

Challenges and Prospects of Teaching and Researching in Industrial Sociology in Nigeria

DOI: 10.36108/NJSA/3102/11(0290)

Emeka E. Okafor
Department of Sociology
University of Ibadan
Ibadan, Nigeria

Abstract

This paper takes a retrospective look at the issues surrounding teaching and researching in Industrial Sociology in Nigeria so as to project into the future. It discusses the challenges facing industrial sociology such as workers' apathy towards academic research, organisation's attitude to academic study, limited application of dominant theories, question of professional status of the discipline, and perceived worth and market value of the sub-discipline. Despite the challenges, this paper identified future prospects of the sub-discipline in a rapid expansion of the discipline, role of practitioners' associations, the influence of globalization, contextualizing industrial sociology, and entrepreneurship education. It is argued that continued relevance of Industrial sociology in Nigeria would depend largely on critical issues such as socio-economic conditions of the workers, quality and mindset of graduate students, collaborative academic research, channels for dissemination of research findings, and utilisation of ICT services.

Keywords: collaborative research, globalization, contextualized industrial sociology, Nigerian workers

Introduction

Sociology, as a distinct academic discipline, emerged in the 19th century as a response to some fundamental socio-economic and political changes and challenges that confronted most European societies. However, with passage of time and the tenacity of the founding fathers such as August Comte, Karl Marx, Hebert Spencer, Emile Durkhiem and Max Weber among others, the discipline got wider acceptance in most European and American universities and beyond. Presently, the discipline, described as the queen of sciences, features in most universities around the world. The scope of sociology is expansive and includes specializations such as crime and delinquency, sociology of mass communication, sociology of religion, sociology of work, industrial sociology, sociology of development, population studies, urban sociology, rural sociology, medical sociology, sociology of knowledge, sociology of education, sociology of the family, and so on. In all these areas the emphasis is usually on the dynamics of relationships and interactions given the social nature of human behaviour (Mills, 1959; Otite, 1994; Henslin, 2008; Isiugo-Abanihe, 2010; Kendall, 2010; Ferrante, 2011; Ridley-Duff and Bull, 2011). Each of these areas has made significant contributions in understanding of the structure and functioning of the Nigerian society. However, teaching and

researching in sociology in any of these areas is fraught with myriads of challenges (Okafor, 2005a; Otite & Ogionwo, 2006; Rotimi, 2006; Ogunbameru, 2008; Imhonopi & Urim, 2012)

This paper focuses on industrial sociology; however, references will be made to general sociology from time to time. What is the significance of this paper? First, it intends to bring to the fore some challenges and prospects of teaching and researching in industrial sociology in Nigeria in order to set the agenda for other sociologists to share their experiences with the community of scholars in order to provoke intellectual discourse and debate on how to move sociology forward as a discipline. In addition, by examining challenges and prospects of teaching and researching in industrial sociology, the paper provides an opportunity for scholars to re-examine the utility of the discipline in a rapidly globalizing world

Brief Overview of Industrial Sociology

Industrial Sociology as an area of specialisation in sociology has a number of definitions. Miller & Form (1951) defined it as the study of occupations and social groups that affect work behaviour. For Spaulding (1961), industrial sociology centres its attention on social organisation of factory, the store and office. According to him, this includes not only the interaction of people playing role in these organisations but also the ways their work roles are interrelated with other aspects of their life. In the view of Parker (1967), industrial sociology is about the nature and meaning of work and occupational life as well as about the differences in opportunities and self fulfillment which industrial development makes possible; it is about attitude and ideologies of power holders at all levels of organisational structure and about what people do in organizational contexts. For Gisbert (1972), industrial sociology is the application of sociological approach to the reality and problems of industry.

In summary, industrial Sociology is the study of the motivations and behaviours of people at the workplace. It is a branch of sociology that looks at the impact of labour and industry on society, as well as the ways in which society impacts industrial forces. Workers in an industry carry along with them their cultural and belief systems and which tend to affect their work environment depending on the nature of their work. Industry is a sub-system of the entire social system. Thus, it is called socio-technical system. In essence, technical system of production defines the nature of social relations existing in an industry (Otobo, 1994; Onyeonuru, 2005; Oni, 2007; Ogunbameru, 2008a).

At the macro level of analysis, industrial sociologists are interested in studying things such as industrialisation, occupational structure, global economies, and how changes in technology lead to modifications in living conditions of the workers. At the micro level of analysis, industrial sociologists examine topics such as workers' job satisfaction, commitment to work, industrial conflict, workplace deviant behaviour and workers' sense of self and identity, and the influence of work on families. Thus, the scope of industrial sociology is quite wide and covers such areas as industrial management,

industrial organisation, technology and work experience, work commitment, job satisfaction/motivation, leadership, productivity, industrial and labour relations, industrial conflict and so on. As a result of dynamism of human society and the industry, the scope of industrial sociology has been expanded to include issues relating to gender, human resource management, globalisation, entrepreneurship, information and communication technology, and so on (Mohr, 1986; Otobo, 1994; Okafor and Bode-Okundae, 2005; Onyeonoru, 2005; Oni, 2007; Ogunbameru, 2008a).

The dominant management perspectives in industrial sociology include Scientific Management theories, Human Relations theories, Bureaucratic theories, Administrative management theory, Theory X and Theory Y and a host of others. The main thrust of *Scientific Management* theories pioneered by F.W. Taylor (1911) and later developed by Frank and Lillian Gilbreth (1911) and Henry Gantt (1911) is that when scientific procedures and principle are applied in the study of job conditions as well as used in the selection of workers into positions within the organization, more efficient, effective and productive workers are guaranteed. The *Human Relations* theory developed by Elton Mayo (1953) and Mary Parker Follet (1924) argued that optimizing the socio-psychological needs of workers other than monetary reward is the best way to make worker to be more productive.

Administrative Management theory, pioneered by Henri Fayol (1913), identified what should be the functions of management in the organization and listed and discussed fourteen principles of management that should be applied in managing organisation for greater efficiency and productivity. Furthermore, Max Weber (1947) is his *Bureaucratic* theory postulated that application of the ideal features of bureaucracy will produce far better workers and better managed organisation (Albrow, 1970). Later, Alvin Gouldner (1954), in his classical monograph on the patterns of industrial bureaucracy, tested Weber's hypothesis which stated that without bureaucracy no modern organisation would function properly. Gouldner (1954) identified three types of bureaucracy namely; *mock*, *representative* and *punishment-centred* bureaucracies and further argued that the degree of bureaucratization could differ even in the same organisation. Douglas McGregor (1960) in his *Theory X and Theory Y* drew attention to the duality of human nature and personality which management should take into consideration in their attempt to manage workers for greater efficiency and productivity.

The above theories have their contributions in understanding and explaining management actions and workers' behaviour in organizational setting; however they have their limitations. In essence, since no one theory captures all that happens in work organizations, the theories complement one another in order to present a robust view and explanation of the behaviour of management and workers. Hence, the explanatory power of one theory and its

application in industrial sociology discourse can vary depending on the subject matter in focus.

Historically, the first university in Nigeria to establish a separate Department of Sociology is the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in 1960 with curricula greatly influenced by the American system, while the University of Ibadan which started as a branch of the University of London in 1948, formalized Sociology as a Department in 1964. At the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) Department of Sociology and Anthropology was established in 1973. Before this time, sociology was accommodated within the Department of Demography and Social Statistics (Rotimi, 1972; 2006). With special reference to Sociology at Ibadan¹, the discipline started as a sub-department in the Department of Economics, with Peter Lloyd as the unit head. The Department of Sociology was formally established in Ibadan in 1964 with a Swede, Ulf Himmelstrand, as the first Head of Department. A number of world renowned academics have passed through the Department most of who are already professors in universities both within and outside the shores of Nigeria. To date, the Department has continued to graduate large numbers of undergraduate and postgraduate students especially in the areas of industrial sociology, demography, sociology of development, criminology and medical sociology (Isiugo-Abanihe, 2010; Isiugo-Abanihe & Adegbola, 2007).

Challenges Confronting Sociology Teaching and Research in Nigeria²

As a former graduate student and later a faculty member in the Department of Sociology, University of Ibadan, and having taught and supervised both undergraduate and postgraduate students in the area of industrial sociology over a decade, this writer considers it worthwhile to share his experience on the challenges and prospects in teaching and researching in industrial sociology to determine actually *whether the cup is half full or half empty*.

Workers' Apathy toward Academic Research

Workers are one of the most important productive components of any country. They are also one of the major targets of study by the industrial sociologists because the period of working life is not only interesting but also characterized by anxieties and challenges (Mohr, 1986; Okafor, 2005b). Usually in most industrial sociology studies or research, workers either in the public or private sectors are used as the target study population. Unfortunately, most workers in the course of field work display apathy and uncooperative attitude towards a researcher. Sometimes they may demand for incentives or one form of gratification or the other before their participation in the study³. Even when

¹ This writer has focused on Ibadan since he trained in the institution.

² The challenges discussed in this paper are by no means exhaustive, but selective

³ This does not intend to write off the Nigerian workers as corrupt. Of course, there are quite a number of respected Nigerian workers of all ranks who had participated in

they consent to participate in a study and the researcher distributes the study instrument to them (usually copies of questionnaire in case of survey research), retrieving the instrument is always a difficult task for the researcher. Repeated visits are often made either to retrieve already completed instrument or to replace missing ones. This makes a researcher incur additional costs. When accepting to fill out the questionnaire, some workers may do so thoughtlessly without paying due attention to the items in the instrument especially if the questions are mostly open-end. Furthermore, if a researcher decides to collect qualitative data, booking appointment with the workers for In-depth Interview (IDI), Key Informant Interview (KII) or Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) is almost an impossible task because of their busy schedules especially if they are workers in non-standard employment relations in the banking, telecommunication and manufacturing sectors (Okafor, 2010).

When workers demand to be motivated or ask for some form of incentive before filling out the instrument, or if they do not give honest and sincere answers to the questions asked, the quality, authenticity and validity of whatever data that have been collected by the researcher are compromised. These may not yield useful and generalisable results. This is a major challenge to both the older and emerging industrial sociologists in Nigeria.

Organisation's Attitude to Academic Research

Management in this context refers to the group of individuals who preside over the affairs or activities of an organisation and have the major tasks of planning, organising, directing, controlling, coordinating the activities of an organisation (Nwachukwu, 1988). Just like the workers, members of management of work organisations are also a major stakeholder in productive activities. Most work organisations in Nigeria whether in the banking, telecommunication, oil and gas, and manufacturing sector have one of the worst labour policies in the world, engaging workers mostly in non-standard employment practices such as casualisation, part-time work, ad-hoc staffing, contract staffing and so on, as dictated by the capitalist and neo-liberalism quest for profit maximisation given minimum government intervention (Okougbo, 2004; Okafor, 2010; 2012).

Usually, industrial sociologists attempt to involve members of organisation's management as part of the overall objective of balancing the responses and views of the workers with those of the management and also to obtain robust data in order to present in greater details, the general picture of the subject matter under investigation. In this context, getting members of management or their representative to participate in the research either through IDI or KII is always a very difficult task to accomplish. The attitude of

research in the past without demanding for any form of gratification and will be willing to participate more in the future without any string attached.

organization's management to research is very frustrating. Sometimes management would decline, thinking that participating in such a study or research will expose their unfair labour practices and set government officials against them.

The fact is that most work organisations in Nigeria are afraid of their own shadows⁴. For instance, it is on record that in the last few decades, the use of workers in non-standard employment relations such as casual and contract workers, has increased and organisations do not always want researchers to investigate this aspect of their infractions. It is particularly frustrating when a researcher who had proposed to select workers on the basis of some random sampling in order to ensure objectivity would, on getting to the organization, be informed that he would not have access to the list of workers in the various departments within the organization for one reason or another. Invariably, this causes the researcher to change his methodology and make do with whatever management has to offer him. For example, the researcher may resort to *accidental sampling* in selecting both the workers (instead of *simple random*) and members of management (instead of *purposive*). More often than not, graduate students do not always report this aspect of fieldwork experience for the fear that the procedure used to obtain their data may be considered unscientific.

Collectively, the uncooperative attitude and apathy of both the workers and management of organisation to academic research is a challenge in industrial sociology research and limits whatever generalization a researcher can make about the organization as well as of other organizations in the same line of business. However, through perseverance, tactfulness, repeated visits and strict adherence to ethical standards many industrial sociologists have overcome this challenging attitude (Ogunbameru, 2004).

Limited Application of Dominant Theories

The dominant management theories in Industrial Sociology include Scientific Management theories, Human Relations theories, Bureaucratic theories, Administrative Management theory, and so on. Also, other topics in industrial sociology such as job satisfaction/motivation, leadership, productivity, labour market and others have their theories as well. It is important to note that all these theories are the products of intellectual works of foreign scholars and authors who developed them to explaining the peculiar action and behaviour of workers and management in their societies.

Clearly, knowledge is universal, but theories and perspectives used in sociology are not always ideological neutral (Haralambos & Holborn, 2004; Ritzer, 2008). They are actually the products of a combination of socio-

⁴ This does not imply that all work organisations in Nigeria are fraudulent and averse to academic research, nor do they all get involved in one infraction or the other. There are quite a number of work organisations that keep to the rules, participated in research in the past and will be willing to participate more in the future.

economic and political arrangements and ideologies which may not be applicable to other societies (Marcus, 1964). The political, social and cultural contexts in which most theories and perspectives developed are different from the African context where the theories are applied. Although sometimes workers may behave the same way when confronted with similar objective situation, but the theoretical explanation may differ because more often than not behaviour is dictated by culture. For instance, an employer in Nigeria could resort to ethnic and religious sentiments to weaken workers against an on-going strike action, while this may be nearly impossible in America. Therefore, the inability of workers to embark on a strike may be captured by a theory that focuses on the material needs of the workers but has no explanation on the manipulation of ethnic and religious sentiments in the workplace. For sure, the foreign-received theories and perspectives have their place in understanding, explaining and predicting the behaviour of African workers, but they have not been substantially modified by African scholars to capture the social realities of workers' behavior, hence their failure to adequately explain some aspects of behaviour of African workers (Otobo, 1994; Onyeonoru, 2005; Oni, 2007).

On the larger scale, the inability of African scholars to successfully indigenize these dominant theories and perspectives in sociology has implications for the emergence of a truly *Nigerian Sociology*⁵ (Madu, 1972; Rotimi, 2006; Onyeonoru, 2008; Sule, 2008). More often than not, one hears or reads about the *American Sociology*, *British Sociology*, *French Sociology*, *Chinese Sociology*, and so on. In each of these countries, there is a common thread that links scholars together, and people are aware of line of argument of a particular scholar or a number of scholars over a period of time (Gouldner, 1970).

Although there were few attempts to 'decolonize' the minds of Nigerians by some scholars through having *Nigerian Sociology*, however, such efforts were characterised by frenzied and inconclusive debates (Akinwowo, 1974; 1980; 1986; 1991; Madu, 1972; Rotimi, 1972; Waterman, 1972). The attempts dimmed with the retirement of the accomplished intellectual and scholar, Professor Akinsola Akinwowo, who initially championed this course. Since then, there has been no serious effort made by Nigerian scholars to build up on his brilliant ideas and concepts. Rotimi (2006) adduced some reasons for this inability to include; devastating influence of prolonged military regime, poor reward system, massive brain-drain, poor funding of teaching and research in universities, and declined influence of Marxist Sociology. Thus, Rotimi (2006)

⁵ What may appear to be a *Nigerian sociology* are various independent works done by reputable scholars on the social structure of Nigeria. Usually such works are hardly interrogated by other scholars so as to provoke robust debate and constructive intellectual engagement and discourse to enable other scholars establish unmistakably the trend of debates on the subject matter over a period of time.

concluded that Nigerian sociology may well stay in a cooler until such a time there would be improvement in the socio-political environment so that Nigerian universities would be better funded, and sociologists themselves would be well fed. In essence, for now, a truly Nigerian sociology remains a mirage.

Question of Professional Status of the Discipline

A profession may be defined as an occupation that requires specialized knowledge and intensive academic preparations to which entry is regulated by a representative body. The essentials of a profession are: specialized knowledge, formal education and training, social obligations and code of conduct (Friedson, 1970; 1986; Abbot, 1988). Although the establishment of sociology departments across Nigerian universities has increased, such increase is not commensurate with the public awareness of the subject matter of the discipline (Okafor, 2005; Imhonopi & Urim, 2012). The fact that sociology is not strictly a professional⁶ course like medicine, law, engineering, pharmacy and others, makes students of sociology and their parents to continuously enquire the kind of job(s) they or their wards could be engaged in upon graduation. One comes across this question and challenge repeatedly in the course of teaching sociology over the years.

Usually, simple explanation or answer that sociology studies social relations and group behaviour, and that a sociologist can work in any establishment in Nigeria, does not always convince, pacify or even douse the inquisitiveness of students, their parents and interested members of the public on what is uniquely sociologically. For certain, students, parents and interested members of the public always want to know what is distinctively sociology, just like they know what is distinctively economics, political science or geography and where they are likely to work upon graduation. Will sociology ever become a professional course in Nigeria so that upon graduation, a sociologist will create job for himself and practice what he had learnt in the university and people would patronize him, just like a lawyer will take a brief from his client or like a patient consulting a doctors for a fee? In the same manner, will an industrial sociologist create a job for himself, maybe becoming a labour consultant or human resource consultant or expert, employing workers rather than being a job seeker himself in Nigeria in the near future?

⁶Some scholars may dispute this; however, going strictly by the definitions and characteristics of a profession, sociology does not qualify as one. For instance, Members of a profession have to abide by a code of conduct which contains certain rules and regulations, norms of honesty, integrity and special ethics. A code of conduct is enforced by a representative association to ensure self discipline among its members. Typical of such associations in Nigeria are; Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Nigerian Medical Association (NMA), and others.

Question of Worth and Market Value of the Discipline

What is the market value of a Nigerian graduate? What is the market value of a sociologist in Nigeria? What is a market value of an industrial sociologist in Nigeria? Can the market value of a Nigerian (industrial) sociologist be quantified in monetary terms? Is it dignifying at all to quantify the value of any Nigerian graduate in monetary terms for that matter, rather than what the person has to offer? Not really. However, in a society like Nigeria such mentality is very common (Okafor, 2005; Okafor & Bode-Okunade, 2005). Sometimes the ignorant comments and public vilification of sociology by some highly placed individual in positions of authority can unsettle and create dilemma for students and practitioners of sociology in Nigeria.

An example will suffice here. Some years ago, the former President, Olusegun Obasanjo, while addressing Nigerians in the Diaspora in 2006 said it was ‘mis-education’ for anyone to ‘read mass communication’ and ‘sociology’ in the university. Also, in another forum, the same Obasanjo publicly dismissed some courses offered at the university level as ‘useless’ including Sociology, History and Mass Communication. This time, he was addressing young, unemployed persons, who were disturbed by the crisis of unemployment and underemployment in Nigeria. With these comments, Obasanjo wrote off sociology, history and mass communication as disciplines without any market value, and labeled students studying such courses merely wasting their time. Although scholars and intellectuals took him up on that (Abati, 2006; Nkpe, 2006), such silly and ignorant public vilification of sociology and other disciplines by a respected personality caused a stir among sociologists and the intellectual community in Nigeria. One can infer a combination of mischief and ignorance in Obasanjo’s remarks regarding the courses he mentioned. There are probably many Nigerians who have the same Obasanjo-opinion.

Prospects of Sociology as a Discipline

Despite the above challenges facing sociologists and industrial sociologists in Nigeria, it is pertinent to note that teaching and research in sociology in the country is not without prospects. Some of the factors that indicate hope for the future of Nigerian Sociology include:

Rapid expansion of the discipline

There has been a rapid increase in the demand for sociology by undergraduate and postgraduate students across the Nigerian universities. At present, the popularity of sociology has soared as a field of discipline with most universities in Nigeria having it in their curricula. At present, sociology exists either as a separate department or combined with other sub-disciplines such as Anthropology and Psychology in the traditional universities, while it exists as a unit within the General Studies departments in Nigeria universities of technology and agriculture (Ogunbameru, 2008b; Imhonopi & Urim, 2012).

Given the versatility of Sociology, it is not uncommon to find the graduates of sociology working in the different sectors of the Nigerian society as law enforcement officers, administrative staff in both public and private establishments, personnel and human resource managers in big establishments in communication, oil and gas sectors, and multinational corporations, labour officers, health workers, inspection officers, executives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and so on. In particular, the demand for industrial sociology as an area of specialisation has risen in most universities. This shows that the prospects of sociology as a discipline is very bright, notwithstanding the fact that some members of public still do not understand in totality its subject matter and therefore continue to question its relevance and utility (Okafor, 2005a; Oni, 2007).

Roles of Practitioners' Associations

Practitioners' association are veritable platforms in bringing people who belong to more or less the same discipline together for the purpose of interacting, relating and sharing ideas and knowledge on critical issues, and also to fashion out ways of advancing their basic interests in order to showcase their relevance and assert themselves in the society. Against this background, in 1970, the Nigerian Anthropological and Sociological Association (NASA) was formed with the aim of promoting research and exchange of information and to foster policies aimed at ameliorating human condition by the different tiers of government in Nigeria. The association also sought to forge ties with other international associations in the field of sociology, anthropology and other related fields. The popularity of sociology within Nigerian universities shows that although NASA started with 20 registered members in 1970, 66 in 1973 and 200 in the early 1980 (Akinwowo, 1986). At present, NASA boasts of membership that runs into thousands across the country. Sociology students have their own counterpart association called the Nigerian Sociological and Anthropological Students Association (NSASA) with membership in tens of thousands (Rotimi, 2006; Imhonopi & Urim, 2012).

Although the association (NASA) was moribund for some years, over the last few years, efforts have been made to revamp and resuscitate it. This association which unites all practicing anthropologists and sociologists in Nigeria is also affiliated with International Sociological Association (ISA) and African Sociological Association (AfSA). Moreover, since 2007, NASA has consistently organized annual national conferences across Nigeria which provided platform for sociologists to meet, interact and share ideas and views on some national issues and discourse. These included conferences were hosted by Universities in Ibadan, Sokoto, Zaria, Ilorin and Awka. Some of the themes of the recent NASA conferences include: *Societal Values in a Reforming Society Crisis of Child Labour; Social Dimensions of Democratization; Societal Values, Corruption and Security; and Sustainable Transformation for Inclusion Development*. These annual conferences appear to be the right step towards developing and sustaining a distinctively *Nigerian Sociology*.

Although NASA may not have been as popular or impactful as the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Nigerian Medical Association (NMA), Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE) or Nigerian Economic Society (NES), however, it is hoped that with effective and committed leadership, supportive followership and adequate awareness, the prospect of NASA is very bright in Nigeria. Besides NASA which is larger body housing all sociologists in Nigeria, other areas of specialisation in sociology have also formed associations specific to their needs. For instance, there are such associations as the Nigerian Association of Rural Sociologists (NARS), Population Association of Nigeria (PAN), Nigerian Industrial Relations Association (NIRA), and so on. All these specialized associations are also making great impact in their own peculiar ways.

Influence of Globalisation

Globalisation has engulfed the entire world and this has continued to throw up issues which are of utmost concern and interest to sociologists in Nigeria. The issues of global labour migration, poverty, global unemployment, security challenges, gender issues, maternal health, infant mortality, unequal development, issues of debt and many others (Okafor, 2005; Imhonopi, 2010; Garba, 2011) are all such issues that cannot be adequately dissected, investigated or addressed without strong academic and intellectual inputs of sociologists from indifferent areas of specialization.

With specific reference to industrial sociology, globalisation has engendered a lot of issues and changes in work organisations such as multi-tasking, non-standard employment relations, depletion of trade unions' membership, neo-liberal policies of privatisation, commercialisation and deregulation and among other issues (Okafor & Bode-Okunade, 2005; Okafor, 2010; Okafor & Akinwale, 2012). Against this background, labour agitations and contestations have increased over the years in both public and private work organisations. All these issues and challenges brought about by globalisation cannot be adequately captured and analysed without the intellectual inputs of industrial sociologists in Nigeria. As human society changes as a result of globalisation, the relevance, utility and prospects of industrial sociologists become more and more evident and inevitable (Onyeonoru, 2008; Sule, 2008).

Contextualizing Industrial Sociology

There have been concerted efforts and attempts by the African scholars to indigenize and contextualize industrial sociology in order to capture the unique African workers' behaviour and experiences. This is basically to understand the social realities of industry in Nigeria and Africa as a whole. Notable industrial sociologists and scholars such as Mohr (1986), Otobo (1994), Onyeonoru (2005), Oni (2007), Ogunbameru & Oribabor (2008) and host of others in their modest contributions produced various industrial sociology

works and texts to help young industrial sociologists to understand (industrial) sociology within the African context. Such efforts at contextualization of the sub-discipline has made (industrial) sociology real to both students and practitioners alike, and has afforded them the opportunity to place African workers' behaviour and experiences within historical and sociological milieu (Mohr, 1986; Okafor, 2010). This has helped a great deal in creating critical minds among the students who would not just accept any issue as given but interrogate them within the framework of national discourse in broader perspective.

Roles of Professional Bodies

The question of the worth and market value of industrial sociology, and by extension of sociology, is gradually easing out as many professional bodies have come on board in Nigeria to add value to academic qualifications. Such professional bodies like the Nigerian Institute of Management (NIM), Chartered Institute of Personnel Management (CIPM), Institute of Management Leadership and Productivity (IMLP) and a host of others, have continued to add value to whatever qualifications or certificates (industrial) sociologists who belong to such association possess. Besides enrolling and becoming members and fellows of these professional bodies, industrial sociologists are also taking advantage of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to improve themselves and their market value and worth in Nigeria. This has placed industrial sociologists at par if not ahead of their peers who read other courses in the labour market. With this development, industrial sociologists are gradually becoming the toast of many employers of labour in Nigeria (Oni, 2007).

Entrepreneurship Education

Youth unemployment or underemployment is a serious problem in Nigeria as a result of long standing irresponsible leadership, massive systemic corruption and other associated factors. No graduate of any discipline in Nigeria is insulated from this social malaise (Okafor, 2011). To curtail this malaise and be more proactive, government and many universities in Nigeria have incorporated entrepreneurship education in their curricula as part of general measures to help students acquire orientation that will make them identify and utilise opportunities available in their immediate environment so that upon graduation, they would become job creators rather than job seekers. Hence, it is not uncommon to see students of diverse disciplines in their part time learning various vocations such as hair dressing, computer operation, baking, automobile repairs, tailoring, fashion designing, shoemaking and so on (Akinwale & Okafor, 2012). This is premised on the fact that there is dignity in labour. This attempt to prepare students for the future is also a concerted effort to awaken their skills and ingenuity to enable them see that other side of life, and by so doing, make them think outside the box. Considering the knowledge and broadmindedness which sociology students and graduates have been exposed

to, many of them are taking or have taken advantage of this in improving their material and social wellbeing.

The Future of Teaching and Researching in Industrial Sociology in Nigeria

As regards teaching and researching in (industrial) sociology in Nigeria, the question is, is the cup half full or half empty? In attempting to answer this question, it is pertinent to state that going down the memory lane, the Nigerian situation presents a paradoxical picture: a country rich in human and natural resources, yet most of her citizens live in penury, squalor and abject poverty. In addition to this, the rising cases of insecurity characterised by subjugation of women, child labour, incessant workers' unrest and strike action and the activities of armed robbers, rapists, kidnappers, insurgents and terrorists have added another dimension to the challenges confronting the Nigeria society. Also, youth unemployment or underemployment has remained unacceptably high with varied implications (Isiugo-Abanihe, 2010; Okafor, 2011; Imhonopi & Urim, 2012).

The above scenario has created new challenges for sociologists in Nigeria. Thus, as far as the above mentioned problems and malaise continue to plague the country, the future relevance and utility of sociology will remain immeasurable and ever significant. Each of these areas of social problem provides opportunity for sociologists to be positively engaged in continuous academic research on how to provide significant insight in tackling them. And for the Nigerian industrial sociologists, what will continue to define and shape the directions of their relevance and utility in teaching and research in future will largely depend on the following issues:

Socio-economic conditions of the (Nigerian) workers

The social condition of the Nigeria workers will continue to attract the interest of industrial sociologists. Most Nigerian workers have been left severely distraughted and disillusioned by a number of factors, including but not limited to, neo-liberal policies, persistent inflation, poverty, general insecurity, social and economic locations, poor political leadership and corruption in the larger society. Under this precarious socio-economic condition, workers are preoccupied with meeting the basic necessities of life (Marcus, 1964; Okafor, 2010). Nigerian workers grappling with many problems will continue to be the subject of study by industrial sociologists on how to adequately understand and suggest ways of ameliorating their problems and challenges both within and outside their work environment.

Though workers in this parlous and fractured state of mind may not fully appreciate the import and roles of academic research in generating knowledge for the improvement of human living conditions; however, this should not deter researchers. The implication of this, therefore, is that researchers should

be well-trained and well-grounded in research methodology on how to professionally handle workers and management apathy and resistance to research, and also how to handle and observe all the ethical issues in the course of research.

Quality and Mindset of Graduates

Nigeria's socio-economic and political situation has negatively affected and dehumanized, traumatized and pauperized most young people including graduates as evidenced in the massive unemployment and underemployment in the country (Garba, 2011; Okafor, 2011). This has turned most graduates into perpetual job seekers always looking out for means of survival. This precarious situation often affects the state of the mind, reasoning and intellect of individuals (Fromm, 1942; 1994; Horkheimer, 1947). It is pertinent to note that the continued relevance of any academic discipline is largely dependent on the ability of the discipline to reproduce itself at the right time, in the right number and in the right quality. Where this is not possible as a result of socio-economic and political arrangement of the country, it is a major threat to the survival of the discipline and the larger society. Therefore, the nature of mindset and quality of teachers and graduates students are very critical factors in gauging the future relevance and utility of teaching and researching in any academic discipline. If teachers and graduate students are attracted to making teaching and research as their careers out of absolute concern for material necessity rather than a well thought-out choice undertaken to advance the frontiers of knowledge, then the discipline is under a major threat and its future hangs on the balance. Also, if the mindset of graduate students who will one day take over from their teachers and mentors is characterised by instrumental orientation and hedonism (Marcus, 1964), thereby considering postgraduate education end rather than means to an end, then there is a major threat.

Graduate students of (industrial) sociology who would want to make teaching and research their career but are not well grounded in theory and research methodology and in their areas of specialization, and who do not wish to improve themselves, may not make good career in the discipline. Such students are potential threats to the relevance and utility of teaching and researching in sociology. For instance, if a graduate student shuttles between lectures and searching for job, such a student may be difficult to educate and mentor because of divided interests. For such a student, a postgraduate programme may be his plan B, an aspiration which he may not have fully prepared mentally and materially to shoulder if not for the crisis in the labour market. The superficiality of such a student's education may be evident in his weak writing skills and intellectual discourse, and he may be incapable of engaging and sustaining any sociological issue or debate.

Funding and Collaborative Academic Research

Empirical research is the hallmark of academic excellence and advancement of knowledge. It is the process of generating, transmitting or disseminating

knowledge in its widest sense. Through this, the social and living conditions of the people whom sociologists have abiding interest to study will be improved or enhanced. However, the ability and capacity of (industrial) sociologists to carry out academic research is often hindered by a number of factors such as the characteristic unavailability of funds, shortage of infrastructure, lack of time and work overload (Ogunbameru, 2004). Supporting research-minded scholars with research funds and provision of requisite infrastructure will aid their research activities. Also, reducing their work-load and other administrative responsibilities will help young scholars to have more time to engage in ground breaking academic research that will improve the quality of teaching and research in the Nigerian universities. This will, in the long run, reflect on the quality of writing and students they produced, and also go a long way in debunking the notion or perception by the employers of labour that Nigerian graduates are unemployable.

In addition to the issue of funding research, is also the issue of collaborative academic research by scholars cutting across various areas of specialisation in sociology. It is on record that the problems and challenges plaguing Nigeria is multidisciplinary and multisectoral, hence the need for more multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary research among sociologists⁷ in Nigeria. For instance, a typical issue in Nigeria which transcends a particular area of specialization but cuts across other areas of specialization in sociology is *youth unemployment*. Therefore, more collaborative academic research will enrich the subject matter being investigated and present research findings or results in a more robust and holistic manner.

Channels/Outlets for Dissemination of Research Findings

This issue is as important as research itself. Well funded and well executed collaborative academic research findings should be appropriately disseminated to the members of academic community to advance empirical knowledge and be communicated to the policy makers who are in position to act or take decisions based on such findings. When research findings or results are not appropriately disseminated or communicated they will not advance academic knowledge, will not add value to human society nor affect lives positively (Ogunbameru, 2004). At best, the findings and the rigour involved in the research will be a mere ideal template for carrying out social research.

In the contemporary society, there is a steady movement towards diversification of research so that the gap between the gown and town will be bridged. The ability of sociologists to take advantage of the opportunity will assist in disseminating and communicating their findings to the larger society.

⁷ Unfortunately, in some departments or even in the same area of specialisation, colleagues may not even know what their other colleagues are doing when it comes to research.

This will in turn help to fund more research. It is significant to state that no person no matter how sympathetic with the course of the sociologists in Nigeria will tell the story of relevance and utility of sociology more than the sociologists themselves. Hence, appropriate dissemination and communication channels should be selected by the sociologists to reach the academic community and policy makers. This will help in consolidating the impact and relevance of sociology in Nigeria. The implication of not doing so is that sociology will be pushed to the background and eventually into oblivion. Thus, disseminating the research results through the appropriate channels (for example through reputable journals) will go a long way to reconfirming sociology as the queen of the social sciences as originally conceived by the founding fathers of sociology.

Utilisation of ICT Services

The final issue to be discussed is the utilisation of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) services for teaching and research activities⁸. Studies conducted in some Nigerian universities showed that most Nigeria academics are yet to fully embrace ICT services in their teaching and research activities (Imhonopi, 2010; Okafor, Imhonopi & Urim, 2011). With the ICT services, the whole world has become more or less a global village. Thus teaching and learning platform has changed a great deal.

At present, a greater number of students are also having access to a wide variety of subjects and materials through the use of internet facilities. Thus, there is the possibility that some students may be ahead of their teachers in a wide variety of subjects. However, for the teachers of (industrial) sociology to remain relevant and be in control of their classes or lectures, or to be more competent in their core area of specialisation and be ahead of their students, they must familiarize themselves with, and demonstrate proficiency, in the use of ICT services for teaching and research purposes. The implication of this is that sociology teachers and mentors should be able to tap into the vast opportunities offered by this medium and platform to advance their professional career. In addition, teachers of sociology should be abreast of new developments in their various areas of specialization by subscribing to world class journals.

Since knowledge is dynamic, any (industrial) sociologist who refuses to continuously update his knowledge is marginalising himself and may not be very relevant in the 21st century Nigerian university system or any other part of the world for that matter. However, by updating their knowledge using the opportunities offered by the ICT services, they will make themselves to be more effective teachers and competent researchers.

⁸ This is without prejudice to the fact that lecturers in Nigerian universities are poorly paid while the ICT services are plagued with several infrastructural challenges.

Conclusion

With the benefits of hindsight, teaching and researching in industrial sociology from our point of view have undergone considerable changes over that last few years in Nigeria with so many challenges, but not without identifiable prospects. Our analysis here in this leads us to conclude that as regards teaching and researching in (industrial) sociology, the *cup* is half full rather than half empty. Sociology, as academic discipline in Nigeria, has a long way to go but with a lot of prospects and bright future considering the enormous social problems and crisis bedevilling the country. However, Nigerian sociologists should brace up to these challenges by being effective teachers of the discipline and engaging in ground breaking research that will help to bring them to greater reckoning in terms of being major stakeholders in social policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria. Also, government and those in positions of authority should adequately motivate Nigerian academics and researchers and provide them with necessary infrastructure to work with, so that teaching and research as a career will attract and retain the best brains in Nigerian universities. In sum, for the (industrial) sociologists in Nigeria, *the cup is half full* because they are in their finest moment; however, their best is yet come.

References

- Abati, R.2006. Before Baba goes to school, *The Guardian* (Nigeria) www.nguardiannews.com (retrieved on 23 November, 2006).
- Abbott, A. 1988. *The System of Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labour*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Akinwale, A.A. and Okafor, E.E. 2012. Intrapreneurial Behaviour of Vocational Trainees in Furniture and Tailoring Workshop in Lagos State. Lagos. *African Journal of Microfinance and Enterprise Development*. 2(2):1-9.
- Akinwowo, A. 1974. Contemporary Sociology in Nigeria. Mohun, R.P. and Martindale, D. (eds.). *Handbook of Contemporary Development in World Sociology*. Beverly: Sage Publication.
- Akinwowo, A. 1980. Sociology in Africa Today. *Current Sociology*. 28(2): 55-72.
- Akinwowo, A. 1986. *Building National Sociological Tradition in an African sub-Region*. Being a Paper Presented at the Seminar on Building National Tradition in Sociology after World War II World Congress of Sociology. New Delhi, India, August, 1986.
- Akinwowo, A. 1991. Responses to Makinde/Lawuyi and Taiwo. *International Sociology*. 6(2):243-251.
- Albrow, M. 1970. *Bureaucracy*. New York: Praeger.

- Fayol, H. 1913. *General and Industrial Management*. London: Pitman and Sons.
- Freidson, F. 1970. *Profession of Medicine: A Study of the Sociology of Applied Knowledge*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Freidson, F. 1986. *Professional Powers: A Study of the Institutionalization of Formal Knowledge*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ferrante, J. 2011. *Sociology: A Global Perspective*. Belmont CA: Wardsworth.
- Follet, P.V. 1924. *Creative Experience*. New York: Longman.
- Fromm, E. 1942. *The Fear of Freedom*. London: Harper and Row.
- Fromm, E. 1994. *Escape from Freedom*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.
- Gantt, L. 1911. *Work, Wages and Profit*. New York: Engineering Co.
- Garba, P.K. 2012. *The impossibility of sound economic outcomes without sound management and leadership*. An Inaugural lecture delivered at the University of Ibadan on the May 3, 2012. Ibadan: University of Ibadan.
- Gilbreth, F.B. and Gilbreth, L. 1911. *Motion Study*. New York: D. Van Nostrand.
- Gisbert, P. 1972. *Fundamentals of Industrial sociology*. New Delhi: McGraw-Hill Publishing Co.
- Gouldner, A.W. 1954. *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy*. New York. Free Press.
- Gouldner, A.W. 1970. *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology*. New York: Basic Books.
- Haralambos, M. and Holborn, M. 2004. *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*. London: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Henslin, J.M. 2008. *Sociology: A down-to-Earth Approach*. Boston: Pearson.
- Horkheimer, M. 1947. *Eclipse of Reason*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Imhonopi, D. 2010. Influence of Utilisation of Internet Services on Teaching and Research Output among Academic Staff of Selected Universities in South-Western Nigeria. An unpublished Ph.D Thesis submitted to the Department of Sociology, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.
- Imhonopi, D. and Urim, U.M. 2012. *Sociology, Culture and Social Problems: Essays and Insights* (Revised Edition). Ibadan: Cardinal Press.
- Isiugo-Abanihe, U.C. 2010. *Continuity and Change in Nigeria's Fertility Regime*. An Inaugural Lecture delivered at the University of Ibadan, Ibadan on 10 May, 2010.
- Isiugo-Abanihe, U.C. and Adegbola, B. 2007. *Abstracts of Higher Degree Research in the Department of Sociology, 1973-2005*. Ibadan: Ababa Press.
- Kendall, D. 2010. *Sociology in our times*. Belmont. CA: Wardsworth.
- Madu, O. 1972. Wither Nigerian Sociology. *West Africa*. 7 April. 4-7.
- Marcus, H. 1964. *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*. Boston: Beacon.
- Mayo, E. 1953. *The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization*. New York: Macmillan.
- McGregor, D. 1960. *The Human Side of Enterprise*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

- Mills, C.W. 1959. *The Sociological Imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Miller, D. and Form, W.H. 1951. *Industrial Sociology: An Introduction to the sociology of Work relations*. New York: Harper and Brothers.
- Mohr, J.U. 1986. *The Nigerian in Industry: Sociological Sketches*. Bonn: Seelze-Hannover.
- Nkpe, D.O. 2006. Obasanjo, Mass Communication, Sociology and the real issues. www.gamji.com/article5000/NEWS5006 (retrieved on 29 November, 2006).
- Nwachukwu, C.C. 1988. *Management: Theory and Practice*: African-FEP. Onitsha: Publishers Ltd.
- Ogunbameru, A.O. 2004. *Research methods in Social Science* (2nd ed.). Oslo: D-Net Communications.
- Ogunbameru, A.O. 2008a. The Nature and Rise of Industrial Sociology. Ogunbameru, A.O. and Oribabor, E.P. (eds.). *Industrial Sociology*. Ibadan: Penthouse Publishing Co. 1-21.
- Ogunbameru, A.O. 2008b. *Sociology: Origins, Development and Uses*. Ibadan: Penthouse Publication.
- Ogunbameru, A.O. and Oribabor, E.P. 2008. (eds.). *Industrial Sociology*. Ibadan: Penthouse Publishing Co.
- Okafor, E.E. 2005a. *Introduction to Basic Concepts in Government*. Definition and Scope of Sociology. Balogun, S.K. and Taiwo, A.O. (eds.). *Society and Economy*. Ibadan: University of Ibadan. 61-74.
- Okafor, E.E. 2005b. 'Globalization and Work: The Nigerian Experience.' *Journal of Society, Development and Public Health*. 2(1):21-47.
- Okafor, E.E. 2010. Sociological Investigation of the Use of Casual Workers in Selected Asian Firms in Lagos, Nigeria. *Ibadan Journal of the Social Sciences*. 8(1):47-62.
- Okafor, E.E. 2011. Youth Unemployment and Implications for Stability of Democracy in Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*. 13(1):358-373.
- Okafor, E.E. (2012). Non-standard employment relations and implications for decent work deficits in Nigeria. *African Research Review*. 6(3):93-108.
- Okafor, E.E. and Akinwale, A.A. 2012. Globalisation and Collective Bargaining in Nigeria. *European Journal of Business and Management*. 4(11):88-93.
- Okafor, E.E. and Bode-Okunade, A.S. 2005. *An Introduction to Industrial and Labour Relations*. Ibadan: Mubak Publishers.
- Okafor, E.E.; Imhonopi, D. and Urim, U.M. 2011. Utilisation of Internet Services and its Impact on Teaching and Research Outputs in Private Universities in South Western Nigeria. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies and Society*. 9(2):135-151.

- Okougbo, E. 2004. *Strategic Issues on the Dynamics of Industrial Relations: Theory and Practice*. Lagos: Wepoapo Enterprises.
- Olurode, L. and Soyombo, O. 2003. *Sociology for Beginners*. Lagos: John West Publication.
- Oni, S.S. 2007. *Understanding Industrial Sociology*. Ibadan: Aseda Publishers.
- Onyeonoru, I.P. 2005. *Industrial Sociology: An African Perspective*. Ibadan: Samlad Press.
- Onyeonoru, I.P. 2008. Challenges of Doing Sociology in a Globalizing South: Between Indigenization and Emergent Structures. *The Nigerian Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*. 6:13-24.
- Otite, O. 1994. *Sociology: Theory and Applied*. What is Sociology? Otite, O. (ed.). Lagos: Malthouse. 1-7.
- Otite, O. and Ogionwo, W. 2006. *An Introduction to Sociological Studies*. Ibadan: Heinemann.
- Otobo, D. 1994. *Sociology: Theory and Applied*. Industrial Sociology. Otite, O. (ed.). Lagos: Malthouse. 209-234.
- Parker, S.R. 1967. *The Sociology of Industry*. George Allen and Unwin.
- Ridley-Duff, R. and Bull, M. 2011. *Understanding social enterprise: theory and practice*. Singapore: Sage.
- Ritzer, G. 2008. *Sociological Theory*. Boston: McGraw-Hill Co.
- Rotimi, A. 1972. *West Africa Nigerian Sociology*. 28 April. 58.
- Rotimi, A. 2006. *Man and His Social Environment: A textbook of Sociology*. The Development of Sociology as a field of Discipline in Nigeria. Ogunbameru, A.O. and Rotimi, R. (eds.). Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited. 49-66.
- Schneider, E.V. 1979. *Industrial Sociology*. New Delhi: McGraw-Hill Publishing Co.
- Spaulding, C.B. 1961. *An Introduction to Industrial Sociology*. New York: Chandler Publishing Co.
- Sule, I.D. 2008. Globalization and the Future of Sociology in the Third World: A Critically Commentary. *The Nigerian Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*. 6:25-36.
- Taylor, F.W. 1911. *The Principles of Scientific Management*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Waterman, P. 1972. *West Africa*, Wither Nigerian Sociology? 28 February. 28-53.
- Weber, M. 1947. *The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation*. Glencoe: Free Press.