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**A Descriptive Study of the
Professionalization Milestones
of the Twelve Major Occupations
in Nigeria**
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Abstract

Purpose: This study is an exploratory and retrospective investigation of the origins and evolution of physiotherapy and eleven other professional disciplines—accountancy, architecture, dentistry, engineering, land surveying, law, library science, medicine, optometry, pharmacy, and veterinary medicine—imported into Nigeria. Three uniform questions we seek to answer with respect to each occupational field are: when did the profession make its entrance into the country?, at what point did it become established as a profession?, and at what period did it receive legislative imprimatur from the Nigerian central government to establish a regulatory board.

Procedures: Data collection for this study comprises information related to the twelve professions gathered from their organizational websites, as well as from published materials, including books and journal articles, on the history of each occupational field.

Results: Application of the three standard questions on each of the twelve professions revealed answers as disparate as the occupational fields themselves. The applications also uncovered a huge entrance gap, running into several centuries, between the first profession, medicine, introduced into the country by the Portuguese in 1472, and accountancy, whose date of entrance, 1950, occurred just ten years shy of the country's independence in 1960. Similar gap, though nothing resembling the depth of the gap in entrance between medicine and accountancy, is also observable regarding legislative mandate to establish a regulatory board. For example, it took law and pharmacy 76 and 65 years, respectively, to achieve recognition from the national

government, and physiotherapy 33 years, but only three years for veterinary medicine and four years for dentistry.

Conclusion: The twelve major professional disciplines surveyed in this study display similar patterns in their origins and growth on the road to professional status and recognition. But there are also observable differences in the pace of growth and popularity (indicated, for example, by the number of schools offering a particular program, and the size of its practitioners), consistent with what obtained in some other countries, such as the United Kingdom and the United States.

Key Words: Professions, Professionalization, Milestones, Nigerian Professions or Occupations, Physiotherapy

Introduction

Nigeria, as we know it today, came into being in 1914 following the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern “Protectorates,” along with the Colony of Lagos, each before that date held and operated separately by British colonizers. The name itself denominates peoples of the Niger areas, the *Niger* here referring to the Niger River which, with its tributary the Benue River, courses through much of the land. The term was reportedly coined in 1897 by the journalist Flora Shaw, later Mrs. Lugard following her marriage to Frederick Lugard, the first governor-general of the new country. Europeans made contact with the territory that later became Nigeria long before 1914. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to reach Nigeria in the fifteenth century. Next followed the British who, in 1553, landed at the Bight of Benin, then known colloquially as the “Slave Coast,” testament to the slave activities that took place there and other areas that became transmuted into Nigeria. Before the arrival of Europeans, the numerous ethnic groups that make up modern-day Nigeria organized themselves in political systems that matched their lifestyles—some, such as the Hausa-Fulani and Yoruba, in centralized structures and others, such as the Igbo, in decentralized polities (Falola & Heaton, 2008: 16-60).

This article takes its title from Eliot Freidson’s work on professions published in 1986 where he posited that “professionalization is perception,” elaborating that “[e]ssentially a vocational pursuit becomes a profession when enough people agree that it is” (Freidson 1986). Building on this insight, *profession* in the sense we define it here denotes “a vocation founded upon specialized educational training, the purpose of which is to supply disinterested counsel and service to others, for a direct and definite compensation, wholly apart from the expectation of

other business gains” (Competition Commission, 1976-1979).¹ Progress toward professionalization in this study is measured in terms of *milestones*, an index or indicator of achievement that an occupational field attains in its quest to reach and maintain professional power and esteem. Two possible means exist for measuring professional progress. One is as a work in progress.² The other is as a destination. Although our work necessarily combines both meanings, our main focus, revealed in the nature of this work and by the definition above, will be mainly on the latter.

Professional occupations evolved in Europe during the Middle Ages, from about the fifth to the sixteenth centuries. Initially, only divinity, medicine, and law were recognized as “learned” professions (Perks, 1993). In the United States, across the Atlantic, surveying garnered professional status first, followed by medicine, actuarial science, law, dentistry, civil engineering, architecture and accounting. With the advent of technology and the accent for specialization in the sixteenth century, several disciplines such as pharmacy, veterinary medicine, optometry and psychology became transitioned to matured professional status in the U.S. (Buckley & Buckley, 1974).

¹ To reduce monotony, the term *profession* is used interchangeably with a number of related terms: *occupational fields*, *professional disciplines*, *professional occupations*, and *occupations*. The interchanging does not suggest that the other terms are technically equivalent with the key term, for they are not in all cases. For example, in social science literature and lingo, *fields* and *disciplines* are *not* technically equivalent terms.

² This concept evokes two images, one extreme and the other much less so. The extreme image is that of Sisyphus in Greek mythology, condemned in Tartarus to an eternity of rolling a boulder uphill only to watch it roll back down again--all for his sin in stealing the secrets of the gods. Camus & O’Brien (1991: 1-123). The less extreme and therefore more plausible image within the context of this work is the notion of “approaching democracy” propounded by Vaclav Havel, then President of the Czech Republic in a speech on February 21, 1990, to a joint session of the U.S. Congress. Havel posited, “As long as people are people, democracy in the full sense of the word will always be no more than an ideal; one may approach it as one would a horizon, in ways that may be better or worse, but it can never be fully attained. In this sense you are also merely approaching democracy.” He stated that one great advantage the U.S. held, which his own country and other nondemocratic countries lack, is that it has “been approaching democracy uninterruptedly for more than 200 years, and [its] journey toward that horizon has never been disrupted by a totalitarian system.” Vaclav Havel, Address in 1991 before a Joint Session of the U.S. Congress, *reprinted in* Berman & Murphy (2013).

Vocational fields transitioning into full professional status and seeking governmental recognition for that stature pass through the professionalization process. Ritzer (1975) defined professionalization as the “social processes or developmental stages through which occupations move to attain the power and status that professions have traditionally held in society.” Forsyth and Danisiewicz (1985) posited that “professionalization has to do with the ability of an occupation to convince legislators and the public of the importance of its work, rather than the intrinsic knowledge and value of that work.” And Freidson (1986), referred to already, asserted that professionalization is public perception that manifests itself when “enough people” agree that a vocational pursuit will rise to a profession.

In other words, contrary to the incrementalism that it connotes, professionalization is *not* always a smooth-sailing process (Williams, Onsmann, Brown 2009). This is a truism that the literature bears out with its enumeration of different stages of development that every occupational field goes through. Carr-Saunders (1944) depicted “a process along a line of inevitable progress, working towards the acquisition of a number of defining characteristics, namely codes of ethics, professional associations, specialized skills and governance.” Wilensky (1964) weighed in with the suggestion that “occupations transcend four sequential stages/functions during the professionalization process.” He identified these four stages as: creation of a full-time occupation, the formation of training schools, creation of professional associations, and the development and creation of code of ethics.

Compared to developed countries, the origins of professional occupations in Nigeria is of more recent vintage. Yet the country witnessed the phases of professionalization from the literature described in the preceding two paragraphs. Soon after their transplantation into the country, the twelve occupational fields under examination in this study progressed at different

paces in their quest for professional status and glory. Our exhaustive search revealed no study that compared the developmental milestones of the different occupations that found their way into Nigeria. Accordingly, this study is a first of its kind that explores the pace of development of the twelve major occupations in Nigeria. We have indicated earlier the three uniform questions applied to the twelve professions at the cynosure of this work: when did the profession make its entrance into the country?, at what point did it become established as a profession?, and at what period did it receive legislative imprimatur from the Nigerian central government to establish a regulatory board. Two research questions, additional to the three uniform questions, drive this study:

- How long did it take each occupation to form a professional association following its initial importation and transplantation into the country?
- How long did it take each occupation to obtain the initial legislative mandate by the *central* government to form a regulatory board?³

Methodology

Study Design

This is an exploratory and retrospective study that did *not* involve the use of human subjects. Along with physiotherapy, the twelve major occupations this study explored are: accountancy, architecture, dentistry, engineering, land surveying, law, library science, medicine, optometry, pharmacy, physiotherapy, and veterinary medicine.

³ Demarcation of a specific level of government that confers authority to establish a regulatory board is important here because, back to the second half of the 20th century, Nigeria has operated a federal system of government of divided powers among various levels of government. Though not the case in Nigeria, in many federal systems, such as the U.S., regulation of professional bodies is a function vested with local governments. We chose to refer to the central government as such or as the national government, rather than “federal” government since, technically speaking, the designation *federal government* confusedly includes other components of the government.

The work involves a review of archival data, using a plethora of sources, on the twelve major professional occupations that made their way among the numerous groups and areas that became consolidated into modern-day Nigeria. We first postulate that information on the entry-level degree, number of educational programs, and number of practitioners available in the country for each surveyed occupation provides dependable evidence regarding the influence, power, and potential in the movement of an occupational field to professional status. For indicators of developmental milestones, we used as measures: the date when each profession made entrance into the country; date when the occupation formed a professional association; date when the professional association received legislative imprimatur by the central government; qualification in the form of completion of an first-level academic degree in the profession; the number of universities offering a degree program in the discipline; and the number of practitioners available in the country.

Procedure

We selected professional occupations with a minimum of baccalaureate degree entry-level education imported into Nigeria during the pre-and post-colonial era and excluded occupations that did not meet this threshold requirement. Next, to obtain pertinent historical or archival information about the twelve occupations at focus in this study, between July 30, 2015 and October 5, 2015, we accessed the organization websites (see the identity of the sites under “web-based sources of the different occupations” at the end of this article) of each of the twelve professional fields at the focus of this study: accountancy, architecture, dentistry, engineering, land surveying, law, library science, medicine, optometry, pharmacy, physiotherapy, and veterinary medicine.

In addition to the information gleaned from the websites, we also reviewed books and published articles on the history of each profession, where available, to supplement information from the websites. In the course of reviewing the websites, books and journals, we took copious notes on information germane to the goals of this study. Results from our findings were summarized in the set of tables under “results” next below, along with the comments accompanying those tables.

Results

The results of our findings are conveniently summarized for the reader in a set of six tables below, beginning with the demographic profile of the professions (Table 1), including the identity of the board that registers its members. [Insert Table 1 about here].

Table 2 presents information on the current professional profile of each profession, indicated by pertinent indicators, such as entry-level degree each discipline awards, the number of institutions offering such programs, and number of practitioners. [Insert Table 2 about here].

Of the twelve professions under review, only four—medicine, veterinary medicine, dentistry, and optometry—require a doctorate degree for practice.⁴ Information on the websites of two other professions, pharmacy and physiotherapy, indicated that the professions have submitted proposal to the Nigeria University Commission to upgrade their entry-level education from a baccalaureate degree to a clinical doctorate degree. As the table shows, the number of universities offering degree programs for the different professions varies widely—from 2 for

⁴ Here too, “doctorate” degree is a concept subject to reasonable disagreements. In Nigeria, graduates of academic medical programs are adorned with the title “doctor,” even though medicine is a first degree admission into which program requires only the equivalent of a high school diploma, compared, for example to the U.S. where the prerequisite for admission into the M.D. is usually an undergraduate degree.

surveying to 37 for law and medicine. Information on the number of practitioners for the different professional associations is incomplete. But what available number that we can lay our hands on, indicate that the numerical strength or size of practitioners range from 2,000 for physiotherapy to over 40,000 for medicine. The table indicates the figure of 4,000 physiotherapists registered with the Medical Therapists Rehabilitation Board (MTRB). However, of the lot, only about 50 percent of the member is resident in the country, while the remaining 50 percent are practitioners outside the country. Only about 1,000 physiotherapists annually renew their practice licenses.

Table 3 presents the professional status or achievement of the various occupational fields, measured by date of entrance, age since entrance, and ranking of each field. [Table 3 about here].

Medicine, dentistry and law were the first three occupations to be imported into the country. Library science (in Nigeria generally referred to as librarianship) and accountancy were the last profession to gain entrance into Nigeria.

Table 4 presents the date when each occupation formed its professional association and ranking based on how long it took to garner this achievement. [Table 4 about here].

The findings reveal that law was the first occupation to metamorphose into a professional organization, followed by pharmacy, land surveying, medicine, engineering, physiotherapy, accountancy, architecture, library science, veterinary medicine, dentistry and optometry in this order.

Table 5 presents the timeline in the journey from entrance into the country to transition as a professional association and rank in that journey. [Table 5 about here].

As the table makes evident, it took accountancy and physiotherapy the shortest timeframe of 10 and 14 years, respectively, to form their professional association. These numbers bear

particular comparison with medicine and dentistry which took an eternal 479 and 495 years, respectively, to form a professional association following their entrances into the country. Medicine is especially notable being the first profession to make its way into the country, as indicated in the introduction, via Portuguese contact in the latter part of the fifteenth century. Next to ranking, accountancy ranked number one, followed by physiotherapy.

Last but not least, Table 6 presents the timeline it took each of the twelve professional associations under investigation to obtain legislative imprimatur from the national government needed to regulate its member and legitimize its trade as well as the rank of each occupational group in that journey. [Table 6 about here].

The timeline or duration varied widely among the different professions. It took veterinary medicine and dentistry only three and four years, respectively, to receive legislative approval from the Nigerian central government. The timeline bears comparison with law, pharmacy, and physiotherapy, whose numbers are 76, 65, and 33 years, respectively. Physiotherapy ranked seventh among the twelve professions in the number of years it took to receive governmental approval to form a regulatory body following formation as a professional association.

Table 1: Demographic Data on the Twelve Surveyed Professions

Profession	Name of Professional Association	Name of Registration Board
Law	Nigerian Bar Association	The Legal Practitioners Act
Pharmacy	Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria	Pharmacists Council of Nigeria
Surveying	Nigeria Institution of Surveyors	Surveyors Registration Council of Nigeria
Medicine	Nigerian Medical Association	Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria
Engineering	Nigerian Society of Engineers	Council for the Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria
Physiotherapy	Nigerian Society of Physiotherapy	Medical Rehabilitation Therapists' Board
Accountancy	Association of Nigerian Accountants and the Institute Chartered Accountants of Nigeria	The Nigerian Accounting Standards Board
Architecture	Nigerian Institute of Architects	Architects Registration Council of Nigeria
Librarianship	Nigerian Library Association	Librarians' (Registration) Council of Nigeria
Veterinary Medicine	Nigerian Veterinary Medical Association	The Veterinary Council of Nigeria
Dentistry	Nigerian Dental Association	Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria
Optometry	Nigerian Optometric Association	Optometry and Dispensing Opticians Registration Board of Nigeria

Table 2: Professional Profiles of the Twelve Profession, Evident in Pertinent Characteristics, including the Award of Entry-Level Degree, Number of Schools and the Number of Practitioners

Profession	Entry-level Degree Awarded	Number of schools (out of 60 universities in Nigeria)	Number of Practitioners	Practitioner Workforce Density Ratio*
Law	LLB	37	DNA	DNA
Pharmacy	BS	17	DNA	DNA
Surveying	BS	2	DNA	DNA
Medicine	MBBS	37	40,000	4,340*
Engineering	BS	?	DNA	DNA
Physiotherapy	BS	7	2,000	86,800**
Accountancy	BS	37	12,000 (2003)	14,467***
Architecture	B.Arch.	27	4,000	43,400
Librarianship	BA	25	5,000	34,720
Veterinary Medicine	DVM	9	DNA	DNA
Dentistry	BDS	7	4,000	43,400
Optometry	OD	5	3,000	57,867

DNA = Data not available

*Workforce density ratio is defined as the number of practitioner divide by the population.

Nigerian population is 173.6 million.

*There is 1 physician available to serve every 4,340 Nigerian

**There is 1 physiotherapist available to serve every 86,800 Nigerian

*** There is 1 accountant available to serve every 14,467 Nigerian

Table 3: Professional Status, Evident in Date of Entrance, Age since Entrance, and Ranking of Each Occupational Field

Profession	Year of Entrance	Age since Entrance (in years)	Ranking Out of 10
Law	1862	153	3
Pharmacy	1887	128	4
Surveying	1863	152	3
Medicine	1504	511	1
Engineering	1896	119	5
Physiotherapy	1945	70	7
Accountancy	1950	65	9
Architecture	DNA	DNA	DNA
Librarianship	1948	67	8
Veterinary Medicine	1932	83	6
Dentistry	1504	511	1
Optometry	DNA	DNA	DNA

DNA = Data not available

Table 4: Year of Formation of Professional Association and Ranking

Profession	Year Association Was formed	Association Age (in years)	Ranking of Association's Age
Law	1886	129	1
Pharmacy	1927	88	2
Surveying	1934	81	3
Medicine	1951	64	4
Engineering	1958	57	5
Physiotherapy	1959	56	6
Accountancy	1960	55	7
Architecture	1960	55	7
Librarianship	1962	53	9
Veterinary Medicine	1967	48	10
Dentistry	1967	48	10
Optometry	1968	47	12

Table 5: Timeline in the Journey from Entrance to Transition as a Professional Association and Rank in that Journey

Profession	Year of Entrance	Year Professional Association Was formed	Journey (in years)	Journey Rank
Law	1862	1886	24	4
Pharmacy	1887	1927	40	6
Surveying	1863	1934	71	8
Medicine	1472	1951	479	12
Engineering	1896	1958	62	7
Physiotherapy	1945	1959	14	2
Accountancy	1950	1960	10	1
Architecture	DNA	1960	DNA	DNA
Librarianship	1948	1962	14	3
Veterinary Medicine	1932	1967	35	5
Dentistry	1472	1967	495	12
Optometry	DNA	1968	DNA	DNA

DNA = Data not available

Table 6: Timeline in Journey from Professional Association to Achievement of Legislative Imprimatur for Regulatory Board and Rank in that Journey

Profession	Year Professional Association Was Formed	Year Legislative Approval was Granted	Journey (in years)	Journey Rank (Out of 12)
Law	1886	1962	76	12
Pharmacy	1927	1992	65	11
Surveying	1934	1989	55	10
Medicine	1951	1963	11	4
Engineering	1958	1970	12	5
Physiotherapy	1959	1992	33	7
Accountancy	1960	DNA	DNA	DNA
Architecture	1960	1969	9	3
Librarianship	1962	1995	33	7
Veterinary Medicine	1967	1969	3	1
Dentistry	1967	1963	4	2
Optometry	1968	1989	21	6

DNA = Data not available

Discussion

To the best of our knowledge, this study is the first systematic investigation of the professionalization milestones of the major occupations in Nigeria. One of the goals of the study was to identify the timeline when each of the major occupations under investigation gained entrance into the area that transmuted into modern-day Nigeria. As expected, the findings revealed that the different occupations were first introduced into the country at different timeframes. Of the twelve professions, medicine and dentistry were the first occupations to become entranced, 511 years ago, followed by law 153 years, surveying 152 years, pharmacy 128 years, engineering 119 years, veterinary medicine 83 years, physiotherapy 70 years, accountancy 65 years, and library science 67 years.

Following its entrance in 1472, courtesy of Portuguese allopathic physicians, Western medicine in Nigeria accumulated a number of important milestones. The first of these important developments was the opening of a Roman Catholic Mission hospital at St. Thomas Island off the Bight of Benin in 1504. The occurrence marked the formal introduction and launch of Western medicine in the country. Subsequently, the Roman Catholic Mission opened the Sacred Heart Hospital at Abeokuta in 1865, followed in 1898 by the St. Margaret's Hospital in Calabar. Prior to these developments, medical registers of doctors within the areas that became modern-day Nigeria were filled with the names of only foreign doctors. For example, the register of a Medical Examining Board in 1789 contained only the names of mainly Dutch, Danish and British nationals.

Next to pharmacy, the first chemist in the area that evolve as modern-day Nigeria was opened in 1887 by Dr. Richard Zachaeus Bailey along Balogun Street in Lagos. The first Nigerian pharmacist, Mr. Emmanuel Caulcrick, was registered on September 1, 1902. He was

followed by Mrs. Ore Green, registered in 1919, as the first female pharmacist; the Timi of Ede, who later became a medical doctor in 1914, following an earlier qualification as a dispenser; and Chief Hunponu-Wusu who received his own qualification in 1922.

Physiotherapy as a profession came to Nigeria in 1945 via two British chartered physiotherapists, one Miss Manfield and one Mr. Williams. Their primary role was to treat wounded and disabled Nigerians soldiers who returned home from Burma and other countries during World War II.

Law as a profession gained entrance into what later became Nigeria in 1862 when Lagos was created as a British colony. Williams Nash Hamilton was the first lawyer to practice his trade in 1886. Christopher Sapara Williams is generally believed to be the first lawyer who was enrolled at the Supreme Court of the area later to become Nigeria in 1888. In that same year, the British Colonial Office established a court in Lagos.

The first land-operated instrument in Nigeria was the Crown Grant, registered in 1863. The Nigerian Institution of Surveyors was born in 1934 as the “Licensed Surveyors Association” under the leadership of the late nationalist, Herbert Macaulay. The organization changed its name to Land Surveys Association of Nigeria in 1960, the same year that the country won its independence from the United Kingdom. C. T. Olumide was elected as president of the association.

Engineering as a profession registered its entrance in the area that became Nigeria with the establishment in 1806 of the Public Works Department in Lagos. The department comprised civil, mechanical and electrical units, and the reach of its responsibility extended to the management of engineering projects in the southern region of Nigeria. The genesis of the library profession in Nigeria is generally traced to the appointment of John Harris as the librarian of the

University College Ibadan in 1948. We were unable to obtain any information related to the origins of architecture, veterinary medicine and optometry.

Another goal of this study was to track the timeframe in which the various professions at the focus of this work achieved specific developmental milestones associated with professionalization. To fulfil this goal, we determined the date when each occupation formed its professional association. Of the twelve occupations, law was the first to form a professional association in the country, followed by pharmacy, surveying and medicine. The Nigeria Bar Association was established 129 years ago. Legal education started in 1962 with the enactment of two laws, the Legal Education Act 1962,⁵ which set up the Council of Legal Education and established the Nigerian Law School to train individuals seeking to practice law in Nigeria, and the Legal Practitioners Act 1962, meant to regulate legal practice in Nigeria.⁶

The Nigeria Institution of Surveyors was established 81 years ago, followed by the Nigeria Medical Council, 64 years ago. The Nigerian Society of Engineers was formed 57 years ago, and Nigeria Society of Physiotherapy 56 years ago.

Pharmacy education in Nigeria took off in 1899. Subsequently, between 1925 and 1927, a medical college was founded in Lagos, comprising the schools of pharmacy and medicine under Dr. Gordon Taylor, a medical doctor, and one Mr. Arthur, a pharmacist. Tracking and overlapping these momentous events was the formation of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria in 1927, 88 years ago. After this, a major lull in activity appeared to have occurred in the field until 1992 when the Pharmacists Council of Nigeria was established.⁷ The Council is vested with

⁵ This law was re-enacted and is now contained in the Legal Education (Consolidation, etc) Act, Chapter 206, Laws of Federation of Nigeria, 1990.

⁶ This law was re-enacted as the Legal Practitioners Act, Chapter 207, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990.

⁷ This law was Act 91, now re-enacted as Act CAP 17, Law of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004.

responsibility for regulating and controlling all aspects of the practice of the profession, including the regulation of pharmacy technicians as well as patent and proprietary medicine.

Next to medicine, regulation of the conduct of medical and dental practitioners in what became Nigeria started with the establishment of the Medical Practitioners Disciplinary Board in the Colonial Department of Health, designed to serve medical personnel whose names were registered with the General Medical Council in England. This remained the situation regarding regulation of medicine—along with dentistry—until the country's independence 1960. In its tour of duty in professionalization, medicine received a major uplifting when in 1962, the Nigeria Medical Association secured government recognition and achieved registration under the Land Perpetual Act and Certificate of Incorporation.

To gain deeper insights into the pace of development of the different occupations, we determined the time-period it took each occupation to form a professional association after its entrance into the country. The findings revealed that accountancy and physiotherapy developed at the fastest pace in forming a professional association following introduction into the country. Accountancy took 10 years to form a professional association, while physiotherapy took 14 years. In contrast, for medicine and dentistry, as indicated before, the timeframes were 479 and 495 years, respectively.

Accountancy as a professional disciple made its debut in Nigeria in the early 1950s when the Nigerian Colleges of Arts, Science and Technology were established in Ibadan, Enugu and Zaria. Within this period, in 1958, the “Association of Accountants in Nigeria” was incorporated under the companies Act of that year. Subsequently, departments of accounting were established in Nigerian Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Technology.

The Nigeria Society of Physiotherapy was formed in 1959, and the first degree program in the discipline was established in 1966 at the University of Ibadan. Another professional milestone moment came in 1988 when the federal government promulgated a decree for a regulatory board for physiotherapy. The regulatory body, christened the Medical Rehabilitation Therapists' Board (MRTB), was not established until 1992, following at least four years of dithering by the Nigerian national government. Even so, the MRTB was constituted as an amalgam of several health professions, including physiotherapy, to the consternation, if not disappointment of many physiotherapists in Nigeria and in the Diaspora who expected a regulatory board solely for physiotherapists.

The Nigerian Society of Engineers was founded on February 16, 1958, most intriguingly in the United Kingdom, rather than in Nigeria. The Society was inaugurated at the Nigerian House in London by a group of young Nigerian graduate engineers and students. Architecture had its moment of professional glory when the Nigerian Institute of Architects was founded on April 1, 1960. Before then, library science recorded its own highpoint moment when in 1950, John Harris organized the first library training course. Other milestone moments include the formation of the Nigerian Library Association in the 1950s as an affiliate of the West African Library Association, and, subsequently in 1962, as the National Library Association. Last but not least, the Association of Optical Practitioners was formed in 1968.

Finally, on the steps the twelve professions under investigation took to achieve approval from the central government to regulate their own trades, our finding is that the time it took to receive that approval varied widely among the different professions. It took veterinary medicine and dentistry professions only three and four years, respectively, to receive legislative

imprimatur to form a regulatory board, compared to whopping 65 years for pharmacy and an ever greater 76 years for law.

The Nigerian Veterinary Medical Association, the umbrella organization for veterinarians, was formed in 1967 as a follow up to the biannual conference of the British Veterinary Officers and Licentiates which began in 1932. Subsequently, the Veterinary Council of Nigeria was established through the Veterinary Surgeons Act of 1969 (amended in 1987), as a quality-control or -assurance board.

Back again to physiotherapy, it took 33 long years to constitute the MRTB, making the occupation seventh in ranking among the twelve professions in the fateful journey from formation as a professional association to governmental recognition. Because, compared to the other occupational fields, accounting made a late debut in Nigeria, it is not surprising that the Association of National Accountants of Nigeria (ANAN) was chartered only in 1993.

Next to land surveying, the Surveyors Registration Council of Nigeria decree was promulgated in 1989. Earlier, in 1970, the Council for the Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN), was established by decree 55.⁸ The Act established COREN as a statutory body of the Federal Government and empowered it to regulate the practice of engineering in the country.

Next yet to architecture, the Architects Registration Council of Nigeria (ARCON) was established in 1969.⁹ ARCON is vested with responsibility for setting benchmarks as well as for controlling the education and practice of architecture in the country. Using its authority, the Council has registered over 4,000 architects. Turning to optometry, the regulatory body for

⁸ The law was amended by Decree 27 of 1992, now called the Engineers (Registration, etc) Act, CAP E11 of 2004, Law of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

⁹ The Council was established by Decree No. 10 of 1969, amended by Decree No. 43 of 1990. Further still in 2004, the law setting up the Council was reviewed and renamed the Architects (Registration, Etc.) Act Cap A19, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria.

Optometry and Dispensing Optics was established in 1989. Finally for library science, in 1995, the national government established the Librarians' Council of Nigeria.

Limitations of the Study

A major limitation of this study is that it included only occupations that were offered at baccalaureate or higher degree levels while excluding vocational careers offered at diploma or certificate levels. Because of this limitation and the issue of limited or unavailable data with respect to some of the professions we surveyed, which additional to its retrospective feature also made this study exploratory, the findings in this study should be interpreted with a dose of caution. However, enough timeline data emerged that provides useful insights into the developmental milestones of the different professions.

Development of a professional association and regulatory board are among several steps that an occupation must traverse on the road to professional status and glory. Wilensky (1964) emphasized the developmental aspect of professionalization, suggesting that occupations transcend four sequential stages or functions during the professionalization process, evident in: creation of a full-time occupation, formation of training schools, creation of professional associations, and development and creation of code of ethics. The twelve professions investigated in this study all have achieved the four sequential stages in their professionalization journey. That said, in and of itself, formation of a professional association and establishment of a regulatory body sometimes does not mean that an occupation has attained the haven of mature professional status or recognition.

Conclusion

The twelve major occupations surveyed in this study attained the specified developmental milestones at different timelines. The twelve professions display similar patterns in their journey from entrance into the country through achievement of professional status to recognition marked by governmental authority to regulate their membership. But there are also observable differences in the pace of growth and popularity (indicated, for example, by the number of schools offering a particular program, and the size of its practitioners). These differences track or resembles the professionalization stories of many other countries, including the United Kingdom which created and colonized modern-day Nigeria and the United States, whose presidential system of government the country has adopted since its Second Republic in 1979 and, before then, whose federal system of government it has emulated continuously with varying results since 1954.

Follow-up studies are needed to more closely discern the factors responsible for the differences observed in the professionalization journeys of the twelve major professions in Nigeria that we have surveyed in this article. Given the spread out of Nigerian professionals into other countries, as indicated with physiotherapy in the section on “results,” studies involving a comparison with countries, such as the United Kingdom and the United States will be exceedingly beneficial.

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