



Journal of Advanced Research in Social and Behavioural Sciences

Journal homepage: www.akademiabaru.com/arsbs.html
ISSN: 2462-1951



What are you?

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Access

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Article history:

Received 13 June 2017
Received in revised form 26 July 2017
Accepted 8 August 2017
Available online 15 August 2017

The question 'what are you or where are you from', often serves as a point of ingress to the conversation or introduction by most Asians especially during formal or informal meetings with Africans. Thus, this article examines the phrase 'what are you' in relationship to African females residing in three major Asian cities. The article attempts to establish that there is more to the question; "what are you" than meet the eye. This phrase or question (What are you?) is the key finding of this study. In so doing, this article critically examines this finding in connexion to the notion of triple gender discrimination. This is in view of a good number of African women working, studying or residing in some Asian countries. Although, this study provokes more controversy than can be explained, the understanding here, is purely academically motivated. This is based on the fact, gender played an essential role in how the conclusion is shaped and illustrated. The study devoid of any racial categorization as it raised a fundamental question, why are male Africans in many Asian cities, treated differently from their female counterparts?

Keywords:

African female, triple gender discrimination,
womanism, social construction

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1. Introduction

Consider an analogy to traffic in an intersection, coming and going in all four directions. Discrimination, like traffic through an intersection, may flow in one direction, and it may flow in another. If an accident happens in an intersection, it can be caused by cars traveling from any number of directions and, sometimes, from all of them. Similarly, if a Black woman is harmed because she is at an intersection, her injury could result from sex discrimination or race discrimination. . . . But it is not always easy to reconstruct an accident: Sometimes the skid marks and the injuries simply indicate that they occurred simultaneously, frustrating efforts to determine which driver caused the harm [18]

This article examines the notion of triple gender discrimination in relation to African women working, studying or residing in Asian countries. The article attempts to establish that there is more to the question; "what are you" than meet the eye. What are you, is a familiar question, or what I

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regard as an everyday question in any given society. But more common when you look different and members of the community assumed 'you don't belong'. To belong is to be part of the pact or mainstream. For most people that are always on the move from country to country, especially if that involves meeting the locals or the mainstream population of that society, this question simply implies you don't belong here, and who the hell are you? Often, this type of question has been a subtle form of racial discrimination. Although, in many instances, the question is not vocally expressed, the facial expression says it all. In subtle redirecting of the question, the local may ask; where are you from; the answer may be acknowledged with a fake smile or patronising behaviour. This is a wanted question foreigners, especially the Africans are confronted within the Asian states.

Nonetheless, the question is sometimes posed out of sheer inquisitiveness or ignorance. Other times coded to sound 'what are you'. My understanding is, when it is directed to an African male it's simple, where are you from; but to an Africa female, it connotes first, what are you, and then, where are you from? Either way, it's a question which could be interpreted or assumed to be coated with some elements of racism, antipathy or gender discrimination. Often, as a result of looking different from the acceptable socially constructed meaning of beauty or to be a 'woman'. But, then given that such question(s) often has a profound undertone when directed to a female of African descent, but applies differently to African male in the same migrant journey. Thus, what are the instrumental factor(s) to this question, and to what extent is the undertone of such question a mere inquisitiveness or stem from discrimination tree?

As globalisation envelops human socio-economic activities, young African males and females like others from different continents, journey out of their home countries in mass. Like other young males and females from other parts of the world, they are constantly on the move. They are traveling en masse, in search of a better socio-economic benefits. This journey is either individually or collectively. For some reason(s), the direction of the movement or migration has slightly shifted from Europe or USA to many countries in Asia. Thus, the top destinations are Japan, Malaysia, China, and India (some Mid-Eastern states). For some unknown [empirical] reason(s), the African males adapt fast and reasonably comfortable in these new destinations. They make friends, acquaintances and establish some form of acceptable presences and lifestyle. The same cannot be said about the African females that have travelled to similar states in search of education or economic wellbeing. As noted above, this is the score and scope of this study. According to the 2007 statistic on migration, the number of African women that migrate to another part of the world stood at 47.4%. This figure is lower compare to Europe (53.4%), Oceania (51.3%) and North America (50.4) and Latin America (50.3%). Most of the 47.4% migrated to Europe or the USA [9]. In recent times, some of these women have migrated to Asia countries either as a result of their spouses' job or in search of educational brilliance. The choice for Asia's higher institutions is partly due to the lower cost or other personal reason(s).

It is very difficult to establish the number of female or male Africans in these countries, because the states would not disclose these statistics. But it is obvious the number is huge and continuously increasing. For example, according to Malaysia's immigration department, 79,352 Africans entered the country in 2012, and 25,467 student visas were issued to Africans to pursue studies at public or private institutions [9]. Based on views provided for DW journalist, Europe had become a fortress. Over the past decade, hundreds of Africans have died trying to cross into Europe, and if some do make it, increasing restrictions have seen dozens deported. DW noted that some do end up staying in Europe, but many soon discovered that life is extremely difficult given the Eurozone crisis. However, the economic rise of Asia has appealed to Africans, and they see this as an opportunity to make a living and help their families out of poverty.

2. Literature

While white middle-class women have traditionally been treated as delicate and overly emotional—destined to subordinate themselves to white men—Black women have been denigrated and subject to the racist abuse that is a foundational element of US society (ibid).

In relation to the above quotation, Ebunoluwa [10] argues, Womanism makes it clear that the needs of the Black women differ from those of their white counterparts. That by recognizing and accepting male participation in the struggle for emancipation, it again differs from feminism in its methodology of ending female oppression. Ebunoluwa [10] notes that Womanism is rooted in Black culture which accounts for the centrality of family, community and motherhood in its discourse and as an ideology has extended beyond the frontiers of Black America to being embraced by many women in and from Africa, and in other parts of the world.

Discrimination is undoubtedly a universal social ill, in which many have experienced directly or indirectly in daily life. Most people of colours understand the pain of being different and how it shapes their participation in both economic and societal activities. However, unlike the black man, the black women are discriminated against because they are black; they are women, they are assumed to be loud and standoffish. According to Conrad [4], they are discriminated against because they are both women and black. Echoing similar tone in a different dialectal, Carby [3] pointed out that, our continuing struggle with History began with its "discovery" of us... thus, her work will be concerned with 'Herstory' rather than 'History'. The understanding here is the fact that the history of African people from pre and post-colonial era more or less tells that tale of black men rather than black women, in many instances rendering black women historically invisible. This mutual invisibility, often impelled the question; what are you?

According to Carby [3] most contemporary feminist theory does not begin to adequately account for the experience of black women. She observed or acknowledged that it is not a simple question of their absence, and consequently the task is not one of rendering their visibility. Carby [3] observed that;

On the contrary, we will have to argue that the process of accounting for their historical and contemporary position does, in itself, challenge the use of some of the central categories and assumptions of recent mainstream feminist thought. We can point to no single source for our oppression. When white feminists emphasize patriarchy alone, we want to redefine the term and make it a more complex concept. Racism ensures that black men do not have the same relations to patriarchal/capitalist hierarchies as white men.

Citing Combahee River Collective, Carby [3] argues;

We believe that sexual politics under patriarchy is as pervasive in Black women's lives as are the politics of class and race. We also often find it difficult to separate race from class from sex oppression because in our lives they are most often experienced simultaneously. We know that there is such a thing as racial-sexual oppression which is neither solely racial nor solely sexual, e.g. The history of rape of Black women by white men as a weapon of political repression.

Although, many contemporary writers may argue to the contrary on the above statements and quotations, the "triple" oppression of gender, race, and class still determine the lives of black women living, working or studying in many Asian countries. Partly, history has made them invisible, and when such invisibility is detached, the black woman is portrayed as vicious, sex objective or domineering sport individual. Besides, the media have done its part to drive these characterisations of black woman home to the minds and souls of many.

Patricia Hill Collins [6] argues that the creation of four socially and culturally constructed images of Black womanhood- mammies, matriarchs, welfare mothers and jezebels were created in the

United States during slavery [6]. These constructed images of Black womanhood, have influenced how African women are perceived in most Asian countries. This is because citizens of these Asian countries must have or somehow, directly or indirectly read or watched movies that depict the African female as such. Yet, these internalised images of black woman often differ from those they met on the campus, shopping malls or seminars.

As Collins [6] argues, the White western view of beauty is known throughout the world. The blue-eyed, blonde, thin White women could not be considered beautiful without being compared to the Black women with classical African features of dark skin, broad noses, full lips, and kinky hair [70]. Caldwell [2] observed that this view is exclusionary and racist, but provides insight into the intersection of race, gender, class and power through the standard of beauty (p18). Johnson [12] maintains that the beauty standard has created dichotomies as binary opposites to distinguish African features from European features such as kinky and straight, long and short, dark and light, good and bad. What is more, the colour of one skin in many instances guarantees or negate some form of prospect. This understanding is illustrated by the 1988 McIntosh' article on 'White privilege'. McIntosh, defines white privilege as unearned privileges that people with white skin or those that can visibly identify as white have. She depicts white privilege as "an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blankchecks" [15]. Looking at the various arguments stated above, it is easy to understand why many Asian populate poses the question 'what are you' to African women. Although, lacking any logical justification, their understanding of African women is often overshadowed in their senseless crave for light or white skin—as this is often the hallmark of beauty or being classified beautiful.

Normally, the understanding of many outside Africa or states that have large African residences, is the predominant attitude which frequently values men and masculinity over women and femininity. Thus, where discrimination occurs, the African women face a triple jeopardy. As King [13] states, black women have to deal with racism, sexism and classism—the equivalent of —triple jeopardy. Each of these different forms of discrimination has a —single, direct, and independent consequence of their status in society (p. 222). In fact, Deborah King argues [14], the experience of black women is apparently assumed, though never explicitly stated, to be synonymous with that of either black males or white females; and from the experiences of both are equivalent, a discussion of black women in particular is superfluous. It is mistakenly granted that either there is no difference in being black and female from being generically black (i.e., male) or generically female (i.e., White). ... When black people are talked about the focus tends to be on black men; and when women are talked about the focus tends to be on white women [13].

It is obvious from the above quotation, the black woman is either invisible or simply knotted as a male African or white female, hence, their presence in areas with little or no knowledge of their presence, often prod the question "what are you". Thus, as noted by Elizabeth Cady Stanton in 1860, "Prejudice against color, of which we hear so much, is no stronger than that against sex" [13]. In 1972, Frances Beale, a founding member of the Women's Liberation Committee of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) wrote: "As blacks, they suffer all the burdens of prejudice and mistreatment that fall on anyone with dark skin. As women they bear the additional burden of having to cope with white and black men" [13]. King further noted that "still others have suggested that heterosexism or homophobia represents another significant oppression and should be included as a third or perhaps fourth jeopardy (ibdi)"

However, the scope of this article is limited, and does not include 'heterosexism or homophobia', it examines the understanding and representation of black women in Asian countries. Besides, the two issues mentioned are still inconclusive among Asian communities and societies.

According to Arisika Razak [17], a number of Black authors discussed the degrading stereotypes of Black women as “self-effacing mammies, lascivious breeders, and tragic mulattoes that emerged in the aftermath of the transatlantic slave trade, and the subsequent Jim Crow era”. Razak [17] observed that, “these negative social constructs have been re-packaged for the 20th and 21st centuries and are used to police, critique, and marginalize Black women today”. As Williams noted, “The colored girl . . . is not known and hence not believed in; she belongs to a race that is best designated by the term ‘problem,’ and she lives beneath the shadow of that problem which envelops and obscures her” [22].

In the final analysis, a social phenomenon [especially as it relates to how black women are viewed or portrayed {in many Asian cities}] is always defined in terms of inter-organism behaviour relations. This is especially based on the cinematography, which many humans are earnestly hooked to. Thus, such portray creates an unaffected depiction of group over another, maybe as a result of omission or commission everyday common sense. That is, it seems generally agreed that a social phenomenon is constituted by the regular accompaniment of one organism’s behaviour by at least one other organism’s behaviour.

Indeed, people inhabit a world that is in large part socially constructed. In particular, the meaning of objects, events, and behaviours comes from the interpretation people give them, and interpretations vary from one group to another. Cooley, in his theory of a “looking glass self,” argued that the way we think about ourselves is particularly apt to be a reflection of other people's appraisals (or more accurately, our imagining of other people's appraisals) and that our self-concepts are built up in the intimate groups that he called “primary groups.” Mead emphasized that human beings do not react directly to events; they act based on their interpretation of the meaning of events.

3. Methodology

Qualitative method was used for this study. It is understandable that qualitative methods are effective at capturing issues which are sometimes immeasurable but absolutely factual in determining the aims and objectives of a specific study. This is possible because qualitative methods are very elaborate. Although sometimes several trials and lengthy follow-up and probing are needed, this enhances the quality of the data and ensures that it conveyed questions adequately answered. It is obvious, people do not always tell the truth. Thus, getting candid information often requires time, trust, rapport, triangulation, observation, and this is where qualitative becomes a vital method. According to Milka Metso and Nicky Le Feuvre [16], from an epistemological point of view, qualitative research is often thought to value subjective and personal meanings and is said to be conducive to giving a voice to the most oppressed groups in society. Thus, Metso and Le Feuvre [16], observed that feminists claimed, it is impossible to conduct research that is totally free from subjective bias. This is because they doubt the possibility of discovering scientific “truth” that could exist totally outside the context of the knower. Moreover, as the saying goes; “who feels it, know it”, it is apposite to employ qualitative methods in this study, as it ensures the ‘voice’ of the oppressed are presented as precisely as possible.

In-depth Interview and observation were the two research instruments used for data collection. This ensures data obtained from the field are factual, and accurate reflection of “who feels it, knows it”. To ensure data from the field provided answers to the study’s objective, and also carefully examine the research’s aim, a designated target group were interviewed and observed. The data collection were slow. It was carried out within a period of five to six years. In three different Asian major cities—Tokyo and Seoul and Kuala Lumpur. These three different cities are both distinct and diverse with both ethnicity and socio-economic (and Political) uniqueness of their environments.

They are all capital cities, and totally or super urbanized. These cities are a magnet for people of different trade, and will continue to be. But more importantly, they are new centres of education, economy and tourism.

This time frame was because this researcher started this study as a mere observation and gradually became an ideal research as he moved from one country to another. Yet, there was a need to gather this data from respondents with specific and similar characteristic. This is to ensure accuracy, and some level of generalisation. Purposive sampling technique was used. Therefore, respondents were chosen based on the following distinctive. Respondents were African women (from West, East and Central Africa), between the ages of 19 to 40 years old, students or female spouse that lived with male spouse in any of the above cities, must have lived in any of those cities for a year or more.

At the end of the data collection, about 29 respondents were interviewed in-depthly. However, the number of respondents interviewed were higher than the above figure. The total number was around 67 respondents of African descendants. The 31 respondents were excluded from this study because the data from this group is not comprehensive. Of these 29 respondents, 25 were university students at the time of data collection, 3 accompanied their spouses on a student's visa. Of the 25 respondents, 17 were post-graduate students in various disciplines, and the remaining 8 were undergraduates at the time of data collection. As mentioned earlier, these respondents have spent more than 12 months in one of the three cities in the study areas. These extended time spent in these cities, have enabled them to directly or indirectly associate with the local populations.

In addition, data were collected from 7 Asian females. The number could have been higher, if they were the target group from the onset data collection. But the inclusion became necessary in order to be seemly, and equally to validity some of the responses obtained earlier. Unfortunately, the entire 7 respondents were drawn from Malaysia, but from different ethnic group components of the country. Besides these 7 female respondents, I had an informal group discussion with about 7 to 8 Asian males on their choice of female relationship outside their Asian community or society.

Accordingly, this study utilized data drawn from the rich experiences the respondents have gained in the course of their daily life and living in these magnificent mega cities of the Asian continent.

4. Data Analysis

The experiences and accounts of these respondents are the subject matter of this section. I have endeavoured to critically evaluate these accounts, endeavoured to analyse the data as objectively as possible. Although, objectivity is mandatory in any research, human errors or emotion may sway conclusion. Thus, it is in view of this, seven Asian respondents were interviewed.

Based on the data from the field, the 29 respondents of African descents, sojourner outside their various countries, to pursue quality education (these are mainly those in the higher institutions), search of greenery prairie, make new acquaintances, gain experience, and if the condition presents a perfect union seize it. Based on their accounts, prior to departure from their countries, respondents had high expectations of the new environments, were hoping for amazing experiences, and a good rapport from their host country. As one respondent puts it; "Once my admission to study in South Korea came through, I was over the moon, and I spread the news to all my friends and acquaintances that dare to ask me about my future. And I was counting a very second to prior to my departure from Accra". And another respondent interviewed in Kuala Lumpur added; "my admission to study in Kuala Lumpur (KL) was like a golden opportunity and I grabbed it with both hands". And one of the respondents, that moved to KL because her husband got admission to pursue his PhD, had to quit

her job in an insurance company to be with her husband and children. According to her, “I thought the place (KL) is like any of the states in the United States, where it’s hard to miss home... Mmmm but I was so wrong”. This high expectation as they put it was as a result of what they read, watch or their ‘media exposure’. These sources they maintained provided them with pictures of people who are open-minded and shun any form of racial prejudices or discrimination.

4.1 *The Sins of My Skin*

The social construction of beauty has directly or indirectly increased human classification and depiction of what is acceptable or unacceptable within a specific culture and society. As Trina Jones, a Professor of Law at the Duke University, recalls in one of her articles—“The Significance of Skin Color in Asian and Asian-American Communities: Initial Reflections”; states, “... this fact, however, should not obscure the important, though perhaps more subtle, role that skin color plays as an indicator of class and beauty within some Asian and Asian-American communities. One of her respondents, Michelle wrote:

When I was a child, I spent a lot of time in the sun and I tanned easily, becoming dark after just a few days. This was not really a concern when I was young, but I remember my mom despairing as I grew up that she let me get too dark. Not an especially serious worry, but a sort of acknowledgment that I will probably never be the incredibly pale kind of Asian women, that I had lost that chance with the time I spent in the sun as a child. Too much time outdoors translated into looking like someone from the poor rural countryside.

The association of skin to class and beauty is not completely an Asian phenomenon, but universally shared. However, while many societies with a large population of people with dark or the black skin have adjusted or learn to accommodate, data from the field indicate the notion or the presence of the black African female is still treated with disdain, often the response to their presence is only described as thus, “what are you”. In fact, about 76% of the African female respondents interviewed claimed to have experienced this behaviour (scorn). A number of them claimed: “on a number of occasions, even when we are with our African brothers, the people we met on the street, conferences or parties usually act very cold towards us, as if we are invisible”. According to Nana, “It’s like our presence is taboo”. Nana a tall and cheerful young woman in her mid 20s, observed; “Each time I initiate a conversation, most people avoid eye contact. Sometimes, I wonder if my presence provokes them and yet, I am always polite”. Another respondent, Silver added, although it’s hard to tag their action or reaction to her presence as discrimination, but I believed it had something to do with her skin colour which she described as shining dark skin... She pointed out; “it’s not the same when they speak to ‘white girls’... I know that because we attend the same school” Nadia, a postgraduate student from Senegal I interviewed in Seoul noted:

I wouldn’t say the people intentionally act discriminatively, but the society and its people are on a daily basis or even hourly basis bombarded with advertisement that associate white skin with beauty, thus, most people in Korea hardly noticed the individuals but the skin colour. You wouldn’t blame the Asian females because of their male counterparts, white skin is everything when it comes to beauty. To many, being beautiful is entirely having white skin...I mean, that’s what most of their males desire...but I am not sure if there is any skin which is ‘white’. Yeah, I guess it’s a metaphor, and it's all in the mind.

One respondent pointed out that;

I don’t notice the colour issue much, because there are lots of Asian people who do not care about the skin colour as long as the relationship remains platonic,... but then again, about 99% Asian male in Asia will never date (don’t even talk about marrying) an African woman (from Sub-Saharan),

as a result of the skin colour and probably other reasons or factors best known to themselves. But I believed its cultural or colonial mentality, whatever it is, its deep rooted. Oh!!, don't get me wrong, I am not suggesting they must date, marry African women, but it's a little weird that both Asian male and female mixed freely with African male but hardly with an African female... that's my point!

One particular, respondent Joy, summed up the skin colour issue like this; "don't blame them or anyone for that matter, it's the sins of my dark skin". In the course of the interview, I learnt, that Joy had a crush on one of her classmates from Japan. Yet, even though she made her feelings known to her crush, it came to nothing.

4.2 The Malicious Media and the Social Construction of "Beautiful and Ugly"

The world we live in today, could be likened to a global village where nothing goes unnoticed. Cultures and norms are easily copied or adapted by the larger world population. This is obvious given the fact, the social media as a tutelage to the world today is a common trend. In fact, a search through websites, and other social network apps, showed that about 87% storylines on African females in and outside Africa hardly has anything positive to say about them. Indeed, about 89% of the African respondents in this study attribute the nature or level of acceptance they received from their host cities in relation to the negative info from the social and other source of media. According to the respondents, "what could be far from the truth, Africans, especially those from the Sub-Sahara are often portrayed as uncultured, dirty and repellent in contrast to those from the western hemisphere, that are portrayed as snow-white, pointed nose and fair skin. This is the image the Asian associates with beauty and civilized" (Adama, Adeola, Akua, Esi and Ayisha). They conclude it's hard to fault their perception, probably it's the doing of the creator (ibid) When these respondents were reminded that these data also made more damning details on the African male (especially those from Sub-Sahara, specifically Nigerians) and yet they are more welcomed than them, why? For many of the study's respondents, it's hard to explain, and yet it's obvious. Some concluded, probably because they're charmers, and knew how to get around the frustrating situations. One particular respondent Abi explains;

African male live and breathe ego, and they don't give up easily. Unlike females, most are energized by rejection, and to protect their ego they keep trying until they get accepted. African women are not the same, they are cultured from childhood to protect their pride and dignity, and at the first sign of rejection, they'll simply withdraw into their shells.

However, when a question was put to this respondent, if these African women are too quick to make conclusions? She intelligently adds;

"Once bitten, twice shy",... coping with rejection is one thing, but when the eyes and body language screams (because it never it never whispers)—what is this! You don't need a wise grandmother from your village to tell you to be a woman and an African woman indeed.

Probing to obtain the best response, this question was introduced: 'What actions or deeds, indicate or demonstrate to you that the media or social media influence your host's negative depiction of African females? Most, (usually the students) respondents narrate a common story when their classmates or officemate called or asked them to clarify negative stories posted or published in the media on African females. According to these respondents there were never such as occasion where positive stories were referred to. One respondent Iverem blunt it out in this word; "they don't read or watch to understand us, but to find proof to say we're better than you, simply". Another respondent added; "the media is the window to see or understand others, but at the same time a window to create harms and prejudice, especially when the publishers are insensitive to others

feelings and way of life". She continued, "most people simply read or watch media products, and make an illogical conclusion about others and things".

4.3. *Their Logic and Our Views*

As mentioned earlier, understanding the logic behind any social issue, demands logical explanation. Such logical explanation can only be established based on both empirical observation and in-depth interview if the qualitative method is applied. Thus, to assess responses from African-female respondents thoroughly, there was the need to obtain data from respondents from the study areas. Based on this researcher's observation, having spent close to two decades in these cities at different times, I can say with absolute certainty that I have never come across any of the male from the study areas dating or even having a platonic relationship with female(s) from Sub-Sahara Africa or other Africans with dark skin. However, it's a complete different tell in relation to African males and Asian females.

From my interaction with male Asian (aged between 20-25 years old) during an informal group discussion, the idea of dating a black African female has never crossed their mind because it's not acceptable within their community. I vividly recalled, when the question; "would you date (or consider dating) an African female from sub-Sahara Africa? First, the group were utterly silent. After a few minutes, one or two started glancing from side to side. I guess, to see whom among them will respond first. Then, they slowly started to smile mischievously and finally the act was completed with a bust of giggling and loud laughter. It was an interest act to watch, but the truth is, none of them have ever thought of such relationship. Yet, they have no qualms acknowledging that they wish or dream of dating a Caucasian if the opportunity presents itself. The group has no explicit explanation for their choice. But most likely, due to their early socialization and other seemingly factors. Somehow, I felt, they were simply being respectful, that is why they did not provide much answer. Yet, their reaction said much. Towards the end of our discussion, a member of the group quietly whispers; "sometimes, hanging out with African boys can be cool, but their ladies,... Nay!!".

In contrast, the Asian females interviewed in Kuala Lumpur, provided richer answers. According to the 7 respondents, it is totally unfair to simply generalise that Asian female and male have something against African women. But they did not deny, there are possibilities some people of Asian descent could harbour some form of prejudice against Africans in general. They observed, the fact that male Asians are not into African females could be the issue of choice, and not absolute discrimination. They also faulted African females. According to Nora one of the 7 respondents; "most African females I have come across, appeared to possess dominative traits similar to those often depicted in the movies... they are loud, and sometimes unfriendly (laughing but added), I'm sorry! But that's my honest observation... Mmm, I may be wrong hahaha".

Another respondent Alice, collaborating the above statement, said; "African female are neither cold or warm. Sometimes, when they speak among themselves, it's like they are fighting each other... I'm a little scared of them". But Jacky, another respondent painted a different picture and story. She attends church services and activities with some of them. She explains;

When they sing in the church, it's like the heaven is about to open... I love to see them in church because they are very committed and sometimes super sweet to be with—especially with their jokes and loud laughter. But it's truly hard to make sense of their thought and mind"... Yeah, I have never seen any of them with the local boys outside the normal chat. A little weird. Mmmm, I think the boys are scared of them... maybe because of their skin or because they don't appear to be interested in the local boys. They're always hanging out with their fellow African boys. If you get to know them, they're like any other females I have met.

But another respondent noted;

While male Africans are often charmers, smiles a lot, creating jokes to make one welcome, their ladies often appear to be on the war path with everyone. Even when you try to be friendly, there seems to be an invisible wall between them and 'others' except for their boys who seems to have a magic wand to make that wall to disappear. I always wonder what is the matter with them (the girls).

Like others, this respondent state; "sometimes they do look quite friendly, but such window of friendship evaporates when they saw with African boys...maybe its jealous or ...I don't really know how to describe their reaction".

In sum, according to the data from the field, about 62% African female respondents, have no problem dating Asian male. And 37% of the 62% are very open to marriage or as they claimed "serious relationship". The other 38% that claimed they're not open to dating or being married to Asian male. Among these, 38% are married female, who simply responded, "I am married, I'm not looking for a new husbands". Others in this group pointed culture differences. But two made reference to sexual incompatibility between them and Asian males. Unfortunately, they couldn't elaborate further on this.

In relation to Asian females, about 89% of the entire respondents said they are open to friendship, but often as soon as they established a friendship path, it usually went dead after a few weeks. But one of the married female respondents, claimed to have befriended a number of Asian females. She noted that the relationship developed mainly because their children attends the same primary school and lived in the same location.

5. Conclusion

Although, this study provokes more controversy than can be explained, the aim of the study, is purely academically motivated. This is based on the fact, gender plays an essential role in how the society's conclusion is shaped and illustrated. This study devoid of any racial categorization as it raised a fundamental question, why are male Africans in many Asian cities are treated differently from their female counterparts? Although, this article started out of curiosity (which is the hallmark of scientific research), the process and findings are definitely vital. Not because it wishes to portray any group as discriminating in nature, but to establish, the gender bias and discrimination are alive and accommodated either in a subtle or direct means. From the discussion above, the male Asian in the study area either have no idea on how to handle a relationship with African female or simply have been socialised to believe beauty is only found in white skin, and somewhat impossible to shake the idea of beauty away from the ingrained notion of beauty as depicted in their education. As Sharon Smith noted: if a Black woman is harmed because she is at an intersection, her injury could result from sex discrimination or race discrimination.

However, it's equally necessary to establish here that most of the time, 'action speaks louder than words'. It's obvious that both the Asian and African females' reaction or body language say a lot to deter each them from associating with one another. Yet, there are elements of misconceptions on both sides. These misconceptions are outcomes of various factors, which include, media portrayal of cultural differences, distances and inconclusive assumptions.

Besides, African and Asian societies like most human societies function through the patriarchal dichotomy, thus understanding of most human social and cultural realities are structured or constructed to reflect that patriarchalness. And socialisation ensures such patriarchalness of society's acceptance of what is normal or abnormal is ingrained and sustained. As the data in this study established, African females in these three different dynamic Asian cities may be racially discriminated (unknowingly), rather sexually discriminated.

Now to answer that awkward question, What are you? I've dark and shining skin, I am a woman and I am an African. Listen to one of the late James Brown's songs, you'll hear him saying it with pride: I'm black and proud say it loud!

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