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THE NIGERIAN NATIONAL ANTHEM



A research study to estimate the percentage of Nigerians that can recite the Nigerian National Anthem correctly.



The Diary of Social Research

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INTRODUCTION

As a kid in primary 3 attending a neighborhood private school, one of the things I held with great pride was been sure of my ability to recite the Nigerian National Anthem correctly, all the words rightly pronounced with no mix ups. If I had depended on the early morning general recitation at the school assembly, I probably would now be part of the many that only follow the tune and hum along. But no, that wasn't going to be me. Time and time again I took my time to write out the words of the anthem and recite independently after I had memorized it from a book a few months before.

For me nothing else was going to confirm my ability than an experience at the birthday party of a neighbor I attended then as a primary 5 student. There was a basket filled with tiny paper wraps each with something written in it. As the music played each kid passed the basket to the next kid in line until the music stopped, whoever had the basket then picks one of the wraps and the moderator un-wraps it and reads out the content. As a shy little boy who reluctantly attended the party, the last thing I wanted was to have the basket in hand when the music stops. Whatever will be in it, I didn't want to be part of it anyway. But lo and behold as the basket was passed to me, Mr. DJ paused the music, now I had to face it. My pounding heart however normalized when the moderator read the content, 'recite the National Anthem'.

After I was through the moderator could not but acknowledge, 'that boy must be attending a very good school'. It could only have been me who would raise national pride when the occasion called.

Ten years on the words remained glued to my memory as I woke up every morning in my room in the University a 3rd year student of microbiology to recite the national anthem as a duty over a period I chose for myself.

KNOWING WHERE WE STAND

While I could say this for myself, my disappointment knew little bound as I discovered many people could not boast in my boasting. Football players representing the nation in national competitions, musicians at national outings and political appointees all find it difficult to correctly recite what should be one of our national representations and exposed how sorry a situation we are in.

If Nigerians at such levels as this go way off when reciting the anthem then how many more do not even know the opening statements.

Some say 'knowing the problem makes it half solved', so we needed to arrive at a believable picture of how close or far off we are as a nation from losing our national anthem.

International Corporate Research embarked a research study to ascertain how many Nigerians can actually recite the national anthem correctly. This is the basis for this work.

METHODOLOGY

In conducting this research, we adopted the qualitative method of direct observation of the respondents. ICR researchers directly observed respondents at random to get the reality of the position as regards their ability to recite the national anthem.

The direct observation method was adopted to avoid the likely pit falls of using quantitative measures like questionnaires and interviews in survey research where respondents can purposely decide to give responses to favor a conclusion rather than the true picture.

Drawing on the experiences of previous research works, direct observation came up as the best tool for this research because of the more likely tendency of respondents to deny the fact that he/she is not able to recite the Nigerian national anthem.

RESPONDENTS	PC*	% of literate population
Primary School Students (9 - 11 yrs)	4.1 million	3.9%
Secondary School Students (12 - 18 years)	41.4 million	39.4%
Undergraduate Students (18 - 24 years)		
Other literates (25 years and above)	59.5 million	56.7%

*Population Consideration

RESULTS

After collating and analyzing the survey results, we are drawing the following conclusions from our observation: Only 3.85 million (3.7%) of Nigeria's 105 million literate population can recite the national anthem correctly. Which makes only 2.7% of Nigeria's total population.

The expanded results of Nigerians who can recite the national anthem correctly are presented in the tables below.

DISTRIBUTION BY AGE		
AGE RANGE	% in Nigerians who can recite (frequency)	% of Literate population
9 - 11	2.13% (82,000)	0.08%
12 - 25	53.77% (2.07 million)	1.97%
26 - Max.	44.1% (1.7 million)	1.60%
POPULATION CONSIDERATION		
POPULATION CLASS	Population Consideration	% of Total population
Children (9 - 11)	4.1million	3.9%
Youth (12 - 25)	41.1million	39.4%
Adult (26 - Max.)	59.5million	56.7%
Total	140.5million	100%
DISTRIBUTION BY LITERACY		
LITERACY CLASS	Number in Population	Nigerians who can recite
Literate	105million	3.7%
Non Literate	35.5million	0%
Total population	140.5million	3.7%

Table 1

Expanding on our general conclusion stated above as shown in the **Table 1**

Adult population (25 and above)

Of this class of Nigerians, approximately 1 in every 35 (i.e. 1.7 million of 59.5m) is able to correctly recite the national anthem. This represents 44.1% of the population that can recite and 1.6% of the total literate population.

Results ...contd

Teenagers/undergraduates (12 - 24)

Of this class, 1 in every 20 (2.07 million of 41.1m) can recite the anthem correctly, representing 53.77% of the population that can recite and 1.97% of the total literate population

Younger population (9 - 11)

1 in 50 i.e. 82,000 of 4.1million persons can recite the anthem correctly representing 2.13% of the population that can recite and 0.08% of the total literate population in Nigeria.

DISCUSSIONS

The major reasons for this trend is mainly the lack of a deliberate attempt at teaching the national anthem to students and ensuring that they know and understand its message. In many schools in Nigeria, the national anthem is rarely taught with a deliberate intent therefore students are left with the socially transmitted 'popular version' which they hear mumbled by others.

There can be no greater proof of this than a visit to school assemblies where the national anthem is utterly murdered morning after morning and teachers and instructors listen to the same incoherent presentation of the national anthem without thinking it fit to address the situation. Perhaps even the teachers cannot recite the anthem correctly.

Deliberate attempts therefore need to be taken to redress this ugly and unpalatable trend through the teaching of the national anthem and helping students not only memorize the wordings but also understand the message it passes. If this situation isn't tackled from such foundational stages as primary and secondary schools, the repulsive trend where ministerial nominees at assembly screenings are unable to recite even the first stanza of the national anthem correctly will still remain with us. Also unacceptable cases where a musical artist invited to perform a rendition of the national anthem and mixes the words up or even misplaces them in the name of 'their own version' will be normalized. Scenarios such as these should be seen not as scenes to laugh over but the shame of a nation.

Yet again we must emphasize that from our study hope lies in the over 41.4 million Nigerians between the ages of 12 and 24 to reverse this decadence. And for the adult population, the national anthem (both stanzas) and the national pledge have been reproduced on the next page.

THE NIGERIAN NATIONAL ANTHEM

Arise O compatriots
Nigeria's call obey
To serve our fatherland
With love and strength and faith
The labour of our heroes past
Shall never be in vain
To serve with heart and might
One nation bound in freedom, peace and unity

O God of creation
Direct our noble cause
Guide our leaders right
Help our youth the truth to know
In love and honesty to grow
And living just and true
Great lofty heights attain
To build a nation where peace and justice shall reign



THE NIGERIAN NATIONAL PLEDGE

I pledge to Nigeria my country
To be faithful, loyal and honest
To serve Nigeria with all my strength
To defend her unity
And uphold her honor and glory
So help me God



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