which I
Think Is From Nairaland Seun is The Owner Of ...

Nairaland Forum
www.nairaland.com/ ▼
See How Nigerian Porn Actress, Afrocandy Celebrated American Independence Today « » Check Out
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Outfit To Paris Fashion ...
You've visited this page 3 times. Last visit: 03/09/16

List of top 15 Nigerian Forums | Best Online Internet Discussion ...
www.earlyface.com.ng › ... › Tech News (How to) › Webmaster and Wapmaster ▼
6 Apr 2016 - 6 posts - 6 authors
Online Forums are discussion boards where users ask various questions, share their views, knowledge
and expertise. Contents (articles or ...

Top 10 Forums in Nigeria - Information Guide in Nigeria
https://infoguidenigeria.com/top-10-forums-in-nigeria/ ▼
2 Oct 2015 - Nigeria Elite Forum is an online community that serve Nigerian youths who aspire to
become elite or fan very important peoples in the country.

Nigerian Elites Forum
www.nigerianelitesforum.com/ng/ ▼
This is a discussion forum for Nigerian elites and Friends of Nigeria,on How to achieve the dream of a

Appendix 3 Bing Ranking for Nairaland.com

b

> nigerian online forum   🔍

Web   Images   Videos   Maps   News | My saves

12,700,000 RESULTS   Date ▾   Language ▾   Region ▾

Nairaland - Official Site
www.**nairaland**.com ▾
Nigerian discussion **forum** offering threads in entertainment, technology and general discussion categories.
Politics · Autos · Nairaland Forum · Jobs/Vacancies · Romance · Business

Top 10 Nigerian Online Forums. | News Of Nigeria
https://**newsofnigeria**.com/**top-10-nigerian-online-forums** ▾
With the continuous increase in the number of internet users in **Nigeria**, one must wonder what keeps people **online**. A single **Nigerian**, spends an average of 4 hours a ...

Nigeria Top 10 Forums - Nairaland / General - Nigeria
www.**nairaland**.com/348171 ▾
27/06/2017 · I know of a hot **Nigerian forum** that is growing very fast: www.kudizone.com. It's new but I will put in in the top 10 considering it's rapid growth and ...

Hope for Nigeria. Hope for Nigerians Forum Free online ...
hopefornigerians.com ▾
Hope for Nigerians forum is **Nigerian Online forum** where we discuss **Nigerian** News, Politics, Jobs and Business in **Nigeria**

NG Archives - OnlineNigeria
www.**onlinenigeria**.com/ng ▾
Forums. LOADING. Lifestyle. Help ... **OnlineNigeria** Popular Links. **Nigerian** History; **Nigerian** ... Some officials of the **Nigerian** police force allegedly stopped a ...

Related searches
nigeria news forums
nigerian **village square** forum

Appendix 4 Pilot Interview Guide

I am interested in how Nigerians celebrate their weddings, how they plan it, the people they involve and how they feel before, during and after the wedding. I am particularly interested in your views of weddings in general and how your own wedding compares.

1. The transition from partner/fiancé to bride/groom. Can you describe your experience of the proposal?
   - What elements of the proposal affected the wedding i.e. was there any part of the proposal that was implemented in the wedding?
   - Was it a surprise or joint decision, who & what was consulted prior to the proposal.
   - After the proposal, what were the significant experiences, beliefs or objects that made you start seeing yourself as a bride/groom?

2. General description and intensions behind the Nigerian wedding
   - What is a Nigerian wedding?
   - Why is it different from other African, European, Asian, American etc wedding?
   - Where do you think it is going?
   - What are the major influences?
   - What is the difference and similarity between the white and traditional wedding?
   - What are your preferences between the white and traditional wedding, individual components of the two?

3. Bridal & Ethnic Identity
   - What makes the ideal bride? (current trends, contemporary ideals)
     i. Have you noticed an evolution of this concept over time?
   - When, where and why did you first feel like a bride?
   - How did you become a successful bride?
   - How did you project the image of being a bride to others?
   - What are benefits of being a successful bride?
   - What ethnic group do you identify with and why?
   - How did you express your ethnic identification? (in both, if you held both traditional & white wedding)
   - Did it affect or influence your wedding planning? And How?

4. Describe your own wedding.
   - Where did you gain inspiration from? Tv, radio, online, specifics if possible
   - What went wrong and what went right? What would you do differently?

- Any surprises? What did you not foresee??
- Where there any cultural, family and/or social expectations?
- Which of these expectations did you meet and which did you consciously reject?
- Did you change clothing at anytime i.e. reception?
- What did you and did you not enjoy about the white and traditional wedding?
- The

5. Budget and planning
   - Who was involved? Which decisions did they make and which did you?
   - How did you handle the financial aspect?
   - Did you seek help/advice? How did you go about it?
   - What role did the internet play?
   - What fears did you have?

6. Social group i.e. people you have some form of connection with
   - How were they incorporated into the wedding?
   - Which would you say is most important and why?
   - Are there any members of these groups that are most like you?

7. Honeymoon selection and experience
   - Use to transition into talk about the global

8. Global awareness and the internet.
   - What general hobbies and interests do you have?
   - What global i.e. non-Nigerian affairs are of interest to you?
   - How do you access the required information to stay up to date?
   - Are there any global shopping, brands, experiences or companies that you like and why?

General themes to discuss

- Has the entire wedding process changed in anyway, particularly your perceptions of yourself?
- Where there any opposing forces during the wedding process i.e. before, during and after. Particularly tradition versus contemporary.
- Issues of social status and class.
- Focus on childhood fantasies, memories and imaginations.
- Elaborate on any celebrity or high profile weddings you observed or influenced you.

Appendix 5 Participant Invitation Letter - Moderator

Hello, my name is Ladipo Olakunle Fagbola, 'Ladi' for short, I am a PhD research student at University of Salford. I am currently studying Nigerian weddings on how they are experienced and planned by the wedding couple. The wedding industry has had significant growth in recent times and yet, there is limited understanding behind the 'why'. What makes a wedding so appealing, so much fun and the implications of having a good wedding.

I intend to conduct an online study (netnography) of what your site members say and feel about Nigerian weddings. This will take the form of participant observation, where I join such discussions, pose questions and download relevant posts, comments, pictures, videos etc. These downloads will be treated under the **UK's Data Protection Act (1998**), with utmost privacy. Posts will not be made public and will be used for **research purposes only.** In a situation where I intend to publish a comment/post in my research paper, I will seek individual consent from the author, asking for permission to use their post. In addition, their name will be anonymised to prevent revealing their identity to the public. I intend to be a part of the forum between **October, 2016 – October, 2017**.

Therefore, **I seek your permission to use your forum Nairaland.com as the primary site for my research** on Nigerian weddings. You also have the **right to decline my request without reason**, now and during the research (including before and after data collection).

Ladipo Olakunle Fagbola
l.o.fagbola@edu.salford.ac.uk

Supervisor; Dr Morven McEachern
m.mceachern@salford.ac.uk

Appendix 6 Nairaland Profile

Nairaland Forum*

Welcome, researcher16: Edit Profile / Shared With Me(32) / Followed Topics(1) / FB / L&S / MT / Following(1) / FS / Trending / Recent / New
Stats: 1,840,378 members, 3,658,833 topics. **Date:** Saturday, 15 July 2017 at 01:02 AM / Logout(all)

[Search]

My Profile

Nairaland Forum / My Profile

My Latest Topics (View All 1 Topics | Posts)

Events / **Parents And Nigerian Weddings**
by **researcher16**. 1 post & 200 views. **5:39pm On Mar 30** (**researcher16**)

Posts I've Liked | Posts I've Shared | My Quotes & Mentions

Send E-Mail Message To researcher16

Personal text: My name is ladi & I'm conducting a research on 9ja weddings. I will be from here Nov 2016 - Oct 2017, participating, contributing and downloading relevant content. For more info, http://realnaijaweddings.blogspot.co.uk/

Time registered: October 31, 2016

Time spent online: 15 hours & 53 minutes

Last seen: 1:02am

View My posts (13) | View My topics (1)

Section Most Active In: Events

Following (6):

WeddingFever, lobiologs(m), sassygal(f), SurefireAsoOke, oadeyeye, Rocktation(f)

(Go Up)

Appendix 7 Study Webpage;

http://realnaijaweddings.blogspot.co.uk

A Study of Nigerian Weddings

Thursday, 3 November 2016

A Study on Nigerian Weddings

Hello, my name is Ladipo Fagbola, I'm a PhD student at the University of Salford, conducting an online study on Nigerian weddings. I am interested in how weddings are experienced and planned by the couple and audience on Niaraland.com, being Nigeria's largest online forum. The wedding industry has had significant growth in recent times and yet, there is limited understanding behind the 'why', what makes a Nigerian wedding so appealing, so much fun and the implications of having a good wedding.

I am conducting an online research (netnography) of what members of Nairaland.com express and feel about Nigerian weddings, how they plan for it, how they judge whether a wedding is good or bad etc. This will take the form of participant observation, where I join discussions, pose questions and download relevant posts, comments, pictures, videos etc. and contribute with the username 'researcher16'. These downloads will be treated under the UK's Data Protection Act (1998), with utmost privacy. Posts will only be made public if they have a significant contribution to my research paper, however, this will never be done in a way that brings shame or harm to the author of the post. In addition, I will seek informed consent from the author, asking for permission to use their post. Also, their name will be anonymised to prevent revealling their identity to the public. I intend to be a part of the forum between November, 2016 – October, 2017.

Ladipo Olakunle Fagbola
l.o.fagbola@edu.salford.ac.uk

Supervisor; Dr Morven McEachern

m.mceachern@salford.ac.uk

Posted by Ladipo at 06:28

Recommend this on Google

About Me

Ladipo
View my complete profile

Blog Archive

▼ 2016 (1)
  ▼ November (1)
    A Study on Nigerian Weddings

Appendix 8 Invitation to Partake in Interview on Nigerian Wedding

Hello, my name is Ladipo Olakunle Fagbola, 'Ladi' for short, I am a PhD research student at University of Salford. I am currently studying Nigerian weddings on how they are experienced and planned by the wedding couple. The wedding industry has had significant growth in recent times and yet, there is limited understanding behind the 'why'. What makes a Nigerian wedding so appealing, so much fun and the implications of having a good wedding.

I will focus on questions around the wedding planning e.g. picking the dress or venue, deciding on the budget, the number of guests to invite, the role family and friends played etc. I will also inquire about the influences i.e. tv, radio, social media etc. and to which extent did any of these mediums influence the wedding. Finally, I will consider how you felt during the actual wedding. These questions need to be understood before we can fully comprehend the reason behind the expanding growth of the Nigerian wedding industry. Therefore, I kindly request that you contribute to this research via a **face-to-face interview that will last between 90-120 minutes**.

During the interview, the interviewee will not be placed in any situation that can potentially cause harm either physically or emotionally. The interview will be recorded via an audio device to be transcribed into text to ease analysis. **Both the audio record and the transcribed text will be used for research purposes only**. No personal details of you or any party you mention during the interview will be exposed in the final research outputs including thesis, journal article, presentations and posters, this will be further aided by the use of pseudonyms (fake name). Any information you provide will be treated with utmost care, privacy and sensitivity in accordance with the UK's **Data Protection Act** (1998) and will be **stored on a secure server for up to 3 years**.

You have the right to decline my request without reason, now and during the research (including before and after the interview).

Ladipo Olakunle Fagbola
l.o.fagbola@edu.salford.ac.uk

Supervisor; Dr Morven McEachern
m.mceachern@salford.ac.uk

Appendix 9 Typical List of Items and Services needed for a Nigerian Wedding Ritual

Ceremony	*Music*
Location fee, officiant fee, marriage licence, musician's fees, ring pillows_____	*Ceremony Musicians, Band and/or DJ, cocktail hour musicians, sound system rental_____*
Reception	*Photography*
Reception Site, Food, Drinks, Rentals, Cake, Favors_____	*Photographer and Videographer's fees, albums, additional prints, disposable cameras for candids_____*
Attire	*Transportation*
Dress, Headpiece/veil, undergarments and hosiery, shoes, accessories, jewelry, hair and makeup, Groom's Tuxedo or Suit, shoes, bow tie, cuff links, studs, suspenders_____	*Transportation for wedding party, guest shuttle and/or parking attendants_____*
Rings	*Stationery*
Yours and Groom's rings, engraving_____	*Invitations, response cards, thank you notes, postage, calligraphy, guest book_____*
Flowers	*Gifts*
Ceremony, bride's bouquet, maid-of-honor and bridesmaid bouquets, corsages and boutonnieres, centerpieces, flower-girl basket e.t.c._____	*Bridesmaid and groomsmen, parents, welcome baskets for out-of-town guests.*

(Source; Nairaland.com)

Appendix 10 Coding Template

Theme	Codes	
1. 'Wedding is for the family'	i. pre-wedding rites - meeting each other's families - sharing of gifts ii. negotiating the date of the wedding - involving parents, church, friends, the couple themselves iii. influence and role of parents and family iv. traditional wedding rites	*"when you're planning for [your] wedding, they say marriage is for the both of you, wedding is for the family" Folarin (F)* *"we've been dating for like 5 years, my parents knew him, everyone knew him, it was him, so he came to see my dad, to introduce himself formally, after that he sent his parents to come and see my dad, after they came to come see my dad to make it formal, then they were invited to come and bring some stuffs, kolanut and some sweets, that is to make it certain that yes you're, that is the formal engagement, so we got engaged and we picked a date." Zahrah (F)*
2. The Exorbitant costs of weddings	i. gifts – souvenirs ii. countdown plans-activities, scheduling, logistics iii. costs of the day - trade-offs iv. dream wedding v. support services required - decorators, catering, tailors, hair-make-up etc vi. clothes, footwear jewellery - cost trade-offs against quality, image etc vii. photography-videography - costs, price-quality viii. food cake designs-wedding food ix. deciding on honeymoon	*"They told [me] this is what and what you have to do, 'marriage counselling, you have to provide some proof that you are Christian', things like that, but the one that brought up the conflict, was the fact that that particular church wanted us to pay N200,000, just to conduct a wedding in that church." Dele (M)* *"I was planning a wedding and of course, I had to invite a few friends, and then you'll hear 'oh no, use George Okoro', ...I sent George Okoro a mail and said 'hey, I'm getting married, I would like to, I would like you to cover my wedding, how much would it cost?' And I get a reply and he said it's 'N1.5 million', hello! the economy is so hard, do I earn N1.5 million a year? What's my husband's take home a year, that we're running a wedding that way, and so even if you're not using a George Okoro, you're still using lots of vendors that are so pricy." Amaka (F)*

3. Undermining a successful wedding ritual	i. trends and predictions ii. deciding on honeymoon iii. support services required - decorators, catering, tailors, hair-make-up etc iv. costs of the day - trade-offs v. influence and role of parents and family vi. emotional experiences and fears vii. feelings around the concept of being 'man' and 'wife' viii. countdown plans-activities, scheduling, logistics ix. bridesmaids and train - role-organisation	*"My husband was stressed out, so, whatever I asked, he'll just tell me to take care of it. The little way i can. He'll be like, this one, that, he doesn't want to start stressing himself over that, I should get someone to get it for me, or I can go with the person, because I was the person in Lagos and he was in Abuja, so the whole market is in Lagos and i have to be the person running around for the whole thing." Chisom (F)* *"It was stressful though, I went to work that day, I had to close early, the shoot was supposed to start around 3 [PM], and then my husband to be, back then, he didn't come until 7 [PM]. The shoot was for 3 [PM], he didn't come to the venue until 6:35 [PM]. I'll call it 7 [PM]. I was angry, I was pissed, the photographer was there around 2:30 [PM], me, I didn't get there until 3:10 [PM]. And then my husband didn't get there until 6:30 [PM], he said there was traffic, there was this there was that, that he had to get his ring, that was the day he got his ring too, he had to do so many things" Sola (F)*
4. Accelerants of wedding fever.	i. trends and predictions ii. post weddings planning expectations iii. reflections on the big day - what went well-what went not so well iv. music - entertainment value, dancing, special song selection v. party – celebrate vi. feeling like a bride vii. influence and role of parents and family	*"I think I was the most happiest person" Musa (M)* *It's a very happy day in your life." Bunmi (F)* *"I love to dance, so it was amazing, my husband also, we danced, we were kind of buzzing, you know, whenever there's a wedding, if the couple don't dance, everyone is not going to dance but if you dance, everyone, my aunties love to dance, my cousins, my sisters, everyone,*

	viii. emotional experiences and fears ix. feelings around the concept of being 'man' and 'wife' x. marriage as end in itself xi. past wedding experience xii. prayer, god, spiritual	*we danced a lot. ...I didn't even know I could dance that much till when I was getting married." Zahrah (F)*
5. Religious wedding rituals are not the same	i. prayer, god, spiritual ii. feelings around the concept of being 'man' and 'wife' iii. influence and role of parents and family iv. religious service v. traditional wedding rites vi. church vs trad	*"the traditional marriage receives the parental consent, the church receives your spiritual fathers and mothers consent. And god consent"* Abiola (M) *"By 2 o clock, I think, Zhuhr prayer, which is the second part of the prayer of the day, because we pray 5 times a day, so, the second part of the prayer, second prayer of the day, was for 1 [PM], I think 15, so we're already in the mosque for that prayer, so immediately after the prayer was due. That same day, they had about 7 different weddings, ours was the first, so like I said, the two representatives will come and do the rites and subsequently they do the other ones. At the end of the 7th, then they did a general prayer for all us, that got married that same day at the same mosque. Yeah, and then officially at that time we're husband and wife," Musa (M)*

Appendix 11 Research Participant Consent Form

Title of Project: Investigating Nigerian Wedddings
Name of Researcher: Ladipo Olakunle Fagbola

(please delete as appropriate)

➢ I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet
   for the above study and what my contribution will be.

Yes	No

➢ I have been given the opportunity to ask questions

Yes	No

➢ I agree to have my comments included in final written document
   of the research

Yes	No

➢ I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can
   withdraw from the research at any time **without giving any reason**

Yes	No

➢ **I agree to take part in the above study**

Yes	No

Name of participant   ……………………………………………………

Signature   ……………………………………………………

Date   …………………………………

Name of researcher taking   Ladipo Fagbola
consent

Researchers e-mail address   l.o.fagbola@edu.salford.ac.uk

Appendix 12 Revised Ethics Approval Form for Post-Graduate Researchers

University of
Salford
MANCHESTER

SBS Research, Innovation and Academic Engagement Ethical Approval Panel

Standard Response Form for PGR and Staff Applications

Ref No: SBSR1617-01

Application Form	Acceptable No changes (please tick)	Minor Change List (please tick)	Major Change List (Please tick)	Comments from the reviewer(s) / Chair of Ethics
Title	V			My question is not about research ethics but I just wonder why netnography is included in the title. Is this proposed method a particular focus in the project? Not mentioned in the research objectives though.
Focus	V			
Objectives	V			
Research Strategy		V		Not clear how the participants are recruited? Selection criterions are not defined. Applicant said: "This research will focus on users who patronize the Nairaland website... particularly on discussion relating to Nigerian environmentalism..." Applicant said nothing about the criterions of participants; or, Anyone on this discussion forum can participate to the proposed research?
Rationale	V			
Organisational Agreement		V		Applicant said no in this box (Point 6) but, in the next box (Point 7) s/he then said s/he will liaise with the website moderator(s) for forum use, which seems a bit weird. In addition, should applicant inform the website moderator(s)? If participants are not employed or regulated by the website, if all activities of data collection happened at the individual level, if actual conversations occurred between participants and researchers via email/skype, it seems no need to gain organisational agreement. Applicant shall explain the recruitment strategy further.
Approaching individuals		V		Same as above
Informed Consent	V			

Data protection	V			
Other Ethical Issues	V			
No. Subjects	V			
Code of ethics used	V			
Participant info letter	V			
Consent Form	V			
Recruitment Material				Not provided.
Research Instrument				Not provided.
Interview Guide				Not provided.
Other Comments				None.

Recommendation:

- Remove "using Netnography" from the title in Section 1a.
- Participant selection criteria are not defined, so the applicant should clarify these in Section 7 (the description in Section 4 is vague and non-scientific).
- In Section 6, the applicant states that no organisational approval is required, yet Section 7 indicates that permission will be sought from the website moderator. If not required, then remove this latter comment. If required, then amend the former response.

Accept – no changes	
Accept subject to minor changes (approved by supervisor if PGR student)	V
Accept subject to changes outlined above (to be approved by committee chair)	
Reject – address changes outlined above and resubmit	