

COLONIAL MENTALITY: ITS SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS ON NIGERIAN YOUTHS

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ABSTRACT: Colonial mentality remains a pervasive issue among Nigerian youths, influencing their perceptions of self, culture, and identity. This study explored the socio psychological impacts of colonial mentality on Nigerian youths, examining how it shapes the aspirations, behaviours, and cultural attitudes of Nigerian youths. The research highlighted the internalization of Western ideals through education, media, and globalization, which often leads to a rejection of indigenous cultural values and an inferiority complex towards local knowledge systems. The study reveals that this phenomenon contributes to a loss of cultural identity, social alienation, and a sense of economic dependency on Western countries. Furthermore, it identifies the marginalization of indigenous knowledge and practices, which exacerbates the devaluation of local education and employment opportunities. Through a comprehensive analysis of the psychological and sociocultural impacts of colonial mentality, the study proposes strategies for combating its negative effects, including the promotion of local knowledge systems, cultural pride, and a more inclusive educational curriculum. The findings underscore the need for cultural reorientation programs to empower Nigerian youths to reclaim their cultural heritage and contribute meaningfully to national development.

KEYWORDS: Colonial Mentality, Socio-Psychological Impacts, Nigerian Youths

INTRODUCTION

Colonial mentality, a lingering effect of colonial rule, has become a critical socio-psychological issue influencing the identity, aspirations, and behaviours of Nigerian youths. Decades after gaining independence, Nigeria continues to grapple with the cultural, economic, and political residues of its colonial past. This mentality manifests as a pervasive sense of inferiority toward indigenous values, culture, and identity, coupled with an overvaluation of Western ideals and practices (Adebisi, 2018; Okonkwo, 2021). Among Nigerian youths, colonial mentality shapes their perceptions of self-worth, career choices, and social interactions, thereby raising significant concerns about its socio-psychological impacts.

Colonial mentality can be defined as a psychological mindset in which individuals internalize the belief that foreign, particularly

Western, cultures, practices, and ideologies are superior to their indigenous counterparts (Chukwu, 2020). This mindset is rooted in the systemic devaluation of native cultures during colonial rule, where traditional norms, languages, and systems of governance were undermined and replaced with Western alternatives. The persistence of this ideology is evident in the preferences of many Nigerian youths for foreign education, fashion, and lifestyles, often at the expense of their native heritage (Okonkwo, 2021).

Consequently, this internalized bias perpetuates a cycle of cultural alienation and identity crises among the younger generation. Globally, the concept of colonial mentality aligns with postcolonial theories that examine the enduring effects of colonization on formerly colonized societies. These theories highlight how colonialism disrupts indigenous systems and

imposes foreign ideologies, creating hierarchical power dynamics that favour the colonizers' culture (Ngugi wa Thiong'o, 2023).

In Nigeria, colonial mentality manifests in various forms, including the preference for English over native languages, the stigmatization of traditional practices, and the widespread admiration for Western lifestyles (Adebisi, 2018). This phenomenon has profound implications for the socio-psychological development of Nigerian youths, who often navigate a cultural dichotomy between their native heritage and Western ideals.

From a psychological perspective, colonial mentality contributes to low self-esteem, identity confusion, and diminished self-efficacy among Nigerian youths. The internalization of inferiority leads to self-doubt and a lack of pride in cultural heritage, fostering feelings of inadequacy in social and professional contexts (Chukwu, 2020; Ibrahim, 2022). Additionally, this mindset undermines the resilience and creativity of Nigerian youths, as many perceive Western solutions and innovations as inherently superior. The psychological toll of this phenomenon is further exacerbated by the portrayal of Western culture as a standard of modernity and success, perpetuating a cycle of cultural dependency and alienation (Okonkwo, 2021).

On a societal level, colonial mentality erodes cultural cohesion and national pride. The devaluation of indigenous knowledge and practices creates a generational divide, where younger Nigerians view traditional values as obsolete or irrelevant. This dynamic undermines efforts to promote cultural preservation and collective identity, as many youths prioritize Western ideals over national development goals (Adebisi, 2018). Furthermore, the pervasive influence of colonial mentality exacerbates socio-economic inequalities, as access to Western education, products, and opportunities becomes a marker of privilege, leaving marginalized populations further disenfranchised (Chukwu, 2020).

Theoretical frameworks such as postcolonial theory and social identity theory provide insights into the power dynamics and psychological implications of colonial mentality.

Postcolonial theory underscores the structural inequalities and cultural hegemony imposed by colonialism, which continue to shape societal values and power relations (Ngugi wa Thiong'o, 2023). Social identity theory explains how individuals derive self-esteem and social significance from their group membership, highlighting the challenges faced by Nigerian youths in reconciling their indigenous identity with Western ideals (Ibrahim, 2022). These frameworks underscore the need for interventions that address the socio-psychological impacts of colonial mentality and promote cultural reawakening among Nigerian youths.

The research seeks to critically examine the socio-psychological impacts of colonial mentality on Nigerian youths. By exploring its effects on identity, self-esteem, and cultural cohesion, the study aims to contribute to the discourse on postcolonial resilience and youth development. It adopts a non-empirical approach, relying on existing literature and theoretical analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue. Addressing the socio-psychological effects of colonial mentality is imperative for nurturing a generation that values its heritage and actively contributes to national development.

Statement of the Problem

Colonial mentality, deeply rooted in Nigeria's historical experience of colonization, continues to exert profound socio-psychological impacts on the nation's youths. This mindset, characterized by the internalization of inferiority toward indigenous cultures and the overvaluation of Western ideals, has created a generational crisis of cultural alienation and identity confusion. Nigerian youths, who often view their native heritage as inferior, face challenges in fostering self-esteem, cultural pride, and social belonging.

The persistence of colonial mentality also undermines societal cohesion and cultural preservation, as younger generations increasingly reject traditional values and practices in favour of Western norms. This devaluation of indigenous knowledge not only disrupts cultural continuity but also exacerbates socio-economic inequalities, as access to Western education and opportunities

becomes a marker of privilege. Furthermore, the psychological toll of this phenomenon manifests in diminished self-worth, low self-efficacy, and heightened identity conflicts among Nigerian youths.

These challenges highlight the urgent need to address the socio-psychological effects of colonial mentality on Nigerian youths. Without intervention, this pervasive mindset will continue to erode cultural identity, national pride, and the developmental potential of future generations.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to investigate the socio-psychological impacts of colonial mentality on Nigerian youths. The specific objectives are to:

1. Examine the extent to which colonial mentality impacts the cultural attitudes of Nigerian youths.
2. Ascertain the implications of colonial mentality on the career aspirations of Nigerian youths.
3. Investigate the extent to which colonial mentality impacts the identity development of Nigerian Youths.
4. Analyze the impact of colonial mentality on the sense of belonging among Nigerian youths.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Postcolonial Theory (Edward Said, 1978): Postcolonial theory, as advanced by scholars such as Edward Said (1978), provided a robust framework for understanding the socio-psychological impacts of colonial mentality on Nigerian youths. The theory critically examined the cultural, psychological, and societal consequences of colonial rule, highlighting how colonial ideologies continue to shape post-independence societies. It posited that colonialism imposes systems of dominance and subjugation that linger in the collective consciousness of formerly colonized societies, fostering feelings of inferiority and cultural alienation.

In the context of Nigerian youths, postcolonial theory shed light on how colonial mentality manifests through self-perception, cultural attitudes, and social behaviours. The internalization of colonial narratives, which often

glorify Western ideals and denigrate indigenous cultures, perpetuates a cycle of identity dissonance and cultural alienation among youths. For Nigerian youths, the strains of colonial mentality arise from several factors. First, the failure to achieve positively valued goals, such as self-acceptance and cultural pride, leads to identity conflicts. Nigerian youths often aspire to Western ideals of success, beauty, and modernity, which may be unattainable or misaligned with their indigenous cultural values. Second, the removal of positively valued stimuli, such as a connection to their heritage, language, and traditions, further alienates youths from their cultural roots. Lastly, societal pressures to conform to Westernized standards and the stigmatization of indigenous practices exacerbates feelings of inferiority and self-rejection.

According to postcolonial theory, the strains caused by colonial mentality can result in negative emotions, such as shame, resentment, and a diminished sense of self-worth. For instance, Nigerian youths who perceive their indigenous culture as inferior may experience shame and self-doubt, leading to low self-esteem and identity struggles. These negative emotions may manifest in maladaptive coping mechanisms, such as rejecting their cultural identity, mimicking Western behaviours, or disengaging from community and social ties.

On a societal level, colonial mentality perpetuates systemic issues such as cultural homogenization, loss of indigenous knowledge, and social stratification. The glorification of Western ideals fosters a sense of division within Nigerian society, as individuals who conform to these standards may be perceived as more "modern" or "successful" than those who embrace indigenous practices. This division undermines social cohesion and erodes cultural solidarity, further entrenching the psychological and societal impacts of colonialism.

The reliance on postcolonial theory to understand the impacts of colonial mentality underscores the importance of addressing these strains at both individual and societal levels. The theory highlights the need to promote cultural reclamation, decolonized education systems, and community-based interventions to foster cultural

pride and psychological wellbeing among Nigerian youths.

Key Tenets of Postcolonial Theory **Cultural Hegemony and the Othering Process**

Postcolonial theory critiques how colonial powers imposed cultural hegemony by presenting their culture as superior while denigrating the culture of the colonized. Edward Said's concept of "Orientalism" highlights how colonizers portrayed non-Western cultures as exotic, primitive, or inferior. This created an enduring process of "othering," where the colonized internalized these perceptions, leading to a distorted view of their identity. For Nigerian youths, this manifests in a preference for Western ideals, ranging from beauty standards to language, often at the expense of their indigenous culture and heritage. The foregoing manifests in the following ways:

Hybridity and Cultural Identity: Homi Bhabha's concept of "hybridity" sheds light on how colonial and indigenous cultures merge, creating a hybrid cultural identity that can be both enriching and disorienting. While hybridity allows for the coexistence of diverse influences, it also fosters identity struggles, particularly among Nigerian youths, as they navigate the tension between their traditional roots and Westernized aspirations. This duality often results in a fractured sense of self, where individuals neither fully embrace their indigenous culture nor feel entirely accepted by the Western ideals they adopt.

Subaltern Voices and Marginalization: Gayatri Spivak's focus on the "subaltern" emphasizes the voices and experiences of marginalized groups, such as the colonized. Postcolonial theory highlights how colonial systems suppressed indigenous knowledge, languages, and traditions, relegating them to the margins. For Nigerian youths, this marginalization persists in educational systems that prioritize Western curricula, media representations that glorify Western lifestyles, and societal structures that equate modernity with Westernization.

Psychological Colonization and Mental Liberation: Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o introduced the idea of "decolonizing the mind,"

advocating for a conscious effort to reclaim indigenous languages, traditions, and identities. Postcolonial theory asserts that psychological colonization is one of the most enduring effects of colonial rule. Nigerian youths often experience this in the form of low self-esteem, cultural alienation, and a desire to assimilate into Western norms. Decolonization, therefore, requires intentional efforts to rebuild cultural pride and foster self-acceptance.

Colonial Mentality and Its Strains on Nigerian Youths: Postcolonial theory identifies multiple dimensions of strain resulting from colonial mentality:

Failure to Achieve Positively Valued Goals: Nigerian youths often aspire to Western standards of success, including education, career, and lifestyle, which may be unattainable due to systemic inequalities and local realities. The inability to meet these expectations fosters feelings of inadequacy, frustration, and shame. For instance, youths who are unable to access opportunities abroad or adopt Western lifestyles may feel like failures, even within their own communities.

Loss of Positively Valued Stimuli: The erosion of indigenous languages, traditions, and values contributes to a disconnection from cultural heritage. Youths who are discouraged from speaking their native languages or practicing traditional customs often lose a sense of belonging, resulting in cultural alienation and identity crises.

Presentation of Negatively Valued Stimuli: Societal pressures to conform to Western norms and the stigmatization of indigenous practices create additional psychological burdens. For example, traditional attires, local accents, and even darker skin tones are sometimes viewed as inferior or "uncivilized," perpetuating self-rejection and reinforcing societal inequalities.

Psychological and Societal Impacts

On Individuals: Postcolonial theory explains how colonial mentality generates negative emotions like shame, resentment, and self-doubt. Nigerian youths may adopt maladaptive coping strategies, such as rejecting their cultural heritage, mimicking Western

behaviours, or pursuing risky migration paths in search of a “better life.” These behaviours often lead to emotional exhaustion, mental health issues, and weakened social ties.

On Society: On a larger scale, colonial mentality perpetuates systemic issues like cultural homogenization and social stratification. The glorification of Western ideals fosters divisions within Nigerian society, as individuals who conform to these ideals may be perceived as more educated or modern. This exacerbates social inequalities, erodes trust in indigenous institutions, and undermines efforts to build a cohesive national identity.

Advantages of Postcolonial Theory for the Study

1. Postcolonial theory provides a comprehensive framework for examining how historical colonial structures influence the socio-psychological experiences of Nigerian youths.
2. The theory effectively addresses issues of identity, cultural alienation, and systemic oppression, which are central to understanding the impacts of colonial mentality.
3. Its emphasis on decolonization aligns closely with the study’s goal of proposing strategies to mitigate the negative effects of colonial mentality.
4. Postcolonial theory underscores the role of societal systems, such as education and media, in perpetuating colonial ideologies, offering insights into potential intervention points.

Conceptual Review

Perspectives of Colonial Mentality

Colonial mentality remains an enduring issue in post-colonial societies, particularly in Nigeria, where the psychological effects of colonial rule continue to shape the identities, behaviours, and attitudes of its youths. This mentality is characterized by a psychological dependency on Western norms, values, and systems, while neglecting or devaluing indigenous traditions and beliefs. The impacts of colonial mentality on Nigerian youths can be examined through three key dimensions:

political, cultural, and educational. Each dimension offers a distinct yet interconnected way to understand how colonial ideologies persist and affect contemporary Nigerian society.

Political Dimension of Colonial Mentality: The political dimension of colonial mentality pertains to the deep-rooted effects of colonial governance systems that were intentionally structured to maintain control over colonized populations while undermining or suppressing indigenous forms of political participation and self-governance. In the case of Nigeria, British colonial rule implemented a political system centered around indirect rule, a strategy that co-opted local rulers and traditional leaders to serve colonial interests.

This system effectively side-lined indigenous political structures, limiting the ability of local communities to govern themselves independently. Local rulers were transformed into intermediaries who were expected to enforce colonial policies and maintain order according to the British authorities' directives (Nwosu, 2018). This created a political environment where colonial powers held ultimate control, and the indigenous population was left politically disempowered.

By instilling a governance system that functioned through intermediaries and imposed foreign political systems, the British created a sense of dependency on the colonial state. This resulted in a systemic disempowerment of the local population, with indigenous forms of governance rendered obsolete or ineffective. The imposition of colonial authority in this way reinforced the hierarchical structure of society, where the colonial elite held significant political power, privileges, and resources, while the vast majority of the local population remained excluded from meaningful political participation (Akinyemi, 2016). As a result, the political sphere in Nigeria was largely shaped by colonial interests, often at the expense of the indigenous populace.

For Nigerian youths today, the political dimension of colonial mentality is manifested in their perceptions of governance, leadership, and political participation. The continued reverence for Western political systems, such as democracy, liberalism, and the rule of law, often overshadows

the potential value of traditional African governance systems. Nigerian youths, particularly those in urban areas, are more likely to view Western political models as inherently superior to indigenous governance structures. This perception leads them to model their political participation on the practices of Western nations, rather than seeking solutions grounded in their own cultural and historical contexts (Adebayo, 2018). This mindset diminishes the relevance of indigenous forms of leadership and governance, which could be more contextually appropriate for addressing local challenges and ensuring sustainable development.

The aspiration to mimic Western models of political participation and leadership is further compounded by a sense of inadequacy regarding local political systems. Many Nigerian youths, especially in the face of ineffective leadership, corruption, and widespread dissatisfaction with local political institutions, may begin to view indigenous governance as obsolete, primitive, or ineffective. As a result, they may look to Western countries as beacons of good governance and stable political systems. This reliance on foreign models reinforces the belief that local political solutions are inferior and that true progress can only be achieved by following Western examples (Nwosu, 2018).

Additionally, colonial mentality in the political domain often fosters a lack of trust in local political institutions and leaders. The disillusionment with Nigerian political structures, which many youths perceive as corrupt, inefficient, or self-serving, leads to a sense of alienation from the political process. When local political leaders are seen as failing to address the needs and aspirations of the people, Nigerian youths may increasingly turn to external solutions, often believing that Western governance systems hold the answers to Nigeria's political and economic challenges. This political disconnection can result in a lack of political engagement and apathy, as youths may feel that their involvement in local governance is futile or irrelevant unless it adheres to Western ideals (Akinyemi, 2016).

This political dependency on external models limits the potential for local innovation in governance and political reform. As Nigerian

youths continue to internalize the belief that indigenous political structures are inferior, they may fail to recognize opportunities for culturally relevant political solutions that could address the unique challenges faced by their communities. Consequently, the possibility of meaningful reform within Nigeria's political system diminishes, as young people are less likely to propose or advocate for alternatives that draw from their own history, values, and cultural practices (Adebayo, 2018).

Moreover, this phenomenon perpetuates a cycle of political disempowerment and marginalization, where youths feel alienated from both the traditional and modern political systems. Without a sense of ownership over their political future and a lack of trust in the political establishment, Nigerian youths may struggle to forge a political identity that is both rooted in their cultural heritage and relevant to the needs of contemporary society.

Cultural Dimension of Colonial Mentality: The cultural dimension of colonial mentality remains one of the most pervasive and deeply ingrained aspects of the colonial legacy, as it directly influences how Nigerian youths perceive their own identity, traditions, and values. During the colonial period, colonial powers intentionally sought to undermine and suppress indigenous cultures, viewing them as "primitive" or "inferior" in comparison to Western culture. African traditions, languages, belief systems, and societal structures were frequently demeaned and discarded, while Western culture was elevated to the status of the ideal (Fanon, 2023).

Colonial education, media, and cultural institutions were powerful tools used to redefine African identity through a lens of colonial dominance, often portraying African ways of life as uncivilized and in need of transformation. This process of cultural devaluation resulted in a shift in how many African societies viewed their own heritage, creating a framework in which colonial powers were seen as the cultural and intellectual authorities.

The effects of this cultural assault have had long-lasting repercussions, which are particularly evident in the attitudes of Nigerian youths today. Many young Nigerians, especially

those in urban areas, are more likely to emulate Western cultural practices, such as adopting Western fashion styles, consuming Western music and media, and adopting social behaviours that reflect globalized ideals. This trend is most visible among youth in cosmopolitan centers like Lagos and Abuja, where Western influences are more prominent. As a result, there is a noticeable cultural dissonance, where Nigerian youths gravitate toward foreign cultural norms and practices, while neglecting or even rejecting their own indigenous cultural expressions. This shift leads to a disconnection from traditional African values, rituals, and languages, and often fosters a sense of cultural inferiority (Oluwole, 2019).

The adoption of foreign cultural norms can result in a profound loss of cultural pride and a weakened sense of cultural identity. For many Nigerian youths, the idealized image of Western culture can become a standard by which they judge their own heritage. Indigenous languages, for example, are often perceived as less prestigious or modern than English, which has become the dominant language of communication in formal, educational, and professional settings. As a result, many young Nigerians increasingly favour English in both casual and formal contexts, contributing to the erosion of local languages and a deeper sense of cultural alienation (Oluwole, 2019). The decline in the use of indigenous languages further alienates Nigerian youths from their cultural roots, as language is a central vehicle for the transmission of cultural knowledge, traditions, and values.

This cultural alienation is not just confined to language but extends to all aspects of daily life. The prevalence of Western-style education and consumerism has created a generation of young Nigerians who often view indigenous knowledge systems, such as traditional medicine, spiritual practices, and local craftsmanship, as outdated or irrelevant. This creates a generational divide where the older generations, who are more connected to indigenous ways of life, struggle to pass on cultural knowledge and practices to younger generations.

The younger generation's adoption of globalized Western ideals contributes to a tension

between tradition and modernity, creating friction within families, communities, and society at large. In many instances, the older generation's attempts to preserve African cultural practices are seen as backward or restrictive by younger Nigerians, while the younger generation views the Westernized lifestyle as more progressive, sophisticated, and desirable (Adebayo, 2018).

Furthermore, the fragmentation of Nigerian society due to colonial mentality has broader implications for national unity. As younger generations increasingly align themselves with globalized ideals, they may begin to see themselves as separate from their roots, leading to a weakened sense of national identity and collective purpose. When cultural pride diminishes and traditional values are neglected, the social fabric of Nigerian society begins to fray, weakening the bonds that hold the nation together. This cultural erosion not only leads to a fragmented society but also undermines the strength and resilience of a collective cultural memory that is essential for the cohesion and unity of the nation. As collective cultural memory fades, so does the ability to draw upon past experiences and indigenous knowledge to tackle contemporary challenges.

The impact of colonial mentality on the cultural dimension extends beyond individual youths and permeates entire communities, as the younger generations' lack of connection to their cultural roots can result in a weakening of intergenerational ties and a failure to uphold and pass on the cultural heritage that has sustained Nigerian society for centuries. The rejection of African identity in favor of Western ideals contributes to a collective cultural amnesia, in which the significance of indigenous culture and history is gradually lost in favor of foreign ideals that may not be well-suited to Nigeria's unique socio-cultural context.

Educational Dimension of Colonial Mentality: Colonial education in Nigeria was not only a tool for intellectual control but also a key mechanism for perpetuating colonial mentality by imposing Western ways of thinking, learning, and being on indigenous populations. The British colonial education system systematically elevated Western knowledge—especially in the areas of science, literature, and governance—

while systematically devaluing and marginalizing indigenous forms of knowledge, languages, and values.

Colonial authorities structured the educational system to serve their economic and political interests, thus teaching Nigerian youths to view Western education as the gateway to success, prosperity, and social mobility. African knowledge systems, on the other hand, were often portrayed as primitive, backward, and unscientific (Fanon, 2023). This created an educational framework in which academic success was synonymous with the mastery of foreign knowledge and languages, and those who excelled within this system were often viewed as "more advanced" or "civilized," reinforcing the idea that Western standards were the measure of intellectual and social progress.

The legacy of colonial education continues to shape educational attitudes and priorities in post-colonial Nigeria. The prevailing preference for Western education over local educational models remains a significant issue today. Nigerian youths, particularly those in urban areas, often place greater value on degrees obtained from Western universities than from local Nigerian institutions. This preference persists despite the fact that local universities may be better suited to address the unique needs and challenges faced by Nigerian society. The idea that education from the West is superior perpetuates the notion that foreign knowledge and academic qualifications are the key to social status and economic success.

As a result, young Nigerians increasingly aspire to study abroad, believing that only Western degrees hold value in the global marketplace (Akinyemi, 2016). This phenomenon has contributed to a brain drain, where Nigeria's brightest minds leave the country to pursue higher education opportunities abroad, thus depriving the country of the human capital needed to address its own development challenges. The idea that success is dependent on foreign education systems, coupled with the belief that local knowledge and institutions are inferior, continues to fuel the reliance on Western education and perpetuates the mental colonialism that hinders national progress.

Another significant aspect of colonial mentality in Nigerian education is the curricular dominance of Western theories, models, and historical narratives. The educational system in Nigeria, from primary schools to universities, is still largely shaped by a Eurocentric curriculum that prioritizes Western thinkers and perspectives, often at the expense of indigenous African knowledge systems. Indigenous knowledge—including traditional forms of medicine, agriculture, philosophy, and governance—is often excluded or given minimal attention in formal education, creating a profound disconnect between what is taught in schools and the lived realities of Nigerian youths.

This disconnect results in a disempowered generation that is ill-equipped to understand and address local challenges from an indigenous knowledge perspective. While Western theories and frameworks may have their value, the over-reliance on these models diminishes the potential for local innovation and solutions that are grounded in the African context (Ogunyemi, 2017). The curricular structure thus reinforces the idea that external knowledge is superior and more relevant to solving local problems, which further entrenches colonial mentality and perpetuates a cycle of dependency on foreign ideologies.

Moreover, the emphasis on Western education leads to a lack of cultural relevance in the educational system. In many instances, Nigerian youths are taught to admire and aspire to emulate the lifestyles, values, and ideas of Western countries, rather than fostering pride in their own cultural heritage. The alienation from indigenous knowledge and cultural values within the formal educational setting weakens the capacity of Nigerian youths to appreciate and preserve the traditions, practices, and wisdom that have been passed down through generations.

This educational approach inadvertently reinforces a cultural inferiority complex, where local ways of thinking and being are considered less valuable and less sophisticated than their Western counterparts. The loss of cultural identity further exacerbates the psychological effects of colonial mentality, leading to a disempowered and disillusioned youth population (Adebayo, 2018).

Addressing the impact of colonial mentality in education requires a holistic approach to decolonizing the curriculum. This includes the integration of indigenous knowledge systems, the promotion of cultural pride, and the development of an educational framework that values local wisdom and aligns with the unique needs of Nigerian society. A reorientation of the education system is essential to encourage young Nigerians to appreciate their heritage and to recognize the value of African-based solutions to national problems. This shift could help foster a generation of youths who are not only academically successful but also culturally grounded and capable of contributing to the development of indigenous solutions that resonate with the Nigerian context.

Ultimately, the political, cultural, and educational dimensions of colonial mentality are deeply interconnected and mutually reinforcing. The political dimension manifests in the preference for foreign governance models, the cultural dimension in the devaluation of African traditions, and the educational dimension in the reliance on Western education. To dismantle these enduring effects of colonialism, it is essential to encourage a reclamation of indigenous knowledge, foster pride in African cultural heritage, and promote an education system that empowers youths to actively engage with their own contexts. Such efforts are essential for decolonizing the minds of Nigerian youths and empowering them to take ownership of their own development and progress.

FACTORS PREDISPOSING NIGERIAN YOUTHS TO COLONIAL MENTALITY

Colonial mentality remains a pervasive issue in many post-colonial societies, particularly among the youth, who are often the most impressionable and influenced by external cultures and ideologies. Nigerian youths, in particular, are vulnerable to the internalization of colonial attitudes, resulting in a diminished sense of pride in their indigenous cultures, values, and history. Several factors contribute to the persistence of colonial mentality among Nigerian youth, and these factors can be broadly categorized into historical, socio-political, educational, psychological, and media-related

dimensions. These factors interact to reinforce colonial attitudes and hinder the reclamation of indigenous identity.

Historical Legacy of Colonialism: The history of British colonial rule in Nigeria has left an indelible mark on the country's social, political, and economic structures, with long-lasting effects that are still evident in many aspects of Nigerian society today. The colonial period, which spanned several decades, was characterized by the imposition of Western values, systems, and institutions onto indigenous African societies.

The British colonizers positioned their culture, systems of governance, and forms of education as superior, leading to the systematic undermining of traditional African cultural practices, political systems, and social structures. Indigenous knowledge systems were marginalized, and the colonial education system was designed to produce a class of educated Nigerians who would serve the interests of the colonial administration rather than nurture and empower African cultural identity (Fanon, 2023). During the colonial period, the British introduced Western education, legal frameworks, and political institutions, all of which were presented as the gold standard for social and economic progress. The introduction of the Western education system in particular became a powerful tool for spreading the ideals of colonialism, as it sought to replace indigenous learning with European knowledge and languages.

The curriculum of schools and universities under colonial rule was heavily biased towards the English language, Western literature, European history, and Christianity, creating an environment where Nigerian youth were encouraged to abandon their native languages, cultural practices, and belief systems. This education system positioned Western ideals—such as individualism, liberalism, and democracy—as the benchmark of civilization, while presenting African traditions and ways of life as backward or primitive. This framework created a sense of cultural inferiority, as indigenous African cultures were seen as obstacles to modernization and progress.

The colonial legacy that emerged from this period continues to shape the self-perception

of many Nigerians, especially the youth. Colonial mentality has persisted, where many Nigerians are socialized to believe that Western lifestyles, values, and governance structures are inherently superior to those of their own communities. As a result, many young Nigerians—particularly those in urban centers—are taught to view Western culture as the epitome of success, social mobility, and prestige.

The consequences of this mindset are evident in the widespread admiration for Western fashion, entertainment, technology, and even political ideologies. Many youths aspire to emulate these aspects of Western life, often at the expense of their African heritage, which they might consider irrelevant or outdated (Akinyemi, 2016).

In addition to the psychological impact of colonial rule, the historical erosion of indigenous systems during colonization has been further compounded by the glorification of colonial powers in post-colonial educational curricula and media. In many instances, textbooks and educational materials in post-colonial Nigeria continue to present Western civilization as the pinnacle of human achievement. Colonial history, instead of being critically examined, is often celebrated or presented from the perspective of the colonizers, portraying the British Empire as a civilizing force in Africa.

This distorted representation of history serves to perpetuate the idea that Western civilization is synonymous with progress, development, and modernity. By framing colonialism as a positive force or a necessary stage in the development of African societies, the educational system indirectly reinforces the notion that Nigerian culture and traditions are inferior and must be aligned with Western norms to be deemed valuable.

Furthermore, this historical conditioning of Nigerian youths is not limited to educational materials but is also reflected in media portrayals of Western values. Films, television shows, and advertisements from Western countries often glorify lifestyles that are considered aspirational in Nigeria. These media representations emphasize Western consumerism, wealth, and social status, reinforcing the perception that adopting these values is the path to success. In

contrast, African cultural expressions—such as traditional dress, languages, and social practices—are often trivialized or portrayed as outdated, contributing to a sense of cultural alienation and inferiority among Nigerian youths (Ogunyemi, 2017).

Thus, the colonial mentality that continues to influence Nigerian society is not only a product of historical colonization but also a consequence of the ongoing glorification of Western ideals in education and media. This ideological colonization perpetuates the view that African ways of life are irrelevant or even inferior to those of Western societies, preventing Nigerian youths from fully embracing and celebrating their cultural identity. Overcoming this mindset requires a critical re-evaluation of colonial history, the decolonization of education, and the promotion of an authentic African identity that values indigenous knowledge, culture, and practices.

Educational System and Western Ideals: The educational system in Nigeria is deeply rooted in the colonial legacy, as the British colonial model has profoundly influenced its structure and content. The colonial education system was designed to serve the needs of the colonial powers by shaping the minds of Nigerians to align with Western values and governance systems. Today, many of the features of this system continue to shape the mindset of Nigerian youths, particularly in how they view their identity, culture, and education.

The English language remains the official medium of instruction in schools across Nigeria, and its prominence reflects the continued dominance of colonial influence over the country's education system. The use of English in all academic and governmental affairs limits the visibility and value of indigenous Nigerian languages, further perpetuating the idea that Western languages are superior to native African languages. This imbalance in linguistic representation has significant implications for the preservation and promotion of local cultures and languages (Ogunyemi, 2017).

The curriculum in Nigerian schools, particularly at the primary and secondary levels, remains predominantly focused on Western knowledge systems, which include Western

history, literature, and scientific models. While the curriculum has evolved over time, much of the content continues to prioritize European ideals, stories, and achievements, often at the expense of African histories and cultural traditions. Indigenous Nigerian cultures, philosophies, and knowledge systems receive minimal attention, and African contributions to global history and knowledge are rarely highlighted.

This educational framework reinforces the perception that Western knowledge is the standard of intellectual achievement, while African knowledge is often viewed as inferior, outdated, or irrelevant (Fanon, 2023). The preference for Westernized academic subjects—including law, medicine, engineering, and economics—further perpetuates this bias. In these fields, foreign qualifications and institutions are often viewed as more prestigious, leading many Nigerian youths to pursue education abroad or seek degrees from internationally recognized institutions. This cultural orientation often leads to the devaluation of local Nigerian universities, even when these institutions may provide relevant and valuable knowledge tailored to the country's needs.

For Nigerian youths, the goal of acquiring a foreign qualification often becomes an aspiration, with many young Nigerians aspiring to study in countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, or other Western nations. This is driven by the widespread belief that education from Western institutions is the gateway to success, status, and economic mobility. In turn, this perpetuates the notion that Nigerian universities are not as effective or respected, creating a brain drain as talented individuals leave the country in pursuit of academic and professional opportunities abroad. This trend contributes to the reproduction of colonial mentality, where youths are taught to view the Western education system as superior and the African system as inadequate (Adebayo, 2018).

Moreover, the educational practices that continue to be used in Nigeria often reflect colonial-era structures. For example, the rigid and hierarchical approach to teaching and learning, which places the teacher as the central authority

and limits student participation and creativity, mirrors the authoritarian structures that were imposed during the colonial period. This lack of emphasis on critical thinking and local problem-solving methods in the curriculum leaves many Nigerian youths disconnected from their cultural and intellectual heritage. By adopting Western educational standards, the Nigerian education system inadvertently undermines the development of indigenous knowledge systems, which could offer valuable insights into addressing the country's social, political, and economic challenges (Ogunyemi, 2017).

As a result, many Nigerian youths grow up with the belief that foreign education and knowledge are the benchmarks for success and social recognition. This creates a sense of cultural alienation, where local values, traditions, and historical experiences are undervalued. The colonial education system thus contributes to the reinforcement of colonial mentality by teaching youths that their native culture, history, and knowledge are secondary to the achievements and standards of the West.

To overcome these challenges, it is essential to rethink and reorient the educational system in Nigeria, emphasizing the integration of indigenous knowledge and cultural values alongside Western education. This approach can promote a more balanced and inclusive education system, allowing Nigerian youths to develop a deeper sense of pride in their heritage while also acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary for success in a globalized world.

Socio-Political and Economic Factors:

The socio-political and economic structures in post-colonial Nigeria have been profoundly shaped by the legacies of colonial rule, leading to a persistent and entrenched system of power imbalances that continue to reinforce colonial mentality. During the colonial era, the British rulers established a governance system that concentrated power in the hands of a small, often foreign-aligned elite, while marginalizing the broader population. This elite class, comprised of indigenous leaders who were co-opted into serving colonial interests and foreign administrators, were granted privileges that allowed them to dominate political, social, and economic affairs.

The effects of this governance system continue to be felt today, as many of these elites—whether in politics, business, or academia—still wield considerable power. Western values, education, and lifestyles have become symbols of prestige and success within these elite circles, reinforcing the idea that Western ways of life are superior to indigenous African traditions and that social advancement is best achieved by emulating Western standards. This influence has contributed to the continued dominance of Western norms and ideals in the socio-political landscape of Nigeria, perpetuating colonial mentality among both the elite and the general population (Fanon, 2023).

The economic structure in post-colonial Nigeria has also been shaped by colonial exploitation, with the British setting up an economy that relied heavily on the extraction of raw materials for the benefit of the colonial power. This extractive economic model favored foreign corporations and multinational companies while leaving local industries underdeveloped and marginalized. Today, Nigeria's economy continues to be dominated by foreign investment, with multinational corporations holding significant sway over sectors like oil, agriculture, and telecommunications.

The continued dominance of Western economic powers has led to a form of economic dependency, where Nigerian youths, particularly those in urban areas, often associate wealth and status with foreign brands, foreign education, and foreign products. This economic dependence on foreign influence has fostered a generation of youths who view Western countries as the epitome of prosperity and progress, believing that to achieve success, they must adopt Western ideals and practices (Akinyemi, 2016).

The preference for foreign goods and brands has created a consumer culture where Western products—ranging from clothing and luxury items to technology—are highly valued, often seen as indicators of success. This mindset leads many Nigerian youths to equate material wealth and social prestige with Westernization. Consequently, local businesses and cultural practices are often side-lined in favor of foreign alternatives that are perceived as being of higher

quality or more fashionable. This cultural alienation further entrenches the idea that Western culture is superior, while African traditions and local economic models are considered inferior or outdated.

The lack of economic opportunities in many parts of Nigeria exacerbates this dependence on Western ideals. With high unemployment rates and limited access to quality education and training, many Nigerian youths see emigration to Western countries as their best chance for economic advancement. The notion that success and social mobility are more easily achievable in the West has contributed to a brain drain, with many of the country's brightest minds leaving to seek better opportunities abroad. This trend reinforces the idea that local economic solutions and systems are not viable, and that Nigerian youths must align themselves with globalized Western ideals to succeed in the modern world.

Moreover, the economic and political reliance on foreign powers and multinational corporations has hindered the development of a strong, self-sustaining local economy. While there have been efforts to promote local industries and entrepreneurship, these have often been thwarted by factors such as political instability, corruption, and insufficient infrastructure. The lack of viable economic alternatives within Nigeria has left many youths with few options but to seek inspiration and guidance from foreign economies. This has further deepened the colonial mentality, as youths continue to view foreign solutions as the only viable path to success, neglecting the potential for homegrown solutions that reflect the country's unique cultural and economic context.

The persistence of colonial mentality in the socio-political and economic spheres highlights the need for a reimagining of Nigeria's development path—one that acknowledges and values indigenous knowledge systems, local economic potential, and the richness of Nigerian cultural traditions. To break free from the cycle of dependency on foreign powers and ideals, Nigerian youths must be empowered with the tools, knowledge, and confidence to value their own heritage, and to innovate solutions that address the country's challenges from within

(Adebayo, 2018). Only by reclaiming agency and embracing local solutions can Nigeria hope to move away from the shadows of colonial influence and build a future that reflects the aspirations and values of its people.

Psychological Factors and Internalized Inferiority: Psychologically, the internalization of colonial mentality in Nigerian youths can be deeply understood through the lens of cognitive dissonance, a theory that explains the discomfort individuals experience when confronted with conflicting beliefs or values. In this context, Nigerian youths often find themselves torn between their indigenous identity and the ideals imposed by colonialism, which were reinforced through various channels such as education, media, and societal expectations.

This dissonance manifests in internal conflicts, as youths struggle to reconcile the values of African heritage with the Western ideals they have been taught to aspire to. The cognitive tension created by these conflicting identities often results in feelings of self-doubt, inferiority, and a diminished sense of pride in their cultural heritage. In many cases, these feelings of inadequacy can extend beyond personal identity to influence broader social interactions and the way they perceive their communities and cultural traditions (Fanon, 2023).

The concept of “mental colonization” further illustrates how colonial mentality operates at a psychological level. Mental colonization refers to the process through which individuals unconsciously internalize the beliefs and values of their colonizers, often to the detriment of their own cultural identity. In Nigeria, this process is particularly evident in the way youths value Western culture over their indigenous traditions. The pervasive nature of Western education, coupled with the influence of global media, makes it increasingly difficult for Nigerian youths to fully embrace their cultural roots.

The pressure to conform to Western standards—whether through fashion, language, or social behaviours—further intensifies the psychological conflict, creating a generation of youths who feel caught between two conflicting worlds. This internalized colonial mentality fosters a pervasive belief that Western ways of

life are superior and that African identity is somehow inferior or backward (Ogunyemi, 2017).

The influence of Western ideals on Nigerian youths is not limited to abstract concepts; it translates into concrete psychological effects that shape their behaviours, attitudes, and aspirations. Many Nigerian youths, especially those in urban centers, idolize Western celebrities, athletes, and political figures, seeing them as models of success and achievement. This emulation is not just about external appearance; it extends to lifestyle choices, values, and aspirations.

The glorification of Western lifestyles, coupled with a lack of accessible indigenous cultural practices in daily life, creates a situation where youths often feel alienated from their own heritage. This alienation is particularly pronounced among those who have limited exposure to traditional cultural practices due to urbanization, westernized schooling, or the dominance of Western media. As a result, these youths are often unable to fully connect with or appreciate their cultural roots, leading them to adopt foreign norms as the standard of success. This psychological alienation is also deeply tied to the lack of cultural representation in the mainstream.

Western media, which dominates global culture, often portrays African cultures in a stereotypical or negative light, reinforcing the belief that African traditions are inferior. This portrayal can make it even more difficult for Nigerian youths to find positive role models within their own culture, further perpetuating the cycle of cultural inferiority. In contrast, Western celebrities and political figures, portrayed as epitomes of success, become the only reference points for social mobility and aspirational living. This creates a vicious cycle where Nigerian youths feel that their own cultural values and practices are inadequate or unworthy of emulation, pushing them further away from their heritage (Adebayo, 2018).

Furthermore, the psychological impact of colonial mentality can also lead to identity crises among Nigerian youths. Faced with the constant reinforcement of Western ideals, many youths experience a fragmented sense of self, unsure of

where they truly belong. The disconnect between their indigenous identity and the Westernized identity they are expected to adopt can lead to cognitive dissonance, where they feel torn between two worlds.

This psychological tension can have profound consequences for their mental health, as they struggle to understand and accept who they are in relation to the world around them. As these youths continue to internalize Western ideals, they may inadvertently suppress or devalue their own cultural practices, leading to a loss of cultural pride and a weakened sense of cultural continuity (Akinyemi, 2016).

The psychological effects of colonial mentality are thus deeply embedded in Nigerian youths' daily lives, shaping their beliefs, behaviours, and aspirations in ways that continue to perpetuate colonial legacies. The process of decolonization, both at the individual and societal levels, requires not only a reclaiming of cultural identity but also an active rejection of the belief that Western culture is superior. By promoting a stronger sense of cultural pride, encouraging the rediscovery of indigenous practices, and challenging the pervasive influence of Western media and education, Nigerian youths can begin to reclaim their sense of self and empower their cultural identity. This psychological shift will be a crucial step toward the decolonization of their minds and the dismantling of the colonial mentality that continues to shape their perceptions of themselves and their world.

Influence of Media and Globalization:

The role of media and globalization in perpetuating colonial mentality is crucial in understanding how Western ideals continue to dominate the psyche of Nigerian youths. The global dominance of Western media, particularly through films, music, fashion, and advertising, has deeply influenced the aspirations of Nigerian youths. These media channels often present Western lifestyles as the epitome of success, happiness, and modernity, positioning them as ideals worth striving for.

Western celebrities and pop culture icons are glorified, and their lifestyles are portrayed as symbols of achievement. This constant exposure creates a desire among Nigerian youths to emulate these figures, believing that adopting

Western norms, values, and practices is the key to attaining success and recognition. The social media era has amplified this effect, where Western influencers and trends are frequently showcased, and their image and lifestyles are highly romanticized. Platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok allow for the instant global dissemination of Western norms, making it easier for youths to emulate these ideals in their daily lives. This creates a cycle of cultural imitation that continues to distance Nigerian youths from their indigenous roots, while reinforcing the belief that Western culture is more sophisticated and desirable (Fanon, 2023).

The influence of globalization, particularly through the internet, has brought Western culture directly into the homes of many Nigerian youths, essentially dissolving geographic and cultural barriers. With internet access being more widespread, youths are continuously exposed to Western films, music videos, and television shows that present a glamorous, idealized version of Western life. These media portrayals show Western societies as advanced, wealthy, and progressive, suggesting that these features are inherent to Western culture.

In contrast, African cultures are rarely depicted in a positive light or are portrayed through a stereotypical or reductive lens, reinforcing the idea that indigenous African culture is backward or primitive. This creates a stark contrast between the perceived advantages of Western lifestyles and the limitations of African identity, pushing Nigerian youths to gravitate toward foreign ideals.

The widespread use of English, the official language in many Nigerian educational and professional settings, further contributes to the dominance of Western culture in daily life. The adoption of Western fashion trends, cosmetic standards, and the increasing preference for foreign goods and services all point to a globalized consumption pattern that privileges Western brands over local alternatives. This has created a marketplace in which foreign goods, especially those from Western countries, are often viewed as superior and more desirable than locally produced items. The prioritization of Western consumer goods over indigenous

products highlights the continued internalization of colonial mentality, as youths believe that Western items represent a higher standard of living and prestige (Oluwole, 2019).

Moreover, the advent of social media and the digital age has revolutionized how Nigerian youths consume and engage with culture. Social media platforms have not only facilitated real-time exposure to Western trends and lifestyles but also created an interactive space for youths to emulate and amplify these trends. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok allow users to engage with Western influencers and adopt their way of life, often amplifying the cultural gap between African traditions and Western ideals. In many cases, globalization through social media intensifies the pressure on Nigerian youths to reject their indigenous culture in favor of Western ideals, reinforcing a hierarchy in which Western culture holds the highest status (Ogunyemi, 2017).

As the media continues to showcase Western societies as models of progress and modernity, Nigerian youths are further distanced from their cultural heritage. The psychological effects of these portrayals are profound, as they foster a belief that Western ideals—from education to lifestyles—are the gold standard. This belief leads to the undervaluation of indigenous knowledge systems, languages, and practices, making youths feel disconnected from their cultural identities.

They come to perceive their traditional ways of life as less relevant or valuable in a globalized world. The cultural hegemony of Western media, particularly through social media and the internet, continues to shape the aspirations and self-concept of Nigerian youths, reinforcing a colonial mindset that views foreignness as superior and local identity as inferior (Adebayo, 2018).

Therefore, decolonizing the media and reclaiming local cultural narratives are crucial steps in combating the impact of colonial mentality. There is need to foster a sense of pride in their indigenous identity. This decolonization process also involves redefining success in a way that is authentically African, where local achievements and cultural practices are

celebrated and integrated into the broader societal framework.

PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH COLONIAL MENTALITY AMONG NIGERIAN YOUTHS

Colonial mentality has had profound and lasting effects on Nigerian youths, shaping their attitudes, behaviours, and perceptions of their own culture and identity.

Some of the key problems associated with colonial mentality among Nigerian youths include:

Identity Crisis and Cultural Alienation: One of the most significant issues linked to colonial mentality is the profound loss of cultural identity among Nigerian youths. The British colonial experience in Nigeria was marked by the systematic erosion of indigenous systems, including cultural practices, languages, and social norms. The colonial administration sought to replace African customs and values with Western ideals, which has had long-lasting effects on generations of Nigerians.

These Western values, initially imposed through force and later perpetuated through education, media, and governance, continue to dominate the Nigerian psyche, shaping the way youths perceive their own culture. As a result, many Nigerian youths find themselves in a constant state of cultural dislocation, torn between their heritage and the ideals they have come to associate with modernity and progress.

The internalization of Western ideals, often seen as symbols of success and development, leads to alienation from indigenous cultures. Nigerian youths, particularly those in urban areas, increasingly perceive their traditional practices and languages as outdated or inferior to Western ways of life. The elevation of Western-style education, fashion, and media representations of success has fostered a belief that Westernization is synonymous with advancement. As such, many youths reject their own cultural heritage, including their local languages, art forms, and social practices, in favor of adopting Western norms and values.

This trend is especially evident in the preference for foreign brands, fashion trends, and lifestyle choices that reflect Western influences,

reinforcing the idea that Nigerian culture is somehow less valuable or less desirable. This loss of cultural identity is further compounded by the lack of representation of African values in mainstream media, education, and public life. In the classroom, Nigerian youths are predominantly taught using Western-centric curricula that prioritize Western history, literature, and philosophies, while African perspectives and histories are often relegated to the margins.

As youths engage with global media, they are constantly bombarded with Western representations of beauty, success, and intelligence, reinforcing the perception that Western ideals are superior to African norms. This perpetuates a deep-seated sense of inferiority and cultural insecurity among Nigerian youths, making them feel disconnected from their roots and less confident in their own identity. The identity crisis experienced by Nigerian youths manifests in various ways, from adopting foreign names and accents to abandoning traditional practices and customs in favor of those perceived as more modern.

This cultural dislocation also affects the way youths view their sense of belonging. In some cases, it leads to a loss of pride in being Nigerian, as the youth may come to see their own culture as backward or irrelevant in the face of the globalized, Westernized world. The rejection of one's heritage often goes hand in hand with the desire to emulate Western lifestyles, such as the aspiration to live in Western countries, pursue foreign degrees, or become successful like Western celebrities. This mindset further erodes the confidence that youths could have in their local identities, and limits their understanding of the value and potential of their own culture in the global context.

The ongoing dominance of colonial mentality in Nigerian youth culture perpetuates a cycle where they feel they must distance themselves from their African heritage in order to be perceived as successful or sophisticated. The consequences of this cultural alienation are far-reaching, impacting everything from national pride and social cohesion to economic development and political engagement. It is crucial to recognize the importance of cultural

reclamation in addressing these issues, fostering an environment where Nigerian youths can embrace their heritage, recognize the value of their indigenous knowledge systems, and confidently take pride in being Nigerian, while simultaneously engaging with the global world without losing their cultural roots.

In order to overcome the identity crisis fostered by colonial mentality, there is a need for reform in the educational system that integrates African history, languages, and cultural practices. Moreover, fostering positive representation of Nigerian culture in the media can help shift perceptions, showing Nigerian youth that success can be achieved through local innovation, cultural pride, and the revitalization of indigenous knowledge systems. Only by reclaiming their cultural identity can Nigerian youths break free from the psychological chains of colonial mentality and move toward a future where they are proud of their heritage while contributing to global progress.

Inferiority Complex and Self-Doubt:

The internalization of colonial mentality often leads to deep feelings of inferiority among Nigerian youths, especially as they navigate a world that continues to glorify Western ideals while marginalizing their own African heritage. From a young age, many Nigerian youths are exposed to Western education systems, media, and cultural norms that reinforce the notion that Western ways of life are inherently superior to their indigenous traditions and practices.

This belief is ingrained through various channels, such as the portrayal of Western lifestyles as symbols of success, wealth, and modernity, while African cultures are frequently depicted as backward, primitive, or inferior. As a result, many Nigerian youths grow up with a pervasive sense of inadequacy, particularly when they perceive their cultural practices, languages, and knowledge systems as being less sophisticated or outdated compared to Western standards.

This cultural inferiority can manifest in a range of psychological and emotional challenges, including low self-esteem and self-doubt. Nigerian youths may feel that their native cultures and practices are irrelevant or inferior, leading to a diminished sense of pride in their

heritage. This internal conflict between their indigenous identity and the ideals imposed by colonial influences often results in a lack of confidence in their cultural values and traditions. This self-alienation from one's heritage can become a significant barrier to self-acceptance and personal growth, as youths may struggle to see the value in their own culture when it is constantly overshadowed by the glorification of the West.

The glorification of Western education and lifestyles further exacerbates this sense of inferiority. In Nigerian society, there is a prevailing belief that success can only be attained through the adoption of Western ideals, particularly through Western-style education. This is evident in the way many youths aspire to obtain foreign degrees, often perceiving qualifications from Western institutions as more prestigious and valuable than those earned locally.

The societal emphasis on Western-style academic achievement creates the notion that being educated in the West is synonymous with being more accomplished or more intelligent, further perpetuating the idea that local educational systems are somehow inferior. As a result, many youths may develop a fear of inadequacy when faced with the prospect of pursuing education or a career in Nigeria, as they believe they must seek validation from foreign institutions or conform to Western standards of success in order to be seen as legitimate or capable.

The media also plays a significant role in reinforcing these feelings of inferiority, as it continually glorifies Western celebrities, political figures, and cultural icons. Social media platforms, in particular, often showcase the lives of Western influencers, athletes, and entertainers, elevating them to an almost mythical status. This constant exposure to the "glamour" of Western success leaves many Nigerian youths feeling as though they must emulate these figures in order to be accepted or valued in society. The aspiration to live a Westernized lifestyle—marked by material wealth, celebrity status, and global recognition—becomes a primary measure of success, overshadowing the richness of Nigerian culture and achievements.

For many Nigerian youths, the path to self-empowerment and personal success seems to be through assimilation into Western norms, rather than the celebration and development of local knowledge, traditions, and values. This cultural pressure to conform often leads to a diminished sense of individual identity and a tendency to neglect or abandon local traditions. Whether it's in fashion, language, or social practices, adopting Western ideals becomes synonymous with progress, while anything that deviates from this path is viewed with scepticism or derision. This self-doubt and sense of cultural inadequacy perpetuate a cycle of cognitive dissonance, where Nigerian youths are torn between their inherited cultural values and the Western ideals that dominate their environments.

Furthermore, the idea that Western culture is the epitome of success and advancement fosters a colonial mindset that restricts creativity and innovation within Nigerian contexts. Instead of seeking solutions that are rooted in African traditions and knowledge systems, youths may be more inclined to look outward to the West for inspiration and answers. This reliance on external models, coupled with a disregard for indigenous knowledge, further reinforces feelings of cultural inferiority and hinders the development of homegrown solutions to local challenges.

Ultimately, the internalization of colonial mentality, through the glorification of Western ways of life and the denigration of African heritage, not only affects the psychological wellbeing of Nigerian youths but also shapes their identity formation and aspirations. For these youths, it becomes crucial to reclaim a sense of cultural pride, foster self-acceptance, and engage with both global and local influences in a way that celebrates their unique heritage while engaging with the world on their own terms. Encouraging a more balanced view of success, one that embraces both indigenous and global knowledge, could help mitigate feelings of inferiority and empower Nigerian youths to develop a sense of identity that is both proud and inclusive of their African roots.

Preference for Foreign Education and Qualifications: The colonial education system established by the British has had a lasting impact

on the way Nigerian youths perceive education and its value. This system, heavily based on Western standards and ideals, has ingrained the belief that foreign education—particularly from Western institutions—is superior to the education provided by local Nigerian universities and institutions. Over time, this notion has been deeply internalized by many Nigerian youths, who see Western degrees as the gold standard for success and social mobility. The perception that foreign education carries more prestige and value has led to an increased preference for studying abroad among Nigerian youths, often at the expense of the country's own educational institutions.

This preference for foreign qualifications has resulted in a significant brain drain—the migration of bright and talented Nigerian youths to other countries for better educational opportunities. Many Nigerian students, driven by the belief that foreign education is superior, seek to gain academic credentials from prestigious institutions in Europe, the United States, and other Western countries. This trend not only robs Nigeria of its best talents, who could have contributed to the nation's development, but also perpetuates the idea that foreign systems are the only viable paths for success. As a result, the local educational system continues to suffer, with Nigerian universities and colleges often overlooked by their own citizens.

The emphasis on foreign qualifications has a profound effect on the local education sector in Nigeria. Universities and institutions in the country often struggle with underfunding, outdated curricula, and limited resources. As many Nigerian youths increasingly seek opportunities abroad, they inadvertently contribute to the weakening of the local education system, both in terms of academic performance and institutional development. The growing preference for foreign degrees, coupled with the belief that they are more prestigious, exacerbates the gap between Nigeria's educational institutions and those in Western countries.

Moreover, the glorification of foreign education diminishes the perceived value of indigenous knowledge systems. Nigerian youths, particularly those pursuing professional fields like medicine, engineering, and law, often regard

foreign expertise as the ultimate authority. In doing so, they neglect the rich history of indigenous knowledge, practices, and innovations that have existed long before colonialism. Local systems of learning, which are rooted in African culture, traditions, and oral histories, are often dismissed as outdated or irrelevant. This dismissal of indigenous knowledge further reinforces the notion that Western knowledge is more advanced, while African ways of knowing are considered inferior.

The effect of this mentality extends beyond just the education sector; it also influences how Nigerian youths view their career prospects. Those who study abroad may believe that their foreign degrees will open doors to better job opportunities and higher social status, while those who graduate from local universities often struggle to gain recognition or respect in the job market. This imbalance, created by the devaluation of local education, leaves many youths feeling as though their national qualifications are not worth as much as those obtained from Western institutions, even though local institutions may offer comparable levels of education and expertise.

In addition to the brain drain and the undervaluation of local education, the preference for foreign qualifications has a cultural and psychological impact on Nigerian youths. By continually pursuing Western degrees, these youths are often distanced from their cultural roots and indigenous knowledge. They may come to see their own culture as irrelevant or inferior, contributing to a growing cultural alienation among the younger generation. In this sense, the pursuit of foreign education, while beneficial in some respects, also reinforces colonial mentality by perpetuating the belief that Western education is the key to success, and African education and traditions are secondary or unimportant.

The obsession with foreign qualifications further undermines the value of Nigeria's higher education institutions and encourages a globalized perspective that prioritizes the Western world over local contexts. In order to counter this trend, it is crucial to reform and improve the quality of education in Nigeria, as well as to celebrate and integrate indigenous knowledge into modern educational curricula. By

doing so, Nigeria can help its youth reconnect with their cultural heritage while providing them with the tools they need to succeed on the global stage. Additionally, there is a need to reframe the narrative around education, emphasizing that success does not depend solely on foreign degrees, but can also be achieved through local expertise and knowledge systems that reflect the nation's rich cultural and intellectual history.

Ultimately, a shift in perspective is needed, where Nigerian youths begin to view their local educational institutions and indigenous knowledge systems as valid, valuable, and capable of providing them with the resources necessary to succeed both locally and globally. By fostering an environment that respects both local and global education, Nigeria can bridge the gap between these two worlds and empower its youth to become active contributors to national development while preserving their cultural heritage.

Economic Dependency on the West:

Colonial mentality has profoundly influenced the economic landscape in Nigeria, fostering a deep-seated dependency on Western countries that continues to shape the behaviour and aspirations of Nigerian youths. One of the most significant ways this mentality manifests is in the preference for Western brands, products, and technologies. Many Nigerian youths, particularly those in urban areas, view Western goods as symbols of success, prosperity, and modernity.

This perception has led to a consumer culture that places foreign products at the forefront, often at the expense of locally produced goods and services. From fashion and electronics to food products and automobiles, Western brands are often regarded as superior, even though local alternatives may offer comparable or even superior quality at a lower cost.

The entrenched desire to emulate the lifestyles of wealthy Western nations, characterized by luxury goods and high-end brands, has further fueled the demand for foreign products. This not only places a financial strain on Nigerian youths, many of whom may struggle to afford these foreign goods, but also perpetuates the notion that Western consumer culture is the ideal to aspire to. As a result, a cycle of economic dependency on Western countries continues, as

Nigeria becomes increasingly reliant on imports rather than cultivating local industries and markets.

The influx of foreign goods into the country, often at the expense of domestic products, stifles local entrepreneurship and discourages investment in indigenous businesses. Nigerian youths, who are conditioned to view foreign products as superior, often overlook the potential of homegrown industries, thereby undermining the country's economic independence and sustainability.

Moreover, the influence of multinational corporations—many of which are Western-owned—has deepened Nigeria's economic reliance on the West. Many Nigerian youths aspire to work for these large corporations, which are seen as offering the ultimate job security and prestige. This preference for working for foreign companies, which often operate in key sectors such as oil, telecommunications, and finance, limits opportunities for local industries to grow and expand. While multinational corporations bring in capital and provide jobs, they often have limited connections to the local economy, with profits sent back to their home countries, further exacerbating economic dependency.

The influx of foreign businesses and capital may create jobs, but these positions are often low-paying and lack opportunities for upward mobility, meaning that many Nigerian youths are unable to leverage these opportunities for long-term economic advancement. Furthermore, the short-term economic gains offered by multinational corporations rarely translate into sustainable growth or empowerment for local industries. This cycle of dependency prevents the development of indigenous businesses and industries that could otherwise provide more meaningful, self-sustaining job opportunities and economic diversification.

This consumer culture that prioritizes foreign goods is deeply ingrained through advertising, media portrayals, and social norms. The idealization of Western lifestyles and consumption patterns is reinforced by media narratives that portray life in Western countries as synonymous with success and happiness. Advertisements showcasing Western products

often depict them as markers of class, status, and modernity, thus elevating them above local alternatives. This mental conditioning leads Nigerian youths to believe that in order to attain a higher status or lifestyle, they must consume Western products, contributing to a cycle of underdevelopment.

The economic dependency rooted in colonial mentality also impacts Nigeria's export potential. Because foreign goods are prioritized and valued above local products, Nigeria struggles to find international markets for its own products, thus missing out on valuable economic opportunities. In this sense, the colonial mindset is a self-reinforcing system that keeps Nigeria reliant on the West for both goods and services while neglecting the potential of its own natural resources and industries.

The underdevelopment that results from this cycle of economic dependency is not just about a lack of local industrial growth, but also the weakening of Nigeria's national identity. When the culture of consumption is dictated by foreign standards, Nigerian youths lose sight of the potential to build indigenous industries that reflect the country's unique needs and aspirations. This dependency has long-term consequences for Nigeria's economic sovereignty, making it difficult for the country to break free from the cycle of import dependence and reliance on foreign investments and technologies.

Colonial mentality has entrenched an economic system in which Nigerian youths continue to view the West as the ultimate source of prosperity, success, and happiness. The ongoing preference for foreign goods, the emphasis on Western education, and the dominance of multinational corporations in the Nigerian economy all contribute to the persistence of this dependency. This situation not only undermines the growth of local industries but also keeps Nigerian youths in a cycle of economic subordination.

To break free from this pattern, there must be a concerted effort to empower local industries, celebrate indigenous products, and reframe economic aspirations to prioritize homegrown solutions over foreign ideals. In doing so, Nigeria can foster economic independence and create a more self-sustaining future for its youth.

Marginalization of Indigenous Knowledge:

The dominance of Western education, media, and cultural narratives in Nigeria has not only influenced the aspirations of the youth but has also played a critical role in the marginalization of indigenous knowledge systems. In schools across Nigeria, the curriculum is predominantly shaped by Western theories, philosophies, and frameworks. History, literature, sciences, and even mathematics are often taught from perspectives that prioritize Western intellectual traditions and overlook local epistemologies.

For instance, history lessons often focus on European achievements and colonial narratives, while African history is either sidelined or reduced to a mere footnote, failing to highlight the richness and complexity of Nigeria's indigenous systems and past. The lack of emphasis on indigenous knowledge systems within educational institutions reinforces the idea that these systems are either primitive, irrelevant, or outdated, making them seem inferior in comparison to Western models of education.

This educational framework fails to recognize the value of indigenous wisdom, which encompasses a wide array of knowledge about sustainable agriculture, community governance, oral traditions, and medicinal practices that have evolved over centuries. By marginalizing these knowledge systems, Nigerian youths are not provided with the tools to appreciate or engage with their cultural heritage in meaningful ways.

Indigenous knowledge, which has stood the test of time and is deeply rooted in the local environment and history, is often dismissed in favor of Westernized solutions that may be poorly suited to Nigeria's unique context. This disconnect between the knowledge that young Nigerians are taught and their cultural heritage creates a void where young people are unable to derive a sense of pride or empowerment from their own traditions, leaving them more susceptible to the allure of foreign ideologies and practices.

Furthermore, the overwhelming focus on Western knowledge in Nigerian educational systems means that students are encouraged to pursue careers in fields that align with Western ideals, such as law, medicine, and engineering,

while careers rooted in indigenous knowledge, such as traditional medicine or cultural preservation, are often undervalued and overlooked. This leads to a brain drain of young talent, as those who pursue Westernized education may find it difficult to integrate and apply their knowledge in a way that is beneficial to local communities, as they are trained to view their native context as insufficient or unsophisticated.

The media, too, plays a significant role in perpetuating this marginalization. Television programs, films, music, and advertising often prioritize Western lifestyles and ideals, presenting them as symbols of success and aspiration. These media portrayals reinforce the message that Western culture is the benchmark for modernity and prosperity, leaving little room for the celebration and promotion of Nigerian traditions and customs. Popular shows and advertisements rarely feature indigenous practices or local cultural narratives; rather, they idealize Western celebrities, urban lifestyles, and foreign products. This widespread representation further contributes to a mindset that equates Western norms with progress, while African traditions are seen as outdated, irrelevant, or even embarrassing.

The result is a psychological alienation among Nigerian youths, who may feel disconnected from their roots and heritage. Without adequate exposure to indigenous knowledge and cultural practices, youths grow up believing that they must adopt foreign ideals in order to succeed, leading to an identity crisis. They become increasingly alienated from their cultural foundations and begin to internalize the notion that their indigenous ways of life are less valid or inferior. This sense of disempowerment can manifest in a variety of ways, including self-doubt, cultural shame, and a lack of pride in being Nigerian. The external validation sought from Western countries further reinforces this mindset, as Nigerian youths, in seeking recognition and success, overlook the value and relevance of their cultural heritage.

The disconnection from indigenous knowledge systems also contributes to a loss of cultural continuity. Traditional knowledge, which has been passed down through generations, holds

the key to sustainable development and social cohesion within Nigerian communities. It addresses local needs, understands the intricacies of the environment, and is based on collective community experience. When this knowledge is dismissed in favor of Western knowledge, communities lose the opportunity to sustain their cultural identity and preserve their practices, leaving them vulnerable to cultural erosion. Indigenous knowledge systems have long provided solutions to pressing social, economic, and environmental issues, yet their value is often ignored in the push toward modernity as defined by Western standards.

By overlooking the importance of these local traditions, the educational system and the media continue to reinforce the notion that the West holds the key to the future, while African culture and knowledge systems are relegated to the past. Nigerian youths are thus denied the opportunity to truly engage with and value their own heritage, perpetuating a cycle of cultural disempowerment that undermines their sense of self-worth and belonging.

If Nigeria is to break free from the grips of colonial mentality, it is essential to revitalize indigenous knowledge systems and incorporate them into the educational curriculum, media, and social structures to create an environment where local traditions and wisdom are recognized, celebrated, and passed on to future generations (Ogunyemi, 2017). This would empower Nigerian youths to view their cultural heritage as a source of strength and self-determination, rather than a barrier to progress.

Political Disillusionment and Lack of Civic Engagement: Colonial mentality also affects the political attitudes of Nigerian youths. The colonial system of governance, which was designed to serve the interests of the British colonial powers, has created a political culture that prioritizes Western-style governance systems over indigenous forms of leadership. Many youths today are more inclined to look up to Western political models and leaders, often viewing local politicians and governance structures with disillusionment and scepticism. This political alienation undermines active civic participation, leading to political apathy and a

weakened sense of responsibility toward national development (Akinyemi, 2016).

Cultural Insecurity and Psychological Stress: The constant exposure to Western ideals in the media, through education, and in daily life can lead to cultural insecurity among Nigerian youths. As they internalize Western standards of beauty, success, and intelligence, they may begin to feel that their own culture, appearance, and way of life are inferior. This can contribute to psychological stress, particularly when youths are unable to meet the expectations set by Western norms. The pressure to conform to these external standards can lead to mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and low self-worth.

Unrealistic Aspirations and Disillusionment: Colonial mentality profoundly shapes the aspirations and worldview of many Nigerian youths, often leading them to set unrealistic goals and expectations based on Western ideals. Growing up in a society where Western lifestyles, celebrities, and success stories are idolized, many youths internalize these foreign benchmarks as the ultimate measures of success and fulfilment.

The portrayal of luxury, glamour, and wealth associated with Western celebrities in the media—whether through social media influencers, Hollywood movies, or international brand advertisements—creates a distorted image of what success should look like. This often fosters a misguided belief that achieving similar status and wealth is not only possible but essential for personal fulfilment.

However, this vision of success is often disconnected from the realities that Nigerian youths face in their daily lives. Many young people are raised with the expectation that they can achieve the same academic or professional success as their Western counterparts, regardless of the local socio-economic constraints, limited educational opportunities, or lack of infrastructure that are prevalent in Nigeria. The emphasis on pursuing degrees or careers in fields highly valued in the West—such as finance, law, medicine, or technology—often fails to take into account the challenges posed by the Nigerian educational system, limited job opportunities, or

the difficulty of accessing resources to compete on a global scale.

As a result, when these Western-inspired dreams don't materialize as expected, many Nigerian youths experience deep feelings of disillusionment and frustration. Their aspirations, having been shaped by an idealized vision of success, no longer align with the opportunities available to them locally. The disconnect between personal aspirations and the realities of their environment often leads to feelings of failure, hopelessness, and disappointment. These youths may perceive themselves as falling short because their local achievements—which might be highly significant within their own communities—fail to meet the global standards set by the West.

This failure to meet Western expectations can manifest in various ways. For instance, a youth who aspires to study abroad or obtain a prestigious international degree may face financial or logistical challenges that prevent them from realizing this goal. In such cases, rather than viewing a local education as equally valuable or valid, they may feel that their educational journey is incomplete or inferior. Similarly, the aspiration to become a Western-style entrepreneur, based on foreign success stories, may lead to disappointment when local market conditions, regulations, or resources don't allow for the same outcomes.

Moreover, media portrayals of success often fail to highlight the hard work, sacrifices, and challenges that come with achieving success in the West. This omission leads many Nigerian youths to believe that the road to success is easy and straightforward, reinforcing the myth of the “American Dream”—the belief that anyone can become wealthy and successful through hard work alone. However, when youths are unable to replicate this experience, it often leads to feelings of inadequacy and a sense that they are somehow lacking. The frustration is compounded when youths compare their progress with that of their peers who have seemingly succeeded by adopting Western ideals, making them feel like they are falling behind.

This unrealistic goal-setting, influenced by colonial mentality, can also lead to poor decision-making and unhealthy career paths. For

example, youths may abandon opportunities for careers in sectors that are more aligned with local needs—such as agriculture, arts, or cultural preservation—because they perceive these fields as less prestigious compared to the globalized, Western-oriented career paths. As a result, they may pursue educational or professional paths that are not a good fit for their interests or the local economy, leading to job dissatisfaction, career misalignment, and a growing sense of frustration when they fail to achieve the glamorous Western-style success they had envisioned.

This cycle of disappointment can also have a detrimental impact on the mental health and overall wellbeing of Nigerian youths. The pressure to conform to Western ideals can lead to stress, anxiety, and depression, especially when these youths feel that they are not measuring up to external standards that are not only unrealistic but also disconnected from their personal and cultural contexts. As they struggle to achieve foreign success in an environment that may not support such ambitions, youths may withdraw from society, lose motivation, and even experience a crisis of identity, feeling lost between the expectation of global success and the reality of local limitations.

Furthermore, the internalized belief that Western models of success are the only valid ones reinforces a cultural disconnection. It diminishes the value of local achievements—such as success in community building, traditional entrepreneurship, or advancing indigenous knowledge—by measuring them against an impossible standard. This mindset overlooks the fact that success in Nigeria, or in other African countries, can be defined in ways that better reflect local realities and community-oriented values, such as contributing to socioeconomic development, cultural preservation, or local entrepreneurship.

Colonial mentality, by setting up unrealistic aspirations based on foreign ideals, not only leads to disillusionment among Nigerian youths but also hinders their ability to realize meaningful success in their local context. Rethinking success in ways that are more attuned to local realities, values, and opportunities could help empower Nigerian youths and encourage a more grounded approach to personal and

professional fulfilment, while still recognizing the positive aspects of global exchange and learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON OVERCOMING NEGATIVE ATTRIBUTES OF COLONIAL MENTALITY

Overcoming the negative attributes of colonial mentality requires a multi-faceted approach that focuses on cultural reorientation, education reform, and economic empowerment.

Below are several recommendations for addressing and overcoming the detrimental effects of colonial mentality among Nigerian youths:

Promote Cultural Reconnection and Pride: It is essential to instil a sense of pride in Nigerian heritage and indigenous culture. Cultural education should emphasize the value of African traditions, languages, and customs alongside the importance of preserving indigenous knowledge systems. This can be achieved through the integration of cultural studies in the educational curriculum, showcasing the richness of local cultures and their relevance in the modern world.

Youth empowerment programs focusing on local arts, history, and traditions can foster a sense of cultural identity and resilience against cultural assimilation. Encouraging youths to participate in cultural events, festivals, and community activities can help reconnect them with their roots and counteract the allure of foreign influences.

Revise the Education System to Incorporate Indigenous Knowledge: The current educational framework in Nigeria needs a critical review to better balance the Western-dominated curriculum with indigenous perspectives. Schools should include African history, philosophy, literature, and science that reflect local realities and experiences. By integrating local knowledge systems, African history, and practical knowledge relevant to the local context, the education system can empower students to value their own intellectual heritage and see the relevance of their education to their immediate environment. This will help students develop a strong sense of self-worth and an

understanding that local knowledge is valid and valuable.

Encourage Locally Relevant Career Paths and Economic Opportunities: Nigerian youths should be encouraged to pursue careers and entrepreneurial ventures that contribute to the development of the local economy. Agriculture, technology, local craftsmanship, and community-driven businesses should be promoted as viable career options. The government and private sector can support these initiatives through job creation, incentives for small businesses, and local industries that foster the growth of indigenous markets. By reducing the obsession with foreign brands and foreign degrees, youths can come to appreciate locally relevant career paths that better serve the country's development.

Revitalize National Pride and Unity: National pride must be reinstated to combat the belief that Western countries hold the key to prosperity and success. Public awareness campaigns, driven by government bodies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and youth groups, can help highlight the achievements of Nigerians and the contributions of local heroes in diverse fields, including sports, science, business, and art. Reinforcing the idea that Nigeria's potential lies in uniting its diverse cultures and building on its local strengths can counteract the inferiority complex associated with colonial mentality.

Encourage Media Representation of African Success Stories: The media plays a significant role in shaping perceptions and aspirations. It is crucial to shift the portrayal of African life, success, and achievement from a Western-centered narrative to one that highlights African self-reliance, innovation, and success stories. Promoting the achievements of African celebrities, entrepreneurs, and leaders who have successfully overcome colonial legacies can inspire youths to see that success does not require adherence to Western ideals. More African films, music, and television programs should depict positive representations of local cultures and values. By showcasing local heroes and African-centered narratives, media can reshape the perception of what is successful and desirable.

Foster Critical Thinking and Intellectual Independence: It is important to

encourage critical thinking and intellectual independence among Nigerian youths. The education system should place more emphasis on teaching students to question historical narratives and explore alternative ways of thinking. This would include teaching them to critically examine the legacy of colonialism and its long-lasting effects on society, rather than accepting colonial history as the sole truth. Encouraging youths to create new knowledge from their experiences, local realities, and African philosophies can foster a mindset of intellectual independence and prevent the internalization of colonial inferiority complexes.

Support Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing: To address the psychological effects of colonial mentality, Nigerian youths need access to mental health resources and counselling services that can help them understand the root causes of feelings of inferiority, self-doubt, and cultural alienation. Providing spaces for open dialogue about the negative impacts of colonial mentality and its psychological toll is crucial in creating healthier mindsets. Incorporating mental health awareness into educational institutions, particularly at the secondary and tertiary levels, can help youths process these feelings and find ways to embrace their identity and self-worth.

Create Platforms for Youth to Share and Celebrate Local Innovations: Young people should be encouraged to innovate and create solutions to local challenges based on their unique cultural context. Innovation hubs, startups, and entrepreneurial initiatives focused on local problems can provide Nigerian youths with the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to their communities. By fostering an innovation-driven culture that values local solutions, youths can break away from the reliance on Western models and instead create their own path to success.

Collaboration with African Institutions and Pan-African Initiatives: To overcome colonial mentality, Nigerian youths must be exposed to Pan-African initiatives that encourage unity and collaboration across African nations. Encouraging academic exchanges, research collaboration, and entrepreneurial partnerships within the African continent can reduce the feeling that success is only achievable

by aligning with Western standards. By looking inward to African peers, youths can find mentorship and support from individuals who share similar struggles and values.

Government and Policy Interventions:

The government has a crucial role in reshaping the narrative around colonial mentality. Policymakers can provide incentives for African-centered education, local business support, and investment in indigenous industries. Government campaigns that promote national pride, the celebration of local achievements, and the value of indigenous cultures will help shift perceptions and encourage youths to take pride in their cultural heritage. Moreover, fostering policy initiatives that encourage economic diversification and the empowerment of local businesses will create an environment where local industries can thrive, ultimately reducing dependency on Western countries.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research findings on the effects of colonial mentality among Nigerian youths have significant implications for various stakeholders, including educators, policy makers, mental health professionals, and youth organizations. The findings highlight the importance of addressing the psychological, cultural, and socio-economic impacts of colonial mentality to promote the wellbeing, identity, and development of Nigerian youths. Below are the key implications of these findings:

Implications for Education Systems:

The research underscores the need for an inclusive and culturally relevant educational system that reflects the diverse realities and values of Nigerian society. The dominance of Western-based curricula has been found to contribute to the marginalization of indigenous knowledge systems, leading to an erosion of cultural identity and a sense of inferiority among Nigerian youths.

The implications for education include: **Curriculum reform:** There is a need to revise the national curriculum to integrate local history, indigenous knowledge, and African philosophies. This will help students develop a sense of pride in their heritage and recognize the value of their

cultural roots. **Promotion of local languages:**

Education policies should encourage the teaching and learning of local languages as a means of preserving and promoting cultural identity. Local languages should be valued alongside foreign languages, such as English, in the education system. **Training educators:** Teachers must be equipped with the knowledge and skills to instil pride in local cultures and engage critically with colonial histories. Professional development programs should focus on cultural sensitivity and critical pedagogy.

Implications for National Identity and Cultural Reorientation: The findings reveal that colonial mentality leads to a disconnection from local culture, with many youths aspiring to adopt foreign ideals at the expense of their own traditions.

The implications for national identity and cultural reorientation include: **Cultural pride campaigns:** There is a need for national campaigns that emphasize the importance of African heritage, cultural pride, and national unity. These campaigns should highlight the achievements of Nigerian youth and local role models who have succeeded without relying on foreign ideals.

Youth empowerment programs: Implementing initiatives that promote African-centered values, such as entrepreneurship, community involvement, and cultural expression, can help empower youths to contribute to the national development and regain confidence in their identity. **Cultural immersion activities:** Programs that encourage youth participation in local festivals, traditional arts, and community events will help deepen their connection to their heritage and provide a platform for reclaiming cultural identity.

Implications for Economic Development and Employment Opportunities

The study indicated that colonial mentality perpetuates economic dependency on foreign nations, leading Nigerian youths to view foreign brands and products as symbols of success.

The implications for economic development include: **Support for local industries:** There is a need for government policies that prioritize the development of local industries and entrepreneurial initiatives. This

includes providing financial incentives, infrastructure support, and training programs to foster self-sustaining economies. **Job creation in local sectors:** By focusing on job creation in agriculture, technology, local manufacturing, and service sectors, Nigerian youths can find fulfilling career paths that do not require the emulation of Western ideals. This approach can help reduce the brain drain and encourage home-grown innovation. **Incentives for African-centered businesses:** Governments and the private sector should provide incentives for businesses that promote African products and services, as well as local brands that reflect the cultural values and needs of Nigerian society.

Implications for Mental Health and Psychological Wellbeing: The research findings highlight the psychological impact of colonial mentality, particularly the feelings of inferiority, self-doubt, and identity confusion experienced by Nigerian youths.

The implications for mental health and psychological wellbeing include: **Mental health awareness programs:** There is a need to implement mental health education programs that focus on cultural identity and the psychological effects of colonial mentality. These programs should be integrated into both formal and informal education settings to help youths understand and process their experiences of cultural alienation. **Psychological support services:** Mental health professionals should provide support services that focus on addressing issues related to cultural trauma, inferiority complex, and self-esteem. Counselling services that help youths build resilience and embrace their cultural heritage are essential. **Promoting emotional intelligence:** Programs that foster the development of emotional intelligence can help youths cope with the psychological pressures of colonial mentality, enabling them to develop a more balanced and positive self-concept.

Implications for Media and Cultural Representation: The dominance of Western media in shaping youth aspirations is a key finding of the research.

The implications for media and cultural representation include: **Media regulation:** There is a need for policy measures that encourage the representation of positive African images and

success stories in the media. This could include promoting local films, music, and television programs that highlight the richness of African cultures and showcase African role models. **Media literacy programs:** Youths should be educated about the influence of media in shaping their perceptions of success and identity. Media literacy programs should teach youths to critically analyze media portrayals and understand the potential impact on their self-esteem and aspirations. **Support for African creators:** African filmmakers, musicians, artists, and writers should be supported through grants, platforms, and initiatives that allow them to tell their own stories and reshape the narratives that define success.

Implications for Policy Makers: The research findings suggest that colonial mentality is deeply entrenched in both the cultural and socio-economic fabric of Nigerian society.

The implications for policymakers include: **Revising national policies:** There is a need to review national policies related to education, economic development, and youth empowerment to align them with local realities and values. Policy reform should prioritize the preservation of indigenous knowledge and the promotion of self-sufficiency. **Investing in youth development:** Policymakers should prioritize investments in youth development programs, which provide opportunities for self-discovery, entrepreneurship, and cultural engagement. This can help counter the effects of colonial mentality and create a generation of empowered youths who can contribute to national progress. **International partnerships:** While fostering local pride, Nigerian policymakers can also engage in strategic international partnerships that promote the exchange of knowledge, technology, and resources. These partnerships should be based on mutual respect and equitable exchange rather than cultural subordination.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCHES

Given the findings and implications of the research on colonial mentality among Nigerian youths, there are several areas that warrant further exploration to deepen

understanding and provide solutions to the issues identified.

Below are some suggestions for further research:

Impact of Colonial Mentality on Youth Mental Health: Further research could explore the psychological effects of colonial mentality in greater depth, particularly its impact on mental health disorders such as anxiety, depression, and identity confusion. Studies could investigate: The long-term effects of colonial mentality on youth wellbeing and mental health trajectories. How colonial mentality influences coping mechanisms and self-esteem among different segments of Nigerian youth, particularly those in rural versus urban settings. The potential role of social support networks in mitigating the psychological effects of colonial mentality.

The Role of Indigenous Knowledge in Education: Future research could investigate how the integration of indigenous knowledge into educational curricula impacts the cultural identity and academic performance of Nigerian youths. Potential studies might include: A comparative study of schools that emphasize local knowledge systems and those that follow a more Western-centric curriculum. The effectiveness of curriculum reforms that integrate African history, culture, and languages in enhancing youth self-confidence and academic achievement. Exploring how the learning environment influences youths' perceptions of their cultural heritage and their aspirations for success.

Colonial Mentality and Economic Participation: The relationship between colonial mentality and economic behaviour among Nigerian youths presents an important avenue for further research. Studies could focus on: How colonial mentality influences entrepreneurial mindsets among youths, especially in relation to their preference for foreign products and employment in multinational corporations. The effect of globalization and economic dependency on foreign brands on Nigerian youths' decision-making and career choices. Investigating whether economic empowerment programs targeting local industries can counter the effects of colonial mentality and encourage youth involvement in home-grown businesses.

Colonial Mentality and Media

Consumption: Given the critical role of media in shaping attitudes and perceptions, further studies could explore: The influence of global media content on youth aspirations, particularly in how Western media portrays success, beauty, and wealth. The effectiveness of media literacy programs in helping youths critically engage with Western narratives and foster pride in their cultural identities. The impact of local media (including television, radio, and social media) in promoting African-centered values and counteracting the effects of colonial mentality.

Relationship Between Colonial Mentality and Social Inequality: Research could investigate how colonial mentality contributes to social inequality, particularly in terms of educational opportunities, employment, and social mobility. Studies might explore: The intersectionality of colonial mentality with other factors such as socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and gender in determining youths' opportunities for success. How colonial mentality influences youths' perceptions of social justice, equity, and opportunity in Nigeria's post-colonial context. Exploring how colonial mentality intersects with class mobility and youth participation in political and social movements aimed at reducing inequality.

Youth Engagement with Traditional Cultural Practices: There is a need for research on how Nigerian youths engage with traditional cultural practices, and whether this engagement can combat the negative aspects of colonial mentality. Studies could examine: The role of cultural festivals, rituals, and art forms in promoting youth identity and cultural pride. How youths' participation in traditional cultural activities impacts their sense of belonging, pride, and resistance to Western ideals. Investigating the role of digital platforms and social media in preserving and promoting traditional cultures among Nigerian youths.

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