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## DESCRIBING ADJECTIVES IN NKORŌŌ (KIRIKA)

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### Abstract

*This paper provides a linguistic description of the adjective class and its functions in Nkŏrŏŏ, an Eastern Ijŏ language. To achieve this, the Lingua Descriptive Studies Questionnaire was employed as a data elicitation tool. The findings revealed that like many African languages in the Niger-Congo phylum, Nkŏrŏŏ operates a small closed class of adjectives that consists of three lexical items, namely áyá 'new', opu 'big/great', and pápa 'bare/empty/useless/vain'. These adjectives express the basic concepts of dimension, age, and value, and can be identified by the following features; they specify the attributes of nouns, they cannot be inflected to reflect temporal, aspectual, modal, or other grammatical meanings or categories, and they only function attributively and not predicatively. To function in the predicate position, Nkŏrŏŏ adjectives obligatorily need the presence of an ideophone, a noun or noun phrase. The adjective 'opu' agrees in number with plural nouns by taking a low tone plural clitic =a. In addition to adjectives, stative verbs may perform the function of adjectives. When adjectives and stative verbs that function as adjectives occur alongside other nominal modifiers such as pronouns, demonstratives, numerals, and the definite article in the noun phrase, they occur closest to the head noun as prenominal modifiers. With the aid of compounds, lexical morphemes, and suffixes, adjectives and stative verbs may be used to express the attributes of nouns in terms of equality, comparative, and superlative and to measure the quality a noun possesses in super abundance, large, or small measure.*

**Keywords:** Adjective, Stative Verb, Nominal Modifier, Nkŏrŏŏ, Ijŏ

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### Introduction

Adjectives are a recognized word class in human language. However, their description is "problematic in almost every language" and this is because "there is no semantically definable class of concepts that universally falls into a category that we would want to call adjectives; rather, adjectives stand "between" nouns and verbs ..." (Payne, 1997, p. 63). Therefore, each language must have language specific features for identifying adjectives, in addition to their universal functions.

Crystal (1997, p. 8–9), defines adjectives as a class of words whose main function is to specify the attributes of nouns. He mentions four criteria that define this class in English, namely;

- i. they function in the 'attributive' position, e.g. the **big** man;
- ii. they can occur in a post-verbal or 'predicative' position, e.g. the man is **big**;
- iii. they can be premodified by an intensifier, such as *very*, e.g. the **very big** man;
- iv. they can be used in a comparative and superlative form, either by inflection (e.g. *big*, *bigger*, *biggest*) or periphrastically (e.g. *interesting*, *more interesting*, *most interesting*).

Adjectives occur with the noun in the noun phrase, where they function as nominal modifiers. The distribution of adjectives within the noun phrase varies from language to language. In some languages, adjectives precede the noun and function as prenominal modifiers, while in others, they follow the noun, functioning as post nominal modifiers. What constitutes the class of adjectives varies from language to language. In some languages, such as English, adjectives form an open class to which more adjectives can be added. Hence, adjectives constitute a large class in English. In a number of languages (and many African languages belong here), adjectives form a small closed class of words that are characterized by certain internal grammatical criteria. In fact, many descriptive adjectives in English and other European languages are expressed by verbs in some African languages. As a result, African languages tend to have fewer adjectives. One striking particularity of a number of African languages, especially in the Niger-Congo phylum is that "they have a very small number of non-derived adjectives (sometimes less than ten), and no possibility of deriving adjectives from other categories at all" (Creissels, 2000, p. 249). In yet other languages, it is claimed that adjectives do not exist, and the translation equivalents of English adjectives are assigned to either the noun or verb class.

Croft (1990) observes that languages with a small closed class of adjectives tend to include words referring to a specific set of concepts. The basic concepts are dimension, age, color, and value. This notion is corroborated by Payne (1997) who affirms that these basic concepts are expressed in any language that has a morphosyntactically distinct class of adjectives. Croft exemplifies with the Igbo adjective class that includes the words for 'large', 'new', 'black/dark', 'good', 'small', 'old', 'white/light', and 'bad'. Generally, other concepts that may be expressed by adjectives include shape, physical characteristics, human property, and speed.

The present study is aimed at describing the adjective class in Nkọrọọ, an Eastern Ijọ language that belongs to the Niger-Congo phylum and is spoken in Rivers state, Nigeria, West Africa (Williamson and Blench, 2000). The objectives are to identify the members of the adjective class, the features that characterize adjectives and examine how they function in the language. The language data presented is based on the Nkọrọọ orthography proposed by Obikudo (2022).

## Methodology

Data elicitation for this study was carried out with the aid of the Lingua Descriptive Studies Questionnaire developed for writing grammars by the Department of Linguistics, Max-Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology. Specifically, the study employed the qualitative research method by collecting data based on section 2.1.4 of the questionnaire that addresses adjectives and analyzing the data collected.

## Adjectives in Nkọrọọ

Jenewari (1977, p. 341) defines the adjective in Kalabari (a sister Eastern Ijọ dialect) as a "pronominal modifier which does not occur with a tense marker" and "denotes quality". He lists three lexical items that fall into this category as **kálá** 'small, little', **opu** 'big, great', and **pápá** 'vain, empty'. From the list, we see that the Kalabari adjectives express the basic concepts of dimension (small, big) and value (great, vain). In Nkọrọọ, adjectives belong to a small closed class that also consist of only three lexical items. They include **áyá** 'new', **opu**

'big, great', and **pápa** 'bare/empty', 'useless/vain'. Membership into the adjective class is based on the following criteria.

i. Adjectives specify the attributes of nouns. Note that stative verbs also do the same, so this criterion alone makes it impossible to identify the true adjectives in the language.

- (1) a. áyá ókúrú  
new cloth  
'new cloth'
- b. pápa ọ̀bù  
bare/empty body  
'bare/naked body'

ii. Adjectives do not take any aspectual, temporal or modal markers. Such markers only occur with verbs and not adjectives. In other words, adjectives cannot be inflected to reflect any grammatical categories or features. The examples below are all ungrammatical because they are inflected.

- (2) a. \*a áyá-sī  
3SG.N new-INT  
'It is very new'
- b. \*tọ̀nyé opu-sí  
PN great-INT  
'Tọ̀nye is very great'
- c. \*a pápa-suku  
3SG.N useless/vain-PFV  
'It has become useless/vain'
- d. \*a=nde pápa-máa  
3SG.N=SCL useless/vain-PRG  
'It is becoming useless/vain'

iii. Alone, adjectives can only function attributively and not predicatively. Examples (3a – c) show the attributive function of adjectives while examples (4a & b) show the predicative function.

- (3) a. pápa ọ̀bẹ̀ẹ̀ ọ̀bọ̀  
useless/vain mouth person  
'useless/vain person'
- b. opu ígbé m kẹ́m ítángá tíe ke  
big box DEF EXIST bed under LOC  
'The big box is under the bed'

c. *áyá okuru m káan-suku*  
 new cloth DEF tear-PFV  
 'The new cloth has torn'

- (4) a. *\*a pápa*  
 3SG.N useless/vain  
 'It is useless/vain'
- b. *\*amímī m áyá*  
 that DEF new  
 'That is new'

Examples (4a & b) above are ungrammatical because true adjectives in Nkọrọọ cannot occur alone as the predicate of a sentence. To function in the predicate position, Nkọrọọ adjectives obligatorily need the presence of an ideophone (example 5a & b) or a noun or noun phrase (example 6a & b). Note that the word order in Nkọrọọ is Subject-Object-Verb (SOV), so the object precedes the verb in the predicate.

- (5) a. *a áyá jéinjéin*  
 3SG.N new ID  
 'It is very new'
- b. *tónyé opu ígídí bọ̀*  
 PN great ID person  
 'Tonye is a very great person'
- (6) a. *tónyé opu bọ̀*  
 PN great person  
 'Tonye is (a) great (person)'
- b. *amímī m pápa ye*  
 that DEF useless/vain thing  
 'That (one) is (a) useless/vain (thing)'

Based on the three criteria discussed above, **opu** 'big, great', **áyá** 'new', and **pápa** 'bare/empty', 'useless/vain' are the only true adjectives in Nkọrọọ. They express the basic concepts of dimension (**opu** 'big'), age (**áyá** 'new'), and value (**opu** 'great' and **pápa** 'bare/empty', 'useless/vain'). Apart from adjectives, however, stative verbs may also specify nominal attributes and thus perform the function of adjectives.

### Stative verbs functioning as adjectives

The stative verbs in Nkọrọọ do function as adjectives by specifying the attributes of nouns. Unlike true adjectives, they can function both attributively and predicatively. Stative verbs do not obligatorily need a noun or an ideophone to function as predicates of sentences.

Stative verbs functioning as attributive adjectives

(7) a. duḃa ígbé m kẹ́m ítángá tíe ke  
be.big/fat box DEF EXIST bed under LOC  
'The big box is under the bed'

b. ólóm ókúrú m kaan  
be.old cloth DEF tear.IMP.SG  
'Tear the old cloth!'

Stative verbs functioning as predicative adjectives

(8) a. ígbé m duḃa  
box DEF be.big  
'The box is big'

b. ókúrú m ólóm  
cloth DEF be.old  
'The cloth is old'

c. tọ́rú m kókóró  
river DEF be.deep  
'The river is deep'

Stative verbs can also be inflected to reflect such grammatical meanings as degree (9a & b), tense

(10a & b), aspect (11a & b), and negation (12a & b).

(9) a. mindi m ọ́kū-sí  
water DEF be.cold-INT  
'The water is very cold'

b. otiọ́ m kọ́rọ́kọ́rọ́-sí  
road/path DEF be.narrow-INT  
'The road/path is very narrow'

(10) a. awọ́ má duḃa-m  
children PL be.big/fat-FUT  
'The children will be fat'

b. kíngí m=ńdē ikpuru-m  
knife DEF=SCL be.blunt-FUT  
'The knife will be blunt'

(11) a. o=nde ólóm-máa  
3SG.M=SCL be.old-PROG  
'He is getting old'

b. tórú m pẹ̀kẹ̀-̀suku  
 river DEF be.wide-PFV  
 'The river has become wide'

(12) a. a iḽi=ka  
 3SG.N be.good=NCL  
 'It is not good'

b. á gboli=ka  
 3SG.F be.short=NCL  
 'She is not short'

### Adjectives and agreement with nouns

This section discusses how adjectives and stative verbs agree in number and definiteness with the nouns they modify.

#### *Agreement in number*

The adjectives in Nkọ̀rọ̀ exhibit different behaviours when modifying plural nouns. The adjective **opu** takes the low tone plural clitic =a when modifying plural nouns (that may or may not take the plural marker). This clitic is also attached to modifying numerals. On the other hand, the plural marker, **má**, follows the noun when it is being modified by either **áyá**, **pápa** or a stative verb. For those specific human nouns in which plurality is marked in the noun itself such as **awọ** 'children', the choice of the plural marker is optional.

Adjective + [- HUMAN] noun

(13) a. opu=a ígbé (má)  
 big=PCL box PL  
 'big boxes'

b. duḽa ígbé má  
 be.big box PL  
 'big boxes'

Adjective + [+ HUMAN] noun

(14) a. pápa tọ̀kú  
 useless/vain child  
 'useless/vain child'

b. pápa awọ (má)  
 useless/vain children PL  
 'useless/vain children'

c. nángúḽ íríára  
 be.tall woman  
 'tall woman'

- d. nángúḡ      íríápu (má)  
be.tall      women PL  
'tall women'

#### *Agreement in definiteness/indefiniteness*

Indefinite reference is not overtly marked in Nkḡḡḡ. Definiteness is marked only on singular nouns with the definite article **mú/m**. There is no definite marker in plural nouns rather, the plural marker **má** is used with plural nouns whether the reference is definite or indefinite. In other words, **má** has a generic reference. This applies to both non-human and human nouns.

#### Adjective + [- HUMAN] nouns

- (15) a. áyá kura m  
new year DEF  
'the new year'

- b. opu ígbé m  
big box DEF  
'the big box'

- c. duḡa      ígbé m  
be.big      box DEF  
'the big box'

#### Adjectives + [+ HUMAN] nouns

- (16) a. opu      kiní m  
great      person DEF  
'the great person'

- b. duḡa      amaowei      m  
be.big/fat      male.man      DEF  
'the big/fat man'

#### **Agreement with coordinated nouns which belong to different classes**

Nkḡḡḡ is a non-noun class language. However, it reflects a human versus non-human gender distinction (in addition to sex-based gender) in its nominal morphology (Obikudo, forthcoming). In this section, we shall look at agreement between adjectives and singular human and non-human nouns and between adjectives and plural human and non-human nouns.

#### **Adjectives and singular nouns**

The adjective is phrase-initial when conjoining both human and non-human nouns. The conjunction **na ... na** 'and' that is used in linking both nouns being modified by the adjective surrounds the second noun whether human or non-human.

Adjective + singular human noun and singular non-human noun

- (17) a. ólómíríára na wó wári na  
 be.old woman CONJ NOM house CONJ  
 'old woman and house'
- b. pápa amaowei na wó námá ná  
 useless male.man CONJ NOM animal CONJ  
 'useless man and animal'

Adjective + singular non-human noun and singular human noun

- (18) a. ólómwári na wó íríára na  
 be.old house CONJ NOM woman CONJ  
 'old house and woman'
- b. pápa námá ná wó amaowei na  
 useless animal CONJ NOM male.man CONJ  
 'useless animal and man'

### Adjectives and plural nouns

The only adjective that takes a plural marker when modifying plural nouns is **opu** 'big/'great'. It takes the plural clitic =**a** in addition to the plural marking on the nouns. Both human and non-human nouns take their own plural markers irrespective of which comes first. The plural marker **má** is used to mark number in both non-human and human nouns, while **apu** 'people' or **-ani** (for kinship nouns and personal names) is used to mark number in human nouns only. Where **apu** is used to mark a plural human noun, the use of the general plural marker **má** is optional. As mentioned earlier, the conjunction 'and' surrounds the second noun but occurs after the plural marker **má** (whenever it is used) that immediately follows the second noun. When this happens, a floating low tone appears between the plural marker **má** and ...**na**, so that we have: [- HUMAN] noun + **má** + **nā** instead of ...**ná** as is the case with the singular non-human nouns ending with a high toned syllable (see examples 17b and 19a & b).

Adjective + plural human noun and plural non-human noun

- (19) a. ólómíríapu na wó wári má nā  
 be.old women CONJ NOM house PL CONJ  
 'old women and houses'
- b. opu=a amaapu na wó námá má nā  
 big/great=PCL men CONJ NOM animal PL CONJ  
 'big/great men and animals'

Adjective + plural non-human noun and plural human noun

- (20) a. ólómwári má na wó íríapu na  
 be.old house PL CONJ NOM women CONJ  
 'old houses and women'

b. opu=a      namá na      wó      amaapu      na  
 big=PCL      animal CONJ NOM      male.people      CONJ  
 'big/great animals and men'

### Means of expressing various kinds of comparison

There are various ways in which the attributes of nouns may be compared. In this section, we shall describe how the attributes of nouns may be expressed in terms of equality, comparative, and superlative. Adjectives may be used to express the comparative but not equality or the superlative. This is because they may occur in the attributive position (for comparative) but not in the predicative position (for equality and superlative), hence, the need to use stative verbs.

### Expressing Equality

Equality is expressed by a compound word consisting of **ḥára** 'way/manner' and a particle **wá**. Together, they may be interpreted to mean 'equal' and function as an equality marker. The conjunction **só** 'also' may be introduced after the subject to express emphasis (examples 21b & d). The formal structure of the sentence that expresses equality is: subject (noun) + object (noun) + **ḥarawá** + Adjective/V (stative). The stative verb performing the adjectival function occurs sentence-finally (that is, in the predicate position).

- (21) a. tonyé      bomá ḥarawá iḥi  
 PN      PN      EQL      be.good  
 'Tonye is as good as Boma'
- b. tonyé      só      bomá ḥarawá iḥi  
 PN      also      PN      EQL      be.good  
 'Tonye is also as good as Boma'
- c. námá nji      ḥarawá ótóm  
 meat fish      EQL      be.sweet  
 'Meat is as tasty as fish'
- d. námá      só      nji      ḥarawá ótóm  
 meat      also      fish      EQL      be.sweet  
 'Meat is also as tasty as fish'

### Expressing the Comparative

A comparative construction is one "in which two items are compared according to some quality" (Payne, 1997, p.88) and this quality is expressed by either an adjective or a stative verb. The comparative in Nkọrọọ is marked by including the stative verb **néngī** 'exceed/surpass' after the second noun that is being compared, that is in sentence-final position. The adjective or stative verb that expresses the nominal attribute occurs between the two nouns being compared. The intensifier **-sí** may be attached to the stative verb. The use of **-sí** with the stative verb is optional while **néngī** is obligatory.

- (22) a. tɔnyé opu bomá nɛngī  
 PN big/great PN exceed  
 'Tɔnye is greater than Boma'
- b. tɔnyé iḃi bomá nɛngī  
 PN be.good PN exceed  
 'Tɔnye is better than Boma'
- c. námá ótóm-sī nji nɛngí  
 meat be. sweet-INT fish exceed  
 'Meat is tastier than fish'

### Expressing the Superlative

To express the superlative, a nominal compound consisting of a noun **ḃú** 'self/body' and the stative verb **nɛngī** 'exceed/surpass' is used. Together, **ḃú nɛngī** may be interpreted as 'exceed or surpass self'. This compound occurs after the stative verb and may be used to compare an entity to other entities. The focus marker **wo** is usually introduced after the subject in this type of construction.

Superlative when compared to other entities

- (23) a. tɔnyé wo nángúḃ ḃú nɛngī  
 PN FOC be. tall self exceed  
 'Tɔnye is the tallest'
- b. ami tɔru m wo kókóró ḃú nɛngī  
 that river DEF FOC be.deep self exceed  
 'That river is the deepest'

Superlative when compared to itself at other points or times

The compound **ḃú nɛngī** may also be used to compare an entity to itself at other points or times. The intensifier **-sí** may be attached to the verb **nɛngī** (example 24b) to indicate emphasis, but this is optional. The focus marker is also optional.

- (24) a. mí tɔru wo kókóró ḃú nɛngī mion ke  
 this river FOC be.deep self exceed here LOC  
 'This river is deepest here'
- b. órúá ófiri ḃú nɛngī-sí íkiringa oku ke  
 sun be.hot self exceed-INT harmattan season LOC  
 'The sun is hottest during harmattan season'

### Degrees of quality

This section discusses how adjectives and stative verbs (functioning as adjectives) measure the quality a noun possesses. This could be in super abundance, large, or small measure.

### Expressing super abundance

As with the superlative, the compound **ḅú nẹ̀ngī** may be used to express super abundance with stative verbs only. The intensifier **-sí** may be optionally attached to this compound. With adjectives however, an ideophone is obligatory (example 25b). Again, this is due to the fact that adjectives do not occur in the predicate position.

(25) a. a            b́íbíé            ḅú    nẹ̀ngī  
          3SG.N    be.small    self    exceed  
          'It is extremely/too small'

b. ami tíín    m̄    opu    ígídí  
          that tree    DEF    big    ID  
          'That tree is extremely/too big'

### Expressing large measure

The intensifier **-sí** is obligatorily used alongside a stative verb to express large measure. In order to express large measure with adjectives, an ideophone is necessary (example 26c).

(26) a. a            iḅi-sí  
          3SG.N be.good-INT  
          'It is very good'

b. a            gogori-sí  
          3SG.N be.red-INT  
          'It is very red'

c. t̄onyé            opu            ígídí  
          PN            big/great    ID  
          'T̄onye is very great'

### Expressing small measure

There are three ways to express small measure with stative verbs functioning as adjectives.

a) By the use of **ḅú** 'self/body' + **nẹ̀ngī** 'exceed/surpass' + **=ka** 'negative clitic'.

(27) tíín    m̄    duḅa    ḅú    nẹ̀ngī=ka  
          tree    DEF    be.big    self    exceed=NCL  
          'The tree is not too/so big'

b) By the use of a lexical negative morpheme **opuma** after the noun in addition to V + **=ka** 'negative clitic'. The use of the lexical negative morpheme **opuma** in addition to the negative clitic **=ka**, which is attached to the stative verb, is mandatory in expressing small measure. If the negative clitic is deleted, the sentence becomes ungrammatical (example 28b). This shows that double negatives are allowed in Nk̄or̄ō.

(28) a. tíín m̄ opuma duḅa=ka  
tree DEF NEG be.big=NCL  
'The tree is not too/so big'

b. \*tíín m̄ opuma  
tree DEF NEG  
'The tree is not too/so big'

c) by the use of **ḅú nẹngī** and the intensifier **-sí** alongside a stative verb that has a diminutive meaning:

(29) a. fíye m̄ bíbíé ḅú nẹngī-sí  
food DEF be. small self exceed-INT  
'The food is too small'

b. amaowei m̄ gboli/gbolu ḅú nẹngī-sí  
male.man DEF be. short self exceed-INT  
'The man is too short'

### Adjectives as nominal modifiers

Both adjectives and stative verbs functioning as adjectives precede the noun they modify within the noun phrase. In other words, they function as prenominal modifiers as seen in examples (1), (3), and (7) that express the attributive function of adjectives and stative verbs. It is possible to have more than one adjective/stative verb in this position and there is no strict order of occurrence for the adjectives/stative verbs within the noun phrase (example 30a & b).

(30) a. opu iḅi olom iriara  
big/great be.good be.old woman  
'great good old woman'

b. iḅi olom opu iriara  
be.good be.old big/great woman  
'good old great woman'

Other nominal modifiers such as pronouns, demonstratives, numerals, and the definite article may occur alongside adjectives and stative verbs functioning as adjectives in the noun phrase. In the order of modifiers, adjectives/stative verbs always come last, immediately preceding the noun being modified. They occur closest to the head noun as seen in the examples below.

(31) Pronoun + adjective + noun  
a. á gbóḅn dímeḅ  
3SG.F be.straight hair  
'her straight hair'

b. wá opu wari  
1PL big/great house  
'our big/great house'

(32) Demonstrative + adjective + noun

a. mí pina óbóri  
this be.white goat  
'this white goat'

b. ami opu ọ̀ọ̀  
that big/great person  
'that great person'

Both cardinal and ordinal numerals can occur with adjectives in the noun phrase. For cardinals, numerals 1 – 19 precede the adjective while numerals 20 and above follow the noun, thus occurring after the adjective. On the other hand, ordinals always precede adjectives.

(33) Cardinal numeral + adjective + noun

a. gbọ́rí síe jọ̀wọ́ín  
one be.bad paddle  
'one bad paddle'

b. gbọ́rí ópu jọ̀wọ́ín  
one big paddle  
'one big paddle'

(34) Adjective + noun + cardinal numeral

a. sie jọ̀wọ́ín si  
be.bad paddle twenty  
'twenty bad paddles'

b. opu=a jọ̀wọ́ín si  
big=PCL paddle twenty  
'twenty big paddles'

(35) Ordinal numeral + adjective + noun

a. pípẹ́rí/púpẹ́rí ólom iriara  
first be.old woman  
'first old woman'

b. kúnọ̀ma pápa iriara  
last useless/vain woman  
'last useless woman'

The definite article always functions post-nominally and so occurs after the adjective and the noun in the noun phrase.

(35) Adjective + noun + definite article

a. olomiriara    *ń*  
   be.old        woman DEF  
   'the old woman'

b. *áyá* kura *ń*  
   new year DEF  
   'the new year'

### Conclusion

Nkọrọọ, like many African languages in the Niger-Congo phylum, operates a small closed class of adjectives that includes words referring to the basic concepts of dimension (**opu** 'big'), age (*áyá* 'new'), and value (**opu** 'great' and **pápa** 'bare/empty', 'useless/vain'). This classification is based on their ability to specify the attributes of nouns and function attributively without being inflected for temporal, aspectual or modal distinctions. On their own, adjectives do not occur in the predicate position. While stative verbs may function as adjectives in the predicate position, true adjectives need a noun or an ideophone to function predicatively. On the other hand, both stative verbs and adjectives can function attributively. Both adjectives and stative verbs function as prenominal modifiers within the noun phrase. They occur closest to the head noun when they occur with other nominal modifiers. Also, there is no particular order of occurrence when more than one adjective and/or stative verb occurs modifies the noun.

In terms of number, it is only the adjective **opu** that marks plurality morphologically by taking the plural clitic =**a**. In other words, it agrees in number with the noun. With other adjectives, as well as stative verbs, number is generally marked by the use of the plural marker **má** with the noun. Definiteness is also marked on the noun and not on the adjective, however, the reference of definiteness includes the adjective.

The attributes of nouns may be expressed in terms of equality, comparative, and superlative with the aid of the compounds **hárawá** and **hú nẹngī**. The latter is used for both the comparative and the superlative. To measure the quality a noun possesses in super abundance and large measure, adjectives require an ideophone while stative verbs employ the compound **hú nẹngī** and the intensifier **-sí** respectively. Small measure may be expressed via stative verbs alongside the compound **hú nẹngī** and the negative clitic =**ka** or the intensifier **-sí** (that is either **hú nẹngīka** or **hú nẹngīsí**), or by negating the stative verb in addition to using the lexical negative morpheme, **opuma**.

Despite the fact that the description of adjectives has been termed problematic in most languages, this study has delimited the features and functions that characterize the class of adjectives in Nkọrọọ as the findings have revealed.

## Abbreviations

1, 2, 3	1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> person
CONJ	conjunction
DEF	definite article
EQL	equality
F	feminine
FOC	focus
FUT	future
ID	ideophone
IMP	imperative
INT	intensifier
LOC	locative
M	masculine
N	neuter
NCL	negative clitic
NEG	negative
NOM	nominative
O	object
PCL	plural clitic
PFV	perfective
PL	plural
PN	personal name
PROG	progressive
S	subject
SCL	subject clitic
SG	singular
V	vowel, verb

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**INVESTIGATING INCENTIVES AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG MUSIC  
TEACHERS IN PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN UYO, AKWA IBOM  
STATE, NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The study on incentives and job satisfaction among music teachers in private secondary schools, Uyo Akwa Ibom State is poised to assess whether there are incentives or job satisfaction among music teachers in private schools. Three specific objectives are formulated to guide the study in order to examine the types of incentives given to teachers, to ascertain if music teachers are satisfied in their teaching career, and to examine if there is correlation between incentives and job satisfaction. A qualitative survey research design was adopted for the study. The population consisted of all music teachers from the selected 20 private secondary schools in Uyo. A self-structured questionnaire titled 'Incentives and Job Satisfaction among Music Teachers in Private Secondary Schools in Uyo' (IJSAMTPSSU) and was used for data collection. The instrument was validated and data collected were analyzed using frequency and simple percentage. Findings revealed that 75% agree that they are not given incentives, 55% agreed that they are contented with teaching job, while 95% agreed that apart from salary if monetary bonuses and other incentives are given to teachers by their employers, the outcome of the educational productivity would be very high and encouraging. In conclusion, it is revealed that incentives have a significant relationship with job satisfaction. The researcher recommends that incentive scheme.*

**Keywords: Incentives, Teaching, Job satisfaction, Teachers, Private Secondary Schools and Uyo**

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**BACKGROUND OF STUDY**

Teaching as a profession involves the impartation of knowledge to students by means of instruction, explanation of concepts, and engagement of students on certain activities in order to enable them understand and apply the knowledge acquired. However, it is pertinent that teaching, which is an important profession to groom people's minds, be well appreciated. Generally, incentives are anything that persuades or motivates a person positively towards a particular behavior. Solanki (2022), notes that incentives are the monetary and non-monetary benefits which are paid to an individual based on his performance, but incentives differ greatly from the normal wages or salaries. It is a scheme aimed at encouraging individuals to perform better at work.

On the other hand, job satisfaction is the overall feeling of the state of happiness concerning the fulfillment of carrying out tasks in work place. Hence, incentives can act as the basis for attracting, encouraging and retaining employees in an organization. Individual works to earn wages and if such a person is appreciated in a way, it can be encouraged to do more. It is noted that in many organizations and professional bodies, wages and incentives are the motivational factors, which can be a drive towards job satisfaction. However, job satisfaction can however come from other factors, but incentives play very vital roles.

Job satisfaction has an essential part to play in the overall commitment and productivity of the school organization. The teacher's job satisfaction significantly influences the

commitment to the organization. Teachers who are satisfied with the job are also committed to work. The more the employees are satisfied, the more participation in job activities which brings about good organizational performance. In terms of teaching, it heavily affects how students learn and relates well to increase educational productivity and academic performance.

Incentives has a way of spurring up and motivating teachers to impact students positively. This can influence the teachers' outcomes or feeling of satisfaction when carrying out their duties as teachers. Understanding the relationship between incentives and job satisfaction among music teachers in private secondary schools in Uyo is essential for school administrators and policy makers to design effective strategies in order to retain qualified music teachers. Identification of these incentives and understanding on how it promotes the teacher's well-being can in turn improve the quality of music education in our society.

## **STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

Music Education in Nigerian secondary school system is important as any other subject. According to the National Education Policy (2020), one of the major aims of education is that educational activities should be centered in students for maximum self-development and self-fulfillment. The key people involved in the actualization of this aim are the teachers who influence educational productivity and outcomes.

In music education, the most essential people to carry out this work effectively are the music educators, who contribute significantly to students' educational productivity. It is however observed that, lack of incentives and job satisfaction can lead to impairments in teaching and impartation of instructions relevant for school students. This ineffectiveness can result in low productivity and lack of motivation to carry out the necessary teaching tasks in music education and may in turn influence music learning and its outcome in secondary school students in private secondary schools. It is on this note that the researcher seeks to investigate the relationship between incentives and job satisfaction among music teachers in private secondary schools in Uyo.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between incentives and job satisfaction using the following objectives:

- To examine the kind of incentives given to music teachers in private secondary schools in Uyo.
- To ascertain if there is job satisfaction among music teachers in private secondary schools in Uyo.
- To assess how incentives if given, can promote job satisfaction among music teachers in private secondary schools in Uyo.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following research questions are framed as a guide

- To what extent can incentives motivate music teachers in private secondary schools in Uyo?
- How satisfied are the music teachers in private secondary schools in regards to teaching profession?
- Can incentives determine job satisfaction among music teachers and increase educational productivity in private secondary schools in Uyo?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

**Conceptual Review: The following concepts, which are related to the work, are reviewed: Teaching and Job Satisfaction**

Education is a timeless concept that transcends generations, which embodies the fundamental pursuit of knowledge and enlightenment. According to Lisdunet (2017), education is a fundamental puller of human development, encompassing a broad range of activities aimed at acquiring knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. Abulencia (2021), describes education as a process where an individual acquired or impacts basic knowledge to another, education has its relevance in the society which includes helping one towards the attainment of goals in life. However, despite the definitions of education by many writers, the ultimate goal of education is to help an individual navigate and contribute meaningfully to the society. In addition, this can be through formal or informal means. In a formal setting, the educator is the teacher who is employed by an educational institution to impact knowledge on the students. The most important professionals needed in education are the teachers.

Robert (2023) defines teaching as a profession of those who give instruction especially in elementary schools, secondary schools or tertiary institutions, while on the other hand a teacher is the one who carries out this act of teaching. According to Emenemu and Isuku (2011), the teacher is undoubtedly the most important factor for achieving profitable learning outcome in every school system. Without the teaching profession, educational system can slack behind and teachers who carry out this job requires a certain level of dedication and satisfaction that can be caused by motivational factors. According to Mugabi (2020), motivated teachers are happier, more confident and are able to consistently carry out work that will lead to desired behaviors in students. Means by which teachers can be motivated are by praising them, recognition, crafting and compelling a reward program, recognizing efforts, encouraging their ideas, buying them lunch, creating breaks and creating a forum that they can recognize each other's handwork. Ozkan and Akgenç (2022), explain that job satisfaction of teachers has significant importance for positive teaching styles and it enables and support meaningful teaching and learning. Teachers with high job satisfaction are more likely eager to improve their teaching efforts and skills that can play an important role in students learning.

### **Incentives and Its Relevance in Job**

Incentives are compensations given to an employee in his work place in order to motivate them towards standard performance. According to Wei and Yaoping (2021), incentives can be defined as the objective criteria where an individual simply wants to establish quantifiable standards for performance. Solanki (2022), defines incentives as a plan or programs to motivate individuals for good performance. An incentive is most frequently built on monetary rewards or prizes. Quadri (2019), explains that a compensation package is when an incentive is used as a strategic tool to compensate an employee for their performance and retain them by achieving employee satisfaction and improving their health for achieving the best job performance at the same time. Organizations provide incentives to their workers as a way of achieving goals.

Wei and Yaoping (2021), divide incentives into moral and concrete incentives. Moral incentives refer to the compensation through certification or recommendations while concrete incentives refer to bonuses given to compensate the worker's efforts. Thompson (2021), classifies incentives as compensation incentives, recognition incentives, reward incentives and appreciation incentives. Compensation incentives involves performance related bonuses, profit sharing schemes and promotion. Recognition incentives includes carrying out a thank

you culture during business related meetings, sending personalized emails of encouragement, shout out to customers and creating a recognition platform. Reward incentives involves bonuses such as monetary gains, gifts and peer-to-peer referrals. Appreciation incentives includes celebrations, extra holidays, giving of prizes, team lunches and company parties in order for the employees to feel appreciated.

Rupali (2023), states that if an incentive is actually to spur performances and efforts, employees must see a direct relationship between their efforts and rewards. Furthermore, the importance of incentives is; for the inducement and motivation of workers for higher efficiency and greater output, earnings of the employee would be enhanced due to incentives and production capacity and performance is likely to increase reduces loss of employees and absenteeism. Incentives play an important role in professionals or working organizations and as such, its relevance cannot be downplayed as the importance are one of the contributing factors that lead to motivation and job satisfaction.

### **Job Satisfaction**

When employees have job satisfaction and feel like they are in the right spot in their careers, they are more likely to perform better and have a longer tenure at a company. According to Chiradeef (2021), job satisfaction is defined as the level of contentment employees feel with their jobs, these deals beyond their daily duties to cover satisfaction with team members, organizational policies and the impact of their job on employees' personal lives. Job satisfaction is an unquantifiable metric defined as a positive emotion response when one works or during experiencing a work. Satisfaction is a simple feeling of attainment of any goal or objectives. Jobs dissatisfaction brings about absence of motivation at work.

Shiyani (2022) defines job satisfaction as an individual's appraisal of the extent to which his or her needs are fulfilled by the environment. This explains that for job satisfaction to occur there has to be a particular goal, need or attainment that has to be fulfilled.

Bourne (2020), defines motivation as a cognitive resource allocation process in which a person makes choices as to the time and energy to be allocated to an array of motives or tasks, when an employee is motivated to perform and complete a task there is a tendency that it can be linked to higher job satisfaction. DeLeon (2022) explains that employee job satisfaction displays the amount of gratification that employees have when they are in their workplace, it can lead to many benefits such as customer loyalty, profitability and productivity. DeLeon (2022), also states that ways to improve job satisfaction includes; offering competitive compensations and benefits, creating a culture of transparency and feedback, amp up employee recognition and and efforts, provide ample training and career development opportunities, showing employees care and fostering workplace relationships.

Walter (2023), explains that there are signs that shows that an employee is satisfied which includes; a clear career path and sense of initiative which contributes to growth of an organization, low absent rate, the worker is proud of work and emotionally involved, the worker possesses a positive attitude and there is free flow of communication and there is amenity in workplace with a positive atmosphere that encourage others to be productive.

### **Empirical Review**

**The empirical review is based on the objectives of the study.**

Thomas and James (2018) conducted a research on incentives selection and teacher's performance evidence from IMPACT in the District of Columbia Pubic Schools. Implemented uniquely high-powered incentives were linked to measure multiple measures if teachers' performance. Regression Discontinuity (RD) was performed and a comparison

between retention and performance outcomes among low performing teachers whose ratings were placed in a threshold were assessed, that implied unusually large financial incentives were given to high performing teachers. The RD results indicated that financial incentives further improved the performance of high performing teachers (effect size = 0.24)

Muhammad and Wasaf (2021) conducted a study to assess the effect of job satisfaction on the performance of employees working in private sector's organizations of Peshawar, Pakistan. For that purpose, one hundred and eighty employees ( $N=180$ ) were selected as a sample from private organizations of Peshawar. An equal number of employees, ( $n=60$ ), were selected through random sampling method from three types of organizations; hospitals, banks, and universities. A Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ-short form) developed by Weiss et al. (1967) and a self-constructed Performance Evaluation Form (PRF) were used as instruments for the study. Initially, the reliability statistics of both the instruments was calculated to know the significance of the scales. According to the findings of the study, the type of occupation has been shown significant correlation with job satisfaction. Similarly, the positive relationship of job satisfaction with performance of employees was also confirmed. Therefore, it is concluded from the study that satisfied employees were better in performance as compared to dissatisfied employees, thus contributing significant role in the uplifting of their organizations.

Mohammed, Najat and Taqee (2022), conducted a study on incentives in achieving job satisfaction, a study of a sample of employees working in general directorate of education Dayak's governorate. The aim was to find the relationship between job satisfaction and incentives increasing the effectiveness of the employee. A random sampling technique was taken in Diyala education directorate (70 employees) and questionnaires were administered to assess data on the encouraging awards and job satisfaction. The findings showed that there is a significant relationship between incentives and job satisfaction that ensures importance of awards in public institutions for increasing job satisfaction.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

A descriptive research design of non-experimental type of research design was adopted for the study to assess incentives and job satisfaction among music teachers in private secondary schools in Uyo.

### **Setting**

This study was conducted in Uyo Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State. Uyo is the capital city of Akwa Ibom in South South Nigeria. Geographically it is bounded in the North by Ikono, Itu and Ibiono Ibom local government area, in the East by Uruan local government area, in the West by Abak and in the South by Ibesikpo Asutan local government area. It is made up of 11 wards, 4 clans and over 20 villages. It is headed by the local government chairman and elected members referred to as councilors. The tribal group in Uyo are the Ibibios and the predominant religion is Christian religion and traditional religion. The languages spoken by the indigenes generally are Ibibio, Pidgin and English languages.

### **Target Population**

The target population consists of music teachers in selected private secondary schools that offer music studies in Uyo. The researcher successfully selected music teachers from 20 (twenty) private schools. A total population of 40 music teachers were obtained for the study as each school did not present above three teachers teaching music.

### **Sampling Technique**

Simple random sampling technique was used, where the researcher selected 20 private secondary schools in Uyo, and a total number of 40 teachers were obtained.

### **Instrument for Data Collection**

The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire. The questionnaire was titled "Incentives and Job Satisfaction among Music Teachers in Private Secondary Schools in Uyo" A self-structured questionnaire was formulated by the researcher. It was made up of 20 items and 4 sections consisting of section A, B, C and D. Section A consists of the Socio-demographic Data, while B, C and D consists of questions related to the research objectives, having the sub-variable characteristics measured with 5 items statements having options of Yes and No.

### **Validity of the Instrument**

The instrument was subjected to validation by a peer reviewer. The instrument was considered valid after being subjected to corrections of errors and removal of ambiguities to ascertain content validation before administration to the respondents and collection for analysis.

### **Method of Data Collection**

The researcher distributed the questionnaire to the sample size of 40 music teachers through face to face contact and online contact. 40 questionnaires were finally collected and were filled correctly.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

The data obtained from the respondents were organized, compiled and analyzed with the use of frequency and simple percentages.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**Results**

**Research Question 1**

What kind of incentives are given to music teachers in private secondary schools in Uyo?

**Table 1:**

**The table below shows the response on the type of incentives given to music teachers in private secondary schools in Uyo. - 2023**

S/N	ITEMS	RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
6	Are you given monetary bonuses	Yes	18	45%
		No	22	55%
		Total	40	100%
7	Are you appreciated through gifts or awards in the school you teach?	Yes	26	65%
		No	14	35%
		Total	40	100%
8	Is your performance as a teacher compensated through promotion in your workplace?	Yes	8	20%
		No	32	80%
		Total	40	100%
9	Has a recognition platform been created for your sake in workplace?	Yes	12	30%
		No	28	70%
		Total	40	100%
10	Has extra holidays been given to you to appreciate your effort as a music teacher	Yes	10	25%
		No	30	75%
		Total	40	100%

**Source: Field Survey, (2023)**

In table 1 data analysis reveals that in item 6, 18 (45%) respondents agreed that they are given monetary bonuses and 22 (55%) disagreed. Item 7 shows that 26 (65%) agreed that they are appreciated through gifts and awards in the school they teach while 14(35%) disagreed. Item 8 showed that 8 (20%) agreed that their performance as a teacher is compensated through promotion in their workplace while 32 (80%) disagreed. Item 9 indicates that 12 (30%) agreed that a recognition platform has been created for their sake while 28 (70%) disagreed. Item 10 reveals that 10 (25%) agreed that extra holidays are given to appreciate their efforts as music teachers while 30 (75%) disagreed.

**Research Question 2:**

How do music teachers in private secondary schools in Uyo got satisfied with teaching as profession?

**Table 2:**

**Table showing the response of respondents on job satisfaction among music teachers in private secondary schools in Uyo - 2023**

S/N	ITEMS	RESPONSE	FREQUENC Y	PERCENTA GE
11	Are you contented with the teaching of music in school?	Yes	22	55%
		No	18	45%
	Total		40	100%
12	Do you feel fulfilled after teaching students to their understanding?	Yes	28	70%
		No	12	30%
	Total		40	100%
13	Do you feel optimistic when impacting students with knowledge?	Yes	36	90%
		No	4	10%
	Total		40	100%
14	When teaching, do you feel that a particular need of a student has been met?	Yes	24	60%
		No	16	40%
	Total		40	100
15	Are you motivated to teach more in order to bring in an inner satisfaction?	Yes	30	75%
		No	10	25%
	Total		40	100%

**Source: Field Survey, (2023)**

In table 2, item 11 indicates that 22 (55%) respondents are contented with teaching music while 18 (45%) are not. Item 12 shows that 28 (70%) feels fulfilled after teaching students to their understanding while 12 (30%) disagreed. Item 13 shows that 36 (90%) feel optimistic when impacting students with knowledge while 4 (10%) disagreed. Item 14 indicates that 24 (60%) agreed that when teaching a particular need of a student's understanding has been met while 16 (40%) disagreed. Item 15 reveals that 30 (75%) respondents are motivated to reach more in order to bring in an inner satisfaction while 10 (25%) disagreed.

**Research Question 3:**

Can incentives determine job satisfaction amongst music teacher in private secondary schools in Uyo?

**Table 3:**

**The table 3 shows the response of respondents on incentives and job satisfaction amongst music teachers in private secondary schools in Uyo - 2023**

S/ N	ITEMS	RESPONSE	FREQUENC Y	PERCENTA GE
16	Can monetary bonuses given to you by your employer motivate you to perform well as a teacher	Yes	32	80%
		No	8	20%
	Total		40	100%
17	Can gifts or awards given to you give you a sense of fulfillment of a work well done as a music teacher?	Yes	24	60%
		No	16	40%
	Total		40	100%
18	If promoted as a music teacher in your workplace would you be inspired to perform better?	Yes	36	90%
		No	4	10%
	Total		40	100%
19	Can a recognition platform as a music teacher give you a sense of fulfillment?	Yes	38	95%
		No	2	5%
	Total		40	100%
20	Do excursion, extracurricular activities and holidays give you a sense of satisfaction as a music teacher?	Yes	6	15%
		No	34	85%
	Total		40	100%

**Source: Field Survey, (2023)**

Table 3 shows that in item 16, 32 (80%) of respondents agree that monetary bonuses given by their employers motivate them to perform well as a teacher while 8 (20%) disagreed. Item 17 indicates that 24 (60%) agreed that gifts and awards can give them a sense of fulfillment of a work well done as a music teacher while 16 (40%) disagreed. Item 18 shows that 36 (90%) agreed that if promoted as a music teacher in workplace they will be inspired to perform better while 4 (10%) disagreed. Item 19 indicates that 38 (95%) agree that a recognition platform as a music teacher can give them a sense of fulfillment while 2 (5%) disagreed. Item 20 reveals that 6 (15%) agree that excursion, extra-curricular activities, and holidays give them a sense of satisfaction as a music teacher while 34 (85%) disagreed.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the demographic data reveals that majority of the respondents are between age 30 -35 with 8 (40%), it also indicates that the respondents are all Christians with 40 (100%), it also reveals that the males are more in number with 30 (75%), majority of the respondents are married with 12 (60%). The academic level attained indicates that 2 teachers representing (5%) had Master's Degree, while, 38 teachers representing (95%) have Bachelor of Arts Degree in Music. From the Data Analysis in Research Question 1 Table 2, reveals that 22 (55%) respondents disagreed that they are given monetary bonuses. The results of Data Analysis from Research Question 2: Table 3 shows that 22 (55%) of respondents are contented with the teaching of music. Findings from Research Question 3: Table 4 reveals that 32 (80%) agreed that if monetary bonuses are given to them by their employer, they can be motivated to perform efficiently as a teacher.

## CONCLUSION

The study focused on incentives and job satisfaction among music teachers in Private Secondary Schools, in Uyo. From the data analysed, it concludes that incentives motivates and affects job satisfaction, which in turn affects efficiency and production positively.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Employers and school's owners should implement monetary scheme to encourage music teachers and other teachers towards a better job satisfaction.
- Gifts and awards should be given frequently to deserving teachers to motivate other teachers towards a better job performance.
- A recognition platform should be created for outstanding music teachers.
- Teachers should motivate themselves towards better job performance in order to promote the culture of giving incentives.

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