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Emerging Trends, Prospects and Challenges for the Contemporary Nigerian Art Musician: The Professional Music Practice on the Social Media as Exemplified by Godwin Sadoh

Chijioke Ngobili

Lecturer, Department of Music, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

Abstract:

Nigerian journalists, newspaper columnists, media practitioners, and TV hosts are presently struggling to keep their relevance and influence alive in the minds and consciences of their readers and viewers. Not only do they do so through their official online news sites, they extend it to the social media outlets used by Nigerians which are mainly Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. Music, a medium of communication just like other communication arts, has equally taken to the social media spaces in some parts of the world which includes Nigeria. With such evolution and changes in music business and musical affairs, this paper seeks to research, understand and raise concerns on the present and future expectations and place of professional music practice on the social media while sampling Godwin Sadoh's experiments as a springboard. Through reviews of related literature on the subject; online and offline interviews granted by some concerned exponent(s), this paper attempts to contribute to the study of and further research on the influence and place of social media in Nigeria's professional musicianship, musical arts and musical practice.

Keywords: Chijioke Ngobili, Godwin Sadoh, Nigerian Music, Nigerian Art Music, Nigerian composers, Ethnomusicology, African music, African musicology, Music technology, Music/social media, Music education

1. Introduction

Music and music practice – be it in the classical, folk, pop or global classification– make up an art that thrives and survives basically on the measure of appreciation and appeal that greets it in a particular space and time. Consequently, the duo, of music and music practice, can always thrive better when they are more public than confined; when they are more liberal than conservative; when they are more popular than elitist. Owing to that, the ones that are more of the former (public, liberal, popular) naturally enjoy a wider social appeal and appreciation more than the latter (confined, conservative, elitist). An understanding of that makes it easier for one to see why there are more non-professional music practitioners than professional ones dominating and exploiting the digital space which has social media as one of its off-shoots. While all musical forms and practices – bordering on the professional and non-professional, cannot and can never be lumped into one form or mould, they both need and have the freedom to exploit the potentials of the dividends of digital revolution which include the social media spaces.

If the social media space knows any music practice, the music practices of the 'non-professionals' would far outweigh those of the professionals in its understanding. The reason for this is not far-fetched as what is obtained offline is the same as online. However, in Nigeria of today, the 'non-professionals' have embraced the social media technological innovation with both hands such that they live and have their beings therein, unlike the professionals would. But the 'professionals' are beginning to adapt, entrench, and assert their practices and efforts on the social media spaces in their different rights and capacities. Godwin Sadoh, a Nigerian music professor is one of such Nigerian music professionals experimenting with living and having out the being of his musical practice on the social media space in the most recent times. His social media exploits inspired this research and the thoughts to be witnessed in this writing.

1.1. What Is Professional About Music Practice?

Every field of knowledge and practice will always have exponents who passed through its institutionalized rigors, systems, standards, requirements and time as against ones who did not or ones who did but not under the institutionalized. We differentiate the two divides with the terms 'professional' and 'non-professional'. Ulrich logically captures that:

Professionals, as the term is used...are specialist knowledge workers, an occupational group that relies on skills that are unavailable to others, not because they are in any way esoteric or are always highly remunerated but simply because they require sustained training and practice (p.1)

Merriam Webster's online dictionary defines the adjective 'professional' as "relating to a job that requires special education, training, or skill." Professional music practice then involves music practices that require/required special education, training and skill. The people who engage in them are called professionally-trained musicians which include ones trained at the music departments of universities, colleges of education, conservatories, legally-recognized music

academies and institutes; people who were specially trained to feed and live their lives on and from it. Someone specially and formally trained in a recognized and registered dance academy just to do dances, and who lives and feeds on dancing is indeed a professional dancer, at least by the standards of the society. Same goes with a professionally-trained pianist, organist, violinist, singer, ethnomusicologist, choir manager, songwriter, composer, etc.

1.2. *Arguing Against What Is Professional about Music Practice*

The above explanations given to buttress the appendage "professional music practice" is not without contestation and contention. Some arguments find the term exclusive in its relevance with respects to what it concludes of itself; which invariably means it would not have been without the necessary exclusivism. Music scholars like Wayne Bowman are of that argument. Contesting that, Bowman submits:

...there is considerably more to being a music education professional than discrete knowledge and expertise in these two areas. The point is that the 'we' in music education is not, if 'we' is based on a claim to professional status, all-inclusive. The claim to professional status is necessarily exclusive, and whom it specifically excludes is a matter of considerable moment. (p.115)

Nonetheless, discussing music practice which involves both formally and informally trained persons in it, especially in this context, requires some level of inclusion. And so, there might be the need to mention any aspect of musicianship as part of professional music practice in the course of this discourse.

1.3. *A Brief View on the Origin of Social Media*

Social media is one of the technological and communication innovations of the late 20th century. One can rightly say that it launched us into the 21st century and then blossomed. The first recognizable social network, SixDegrees.com, was launched in 1997. Between 1997 and 2003, some other networking sites where people socialized sprang up too. Some of such sites were Asian Avenue, Black Planet, MiGente, etc. (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Considering the context that concerns this topic, let us examine briefly the origin of Facebook.

Facebook, as a networking site and social media space was innovated and founded by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004 after it has existed and evolved in different patches with similar names. The social media site enables people to connect from all over the world, share their profiles, bio-data, thoughts, ideas, expressions, pictures and files of different categories. The greatest of what Facebook offers seems to be the opportunity of people reacting freely to issues they otherwise never had the opportunity to, and to also come face-to-face with certain personalities and public figures in the reactions; people they would never have had the opportunity to meet in real life. Simply put, freedom of communication and expression is made easier on Facebook. As of the first quarter of 2017, Facebook had over 1.9 billion subscribers and still counting. Facebook has proven to be the world's leading social media site with the greatest capacity to publish and publicize one's information pieces within a short time and to any length ones wishes. Facebook, by estimation, is the most popular and most visited networking site in Nigeria and for Nigerians in connecting themselves amidst all other networking sites for social media activities.

1.4. *A Brief Profile of the Exponent-In-Context of Social Media Music Practice, Godwin Sadoh*

A professionally-trained musician and music practitioner, ethnomusicologist, choral conductor, composer, organist, pianist and stalwart music scholar with over 100 stellar publications including 12 books. Godwin Sadoh was born on March 28, 1965. He had his formative music education at Eko Boys' High School, Lagos, and St Paul's Anglican Primary School, Idi-Oro, Lagos. One of his books, *Intercultural Dimensions in Ayo Bankole's Music*, topped the bestseller list as No. 1 on Amazon in 2007. Godwin concertized as a solo pianist playing recitals in Kaduna, Abuja, Ile-Ife, Lagos, and at the maestro Christopher Oyesiku epic concert series at the University of Ibadan. With a Masters Degree in African Ethnomusicology from the University of Pittsburgh, an M. Mus. in Organ Performance and Church Music from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and a Doctor of Musical Arts in Organ Performance and Composition from Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge; Godwin distinguished himself as the first African in history to bag a doctorate degree in Organ Performance from any institution in the world.

Godwin has taught at several institutions of higher learning including Kentucky State University, the University of Pittsburgh, and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. His compositions have been performed and recorded all over the world. Godwin is a recipient of the ASCAP PLUS Award for over 10 years in a row in recognition of the performances of his compositions worldwide. His biography is listed in *Who's Who in America*, *Who's Who in American Education*, and *Who's Who in the World*. 20 years after sojourning in the United States for higher studies and teaching career, Godwin returned to his native country Nigeria as a Professor of Music with a wealth of musical experiences and knowledge that can impact greatly on the younger generation of Nigerian art musicians, composers, ethnomusicologists and music scholars.

1.5. *Foraying into the Nigerian Social Media Space: Sadoh's Drive, Mission and Vision*

Having returned to Nigeria with the passionate drive to give back to his country, Godwin, who became a Professor of Music at the age of 42 in 2007, thought it fitful and most efficient to use the social media spaces as the avenue to achieve this. His drive is unambiguous. In his own words, Godwin explains it in an online interview he granted this researcher:

Upon my arrival in Nigeria in January 2013, I knew I had a herculean task before me to re-introduce and establish myself to the musical circle especially the younger generation in Nigeria. How best, effective and fast could I achieve this? The best starting point is Facebook.¹

This drive, of course, has a mission attached to it which primarily rests on meeting and influencing other Nigerian art musicians, especially of the upcoming generation with his works. He unveils this in same online interview with this researcher:

Another reason of joining Nigerian Facebook associations is to fulfil one of my main goals of return to Nigeria, that is, 'to give back to my country.' I have executed this mission through all my free giveaways on a weekly basis.ⁱⁱ Added to the mission above, is the look-alike vision which gives us a broader perspective and foresight of Sadoh's examples of music practice on Facebook. He captured it thus to this researcher while being interviewed as participating in "...shaping the musical thoughts of lots of minds especially about Nigerian art music, composers, and intellectuals; the forebears of Nigerian academic music."ⁱⁱⁱ

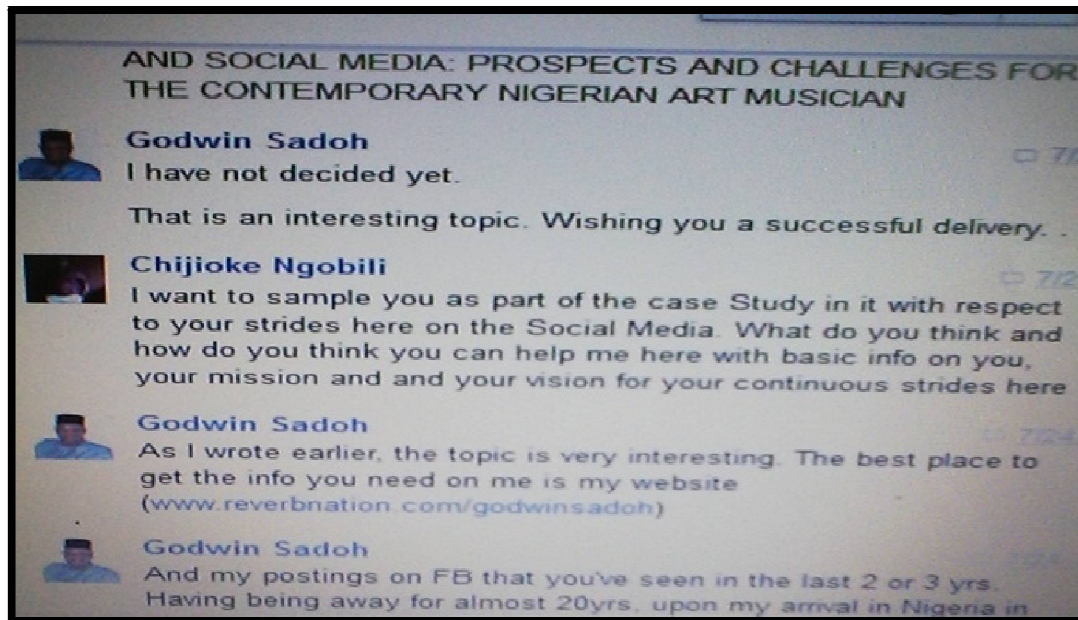


Figure 1: An Excerpt of the Interview Granted by Godwin Sadoh to the Researcher

1.6. Classifying Sadoh's Works in the Social Media Domain

The totality of Sadoh's professional music practice on the social media can be categorically compressed into two main divisions, which are the:

- Theoreticals
- Practical

Under the theoreticals, Sadoh brings to bear these two:

1.6.1. Enlightenment

This includes his several posts on performance/birthday memories, histories (that are rarely found anywhere in Nigeria), and strides of pioneer Nigerian art musicians to enlighten the younger generation of Nigerian art musicians and foreign art musicians as well as other followers and fans of his intellectual experiments. Sometimes, his basic music teachings and musings on Nigerian art music are brought to bear under this too. A recent example of this can be seen in the screenshot of June 20, 2015, Facebook post he made on his wall below:

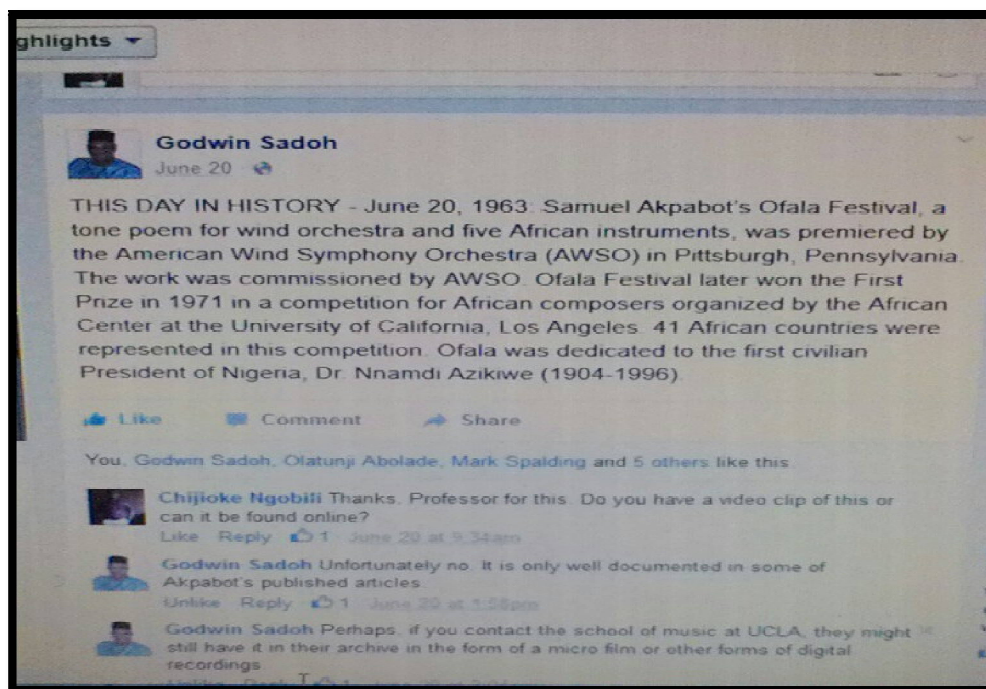


Figure 2

Additionally, and as part of the the oreticals, Sadoh equally has a programme he calls monthly sweepstakes. In this, he establishes participation amongst the ardent followers of his art music posts. The monthly sweepstakes – which come once or twice a month, running through the first three days of that month – enable the followers to participate in the quiz which the programme is all about. Questions derived from the earlier postings on his Facebook wall are asked on Nigerian art music itself or Nigerian art composers. All those who provided correct answers to the questions are given prizes in the forms of rare articles on Nigerian art music, and most often, out-of-print and unpublished scores of some of Nigerian famous composers such as Thomas Ekundayo Phillips, Fela Sowande, Ayo Bankole, Samuel Akpabot, and Joshua Uzoigwe. In doing this, Sadoh emphasizes that “...the minds of the classical aficionados are broadened on Nigerian art music”.

1.6.2. Announcement

In this context, this word is not limited to ‘what will happen.’ It includes both ‘what has happened’ and ‘what will happen’ – musical and extra-musical activities that concern him and his colleagues in the professional music practice. Here, Sadoh announces performances of either his instrumental or vocal works to be held or that have been held in the United States, United Kingdom, Europe or Nigeria. Often, this is done with or without a picture tagged to the post. A very recent example of this can be seen in the screenshot of a 9th August, 2015 Facebook post he made below:



Figure 3

Under the practicals, Sadoh strives best to make flesh the word of some of his posts on his works. There are also two divisions in this. They are:

- Audio: This includes sonic but non-motion-picture representation of his works as performed by him and other musicians.
- Video: This includes sonic and motion-picture representation of his works performed by him and other musicians around the world.

To make posts on the above two, Sadoh deploys mainly the YouTube and Reverbnation where audios and videos of his works can be accessed easily when he posts links of the particular clips in question on his Facebook wall.

Noteworthy here is Sadoh's consistent diversification and extension of publicity and outreach on Facebook. Aside his Facebook wall which he completely controls and administers, he has a few other Facebook pages where he reaches people who are not his friends on Facebook. Some of such pages are Black Composers Music, National Association of Negro Musicians, Association of Nigerian Choral Directors, Naija Choristers, International Composers, Composers for Performers, Performers for Composers, Association of Facebook Organists, Church Music, Organists, Concert Organists, etc. On Black Composers Music, Sadoh replicates the musically-related posts he makes on his wall as to reach other art musicians around the world who chanced on such names as "Black Composers" while surfing the net for information. Below is a screenshot of the Black Composers Music page and a post made on it recently:



Figure 4

2. Impressions and Reactions to Sadoh's Works and Strides on the Social Media

Under this, we have a tabulated representation of Godwin's works: vocal and instrumental, chamber works, orchestra and symphonic works, Western and African, originally-composed and arrangement, etc, uploaded on YouTube and Reverbnation and posted on his Facebook wall, Google+ and other Facebook pages together with the impressions and reactions that greeted them.

Impressions: In this, we consider the comments, likes, etc from followers and watchers of Sadoh's written texts, motion and non-motion picture posts, while reactions have to do with views, download, requests for purchases, financial returns, etc.

Dates of Comments	Commenters And Comments
7 th October, 2014	<p>Jude Osy NwankwoWow! This is very informative sir. Prof. I must really commend your good work of making us know about the history of Nigerian art music free of charge. Thanks for sharing your fount of knowledge with us. Still look forward to when we'll meet in person.</p> <p>Mathew McConnell: Wow!! Thank you so much!! I'll send you a recording, and let you know when I plan to play or during a service. . .I played through your piece tonight following handbell choir rehearsal. Not only does it "lie well" for the organ, but it is unbelievably fun to play! I can't wait for December to come so I can feature it as a special selection during our worship service. Many thanks, again, for the score! I played another piece of yours in concert a few years ago. For the life of me, I can't remember the title, but it was charming; it was an 11th-hour addition, since I came across it shortly before my program had to be submitted, and I was quite taken with it. If I do find the program from that concert, I'll send it to you in PDF format. God bless you, Maestro! I look forward to meeting you in person some day!So excited to be learning "Ijo Keresimesi" (Christmas Dance) for organ by Godwin Sadoh! First Baptist Church, you're in for a treat this winter!![St. Stanislaus Kostka School Centennial] September 12, 2014 to present · Adams, Massachusetts, First Baptist Church Minister of Music · November 14, 2013 to present · North Adams, Massachusetts.</p> <p>Oladele Ayorinde: A succinct, coherent and impressive review. Such analysis; woven fragments together in a logical and concise manner can only manifest itself from the pen of 'renowned' writer. Thanks Prof. [Music student at the University of Cape Town, South Africa]</p>
22 nd October, 2014	Dr. Joy Nwosu: I had to find a quiet time to listen to this, and oh... I loved it. I could hear the Yoruba themes woven into and between the runs. That was BEAUTIFUL. Now I see why everyone is playing your works. More grease [Comments on the performance of the Toccata from my Impressions from an African Moonlight for organ by Ruth Draper]
15 th December, 2014	Rebecca Gleason: Godwin Sadoh, your piece is an inspiration to all of us who are singing it! We thank you for the many blessings we have received while preparing it. From First Baptist Church Choir, North Adams, Massachusetts.
22 nd January, 2015	Abiodun Benjamin Adebisi:I find it so pleasing, when brilliant musicologists like you unearth forgotten people like Deacon Ayo Samuel and several others and document their works for posterity. That is research, that is education. I'm sure Dr. Kayode Samuel, Kayode Moronfolo, Pastor Ayo Fisher, Revd Dr. Taiwo and Dr. Kehinde Adeola, Revd Kenny Olatoye, Lagbaja, 'Segun Prestige Ladipo, Dr. Xtofa Ayodele and several other will attest to this fact. Thanks Prof., the source of your knowledge will not dry.
24 th February, 2015	Stephen Jenkins of the American Guild of Organists, Holland, Michigan Chapter: "I find Godwin Sadoh's work fun to play and refreshing. I love the way he uses Nigerian riffs on the pipe organ. Dude rocks." He made this remark after listening to a recording of my Konkokolo from Five African Dances for organ solo
June 12, 2015	Akinyemi DavidSir, you are indeed a valuable asset to this country even when our leaders refuse to celebrate u while u were alive but history will celebrate u. Joshua AdesinaIf possible, in my next life. if am to study history, I will love Prof to b my teacher. Good job sir.
April 1, 2015	Renee Baker: one of our most original composers... ^{iv}

Table 1

3. Some Impressions on Godwin Sadoh's Posts (With Respects to Theoreticals and Practicals)

3.1. Some of the Reactions

Under this, we see the number of views and financial returns generated on some of Sadoh's works posted by him in the social media domain, together with the geographical areas of the views and patronages.

Country	Views	Minutes Watched	Duration (Average View)
United States	47,677 (41%)	19,023 (38%)	1:05
United Kingdom	20,152 (18%)	7,217 (14%)	1:02
Nigeria	7,676 (6.7%)	7,851 (16%)	1:32
Canada	5,971 (5.2%)	2,854 (5.7%)	1:12
Germany	3,712 (3.2%)	1,202 (2.4%)	0:51
Netherlands	2,417 (2.1%)	818 (1.6%)	0:49
Italy	1,772 (1.5%)	584 (1.2%)	0:57
France	1,638 (1.4%)	496 (1.0%)	0:49
Australia	1,582 (1.4%)	624 (1.2%)	0:48
Ireland	1,284 (1.1%)	395 (0.8%)	0:56
Spain	1,243 (1.1%)	470 (0.9%)	0:59
Ghana	1,242 (1.1%)	1,083 (2.2%)	1:17

Table 2: Below Are Some of the Videos Posted Which Have Generated Financial Returns Together With the Statistics

Videos	Total Estimated Earnings	Ad Earnings
Keresimesi Odun de (Nigerian Christmas Carol) by Godwin Sadoh	\$21.44 (45%)	\$21.44 (45%)
Kabiyesi Hosana (O mighty Jesus, Hosanna) by Godwin Sadoh	\$9.28 (20%)	\$9.28 (20%)
Ogo ni fun oluwa (from 25 preludes on Yoruba Church Hymns) by Godwin Sadoh	\$5.42 (12%)	\$5.42 (12%)
Ijo Ekeresimesi (from 25 preludes on Yoruba Church Hymns) by Godwin Sadoh	\$1.95 (4.1%)	\$1.95 (4.1%)
Oluwa Gbo Adura Mi (Lord, Hear My Prayer) by Godwin Sadoh	\$1.65 (3.5%)	\$1.65 (3.5%)

Table 3

Sources of Data: Godwin Sadoh's personal archives

3.2. Drawing the Trends, Prospects and Challenges from Sadoh's Example

Commercially speaking, the Nigerian art musician/music scholar in professional music practice has always remained conscious of the fact that he must sound loudly and assertively so, his trumpet of standard practices, products and services on the Nigerian music stage that is highly and tightly dominated by the pop musicians. The speed and abruptness of changes in tastes and demands of the appreciation and consumption market are not making it easy for him; and so, he needs to brace up and embrace the social media as one of the major frontiers for projection and defence of his music practice. Beyond Nigeria, there are positive prospects of support and patronage arising from the curiosity invested in researching African arts by the Western world as can be seen from Sadoh's unprecedented examples where modest financial returns were made in just few years and will hopefully continue to be made. Stressing on this, Sadoh revealed thus:

...the viewing of my audio and video recordings on the social media has led to an increase of sales of my published compositions around the world. The more they see and hear my music, the more they were encouraged to buy the scores and perform them.^v

One is aware that the population of pop music fans and its supporters will always be far higher than that of art music, which in turn brings a low turn-out in impressions and reactions that greet professional music practice on the social media. But that should not discourage anyone who does so as consistency in the professional practice can attract an attention one least expects, and equally influence or diversify the tastes of some consumers in their music appreciation. On the other hand, some impressions, as negative as they may come, are very priceless catalysts which can either help to revolutionize the art of a composer and performer, or keep them on their toes to be current in supply and demand of Nigerian art music history and theoretical knowledge, as can be seen in Sadoh's case.

4. Conclusion

This research writing has attempted to examine what professional music practice entails within the ambit of Nigerian art music scholarship. Examining and sampling Sadoh's experiments, it has analysed what has had to be and could still be possible as regards professional music practice on the social media, especially on Facebook. Hopefully, the discourse so far can elicit more researches, questions, concerns, criticisms and suggestions on how to rebase our frontiers as Nigerian art musicians to influence and advance our professional music practice on the social media using its different outlets.

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ⁱGodwin Sadoh, interview with the author on 24 July, 2015.

ⁱⁱGodwin Sadoh, interview with the author on 24 July, 2015.

ⁱⁱⁱGodwin Sadoh, interview with the author on 24 July, 2015.

^{iv} Tabular Information provided by Godwin Sadoh.

^vGodwin Sadoh, interview with the author on 10 August, 2015.