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Oral Literature as a Tool for Moral Education in Senior Secondary Schools in Ikeduru Local Government Area of Imo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study focused on oral literature as a tool for moral education in Senior Secondary Schools in Ikeduru local government area of Imo State. It has revealed that the application of the literature review covered many conceptual issues, theoretical and empirical studies. The work adopted a descriptive survey with and questionnaire was used to collect data. The data were analyzed using mean statistics. Findings reveal that to a very high extent, Senior Secondary Schools utilize oral literature for moral education in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State; the types of oral literature use more often for moral education in Senior Secondary Schools in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State include history, folklores and oral traditions; the impacts of oral literature in enhancing moral education in Senior Secondary Schools in Ikeduru LGA is very positive; and the challenges affecting effective utilization of oral literature for moral education in Senior Secondary Schools in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State are ineffectiveness on the part of some teachers, negative peer group influence, lack of proper consideration in the curriculum, societal neglect of history, folklores and oral traditions. The study concludes that oral traditions, folklore and history were the bed-rock for the development of education and society in the pre-colonial period, but these were dropped gradually with the advent of the colonial masters and gradually deteriorate both in the educational curriculum and general conduct of the society and these have

adverse effect on the nation's economy. It was therefore recommended that there is the need for more provision of more cultural, personnel, capacity building, material mobilization for innovative study and development of the oral literature for history of Nigeria. Furthermore, there is the need to re-learn oral traditions, folklores and history by making use of artistic remains of Ife, Nok culture, and Igbo Ukwu.

Keywords: Oral Literature, Moral Education, History, Folklores, Oral Traditions, Culture.

Introduction

Education is the key to national development in every nation. This is because it unlocks the economic potentials of the people; empowers and equips individuals in the society to participate in and benefit from their national economy, facilitates economic development and provides the basis for transformation in the system. According to Fafunwa (1970), cited in Nzerem (2022), the goal of education can only be achieved if when the students are well taught so as to acquire the knowledge and principle necessary for development. In this case, the benefits of oral literature as a tool for moral education comes to mind. Before the advent of modern education, parents and elders usually express their values, norms, culture, and ideas orally in their indigenous languages.

Through this medium, they subconsciously and consciously transmit those sacrosanct ideas to their children through traditional and formal politics, religion, culture, family etc. During this period, society is mainly communal, so everyone, the parents, family members, and even neighbors, is expected to train up children. Nwakaego (2016) reveals that society usually uses folktales, folksongs, riddles, and proverbs as pedagogic tools for supplementing any deficiency they note in children's values and behaviors. Mothers start training children even right from home through proverbs, lullabies, and folktales. Moreover, as children grow up, they can imbibe those values that are core to society. Those days, children would be gathered under the moonlight at the market square or in front of their homes while the older women in the family narrate proverbs, folktales, and riddles about some legendary animals like the grasshoppers, tortoise, dog, ants, elephant, lion and hare (Amin & Ahmed, 2021).

After recounting their stories via artistic and emotive language, folksongs, gesticulations, and tonal fluctuations to draw children's attention and make their stories real, the narrators would then interpret them according to the way the society construes the world centering on projecting and propagating the values, virtues and morals that are sacrosanct to

them (Sekoni, 2018). Through this medium, children can understand rights from wrong and what their society holds in high esteem apart from what they consider taboos. For that, oral literature becomes the best strategy to achieve improved moral education in the society (Orotoye, 2019). This is because through artistic and imaginative devices, the folktale is used as a vital tool of drawing children's attention and developing and training them to be well-cultured individuals that are morally sound and virtuous.

Furthermore, it is deeply rooted in culture, deploying highly artistic and emotive language to draw the listeners' attention. Values are collections of guiding principles about behaviors and attitudes that are desirable in life. Hornby (2015) describes moral values as beliefs about right and wrong of essential things in life. Values are observable in people's behavior, and society's responsibility is to impart those values that are dear to them to their children so that those children can inculcate them and act them out in their behaviors. Every society has some values and morals that it campaigns for and tries to share through generation. Through its creative spoken words of myth, proverbs, folktales, poems, songs, narratives, and riddles, oral literature passed communally from one generation to another preaches those values and virtues that are a particular sacrosanct community. In the view of Banjo, Adeniran, Akano and Onaga (2018), the rich reservoir of Nigeria's traditional heritage has afforded writers like D. Fagunwa and Amos Tutuola, who show Nigeria's music, worship, proverbs, and folklores in their works. In addition, several critical African literature writers like Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Gabriel Okara, Kofi Awoonor and others have vividly incorporated the indigenous oral tradition of the Nigerian society.

Okoh (2018) insinuated that the oral traditions in Nigeria were a precursor for written literature in the country. The author expressly affirmed that the Igbo novel, poetry, or drama is the extension of the rich Igbo folktale. Literature is integrated with the English language and called English Studies in the English Studies curriculum for Junior Secondary School students. This integration made it possible for the English language aspect to be taught and literature topics, oral literature included. This is to empower students to use the English language communicatively and decongest the curriculum (Adeyinka & Adegbode, 2018). Both Non-African and African indigenous folklores of the Nigerian society like the Fulani myth, Yoruba folklores and epics, South African, Ghanaian folklore, myths and several oral traditions of other nations like the Chinese myth, American folktales etc are included in the Literature aspect that Junior secondary school students are taught. The topics are incorporated alongside other language topics in the textbooks used across the nation.

Currently, many teenagers and youths in Nigeria prefer the Western ways of life, such as their music, movies, and other entertainment modes, which often expose them to the mode of communication, dressing that are not in line with the value system of the Nigerian society. Little wonder the rate of moral decadence among secondary school students in

Nigeria is on the increase, and it is evident in the persistent cases of fighting, violence, rape, examination malpractices, truancy, unruly behavior towards teachers, lying, aggression, even robbery and cultism (Okebukola, 2012). Therefore, there is need to effectively use oral literature to enhance moral education so as to improve the moral values of the students. Therefore, this study focused on oral literature as a tool for moral education in Senior Secondary Schools in Ikeduru local government area of Imo State.

Statement of the Problem

There is notion of persistent raging of social vices among the secondary school students. The situation has led to students' persistent involvement in undesirable behaviours such as cultism, robbery, kidnapping, rioting, raping, among others. Obviously, most of the students lack ethical, moral and civic values among other desirable behaviours in them, which are needed for lifelong learning as demanded in National Policy on Education [NPE] (2013). Ideally, the situation has resulted in students' poor performance in school subjects.

In-school adolescents who are primarily Junior Secondary School students in Ikeduru LGA of Imo State for instance, are not exceptions to this prevailing crisis as their moral decadence status has become worrisome. Since adolescent students in Nigeria are daily exposed to the content of English studies which is expected to have taught them the essential values that should translate to what they practice. It is expedient that the different English studies textbooks utilized in the junior secondary schools are evaluated to ascertain their content adequacy for teaching practical moral values to these adolescents. It is in line with the above problems, that this study investigated oral literature as a tool for moral education in Senior Secondary Schools in Ikeduru local government area of Imo State.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study focused on oral literature as a tool for moral education in Senior Secondary Schools. The specific objectives include:

1. To find out the extent of utilization of oral literature for moral education in Senior Secondary Schools in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State.
2. To identify the forms of oral literature use more often for moral education in Senior Secondary Schools in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State.
3. To examine the impact of oral literature in enhancing moral education in Senior Secondary Schools in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State.
4. To examine the challenges affecting effective utilization of oral literature for moral education in Senior Secondary Schools in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State.

Research Questions

Based on our objectives, the following research questions were generated for the study:

1. To what extent do Senior Secondary Schools utilize oral literature for moral education in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State?
2. What are the forms of oral literature use more often for moral education in Senior Secondary Schools in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State?
3. What are the impacts of oral literature in enhancing moral education in Senior Secondary Schools in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State?
4. What are the challenges affecting effective utilization of oral literature for moral education in Senior Secondary Schools in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State?

Major Concepts of the Study

Oral Literature

Oral literatures are cultural heritages transmitted from one generation to another. They are messages, information and testimonies of a group of people transmitted through speeches, songs and the like. For Nnyagu (2017), oral literature are media of presenting ancient culture, history and experiences of the past generation. Oral tradition and oral lore are cultural materials and traditions transmitted from generation to generation and they are as old as man himself, the oral tradition is the hallmark element of the human experience all over the world. In the view of Adeyinka and Adegbodu (2018), oral literature are stories that people formulate, pick up and carry along as part of their cultural freight. Oral literatures are original form of education in which both social values and community norms are taught to children through storytelling and moonlight plays.

Oral literature includes spoken, recited, or sung utterances composed and performed in an artistic character of vivid imagination, accurate observation, and creative expression (Falola & Akinyemi, 2016). Like written literature imitates and mirrors society, oral literature preserves societal values, traditions, and beliefs. According to Egbochukwu and Aihie (2017), oral literature in the English Studies curriculum consists of folktales, myths, legends, and epics. The folktales are traditional stories handed over through generations to transmit societal values and virtues. Akporobaro (2016) describes those stories as fictional but used to entertain through their creative narration and intended to illuminate humanity's nature and moral conflicts like love, jealousy, endurance, persistence, etc. The folktale incorporates both human and animal characters to narrate human and non-human experiences that are fantastic.

Moral Education

The word ‘Moral’ comes from Latin words ‘Mores’ meaning “behavior” hence, Morality is concerned with individual behaviour. It deals with behaving according to the laid down rules and norms that are generally acceptable in a social setting. Morality, according to Abdulkareem (2012) is the individual’s ability to recognize the difference(s) between good and bad behavior and between right and wrong behaviours. If the above is true of

Moral and Morality, and the word education is said to have originated from Latin word "Educere" meaning "leading out" or "bringing out". Then Moral Education can be said to be ways of suppressing the immoral behaviours in individuals while bringing out the Moral qualities in individuals. While in support of this, Birma (2018) has pointed out that moral connotes self- control, obedience and tolerance while moral education means a way of guiding individuals to the right paths and to enable him take wise decision and display good behavior, otherwise known as ethic of behavior or socially unobjectionable manners. Moral education can also be described as the process by which individuals are trained in order to behave in the expected ways and manners leading to good character (Agbo, 2010). In this way, morality and education go hand in hand and they complement each other. These are organs that are saddled with the responsibility of education individuals morally, socially, etc. the first among them is home or family. This is the foundation of any child and it is on this that the school is built. The individual is taught the norms and values of the society as well as how to worship God and express his moral feelings and emotions right from the family level. It is the family that teaches the individual his or her religious beliefs, ethics and principles that are acceptable in the society. Hence, Agha (2016) maintains that the impression made upon the child's mind at home will determine his personality in future. This shows the importance of home in moral upbringing of individuals. The second agency of moral education is the school.

Theoretical Framework

Educational Learning Theory

In educational learning theory, we have constructivism; constructivism is s philosophy of learning founded on the premise that by reflecting on our experiences, we construct our own understanding of the world we live in. each one of us generates our own rules and mental models which we use to make sense of our experiences (Earthman, 2004). Learning therefore is simply the process of adjusting our mental models to accommodate new experiences. The guiding principle of constructivism is learning which is a search for critical meaning of the subject matter. Therefore, learning must start with the issues around which students are actively trying to construct meaning from them. The following according to Earthman (2004), Farrant (2008) and Oliver and Lippman (2007) should be noted:

1. Learning also requires understanding whole as well as the parts and the parts must be understood in the context of wholes. Therefore the learner precisely focuses on primary concepts not isolated facts.
2. In other to teach well, we must understand the models that students use to perceive the word and the assumptions they make to support these models.
3. The purpose of learning is for an individual to construct his or her own meaning, not just to memorize the right answer and regurgitate some one's else's meaning.

Since education is inherently inter-disciplinary, the only valuable way to measure learning is to make assessment a part of the learning process by ensuring that it provides student with information on the quality of their learning.

Empirical Studies

Ibeh (2020) focused on obstacles to moral education in Nigeria educational institution. It used quasi experimental, and data were collected using scale system. Mean was used for data analysis. It discovered that some obstacles to moral education in Nigeria educational institutions like tribalism and political patronage, materialism and lack of effective sanctions on immoral practices affects educational growth.

Nzerem (2022) studied moral education and Nigeria's development. It collected data through primary source and analyzed it using regression. It discovered that the progressive decline of moral values could be said to be responsible for the increasing rate of social vices in Nigeria. The present situation of Nigeria where graft and corruption have become an accepted way of life for many is one of the major impediments to her development as a nation.

Achuku (2015) carried out a research on the impact of oral literature on the performance of students and teachers in Tia LGA of Rivers State. The study used descriptive survey research design and questionnaire served as the instrument of data collection. The data collected were presented in tables and analyzed using simple percentage, tables and mean frequency. The findings reveal that oral literature enhances learning.

Abba (2019) focused on challenges of oral literature in secondary schools in Kwara State. Simple random sampling technique was adopted to select 15 History teachers and 100 History students as sample. Questionnaire was designed to collect data while descriptive statistic of mean was used to answer the three research questions generated in this study. The findings reveal that inconsistent government policies towards History as a subject, the quality of History teachers and the teaching method used in teaching History has adversely affected oral

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was a descriptive survey. The survey was used so as to employ primary data through questionnaire.

The population covered the entire 25 teachers and 275 students in SS II in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State. The population is 300 (covering both teachers and students in SS II in Ikeduru LGA). SS II were used because they are more stable class. The SS I students were just entering the senior class and may not be suitable for the study. The SS III students are busy with preparation for their senior school certificate examination. For that, the SS II students are the most suitable for the work. There are seven (7) secondary schools in

Ikeduru LGA of Imo State (**Source:** Owerri Education Zone 1, 2022). For that, our study population is 300 in all.

The sample was 171 respondents. This means that the sample is 57% of the population. Also, the researcher used simple random sampling technique to select 171 respondents for the study. This is to ensure that all the population in the area of the study has equal chance of being included in the sample. Furthermore, the Taro Yamane formula was applied in the 300 population so as to calculate and get the sample size of 171. The instrument for the collection of data was structured questionnaire.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed by weighing each of the response option by using the Likert rating style of 4, 3, 2, and 1 for SA, A, SD, D, Respectively.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Out of 171 copies of the questionnaire distributed, only 150 copies were properly filled and returned.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Research Question 1: To what extent do Senior Secondary Schools utilize oral literature for moral education in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State?

Table 1: The extent Senior Secondary Schools utilize oral literature for moral education in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State N = (150)

S/N	Items	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	Decision
1	To a high extent most students use oral literature like speeches and songs to share information	65	40	25	20	3.0	Agreed
2	In most cases students listen to and utilize oral literature like cultural history about their people	76	40	14	20	3.1	Agreed
3	Most times students utilize oral literature because through it, community norms are taught to children through storytelling and moonlight plays	58	50	12	30	2.8	Agreed
4	Most student utilize oral literature very well because it helps to preserves societal values, traditions, and beliefs	30	47	63	10	2.6	Agreed
	Total					11.50	
	Grand mean					11.50/4 = 2.9	

Source: field survey (2025)

It was discovered in table 1 that all the items were all accepted. This is because item 1 has a mean of 3.0, item 2 has a mean of 3.1, item 3 has a mean of 2.8 and item 4 has a mean of 2.6; hence all the items have mean scores more than 2.5 and above. It is therefore concluded that the extent Senior Secondary Schools utilize oral literature for moral

education in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State include to a high extent most students use oral literature like speeches and songs to share information; in most cases students listen to and utilize oral literature like cultural history about their people; most times students utilize oral literature because through it, community norms are taught to children through storytelling and moonlight plays; and most student utilize oral literature very well because it helps to preserves societal values, traditions, and beliefs

Research Question 2: What are the forms of oral literature use more often for moral education in Senior Secondary Schools in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State?

Table 2: The forms of oral literature use more often for moral education in Senior Secondary Schools in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State N = (150)

S/N	Items	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	Decision
1	History	74	46	8	12	3.1	Agreed
2	Drama	14	28	60	48	2.1	Disagreed
3	Folklores	52	20	38	40	2.6	Agreed
4	Oral Traditions	55	47	23	25	2.9	Agreed
	Total					10.70	
	Grand mean					10.70/4 = 2.7	

Source: field survey (2025)

It was discovered in table 2 that items 1, 3 and 4 were all accepted. This is because item 1 has a mean of 3.1, item 2 has a mean of 2.6 and item 3 has a mean of 2.9; hence all the items have mean scores more than 2.5 and above. It is therefore concluded that the types of oral literature use more often for moral education in Senior Secondary Schools in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State includes history, folklores and oral traditions.

Research question 3: What are the impacts of oral literature in enhancing moral education in Senior Secondary Schools in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State?

Table 3: The impacts of oral literature in enhancing moral education in Senior Secondary Schools in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State N = (150)

S/N	Item	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	Decision
1	It encourages students to learn the history of their society	67	41	23	19	3.0	Agreed
2	It leads to both positive and negative behaviour among students	13	17	69	51	1.9	Disagreed
3	It discourages negative character and instills morality among students	74	46	10	20	3.2	Agreed
4	It helps to improve students' academic performance	55	47	23	25	2.9	Agreed
	Total					11.00	
	Grand mean					11.00/4 = 2.8	

Source: field survey (2025)

It was discovered in table 3 that items 1, 3 and 4 were all accepted. This is because item 1 has a mean of 3.0, item 2 has a mean of 3.2 and item 3 has a mean of 2.9; hence all the items have mean scores more than 2.5 and above. It is therefore concluded that the impacts of oral literature in enhancing moral education in Senior Secondary Schools in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State includes it encourages students to learn the history of their society; it discourages negative character and instills morality among students; and it helps to improve students' academic performance.

Research Question 4: What are the challenges affecting effective utilization of oral literature for moral education in Senior Secondary Schools in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State?

Table 4: The challenges affecting effective utilization of oral literature for moral education in Senior Secondary Schools in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State

N = (150)

S/N	Items	SA	S	SD	D	Mean	Decision
1	Ineffectiveness on the part of some teachers	60	53	17	20	3.0	Agreed
2	Negative peer group influence	55	58	12	25	3.0	Agreed
3	Lack of proper consideration in the curriculum	78	45	12	15	3.2	Agreed
4	Societal neglect of history, folklores and oral traditions	63	48	17	22	3. 0	Agreed
	Total					12.20	
	Grand mean					12.20/4 = 3.1	

Source: field survey (2025)

It was discovered in table 4 that all the items 1 - 4 were all accepted. This is because item 1 has a mean of 3.0, item 2 has a mean of 3.0, item 3 has a mean of 3.2 and item 4 has a mean of 3.0; hence all the items have mean scores more than 2.5 and above. It is therefore concluded that the challenges affecting effective utilization of oral literature for moral education in Senior Secondary Schools in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State includes ineffectiveness on the part of some teachers; negative peer group influence; lack of proper consideration in the curriculum; and societal neglect of history, folklores and oral traditions.

Summary of Findings

This study discovered that:

1. To a very high extent, Senior Secondary Schools utilize oral literature for moral education in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State. this is because most students use oral

literature like speeches and songs to share information, students listen to and utilize oral literature like cultural history about their people, students utilize oral literature because through it, community norms are taught to children through storytelling and moonlight plays, and student utilize oral literature very well because it helps to preserves societal values, traditions, and beliefs.

2. The forms of oral literature use more often for moral education in Senior Secondary Schools in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State include history, folklores, and oral traditions.
3. The impacts of oral literature in enhancing moral education in Senior Secondary Schools in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State include that it encourages students to learn the history of their society, it leads to positive behaviour among students, it discourages negative character and instills morality among students, and it helps to improve students' academic performance.
4. The challenges affecting effective utilization of oral literature for moral education in Senior Secondary Schools in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State are ineffectiveness on the part of some teachers, negative peer group influence, lack of proper consideration in the curriculum, societal neglect of history, folklores and oral traditions.

Conclusion

The history of oral tradition is traced to the history of man. For example, in Genesis 1:2, the bible says "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." This quotation traced the origin of man to God through oral tradition i.e. spoken words, written out, with traits of folklore like proverbs and symbolism which form the history of human creation. In the same vein, oral tradition, folklore and history, have developed with Nigerian educational system since the traditional African society, that is, before the colonial era through informal training, this has formed the bedrock upon which the colonial education or western education lingers on.

Since education is the process of learning knowledge, skills, beliefs, and habits of a group of people, the appropriate method of imparting it, is highly necessary and this can be discovered through history and oral tradition. More so, when one realizes that, socialization is the process by which individuals require the knowledge, language, social skills and values needed to function in the society, and then the place of oral tradition and folklore in moral education will not be relegated to the background. This study conclude that oral traditions, folklore and history were the bed-rock for the development of education and society in the pre-colonial period, but these were dropped gradually with the advent of the colonial masters and gradually deteriorate both in the educational

curriculum and general conduct of the society and these have adverse effect on the nation's economy.

Educational Implication of the Study

1. For the research question one, this study discovered that most students use oral literature like speeches and songs to share information, students listen to and utilize oral literature like cultural history about their people, students utilize oral literature because through it, community norms are taught to children through storytelling and moonlight plays, and student utilize oral literature very well because it helps to preserves societal values, traditions, and beliefs. The educational implication of the above findings is that students and teachers will understand the needs to effectively used oral tradition to a very high extent so as to enjoy its benefits.
2. For research question two, it was discovered that the types of oral literature use more often for moral education in Senior Secondary Schools in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State include history, folklores, and oral traditions. The educational implication of the above is that the students and teachers will know the need to use other oral literature like drama etc that are neglected. More so, history, folklores, and oral traditions will then be effectively used in a practical manner to achieve effectiveness and efficiency.
3. For the research question three, the impacts of oral literature in enhancing moral education in Senior Secondary Schools in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State include that it encourages students to learn the history of their society, it leads to positive behaviour among students, it discourages negative character and instills morality among students, and it helps to improve students' academic performance. The educational implication is that oral literature will continue to achieve positive values, promote positive change, and encourage good moral and standards in education.
4. For research question four, this study discovered that the challenges affecting effective utilization of oral literature for moral education in Senior Secondary Schools in Ikeduru LGA, Imo State are ineffectiveness on the part of some teachers, negative peer group influence, lack of proper consideration in the curriculum, societal neglect of history, folklores and oral traditions. The implication of the above is that the government will know the need to include the oral literature and its use in the curriculum, the students/teachers will know its values and utilize it, and the society will know it benefits and encourage it.

Recommendations

This study recommends that:

1. There is the need for more provision of more cultural, personnel, capacity building, material mobilization for innovative study and development of the oral literature for history of Nigeria.
2. There is the need to re-learn oral traditions, folklores and history by making use of artistic remains of Ife, Nok culture, and Igbo Ukwu.
3. There is the need to enlighten citizens on the role of our tradition as a means for social enlightenment citizens and reconstruction in the pre-literate times to re-sharpen our present and earn better future for our children;
4. There is the need to promote Nigerian languages as media of instruction, communication and socialization for national development.
5. In order to promote economic advancement, there is the need to diversify through some cultural heritages and traditions. Like tourism to historic centre, excursions can be organized for school pupils and students at all levels of education in Nigeria.

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