



Rise of Rasta Hairstyle Culture in Ghana

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Abstract

The study examined the rise of rasta hairstyles among the youth in Ghana despite the stigma about rasta hairstyle. This is because the upsurge and diffusion of rasta hairstyle culture among the youth in the urban centres and villages and its diffusion beyond the metropolitan centres in Ghana needed further investigation to establish the formal structures for rasta hair promotion. In examining the experiences that come with being a Rasta in Ghana, descriptive case study research design situated in the qualitative research paradigm was used for the study while semi-structured interview and focus group discussion constituted the data collection instruments. Narrative inquiry and descriptive analyses were used as method of data analysis. The study zoned Ghana into three: southern, northern and middle belt, within which a total of 18 respondents were sampled using simple random and expert sampling techniques. Aesthetic sensation and clout of the rasta hairstyle, its association as marker of African identity, personal beliefs of wearers about the hairstyles (including personal philosophy), and fashion lifestyle pleasures were the motivational and compelling reasons that accounted for the rise in the hairstyle amongst the youth in urban centres and villages in Ghana. These reasons caused the high self-esteemed youthful male to a large extent, relegate the negative consequences of wearing the rasta hairstyle to the background. It recommended that rasta hair culture needs to be accommodated and destigmatised for Ghanaian cultural reorientation. Further research into the relationship between rasta hair culture and crime would be helpful to establish whether or not the wearing of rasta hairstyle is a reliable indicator of crime susceptibility.

Keywords - Rasta, hair, stigmatisation, Rastafari, culture, hairstyle.

I. INTRODUCTION

Dreadlock is synonymously referred to as *rasta* in reference to both natural and artificial hair styled in that manner. Dreadlock has roots in Africa (Essel, 2021), and has been practised in precolonial, colonial, postcolonial and present times. There are references to the biblical Samson who kept his Nazarite vow of not cutting his locked hair, as the source of dreadlock. Some scholars have pointed to the historical sources of dreadlocks in Africa. Campbell (1987), for example, traced the hairstyle to *Mau Mau* movement of Kenya while Chevannes (1994) traced it to the Youth Black faith hence its incorporation in Ethiopia. The Akan people of Ghana refer to the dreadlock as *mpesempese* (Essel, 2021; McLeod, 1984 as cited in Sieber & Herreman, 2000). Rasta is the short form of the word *Rastafari*. In this study the terms dreadlock and rasta have been used interchangeably in reference to the hairstyle.

Legend has it that some enslaved rasta people who were in Brazil repatriated to Ghana to reconnect to their African root (Zion) and settled in a house called Brazil House, in Jamestown, Accra. Subsequently, some Rastafarians from Jamaica repatriated to Ghana (Benton & Shabazz, 2009; Whiteman, 2007). The repatriation of rasta people to Ghana increased the rasta population and contributed to making it a haven for Rastafarian movement, which led to the establishment of Rastafarian Council in the country. Their active involvement in PANAFEST, National Festival of Arts and Culture (NAFAC) and the *Year of Return* series of international festivals continue to attract tourists, especially, from the diaspora. Beyond this, their activities have fuelled the pan-Africanism and cultural entrepreneurship in Ghana.

Available studies on rasta hair culture have confirmed the existence of the stigma associated with rasta (dreadlocks) in Ghana (Alhassan, 2020; Whiteman, 2010; Savishinsky, 1994). In his study on how Rastafari philosophy and practice have represented points of both resonance and dissonance between repatriated Rastas and non-Rasta Ghanaians, Whiteman (2010) pointed out the stigma of wearing locks (rasta), adding that even children who wear locks to school face teasing from their non-rasta Ghanaian peers. His study confirmed the fact that public school authorities proscribe locked hair. Essel's (2021) study has also established that Ghanaian public schools proscribe learners with rasta hairstyle in Ghana. A landmark case that evidenced the prevalence of Ghanaian public schools' stigmatisation of dreadlocks was the famous case of *Nkrabea v Board of Governors Achimota School, Ghana Education Service, Ministry of Education & Attorney General*. The plaintiff, a minor and adherent of the Rastafari religion and creed, was placed in the prestigious Achimota Senior High School by the Computerised School Selection and Placement System but was asked by the school authority to either cut his dreadlocked hair or forfeit admission into the school. He brought an action against the school authority and the stakeholders of the school, invoking the jurisdiction of the High Court per an originating motion for the enforcement of his fundamental human rights. It was held that requiring the plaintiff, a child and adherent of the Rastafari

religion and creed, to either cut his hair or forfeit admission into Achimota School, a public senior high school, is a violation of his right against any form of discrimination and right to education.

Alhassan (2020) analysed some of the reasons Ghanaians choose to “trode the path” of Rastafari and the long-term consequences of their choices, and argued that they do so to affirm their African identity and participate in Pan-African anti-colonial politics despite adverse social consequences associated with it. However, her study was based solely on the ethnography of one Ghanaian Rastafari woman. There is the need to gather data from relatively wide sample population to get a broader picture of the phenomenon. From the available studies on rasta in Ghana, it has become clear that the rise of rasta hair culture among the youth in Ghana has not been given the needed scholarly attention.

From the foregoing discussion, it is evidential that rasta hair (dreadlocks) culture has been demonised and scandalised in Ghana. It is a common knowledge that the hairstyle has received a grotesque impression amongst the people to the extent that wearers of this hairstyle are stigmatised, discriminated against, marginalised, and perceived as criminals. Notwithstanding the stigma about rasta in Ghana, there is an upsurge and diffusion of rasta hairstyle culture among the youth in the urban centres and villages. The diffusion of rasta beyond the metropolitan centres in Ghana needs further investigation to establish the formal structures for rasta hair promotion and how it is impacting on the youth amidst the stigmatisation, marginalization and discrimination on social, economic, and political repression grounds. This study, therefore, examined the rise of rasta hairstyles among the youth in Ghana. Study of this nature is intended to add to the paucity of literature on issues of stigmatisation, discrimination and marginalisation experienced by the rasta population and its link with equality, equity and dignity and related social and psychological impacts.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Studies on rasta hair culture in Ghana (Whiteman, 2020; Alhassan 2020; Whiteman, 2007; Savishinsky, 1994) have not touched on the history of the Rastafarian Movement in Ghana, the aesthetics of rasta hair, the rise of rasta hairstyles among the youth in Ghana, the public perception of rasta hairstyles and the self-perception of the wearers, and the causation factors of the perceptions. The scholarly works of Lake (1994) provided historical-religious roots of rasta by outlining the genesis and progress of Jamaican Rastafarians and remained salient on how a Jamaican phenomenon has become deep rooted movement in Ghana. Scholars have shared their perspectives on politics of hairstyles (Watkins, 2016; Bankhead & Johnson, 2014; Thomas, 2013; Agabond, 2010; Mercer, 1987) in creating identities and power, and how the slaves who arrived in the Americas, were robbed of their African identity by shaving since the enslavement masters considered black hair as inferior and unattractive.

Rastafarianism, Zionism and repatriation to Africa features prominently in a repertoire of symbols and concepts of Rastafarians (Whiteman, 2007). The Rastafari notion of Zion is Africa/Ethiopia with positive attributes such as pride, community, charity, and serenity while Babylon represent hell and or negative forces (Whiteman, 2007; Edmonds, 2003; Campbell, 1987).

2.1 Misperception about others

In rereading available empirical studies on misperception about others, Bursztyn and Yang (2021) established four facts on the pattern of misperceptions. They put forward that misperception about others are in the first place widespread across domains, and they do not merely stem from measurement errors; secondly, they are asymmetric, that is, beliefs are disproportionately concentrated on one side relative to the truth. Thirdly, misperceptions regarding in-group members are substantially smaller than those regarding out-group members; and fourthly, one’s own attitudes and beliefs are strongly, positively associated with (mis)perceptions about others’ attitudes and beliefs on the same issues. Treatments that are qualitative and narrative in nature, according to Bursztyn and Yang (2021), tend to have larger effects on correcting misperceptions.

The concepts of perception and self-perception has to do with the *self*, *other self* and *real self*. The *self* deals with perception about one’s personality traits, behaviours, abilities and inabilities. These includes externalization of individual identity, passions, feelings and what one wants to be known for. These contribute to building one’s self-esteem. Having a strong self-esteem is essential in building one’s self identity.

2.2 Rastafari Topologies

In an attempt to distinguish between different categories of rasta people rather than straight-jacket portrayal of them, Chakravarty (2014) proposed a four-point typology namely orthodox-isolated, orthodox-integrated, secular-spiritual, and secular-cultural. The four-point typology responds to the need to establish a pertinent vocabulary associated with Rastafari expression that can more accurately allow each Rasta authenticity. To Chakravarty (2014), generalising all adherent of Rastafari can be in sharp contradiction with their actual practices, beliefs, and behaviours. This is owing to the fact some Rastafari adherent follow dietary culture, some keep knotted locks of hair, and some resort to the use of cannabis (marijuana), while others refrain from these activities.

The orthodox-isolated Rastafari adhere to the 1930 to 1966 movement portrayed as lower-class, politically passive, and non-violent, and mostly committed to worshipping the divinity of Emperor Haile Selassie while the orthodox-integrated ‘Rastafari expression exhibits a dialectical relationship with modernity’ and ‘coincides with the politically oriented Rastafari that emerged in the mid-1960s as a result of a new tenet of liberation before repatriation’ (Chakravarty, 2014, p.18 – 19). The secular-spiritual Rastafari on one hand maintains an open interfaith dialogue with other religions and demonstrates an openness to dialogue with other belief groups, thereby exhibiting grades of religious hybridity (Chakravarty, 2014). Also, the secular-spiritual, though deviates from orthodox Rastafari practice but do not lose their sense of spirituality. For example, they may eat meat, keep clean cut, possess tattoos or piercings, or drink alcohol without losing their sense of spirituality. With the secular-cultural Rastafari, they exhibit a fascination with rasta due to its cultural aspects or roots rather than the more religious aspects of Rastafari. For example, they may resort to dreadlocks, clothing, music, lingo, ganja, and diet (*ital* foods), but without the sense of spirituality that could also be associated with these expressions (Chakravarty, 2014).

3. METHODOLOGY

Based on the boundedness of the research problem, descriptive case study research design (Yin, 2009) situated in the qualitative research paradigm was used for the study. In-depth semi-structured interview and focus group discussion were used as data collection instruments. Narrative inquiry and descriptive analyses constituted the method of data analysis necessitated by the demand of the research objective. The study zoned Ghana into three: southern, northern and middle belt, within which a total of 18 male respondents were sampled using simple random and expert sampling techniques. Five (5) respondents were selected randomly in each of the three zones (southern, northern and middle belt) across the urban and villages therein. The criteria for selection included wearing the hairstyle for at least five years and willingness to participate in the study. In addition, expert purposive sampling was used to select one (1) ex-rasta hairstyled person from the middle belt; two (2) experts and practising rasta persons from southern and northern zones with at least a decade of wearing the hairstyle. The ages of the respondents selected for the study fell within 22 to 45 years. Pseudonyms were used to conceal the identity of the respondents for ethical reasons.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Reasons for the rise of rasta hairstyle

In the quest to examine the rise of rasta hairstyles among the youth in Ghana revealed interesting perspectives from the practitioners of the hairstyle. From the semi-structured interview, the respondents gave their lived experiences of the stigma and discrimination they have suffered for wearing dreadlocks. One of the respondents shared his story:

I wear rasta for aesthetic reasons. I feel good in it and look nice. But one day, I had a very terrible experience when I went out to withdraw money from my mobile money account. It was in the evening. The mobile money merchant got scared and ran away upon seeing me. I also had an encounter of people running away when they meet me in the evening at quite place. I realized that it could give me problem since I love strolling in the evenings. I then decided to cut my rasta hair. When I did, I have not experienced that. People have evil motives about rasta people. They are perceived as criminals, smokers amongst others. (Respondent K)

Rasta hair stigmatisation and discrimination has become an albatross that lingers on the neck of males in Ghana as a result of its layered complexity. There are two major sources through which the stigmatisation and discrimination manifest itself: internal and external. The internal factor has to do with stigmatisation by some Blacks against their fellow Blacks while the external factor concerns Western stigmatisation of rasta hair culture in colonial times which continues unabated. What deepens the complexity of the stigmatisation and marginalisation is the former. The internal stigmatization which involves Blacks stigmatising their fellow Blacks has a long historical antecedents perpetuated by the colonialists through so-called formal education (Morrow, 2014), slave trade, Euro-Christian religion, and Islamic teachings. This led to what Morrow (2014) described as sewing the inferior seed of Black hair and skin as bad. The colonialists and imperialists have physically left but the *inferior seed* they planted through slave trade, Euro-Christian religion, and Islamic teachings have fuelled the negative perceptions about wearing of dreadlocks to the extent that it is associated with crime and smoking of narcotics. Some of the respondents put forward that:

I wore rasta but I do not smoke marijuana. Not all rasta people smoke marijuana. (Respondent L)

I was in the company of some non-rasta friends of mine who were in possession of marijuana when we boarded a car to a nearby town. On reaching police security check point, the car was stopped. I was singled out and searched thoroughly leaving my friends because of my rasta hairstyle. (Respondent J)

I have been discriminated against during my time of first-degree education by lecturers and administrators. (Respondent M)

The negative perception of rasta hair has become a canker battling the wearing of such an indigenous hairstyle by males. Even the Police whose duty include the protection of human rights and dignity associate rasta hairstyle with smoking. During the focus group discussion, 94% of the rasta respondents attested that they have once been searched on board public transport by the police before. As Edmonds (2003) puts forward, the stigma associated with the hairstyle has rather metamorphosized it to become the most salient and visible symbol of Rastafari identity as it questions Eurocentric hair beauty culture standards. In Beyeche's (2018) study of finding out the challenges and paradoxes of belonging to the Rastafari movement in Ethiopia, the author concluded that despite the challenges the Rastafari face in their daily lives, they are determined to stay 'home' for it is better to experience them in Ethiopia which is their homeland than elsewhere since challenges are everywhere.

Apart from the police, learners with rasta hairstyle faced stigmatisation and discrimination from school authorities, administrators; and their peers according to the respondents. This is in confirmation of Whiteman's (2010) findings that school children who wear dreadlocks to school face teasing from their non-rasta Ghanaian peers. The respondents confirmed that the stigmatisation of rasta hairstyle also persist in some higher institutions of learning. The finding that school authorities stigmatised and discriminated against learners with rasta hairstyles has also been confirmed in the study of Essel (2021, p.121) who theorised that 'the public schools proscribe Afrocentric hairstyles with no substantial scientific evidence that wearing afro and rasta inhibits the acquisition of creative and innovative thinking, and academic performance or progress of the students.' Essel (2021) also added that the schools that stigmatised and discriminated the wearing of Afrocentric hairstyles including rasta have not established the negative socio-moral and cultural effects of rasta hairstyle on indigenous Ghanaian culture. Maganga (2019) similarly found that most rasta children in Malawi that attend public schools, are denied their right to attend classes with dreadlocks, curtailing the fundamental human rights to education even under democratic dispensation.

Interestingly, the negative perception some Ghanaian have about the rasta population is largely affected by one's economic class. The rich and opulent rasta people are less likely to be perceived as criminals. A respondent revealed that '*I have also realized that if you are a rasta with gainful employment or have your own car, people do not associate you with evil*' (Respondent M). Impliedly, the perception some Ghanaians have about the male rasta population as criminals is strongly influenced by their economic net worth. The male rasta population with low economic background or who were unemployed were usually labelled as criminal irrespective of the reason that informed their choice of rasta hairstyle, according to the respondents.

Besides, Rastafarians have their values which includes their Pan-African ideology, dietary culture (*i-tal levity*), theology (religious beliefs and practices), colour symbolisms and music. Botchway (2018) contended that the theorizing and historicizing of hair could clarify the link between the physical and social bodies within the context of identity and ideology. Some of the respondents hammered on the view that wearing rasta made them feel more of their African identity since that is their natural hair. One of the respondents remarked:

I wear rasta hairstyle because of the philosophy behind it. It makes me love myself as an African. The pan-Africanism, the Afrocentric philosophy backing it, is what makes me uphold myself so high that I would love to project it. (Respondent N)

Many of the respondents (85%) have the view that wearing rasta is a marker of African identity. This worldview of the rasta population stem from the fact wearing of dreadlocks has root in precolonial Ghana to the extent that the traditional priest wore that hairstyle as a sacred symbol of pioussness, spirituality and power. Some traditional priests in Ghana still wear the rasta hairstyle in their religious enterprise.

Almost all the respondents admitted that they wear the rasta hairstyle for fashion purposes. They wear it due to its sense of fashion consciousness it gives them. One of the respondents said 'I wear rasta hairstyle for fashion purposes. My friends equally appreciate my hairstyles.' Other respondents (56%) hinted on the emotional vibe or connectedness and or feeling of 'goodness' in wearing the rasta hairstyle.

Though Rastafarians have their theology (religious beliefs and practices) as part of their values, the wearers of the rasta hairstyle who were involved in the study did not subscribe to the Rastafarian religion as pointed out by Chakravarty (2014) that there are different topologies of rasta people namely orthodox-isolated, orthodox-integrated, secular-spiritual, and secular-cultural. This implies that they wear the rasta hairstyle not for the sake for religion.

2. Factors leading to the negative perception of rasta

The respondents pointed to miseducation/brainwash on the part of the populace about rasta hairstyle stemming from Ghana's colonial past, Euro-Christian and Islamic religious infiltration, indigenous spiritual connection to the hairstyle, and individualistic branding as the factors leading to the negative perception of the rasta hairstyle. With regards to miseducation/brainwash on the part of the populace a respondent's voice reflected the consensus reached in the focus group discussion. He vehemently put forward that:

People have come to accept that anything African, traditional or indigenous is negative, fetish ... inferior. So, you going that way looks like you are deviating from accepted standards. Because of the miseducation, people think that rasta is a foreign culture. They don't know that is ... part of the indigenous arts. They think it is something somebody is trying to copy. (Respondent Q)

Flowing from this statement, it become obvious that people have been disoriented about the root of rasta hair culture, making them think that is foreign to Africa and for that matter Ghana. Essel (2021) helps to straighten the matter with his theorisation that the hairstyle existed in some parts of Africa including Ghana in precolonial times and that, some Ghanaians were born with natural dreadlocks while others wore artificial locks. He added that the rasta hairstyle is not solely a Jamaican phenomenon. Campbell (1987) and Chevannes (1994) have theorised on the African root of the rasta hairstyle as well.

According to the respondents, some people filled with Euro-Christian indoctrination and Islamic teachings usually discriminate and stigmatised rasta hairstyles worn by males. These people 'try to cite religious books (1cor 11:14; Num 6:5) to tell you why you cannot keep your hair long. Others play the gender-card, saying that per their religious beliefs only females can wear long hair.' (Respondent S). The 2021 Population and Housing Census pegged the Christian population in urban areas at 74.7% while Islam followers at the urban areas were 20.4% (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021). It continued that the rural areas had 66.9% Christians with 19.2% Islam followers. Those who belong to the traditionalist faith in the urban areas constituted 0.8% while those in the rural areas were 6.5%. The two major religious groups, Christianity and Islam stigmatised rasta hairstyle from their religious perspectives rather than the indigenous culture or root of the hairstyle.

Generally, people perceived that born rasta people are children of the gods and that they were linked to offspring of river goddesses. Traditionally, many of the people born with rasta become traditional priests or priestesses. A respondent shared that:

Growing up, people had the belief that rasta people are *Nsuoba*, '*Yekɔ gye no wo bosom hɔ*' (children of the gods), priest or priestess. So, if you are not a priest or an African warrior, they tend to ask why you have to brand yourself in rasta hairstyle. (Respondent O)

Based on these traditional notions, rasta hairstyled people are regard by a section of Ghanaians as special spiritual beings. Essel (2021, p.117) confirmed that 'people born with rasta were considered by society as special beings, for that matter sacred. Apart from that, some priests and priestesses wore dreadlocks or afro. Cowries were placed in the rasta or afro hair of some priests and priestesses for symbolic, decorative, religious and ritual purposes.'

The dreadlock culture was made popular to some people through legends including Raggae king, Bob Marley. Per his lifestyle as raggae artist, master guitarist and smoking in public, people tend to associate dreadlock with narcotics or smoking of marijuana. According to Rootsman (2010) rastas smoking cannabis (marijuana) is a spiritual act, considered as a sacrament that cleans the body, mind; heals the soul, exalts the consciousness, facilitates peacefulness, brings pleasure, and brings them closer to Jah (God). Smoking marijuana is a criminal offence in Ghana. As a result, wearing rasta hairstyle tend to be associated with crime, and smoking of marijuana, hence perceiving the hairstyle as negative branding. Sections 37 and 38 respectively of Ghana's Narcotics Control Commission Act 2020 (Act 1019) criminalises possession or control of narcotic drugs and business relating to narcotic drugs. Section 37 provides that:

37. (1) A person who, without lawful authority, proof of which lies on that person, has possession or control of a narcotic drug for use or for trafficking commits an offence.
- (2) A person who commits an offence under subsection (1)
 - (a) for use is liable on summary conviction to a fine imposed in accordance with the penalty specified in the Second Schedule and an additional term of imprisonment specified in that Schedule if the fine is not paid; or
 - (b) for trafficking is liable on summary conviction to the fine and imprisonment specified in the Second Schedule and an additional term of imprisonment specified in that Schedule if the fine is not paid.

Marijuana, part of the narcotic drugs, is associated with the religious beliefs of the Rastafari religion but in many countries, it is criminalised as in the case of Ghana and Malawi. Rastas in Malawi, according to Nganga (2018) found themselves being stopped by the police often because they are perceived to be having marijuana in their possession. The religious value of marijuana to the Rastafari religion have created a perception that all wearers of the rasta hairstyle are potential handlers and or users of the drug.

3. Self-perception of rasta hairstyle people

Despite the negative perception, the respondents shared their self-perceptions in terms of how they see themselves. The rasta-respondents said:

Despite the stigma, I'm motivated to do it for fashion purposes. Besides, I know deep down from my heart that I'm not a criminal or bad person. If you think of evil for me because of my hairstyle, I care less. (Respondent P)

I feel that we rasta people are portraying the original arts, the actual arts. We are proud of ourselves. I am proud of the texture of my hair so I flaunt it. I'm comfortable in my own hair and skin and I feel beautiful. The same way some female might consider colonialists' hair as attractive and they have to force their hair to look like that, I feel mine is beautiful, mine is original. So, I have to be proud of my root. I feel that we are holding the indigenous culture, holding our heritage high. We see ourselves as the original people. (Respondent U)

I'm of the objective that you can't live to please everybody. So, I prioritize my comfort and convenience first... Even, race that people don't choose by themselves, people will dislike you because of your race. So, you can't please society. (Respondent Q)

Those who will like you, will like you paaaaaa! Those who will not like you, will not like you at all. You get favours you don't ask for just like that because of the dreadlock. People trust you, just because you have dreadlocks. They could entrust things in your care. I got a job offer I never asked for. (Respondent R).

The rasta-respondents showed strong will for practicing the hairstyle. They were intrinsically motivated in wearing the rasta hairstyle despite its associated negative repercussions from society. This finding has the blessing of Alhassan (2020) who observed that *Rastafari* is a Black Pan-African socio-spiritual movement and way of life. Apart from practicing the hairstyle for fashion purposes, they related to it as indigenous Black identity, pan-African cultural heritage and comfortable which they must uphold and protect. Consequently, they wore the hairstyle to please the 'self'. Others also shared that people at times treat them well just because of their dreadlocks.

Conclusions

Against the background that male rasta people are stigmatized, marginalized and discriminated against on the basis of their hair in Ghana, this study examined the rise of rasta hairstyles among the youth despite the stigma. The diffusion of rasta in urban centres and villages was examined, amongst other things, to establish the formal structures for rasta hair promotion and the factors leading to its impact on the youth amidst the stigmatisation, marginalization and discrimination on social, economic, and political repression grounds. The study confirmed the stigmatization of the rasta hairstyle pointing its source to miseducation about Afrocentric hair through formal education, remnant of slave trade, Euro-Christian religion, and Islamic teachings which have disoriented the people to envisage the hairstyle in negative perspective. The effect of colonialists' contacts and school education informed the factors leading to the negative perception. In addition, indigenous spiritual connection to the hairstyle, and negative branding of some rasta hairstyle wearers (branding) caused the non-rasta population to look down upon wearers of the hairstyle. Male practitioners are perceived by the non-rasta population as potential criminals. This has caused the police to keep high security surveillance on the rasta people as prime suspect of crimes. Moreso, school authorities denied minors with rasta hairstyle access to education in Ghana leading to breach of their fundamental human rights to education and dignity. However, these negative public perceptions have unshaken the self-esteem of the rasta people, and made little impact in controlling the rasta hair culture escalation amongst the youth in Ghana.

Aesthetic sensation and clout of the rasta hairstyle, its association as marker of African identity, personal beliefs of wearers about the hairstyles (including personal philosophy), and fashion lifestyle pleasures were the motivational and compelling reasons that accounted for the rise in the hairstyle amongst the youth in urban centres and villages in Ghana. These reasons caused the youth to a large extent, relegate the consequences of wearing the rasta hairstyle to the background. The youth defied the odds in practicing the rasta hairstyle craze. They practice the rasta hairstyle not for the sake of Rastafarian religion. Their rasta hairstyle choice have little or no Rastafari religious association.

There were no formal structures for rasta hair promotion aside its philosophical inclination, connotation as one of the markers of African cultural identity, and fashion purposes. The youth who practiced the rasta hairstyle craze were intrinsically motivated and had confident urge about the 'self' and therefore were not easily influenced by naysayers about the wearing of the hairstyle. The non-rasta population may not see beauty of the hairstyle but the practitioners have not lost sight of the aesthetic aspect of the hairstyle. It is therefore recommended that rasta hair culture has thrived based on its connotation as one of the markers of African cultural identity, philosophical inclination, aesthetic reasons and fashion purposes and needs to be accommodated destigmatised as way of Ghanaian cultural reorientation. Further research into the relationship between rasta hair culture and crime would be helpful to establish whether or not the wearing of rasta hairstyle is a reliable indicator of crime susceptibility.

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