EDUCATION MANAGEMENT, DIGITAL SYSTEMS, ETHICS AND LEGAL VALUES AS MEASURES FOR STANDARDIZING AFRICAN RELIGIO – CULTURAL PRACTICES

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Abstract

The world is rapidly resorting to good and sound education management, and digital systems, but in most African traditional religious and cultural settings, it apparently appears very difficult to join the fast growing education and digital expositions. It has been ascertained from some traditionalists that such expositions, unveil in depth secrets of sensitive traditional religious and cultural practices because this young generation lack respect to ethics and legal cautions in traditional African indigenous practices. The paper views utilization of digital electronic systems as dangerous obstacles challenging

the possibility of African religious and cultural practices assuming a world class standard that could equal Africa with or above other countries of the globe. The paper finds out that there is a dare need to take African religious and cultural practices to the digital world through a sophisticated education management and planning. The study aims at advancing African cultural practices to a global standard with a well preserved dignity to the ethics and legality of African identity. It is recommended that Africans should portray the good image of their cultural identity to join the world in fighting for cultural growth and expression. The study applied historical and comparative approaches. Data were got from primary and secondary sources. Data collected were analyzed with phenomenological method of data analysis.

Introduction:

Education, they say, is expensive, more so, they also say, if education is expensive, then try illiteracy. The importance of education can never be over emphasized in human life. Therefore, there is a very important need to plan and manage education system of any state. It is emphasized here, that African traditional religious and cultural settings need to project their religious and cultural practices to the digital world but the traditionalist have felt uncomfortable with the idea of taking the traditional religion and culture to the digital world. Because of the fear that this young generation cannot be trusted in veiling the secrecy in the indigenous tradition and culture, meanwhile there is fear that this generation would not be able to conform to traditional ethics and legal provisions for safeguarding the traditional religious and cultural practices.

That notwithstanding, this paper advocates that good and sound education management, planning and digital systems will effect transformation in the contemporary people's interactions with African traditional religious and cultural practices by setting standard goals within academic and non – academic scene where both the educated and uneducated will naturally attach relevance in concealing the secrecy of traditional religious and cultural practices in conformity with traditional ethics and the state's constitutional and legal contents of the state laws. Barr. Emeka Igbo (Personal communication, 10 May, 2022) is of the view that most secrets in African traditional and cultural practices are not illegal especially in their legitimate religious and social activities, for example, worship, masquerading cultism and other activities including festivals and other cultural observations. Mr. Unebuike Ugwueche (Personal Communicator, 9 May, 2022) asserts that there is no group of religious practitioners that do not observe certain secrets, be it

Christian denominations, Islam or Judaism, Shintoism, Taoism and African Traditional religious loyalists.

This research examines that African traditional religious and cultural practices are not fast growing to the digital world like at least two other religions, for instance, in Nigeria Context. One major reason for this problem is that the global world will expose some sacred secrets of the traditional religious and cultural practices and observations. The paper finds out that there is dare need for African religious and cultural practices to go digital and global world through a sophisticated education management and planning. The major aim of the research is to advance African cultural practices to an enviable global standard, with a well preserved dignity to ethics and legality of African origin and identity. It is recommended among other things that Africans should portray the good image of their cultural identity to be part of other well-known countries of the world in the fight for cultural growth, and development. The paper applied historical and comparative research methodologies. Data were selected from both primary and secondary materials. Data gotten were analyzed with phenomenological method of data analysis.

Definition of Terms

The terms that are given explanations includes: Ethics and Legality, Digital System, African Religious and Cultural Practices, and Education Management System. Ethics and Legality shall be separately defined in this paper. Ethics has been defined by some authorities in both disciple of philosophy and religion. Madu (1997:100) states that:

> Ethics is both speculative and practical for obvious reasons. Ethics is a science, a speculative science because in it, the truth is sought on the part of the object known and unknown. The object known, for instance, a mathematic object like the number eight is not subject to any kind of operation or activity. Similarly, the mathematician has no intention. of doing anything with or about the object at least in any proper sense of doing or making. He is a pure mathematician. In practical knowing, we are concerned with an object that is completely operative, either with doing something such as a voting for a post, or with making, for instance a cane chair. In making of the cane chair our knowing is ordered to the actual making of a chair not merely to an understanding of how to make a chair and hence both the manner of knowing is removed from any speculative consideration, and this can be designated as completely practical. Thus ethics is both a speculative a well as a practical science.

The basic discourse in explanation of ethics, is that ethics is developed in two basic conceptual framework which include: speculative and practical ethics. Moreover, it

examines ethics as a conception that I based relying on truth of any case. Scholars like Profs Agha, A.U and Okwueze, M.I also give definitions of ethics. For Agha (2003:1) he sees ethics as a "Normatic Science, which sees man as a moral agent and considers his actions, habits and character with a view to their rightness or wrongness". Okwueze(2003:1) avers that: "Ethics is derived from the Greek word ethos which means wisdom, conduct, culture or way of Life, many regard ethics as a branch of philosophy concerned what is morally good or bad, right or wrong". Agha and Okwueze share similar notions on the confines of the concept or the term ethics. As they agree to the fact that ethic is taken by many as a branch of philosophy that focuses on morality, human character or behavior as to the principle of what is good or bad, right or wrong, acceptable or unacceptable, approved or disapproved, etc.

Legality on the other hand, looks at the legal rights of human actions. Summers (2001:806) defines legality thus: "the fact of being by law. Legality therefore scrutinizing legitimacy and illegitimacy of any action ordered.

African religious and cultural practices deal with those practices that could be traditional that form part of the African religious and cultural practices that showcase the people's identity. Okwueze (2003:698) posits thus:

> …Traditional morality is in line with the above definitions. It could be understood in form of "Omenani", that is what is customary and generally held to be good. Its emphasis is on group morality rather than an individual cultivation of goodness. The moral code of Igbo land commonly spoken of as "Omenani" defines the various aspects of behavior and social activities that are approved while at the same time indicating those at achieving social harmony. It is built it up from the injunctions of the earth goddess through the ancestors.

This is the basic tenets of African religious and cultural practices. Everything is targeted at maintaining social harmony. Most of these religious and cultural practices are what the Igbo for example called "Omenani" which can invariably be called culture in English Language. But an important fact is that the moral content of this culture are detected by the gods of the land commonly led by the earth goddess usually known as "Ani" among the Igbo. Therefore, it appears very difficult to disentangle African culture from African religious and cultural practices which are geared toward making the society morally organized. African religious and cultural practices could be defined as to religious and cultural practices of African origin or Africans that are aimed at keeping the society religiously and culturally harmonized.

Digital systems have much connections with electronic and internet means of making certain services and activities gather wider and easier spread and coverage. Digital

knowledge has been emphasized by Hulter (2018) thus: "… It allows teachers to ensure that their students are learning to think digital world, primes students for future success". In the words of Katie (2018:19) is of the option that". (TS as an ICT – based strategy is linked to how efficient the way people process information in order to acquire knowledge or to solve problems, regardless of the position the individual assumes in the society. (TS – ICT are component of digital systems. As digital knowledge allows teachers to ensure that their students are learning to think in a way that will allow them access and understand their digital world. Education management experts will be very relevant in providing digital knowledge as teacher's guide in education planning for teaching and learning, which it will help to familiarizing African religious and cultural practitioners with digital knowledge that will allow them access and understand the digital knowledge that will allow them access and understand the digital world. Meanwhile, it is ideal to find definition to the meaning of digital system. O'REILLY (2022:1) states that:

> Digital systems are designated to store, process, and communicate information in digital form. They are found in a wide range of application, including process control, communication systems, digital instrument and consumer products. The digital computer, more commonly called the commonly called the computer, is an example of a typical digital system. A computer manipulates information in digital, or more precisely, binary form. A binary number has only two discrete values – zero or one. Each of these discrete values is represented by the OFF and ON status of an electronic switch called transistor. All computers, therefore, only understand binary numbers. Any decimal number (base 10, with ten digits from 0 to 9) can be represented by a binary number (base 2, with digits 0 and 1). The basic blocks of a computer are the central processing unit (CPU), the memory, and input/output (1/0). The CPU of the computer is basically the same as the brain of a human.

This explanation of nature and components of computer as a digital device explains virtually everything about digital system. Education as a faculty or school of its own as a digital device explains virtually everything about digital system. Education as a faculty or school of its own has some departments in it. These departments cover wide scope of disciplines of academic endeavour. Education management as a department in the faculty or school is concerned with management, supervision, planning, etc of education and academic programmes especially in schools, ranging from nursery, primary, secondary and tertiary settings of learning. Supervision as an integral of education management expertise has been examined by Edison (2017: 41) when he refers to the supervisors as designated officials of the school organization who interact with the members of the teaching behaviour system in order to improve the quality of learning of the students.

These supervisors have important role of making African religious and cultural practices part and parcel of core topics in related subjects offered in schools. Assignments can compulsory made to be given to pupils and students of different levels of relevant areas of studies to be done with the use of digital devices without infringing or encroaching into the ethics and legal conditions guiding the secrecy of those practices. It is worthy to note that in the National Policy on Education (2014), Secondary schools were designated to prepare students for useful living within the society as well as for higher Education. Otijietal (2021:311) view education Management and supervision as principally targeted at improvement of the educational policies. Therefore, when professional in education management encourages studies in African religious and cultural practices through digital systems it will help the school system and at the same time prepare both the African practitioners and students.

It is necessary for useful living within the African society as well as the larger world of globalization. Omorbi (2021:8) defines Education Management as: "The application of management principles to the field and practice of educational leadership for the attainment of educational goals and objectives". Summarily, Education management profession would plan and control the manner of accessing the traditional religious and cultural practices in a way that the positive impacts of the secrets are concealed for the good of all and sundry. Educational mangers and planners can develop serious curriculum plans from primary to tertiary where African religious and cultural practices will be embodied for growth and development of African cultural practices across the globe.

Areas of Secrecy in African/Igbo Religious and Cultural Practices

Secrecy in African religious and cultural practices has areas secrets are carefully observed to enable that particular activities function effectively. These areas of secrecy includes: Masquerading cultism, title – taking/covenants, festival worships, institution of the spirit of medicine (Magic) and divination, reincarnation rituals to mention but a few. In African traditional religion, there are beliefs in God, divinities, spirit beings, cult of ancestors and magic and medicine. These belief systems are principle to the observation of secrecy in both religious and cultural practices in Africa. Anyacho (2005:244) upholds that:

> The categories of these beliefs do not mean that the Africa Traditional Religion is made up of only a series of beliefs. It only helps to understand the major beliefs systems in the religion, which determined all other practices, carried out in it.

In African religious and cultural practices most secrets are sealed in traditional religious order. It is this spiritual order that infuses the fear that makes believers and related persons to obey and maintain humble spirits to the contents and agreements reached in any

cultural or religious contracts. It is religious seal that enhances cult which has been defined by experts in the field of religion. Murdock in Madu (1997:64) defines cult as a body of religious rites and practices associated with the worship or propitiation of a particular divinity or group of supernatural beings. As it is maintained above, cults are derived from man's dependency on the supreme- being, a dependency which necessitates worship or propitiation. In most religious and cultural practices in Africa, there are religious rites, in their worship exercise. This act makes traditional African practices in the most modern people's minds assume the name cultic/cultism or cult, as if other religions do not have their own cults. In some cases illiteracy is a contributive factor.

On the masquerade cult, there are secrets that the young generation has condemned as evil. Masking secrecy is mainly introduced to enable cult to be able to execute penalties against a lot of criminal actions in the society. Initiation into the masquerading cult conceals a whole lot of secrets mandatorily controlled and managed by male teenagers and adults. Onuigbo (2009.92) views masquerade among the Igbo thus:

> Masquerade is generally called "mmonwu,""ma or muo" by the Igbo. It is believed to be the physical manifestation of spirits from the ancestral world. It represents the forces of nature and ancestors that emerge at ceremonial period to grace the occasion and endorse it. Baseden defines masquerade as the return of the deceased members of the community in the form re –embodied spirits to their former surroundings, especially at festivals.

The Igbo name for masquerade that is "mmonwu," "ma or muo" literally means spirit. On the basis of the nomenclature, as it has to do with spirit, the Igbo man has a reasonable level of secrecy in that spirit matters are not open for non-members' consumption. Nzekwu in Onuigbo (2009) asserts that:

> Among the Igbo, Masquerading is of foreign origin, having been introduced along with some cults from among the Igala to the north, the semi Bantu to the east and the Niger Delta tribes to the south. But they have adopted them to their own conditions.

Nzekwu is of the opinion that Masquerading is introduced by foreign ethnic groups of the Igala at the north and the Bantu of East and Niger Delta from the south with some cults that accompanied it. The cultic connection to Masquerade is the major source of the secrecy. Onah (2004:73) Avers thus:

> The modern trend in Masquerading has some effects on the traditional cultic masquerades. These cultic masquerades are fast losing their prestige as it concerns dignity and secrecy. In the first instance there is this unfortunate's fact of the loss of adherents to the traditional religion.

Most of the secrets in the Masquerades cult are merely to restore the cult's dignity, but not necessarily to harm people, but when people disobey the ethical guides associated with the cult especially when they are constitutionally right, the masquerading cultic members can turn violent and harsh. Modern people are virtually nonchalant about masquerading ethics and legality. This disobedience has caused some chaos in several communities within and beyond Igbo land. With respect to Masquerading cult, and its ethical application, introduction of digital system and education administration in Masquerade cultic practices will help to promote the practice beyond African context. This sort of counter from modern people to traditional religious and cultural practices makes the traditional practices loose standard even within the immediate local communities.

In title – taking, rites and rituals in it face some condemnations from the modern people. They perceive traditional titles and their rite or rituals in most cases as evil basically because of certain secrets they keep among members. In both traditional title, masquerading, and burial occasions, there are certain rites and rituals performed at night, depending on the deceased status respectively. These night activities especially during funeral are misconceived as evil. Today people still do Christian wake – keep till the next day when the corpse arrives. Onwubiko (1991:41) examines rituals as, "effective instruments of education within a culture and thus, of transmission of culture". Ritual activities are wires that carries out a particular rites that is being performed. In title – taking among Africans people are initiated in a particular cultic membership which will not necessarily be evil in nature, though outsiders always conclude them to be evil and devilish. The Igbo for instance take Ozo title – taking in esteem in regards and otherwise. In fact ozo title is the most prestigious title among the Igbo of the south – east Ozo title in Igbo land has much secrecy, ethics and legal order guiding the institution. Digital system and education planning would help to make the world understand the Africa traditional title – taking better than what they regard it as, when the legal and ethical orders are honoured.

Burial rites are highly observed in Africa. Every African traditional community has elaborate burial rites from the point of death to the stage of burying the deceased and its associates funerals. Mr. Sabastine Chikwelu (Personal Communication, 17th April, 2022) states that the Igbo observe many rites in burying the deceased. It connects all the dead's relations and even his/her friends, well-wishers and neighbors. The Igbo believe that when all the burial rites the dead are culturally entitled to are not accomplished, the dead suffer in the spirit world, and his suffering negatively affects the living relations of the dead. Therefore, every Igbo family tries to accomplish burial rites of their deceased member. In the traditional burial rites and rituals certain activities are either done in secret, or by particular class of people. Ifesieh (1989:216) asserts that: "Fear of the dead man… is a

collection fee." Dying induced into the society by the fact that death he has become the object of dysphonic condition of the collective consciousness". There is always the fear of the dead in Africa. This caused most Africans to settle every dead soul for their peace in the spirit and peace for the living. Digital systems incorporation with education management will go far in making the world understand the activities in burial rites and rituals in Africa better to uplift the continent around the world.

Traditional festivals in Africa have some secrets activities specially performed in form of worship by male elders in different families. Engr. Johnson Aguike (Personal Communication, 8th November, 2021) explains that during their *Igo chi* festival, that their father goes out early in the morning with either a cock or ram to his mini shrine in their compound, after performing some religious rituals, he will kill the animal, then ask them to carry it to the kitchen for the festival feasting. Onwubiko (1991) posits thus:

> In African festival and their celebration, the connections between sacred symbols of culture, myths and rituals are put into practical expression feast and festivals are common features in world religions and cultures. They are occasions for commemorating certain events which are of vital importance to the celebrating community. Some feast and festivals normally occur at specific period and the follow a calendar of events.

Ekwunife (2003:93) links festivals in Aguleri with moon/luna calendar and rituals. Every religion in the world celebrates one festival or the other. In most religious festivals, secret rituals and rites are done but they are not condemned like some African festivals by the modern people. Then, there is need to involve the skills of education management and digital system experts to make African festivals very standard and attractive.

Secrecy is obvious in oath taking/covenant and institution of the spirit of medicine and divination, reincarnation rituals and so on. All these practices are carried with rituals and rites. Though their rituals are highly elaborate and lack standard because the secrets are not in line with modern education undertone. The involvement of education management, supervision, administration and digital coverage the traditional practice will gain a more sophisticated outlook.

Ugwu (2014:25) has given a diagram of African rites of passage thus:
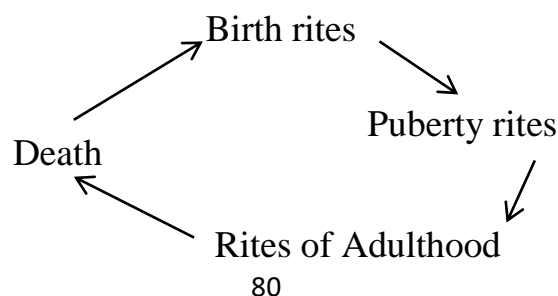
He emphasizes further that:

> These involved ceremonies of different forms and shapes during conception and pregnancy. Thereafter, other such rituals that fall under this category such as birth, infancy – exorcising the spirit of born – to – die *Ogbanje* among the Igbo and *Abike* among the Yoruba, naming ceremony…

All these rites summarize the ritual rites that run through the life of every individual in African traditional religious and cultural settings.

Digital Systems, Education Management, Planning and Provision of Transformed Conducts in Digital Projection of African Religious and Cultural Practices to a World Standard

Digital systems are always electronic means of disseminating information and providing internet services to clients and users. Gregersen et al (2010) examines the structure of digital computer thus:

> A digital computer, encompassing the design and layout of its instruction set and storage register. The architecture of a computer is chosen with regard to the types of programs that will be run on it (Business, Scientific, General – purpose etc). Its principle component or sub – system, each if which could be said to have an architecture of its own, are input/output, storage, communication control and processing.

It is a critical study of this architecture of the digital computer that will help in designing the instruction set, storage and processing programme. It is good management of these computer layouts that will help users of digital systems to conform to the ethics and legality involved in spreading African traditional religions and cultural practices to the world standard. Education management comes into play in building formidable planning and supervision from primary schools to tertiary institutions to enable whoever that has passed through school systems to be educated on application of traditional religious and cultural practices and legality in using the digital systems. Britt (2010:6) states that:

> By the beginning of the 1980's integrated circuiting had advanced manufacturing scales integration (VLSI). This design and manufacturing technology greatly increased the circuit density of microprocessor, memory and support chips i.e those that serve to interface microprocessor with input – output devices. By 1990's some VLSI circuit contained more than 3 million transistors on a silicon chip less than 0.3 square inch (2 square cm) in area. The digital computers of the 1980's and 90's employing LSI and VLSI technologies are frequently referred to as fourth – generation systems. Many of the microcomputers produced during the

1980's were equipped with a single chip on which circuits for processor, memory and interface functions were integrated.

The point here, is that, as days pass by, microcomputers products advance rapidly in technological components. (Gregersen 2010) adds thus:

The use of personal computers grew through the 1980's and 90's. The spread World Wide Web in 1990s brought millions of user onto the internet, the worldwide computer network and by 2019 about 4.5 billion people, more than half the world's population, had internet access. Computers became smaller and faster and were web ubiquitous in the early 21st century in smart phones and later tablet computers. The iphone 4, released in 2010. Image: courtesy of apple

Integrated Circuit

Digital Computer Component and Features
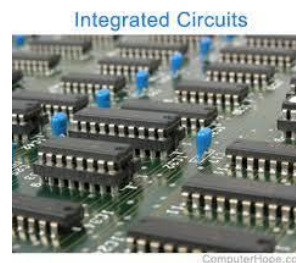
A typical digital computer system has four basic functional elements (1) input – output equipment, (2) Main memory, (3) Control unit, and (4) Arithmetic unit. Any of a number of the devices is used to enter data and program instrument into a computer and to gain access to the result of the processing operation. Education management experts have both formal and non – formal education platforms to re – position the people psyche towards making African religion and cultural practices live up to standard. Princeton word net in Otiji et al (2021) stresses that:

Adult education is practice of teaching and educating adults. Adult education takes place in workplace through "extension". Other learning places include: Community colleges, folk high schools, colleges and universities, libraries and lifelong learning centers. The practice is often referred to as "training and development and is often referred to as "training and development and is often associated with workforce or professional development. It has also been referred to as andragogy. Adult education is different from vocational education, which is mostly workplace – based for skill improvement: and also from non – formal adult education, including learning skills or learning for personal development.

Education management, planning and supervision can organize a special training for professional teachers inform of orientation, training specially made to teach core and illiterate African traditional religious and cultural practitioners in adult education centers where such individuals will be taught how to use digital electronics from those made in the 1980s and 1990s to the most current digital gadgets for example, iPhone4, apple, etc, according to the one, an individual can afford. As far as these practitioners have traditionally acquired the knowledge of the ethical and legal guide on these African religious and cultural practices, with the learned knowledge of the digital systems they will have far- reaching skills of spreading African religious and cultural practices without infringing against the traditional ethical and legal guiding rules protecting every traditional institutional practices.

It has been obvious that the modern people have misconceived traditional religious and cultural practices that they always tamper to the legal rights of the practitioners. Dr. Ndubibisi Ejike (personal communication, June 21, 2022) laments on the attempt and decision of Cooperate Affairs Commission (CAC) staff to deny- the Association of African Religious and Medical Practitioners registration, though this traditional religious and medical team are set to go to the law court for litigation. Dr. Okey Ozo (personal Communication, 22 June, 2022), emphasizes that education management would make it a point of duty to address similar thinking of the CAC staff not to prevail in a democratic country like Nigeria where her constitution grants freedom of worship and association to her citizens.

Education management and administration is always paramount to development and progress of any given society. Iloanya (2021: 178) views thus:

> Indeed, one cannot talk of the development and progress of any society without resource to education. That is the reason education is referred to as the bottom rock of every sustainable development. However, for education to achieve this feat there is need for good educational policies to be made in order to guide the teachers and educational personnel to the right part. These policies also have to be tailored towards and formulated in line with the overall philosophy and goals of a particular society.

Education management and administration experts ought to promulgate or influence or contribute to introduction of policies that will work in line with the overall philosophy and goals of a particular people and their environment. African religious and cultural practices showcase African peoples' goals and philosophy. Therefore educational managers and administrators should collaborate with relevant bodies within the ministry and its arms in education to encourage the growth and development of African religion and culture across

the universe through digital systems without tampering to the African people's ethical and legal rights that protect the dignity of African religion and culture.

There is serious need for models and approaches to ethical issues in school supervision. School supervision on ethics will help to conform to ethics and legality of African religion and culture. Ademora (2016) points that "setting prior to agreement by both the supervisors and supervisees is therefore desirable for effective supervision of instruction and not the otherwise". In order to achieve maximum result in introducing ethics and legal guides in formal and non-formal education settings or schools, effective supervision of instructions is very pivotal. In establishing adult education schools for the effective use of digital systems in spreading African religion and culture, supervisors should monitor teachers' compliance to instructions. This is equally applicable to formal education settings including Pre- Nursery, Nursery, Primary and Secondary Schools, etc. With proper application of digital systems to African religion and culture, where education management, administration, planning and supervision will co-ordinate programme platforms, African religion and culture will compete favourably with other religions and cultures in the world.

Recommendations

1. Digital systems should be encouraged to be used by African religious and cultural adherents.
2. Education management and supervision experts should find serious need to pay attention in projecting African religion and culture.
3. Compliances to African ethics and legal issues in their traditional religious and cultural practices should be given priority.
4. Digital electronics stages of development should be carefully studied by African traditional religious and cultural practitioners with the help of digital experts to avoid violating the traditional ethics without knowing when the mistake has been made.
5. African religion and cultural practices should be displayed more than they are used to be displayed before, especially by core practitioners to help in spreading their practices for rapid growth.

Conclusion

African traditional religion and cultural practices seem to face degeneration. This paper discusses secrecy which is being maintained through promulgation of traditional ethical guides in conformity with secular legal systems as a major factor hindering the growth

and development of African religion and culture when digital systems become the source to move the traditional practices forward to world standard. More so, it has been found that digital system should be built in the practices of African religion and culture for faster exposure and spread round the globe.

In order to maintain ethical and legal decorum in the use of digital systems in traditional religious and cultural practices of African people, the services of education management will be pivotal. Education managers would work on the supervision on instructions. They will also help in planning how the digital systems could be built in traditional religious and cultural related subjects or courses. They will also assist in developing other education or academic settings where the religious and cultural practices of African origin will be intensively taught. In fact, if the digital systems are well and carefully adopted in African religious and cultural practices, it will go far in improving their status to a world reputation.

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