

Revitalising African Indigenous Storytelling in Education: The Unity School, Agbarho Experience

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Abstract

This study examines the role of African Indigenous narrative art in the Cultural and Creative Arts CCA Curriculum of Nigerian Junior Secondary School focusing on educational drama. The research examines how students learn in educational, cultural and moral values through this art form. The paper reveals that African indigenous narrative art facilitates comprehensive individual growth capability development, self-reliance, empathy, collaboration and interpersonal connections. This study employs a case study design, experiment with an intervention programme in a workshop setting at Unity School Agbarho, Delta State, Nigeria. Data collection involved participant observations researcher's journal, interviews, assessments and students' self-assessments. The participants consisted of seventy-nine (79) JSS 2 students. The cohort consists of thirty-eight (38) females and forty-one (41) males. The study findings indicate that incorporating African Indigenous narrative into educational Theatre effectively develops children's moral and ethical principles as well as essential practical skills. To promote African Indigenous pedagogy and culture, the research therefore recommends incorporating African Indigenous narrative art into educational theatrical initiatives and the Nigeria Junior Secondary School CCA curriculum.

Keywords: African, Art, Educational-drama, Indigenous storytelling, Whole-person-development.

Introduction

Contemporary African societies have increasingly adopted Western cultural values, supplanting traditional African norms and values. This adopted contaminated culture has affected African traditional institutions, raising concerns about the erosion of African culture. The root cause of this cultural declines lies in educational system that is replaced the African Indigenous education with a Western curriculum highlighting individualism, capitalism and materialism. It is against this backdrop that this study investigates the effectiveness of integrating African Indigenous storytelling art into educational drama programmes as a tool for whole-person development and moral instructions for young people. To grasp Africa's educational history, it is imperative to analyse the traditional indigenous educational system that existed before the arrival of Islam and Christianity. Christian education was founded in Nigeria in the early 17th century, while Islamic education gained formal recognition in the 14th century. However, indigenous education programmes remain relevant, with no indication of their imminent discontinuation.

In traditional African setting, education was rooted in functionalism, where schooling served as a means to accomplish a certain goal, rather than an end in itself. The main objective of African of African Education has always been to help people become ready for maturity and to make smooth transition into society. Valued qualities included moral and spiritual growth, a strong work ethic, political involvement, and social responsibility. Young people learn through experiential activities, including rituals, ceremonies, imitations, recitations and demonstrations. They took great pleasures in farming, fishing, cooking, knitting, carving and other pastimes. The African indigenous educational system included a variety of recreational activities such as writing, dance, drumming and sports. Intellectual teaching covered many topics including geography, local history, folklore, poetry, logic, riddles, and proverbs. These ideas were passed down through generations via storytelling and tale relays.

In ancient Africa, learning was highly valued and respected, combining academic instruction, manual labour, character development, and physical training, practical examinations were administered after each level to evaluate their comprehension of the subject matter, considering their age and exposure. The examination was appropriate given the child's age, developmental stage, and specific assessment needs. An adult initiation ceremony, also known as a passing out ceremony, marked the culmination of continuous evaluation. Education in ancient Africa was not as rigidly divided as it is in the educational system of today, according to Fafunwa (1991). Conversations among educators concerning zero-grade classrooms, zero-grade courses, and zero-limit institutions are becoming more and more common. Contrary to popular belief, Africa had both formal and informal education systems before colonization, as documented by several studies. Africans have consistently passed on knowledge to future generations through various official and informal channels Walter Rodney (1972) asserts that formal education was not brought to Africa by Europeans. Rather, they created a new institutional framework that both enhanced and replaced the previous one.

Africa's diverse ethnic groups have historically produced various educational establishments, reflecting the continent's distinct political, social, and economic systems. Despite their differences, these communities shared similar learning cultures and knowledge dissemination methods of traditional education in Black Africa was greatly influenced by cultural homogeneity, transferring knowledge between generations was a highly esteemed and respected practice. The educational landscape was broad, including a wide range of age groups and grade levels. The craft of storytelling was vital to the dissemination of knowledge and the promotion of human growth. The research aims to explore the potential of African traditional storytelling arts in teaching civic education, citizenship, and moral principles to junior secondary school (JSS 3) students. The study integrates a range of Urhobo cultural expressions, such as riddles, parables, proverbs, and folktales, into its narrative framework.

Conceptual Clarification

Storytelling is an art form and a means of capturing and conveying people's emotions, attitudes, and reactions to their surroundings and experiences in life (Gbadegesin, 1984). Chinyowa (2004) asserts that storytelling plays a crucial role in the mediation and transmission of knowledge and information across generations. Through storytelling, Children learn about culture, customs, expectations, ethics, and values. As stated by Ngugi wa Thiong'o in 1986, storytelling is "the act of narrating a story or narrative to one or more listeners through gestures and voice." It is not the same as reading aloud from a book or repeating a passage from memory. To evoke vivid mental images, the storyteller employs metaphors and sensory language. Various media, such as Plays, dramas, poems, songs, music, dances, and other media may all be used to tell a story (Ngugi wa Thiong'o, 1986; Utley, 2008). Telling a narrative might be enhanced by singing or playing an instrument. Vambe (2001) claimed that storytelling is a universal technique used to comprehend the world. While storytelling customs vary globally they share commonalities, including oral repetition, gestures, and verbal moral lessons. African cultures, communities, and individuals are deeply entwined with the rich and famous history of African storytelling.

Before colonization, African culture relied heavily on storytelling to acquire and share information, according to scholars from various fields. However, alternative knowledge systems have been marginalized and dismissed by the Western paradigm (Ngugi wa Thiong'o 1986; Elabor-Idemudia 2002), which has led to the subjugation of African culture to Eurocentric concepts and ideologies. This imposed Western ideas, and practices on information dissemination, creating a hierarchy that classified African knowledge as superior or inferior. Elabor-Idemudia (2002) argues that decolonizing social science research on non-Western emerging countries like Africa is essential to prevent the influence of Western ideology and authority on the worldview of African people. African research methodologies and approaches must acknowledge and communicate the deeply ingrained ideas, values, and rituals in African civilizations, as seen in the works of Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986) and Kunene (1991).

Africans have long valued narrative and the art of captivating audiences. Scholars like Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986), Vambe (2001), Chinyowa (2004), and Vambe (2004) stress that Africa's rich oral cultures and traditions are the source of this appreciation. Although ancient writing traditions exist, most Africans have been oral people who rely more on oral storytelling and art than on written forms (Achebe, 1958; Chinyowa, 2001) storytelling has played an essential role in maintaining social order and preserving customs, standards, and ideals in African civilizations. Before writing and reading were invented in antiquity, Africans relied heavily on storytelling to preserve their history, customs, and ceremonial practises (Vambe, 2001). Given that storytelling is one of the oldest customs on the continent, it plays a significant role in African culture (Vambe, 2001).

Ongoing whole-person development can significantly enhance a person's cognitive, physical, professional, psychological, social, and spiritual abilities. Three criteria are often used to categorize capacity: potential, attitude, and performance: "Performance" and "potential" show the level of experience and talent, whilst "attitude" indicates the level of anxiety. People may enhance their "Attributes" by improving various aspects of their "Whole Person Development" and better equipping themselves. Whole-person development is a learning approach that emphasizes and influences a student's social, emotional, and cognitive development, according to Idogho (2013). The terms "creative drama" and "educational drama" are often used interchangeably. According to McCaslin (1996), creative drama is "a play or story created by a group rather than following a written script." It's a kind of process-centered, improvisational theatre where performers are guided by a leader as they imagine, act out, and consider human experiences (Idogho, 2013). In contrast, educational drama as defined by Dorothy Heathcote (1997) as "any situation in which individuals actively engage in role-playing scenarios, with a primary focus on attitudes rather than characters." "The practise of professional actors performing plays or 'tales' in school or community settings with the specific purpose of educating young people," is how Idogho (2013) described educational theatre. The above description suggests that African indigenous storytelling techniques may be successfully incorporated into educational theatre and drama. This perspective aligns with Walter Rodney's (1972) assertion that African education emerged from new formal establishments that supplemented and displaced earlier ones. Similarly, Idogho (2013) argues that modern theatre borrows concepts, archetypes, and narrative elements from classical Greek plays and traditional African dramaturgy. Additionally, this borrowing applies to genre classification and technical terms. By extension, storytelling theatre and Western educational curricula can be compared to African traditional storytelling art. These elements of educational theatre can facilitate the teaching and learning procedures in indigenous African education.

Benefits expected from educational drama

Four different objective kinds that instructional drama conventions may cover were recognised by Neelands and Goode (2000). These exercises encourage all-encompassing growth and are figuratively related to the compass's points.

- I. North goals, or instrumental goals, are the particular targets meant to improve conceptual understanding and skill development.
- II. South American expressive goals: The vague goals include forming attitudes and ideals via active engagement in theatrical performance.
- III. Personal and Social Learning (Western): Learning about oneself and other people and gaining abilities in these areas.
- IV. Drama for education has several advantages. Among these is the embodiment of learning, which is learning via physical movement (Beaver, 1999). Educational theatre also elicits emotional responses, which enhances immersion in the learning process (Boud, 1996). Adding a play component to the classroom or learning environment also helps remove obstacles to learning, (O'Toole & Dunn, 2002). Educational theatre conventions have their roots in constructivism pedagogy, which fosters knowledge generation and meaningful learning. Unlike traditional "reception learning" via exposition, discovery techniques in like theatrical exercises encourage students to find knowledge for themselves. This self-discovery process highlights the importance and relevance of key concepts, enhancing transformational learning via discovery learning. Strategies like Group projects, learning contracts, role plays, case studies, and simulations facilitate this process. According to Mesirow (1991), these activities require participants to yield their prior assumptions, grow in autonomy, and practice critical thinking. Experiential Learning as seen in educational theatre differs from traditional teaching approaches by engaging students holistically.

Theoretical Orientation

This research is grounded in the "Indigenous Paradigm theory" and the "Indigenous Peoples' Paradigm theory." These frameworks underscore the significance of Indigenous peoples' involvement in the decolonization process and their ongoing struggle for self-determination. A global movement now supports Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination, congruent with a primary objective of the current UN discussion. Indigenous peoples have the right to exercise self-determination over various matters, including preserving customary practices, replenishing spiritual and intellectual assets, and safeguarding their cultural heritage. Developing an Indigenous viewpoint is essential to claiming these rights and confronting the legacies of colonialism. Colonialism and imperialism have historically exploited and displaced indigenous peoples, with ongoing impacts in the post-colonial era. Robust colonial structures have influenced individuals' cognitive processes, culminating in the assimilation of colonialism and the implementation of "white lenses" (Hooks, 1992). This has resulted in some Indigenous people developing a deep-seated dislike for their own culture. According to Adelowo (2012), Africans must recognize their objectives and desires, rather than emulating Western culture. Instead, people should study their cultures and traditions to fully understand their life experiences. Given the cultural background of the intervention participants, who are of Urhobo or African descent from Delta State, Nigeria, using storytelling as a paradigm in this study is culturally relevant and appropriate

Research Method

This research aims to investigate the impact of African indigenous storytelling art on enhancing skills that foster personal empowerment, empathy, collaboration, and improved interpersonal relationships among Junior Secondary School (JSS 3) students at Unity School Agbarho during the 2021-2022 academic session. In addition, the study promotes African cultural values and moral traits among young people.

Research Hypotheses: Incorporating traditional African storytelling into educational courses can promote students' social and emotional growth, leading to positive interpersonal relationships and holistic development. Conversely, the curriculum seeks to instil moral values in students while promoting, preserving and reviving African traditional customs and practices within the context of globalization and Western society.

Participants The study was carried out with Junior Secondary School (JSS 2) students of Unity School Agbarho during the 2021-2022 academic sessions; which spanned across two (2) terms from January till mid- July 2022. The African Indigenous storytelling art was integrated into the students' Cultural and Creative Arts (CCA) Curriculum that focuses on teaching the students Arts, Creative Arts and moral instructions, which the Storytelling arts become a viable medium of teaching and learning the (CCA) curriculum content. The researcher creatively converts / translates the curriculum contents into African: stories, folklore, proverbs, parables and jokes which were used to teach the workshop participants. The (JSS 2 Class) that was used has three (3) Classes/Arms, A, B, and C, but the researcher carried out the intervention in the form of workshop with the (JSS 2 A & B arms) of the school during the period of the programme. The population of the students used for the study consists of (JSS 2A; which has a total of forty (40) students with twenty (22) being boys and eighteen (18) girls); while the JSS 2B arm has a total of thirty- nine (39) students with nineteen (19) boys and twenty (20) girls. The students are between the ages of ten (10) years to thirteen (13) years of age.

The researchers spent nine (9) weeks with the Participant in the first term, from the second week of January till the second week of March 2022 and the students' normal term examination on the CCA Subject was written based on the activities carried out in the workshop. While the researcher repeated the same activities in the second term of the same 2021-2022 academic sessions; which he commenced in the last week of April and ended in the last week of June. Again the students' normal term examination on the CCA Subject was written based on the activities carried out in the workshop. When the performance of the participants (JSS 2 A & B arms) who learned through African Indigenous Storytelling Arts, in Educational Drama was assessed and compared to the JSS 2 C Arm that learned through the chalk and talk methods; it is revealed that the (JSS 2 A & B arms) who learn through African Indigenous Storytelling Arts outperformed the latter group.

Research Tools The case study employs artistically oriented research instruments, such as music, theatre, storytelling, and folklore mime. Data was collected and analysed using participant observation, the researcher log, evaluations, and self-assessments. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in two phases: before and after the programmes. This approach allowed for an in-depth understanding of students' perspectives on challenging life subjects. The interview questions were designed to assess the effectiveness of narrative and instructional theatre in promoting overall human development.

Discussion

Impact of the Programme on Emotional Intelligence and Empathy

The intervention's effectiveness depends heavily on fostering pupils' emotional intelligence and empathy. Research has extensively examined the role of educational theatre in fostering empathy. For years, educational theatre has been credited as a valuable tool for strengthening interpersonal relationships, improving communication, and dispelling misconceptions and prejudices (Bhukhanwala & Alleksaht-Snider, 2012). An objective of this intervention was to promote emotional awareness alongside other crucial elements of emotional education. The study's goal was to encourage children and teenagers to express their emotions verbally, develop empathy and compassion for others, and explore many viewpoints on a certain topic (Triliva, Anagnostopoulou, & Hatzinikolaou, 2008). Significantly, the group debriefed and assessed student performance at the end of each session, using the "hot chair conversations" to discuss exercises.

Through regular discussions, students articulated emotions including joy, enthusiasm, grief, and anger. This suggests they developed emotional maturity. The students also participated in activities, including dramatizations, forum theatre, improvisations, and role-playing games to improve their understanding of their own and their peers' feelings. These activities promoted perspective sharing, active listening, and empathy, enabling the students to better grasp their peers' needs, objectives, and opinions. By engaging with difference perspectives the participants gained a deeper understanding and they also improved in their academic performances. They were able to get a greater awareness of the world around them and developed greater awareness of the challenges faced by their peers. Dramatic plays in this intervention/workshop, according to Androusou and Magos (2001), mix a direct experiencing component with a feeling of separation from actual events and individuals. As a result, they promote calm and empathy. This knowledge may reveal new conflicts or exacerbate pre-existing prejudices, which might have advantageous and disadvantageous effects. Consequently, any educational intervention must have a thorough awareness of the social context in which it is being produced. According to the study's findings, empathy and drama in educational contexts have been studied before by Burton and O'Toole (2009) and Santomenna (2010).

Programme Impact on Self-Perception

Throughout the intervention, students received methodical instruction on emotional regulation improving their comfort with their emotional environment and boosting their self-worth. This improvement in self-perception enabled students to take ownership of their actions, develop self-confidence and effect desired changes in their personalities and social relationships (Tsiaras, 2012, citing Manion) In light of this, the intervention included exercises designed to encourage students to feel more at ease with both their own bodies and the distinctive qualities of the others in their group.

The intervention technique integrated motor exercises including mime, gestures, and dramatization to improve psychomotor skills, rhythmic ability, aural awareness, inventiveness, and motor coordination and expressiveness. These activities fostered self-awareness, encouraging students to analyse their self-perception and public image. Through group discussions and exercises, students shared personal details, interests, and physical characteristics, promoting a deeper understanding of themselves and others. A specific example was a student's human sculpture, inspired by a family portrait, which generated meaningful anecdotes about their relationships. Establishing a strong, healthy connection with oneself is essential for effective collaboration, communication, and building meaningful relationships with others (Hull et al., 2010).

As people become more aware of their inner complexities, they can better connect with their peers (Roth, 2016) the programme diverse psychomotor allowed face-to-face interactions among students, highlighting their individual qualities beyond group memberships. The first workshop meeting was well received, with participants identifying and valuing their distinctive individual personalities through a dramatized tale that was centred on a particular poppy variety. A JSS 2 student is used in the thinking stage. One student said, "Everyone is different from one another and unique." "Having something unique is not a bad thing; one just needs to accept it and not be concerned about it," stated a different child. After completing the special training, students are now prepared to take part in more in-depth discussions regarding their visible psychological and interpersonal traits. They demonstrated this by responding to the interview question, "Tell me about yourself." Here are a few examples of these kinds of answers: "I have brown hair," "I am tall," "I am not a Christian girl, but rather a good person with some flaws," "I tend to get angry easily," "The colour of my eyes is brown," "I am trustworthy and can keep a secret," in addition to "I enjoy spending time with my friends and I have a deep love for my parents."

Programme Impact on Interpersonal Relations

The research aimed to test the hypothesis that teaching African traditional storytelling practices to children would improve their social skills. The intervention approach validated this hypothesis. According to The researchers' log, students who took part in the "hot seat" exercise demonstrated increased cooperation, interaction, and forming connections with their group members. Furthermore, the students anonymously assessed the programme's effectiveness during the second- term workshop, concluding that it enhanced their connections with and understanding of their peers. Participants

acknowledge learning to treat their peers with kindness, decency, and confidence. They gained fresh perspectives and knowledge about their peers, acquired new skills to encourage and help their peers, and found it is easier to socialize. They generally said that they felt better about their classmates and noticed improvements in their behaviour and play abilities.

During follow-up interviews, A, a JSS 2B student, emphasized the value of collaboration in improving interpersonal communication. A noted that working one in groups was a key feature of the curriculum. "My co-workers and I had long conversations for the bulk of my time. Our pals and I used to go out together often. However, we chose to work with kids we didn't know well based on your suggestion. This experience also taught us a lot about what it was like to work with them. That was just amazing. A other JSS 2A kid spoke about how his connections with people for teamwork became stronger over time. "I performed exceptionally and worked with my classmates effectively," he said in his next statement. Since we weren't familiar with one another at first, people were behaving strangely and screaming. However, we were able to improve our teamwork skills over time.

Participants' assessments emphasize the programme's focus on fostering a collaborative atmosphere. According to Bayliss and Dodwell (2002), cooperative activities that promote creative expression, such as the ones in this study, encourage students to work selflessly and consider their peers' needs; collaborative spirit strengthens both the group and its members, allowing them to express unusual expectations and feelings. Consequently, previously suppressed ideas, talents, ambitions, and thoughts emerge, fostering the development of new personalities and a revitalised feeling of collaboration. The group's frequent meetings fostered a strong feeling of collaboration, benefiting each member individually. This finding is supported by the current study's results. The recent classes were conducted in a highly collaborative environment, promoting strong interpersonal bonds among the participants. This was evident from the notes taken by the participants, observers, and researchers.

Furthermore, students' evaluations of their interactions with other group members improved between sessions, particularly for those who struggled with communication. For instance, among all the group members, a child in JSS 2B seems to have had the most difficult forming connections due to personal hygiene concerns, leading some students to avoid interacting with her. According to the teacher-observer, the youngster felt especially isolated after a similar incident occurred in class. However, the student reported an improvement in her relationships with peers due to her efforts to fortify bonds during the programme she said in the first interview that she was unhappy with her classmates, adding, "I feel upset about my classmates because they refuse to sit next to me and constantly make fun of me." She remarked, "I am unhappy with how the other kids are behaving because neither they nor I want to be friends with each other." in response to their actions. Her response changed once I described the plan to her. "I can't complain about the behaviour of other students; it's only (...) who I find disgusting," she said in her next statement. Being with my students makes me feel

amazing. I'm thrilled because I adore playing with them and they're my pals. As noted in the researcher's log and by the observers, early on in the sessions, children with stronger social relationships established micro-groups within the classroom. According to Bikos (2004), the primary cause of subgroup emergence is individual's incapacity to build comparably intimate connections with others.

Students in the target subgroups consistently showed a strong willingness to cooperate. When cooperation was lacking, they expressed dissatisfaction, sometimes resorting to teasing or taunting their peers. This led to tension, misunderstandings, and protests. of note, students showed a preference for working with same-gender peers. However, when grouped with unfamiliar students to achieve a common goal, they initially express regret and confusion. However, as relationships improved, tensions among the students decreased systematic involvement, which occasionally included physical contact, helped students get to know each other better. Initial worries about group assignments dissipated over time. As a result, relationships between sexes grew less rigid, and while micro-groups continued after the first workshops, their cohesiveness and intensity began to wane.

A discernible improvement in micro-group interaction and communication was observed in the second term's sessions, compared to the first term's workshops. This was supported by The fact that students working in groups and pairs completed their tasks with greater depth and quality the intervention's positive impacts on collaboration began to emerge from the sixth week, validating Siaras's (2012) claim that a minimum of five (5) sessions are needed to raise students' awareness, prepare them for participation, and encourage greater creative interaction. The idea that children must go through a certain number of workshops before they can build trust and emotionally participate in the activities was validated by data from Bolton (1986).

The Pedagogical Significance of African Storytelling

According to Chinyowa (2000), many studies consider Africans to be lacking a rich storytelling heritage, with Oral performances often viewed as merely theatrical. Chinyowa argues that African storytelling traditions hold tremendous value in the continent's theatre, performance and education industries. African storytelling, especially in theatre, is inextricably linked to the humanistic concept of African people, making it a vital medium for promoting social, cultural, intellectual, and emotional growth. Chinyowa (2001) emphasizes the need for objective paradigm shifts in how a story is taught. The bulk of works on African oral storytelling and narrative performance, according to Chinyowa (2001), have mostly focused on anthropological collections and translations of diverse folktale genres. However, Chinyowa's study emphasizes the significance of African storytelling, notably Shona trickster tales in Zimbabwe, as an efficient way of imparting knowledge and wisdom. Beyond entertainment, he narratives serve a higher purpose, teaching cognitive abilities, behavioural habits, and emotional self-control.

Moral Lessons of African Storytelling

Oral African tales primarily aim to instil moral principles in young people, engendering their sense of self and community development. According to Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1982) and Utley (2008), young people must learn critical life skills. Throughout history, African storytelling has served multiple purposes, including conveying moral lessons, preserving cultural values, explaining natural phenomena, passing down survival skills, and worship deities (Ngugi wa Thiong'o 1986, Vambe 2001, Utley 2008, Kunene 2012). Furthermore, many African cultures feature Rich mythologies centred on trickster characters. In trick tales, anthropomorphic creatures convey meanings using animals as metaphors for human character and conduct. The tales hold significant cultural importance and entertain, while teaching important truths. Animals in literature represent human qualities and vices as seen in the works of (Achebe 1958, Ngugi wa Thiong'o 1982, Hove 1997).

African proverbs and parables are important for oral storytelling, effectively communicating meaning, feelings, ideas, while honouring collective knowledge. As noted by Kunene (1991), Obiechina (1993), Chinyowa (2000), and Vambe (2001), social, ethical, and cultural considerations must be taken into account when investigating these storytelling elements. Narratives are important to oral traditions since they are often utilised to transmit culture, experiences, and values (Obiechina, 1993). However, Obiechina argues that the incorporation of proverbs and parables would bring more relevance and depth to the tales. Proverbs and parables play a crucial part in oral traditions as a way of sharing old information, wisdom, deep concepts, and attitudes (Obiechina 1993). According to Chinua Achebe (1958), studying African literatures require a thorough understanding of the culture, customs, and elements that inform themes, values, narrative structures. Iyasere (1975), aptly describes the modern African writer thus "The modern African writer can be likened to a snail in relation to its shell, which represents their indigenous oral tradition." The import is that African writers remain deeply connected to their cultural heritage. A snail never throws away its shell, not even when it is in the unknown. The speeches listed above have an impact on African storytelling in the following ways:

- I. A Collaborative Participatory Experience: This might have a framework like to modern-day focus groups in the West.
- II. Style and Structure: The story's structure draws attention to its relevance and importance, according to Chinyowa (2004) and Vambe (2004).
- III. Cultures in Africa: The Application of Proverbs and Parables in Storytelling: Proverbs and parables may increase a story's impact and relevance. Oral traditions provide ancient knowledge, profound ideas, and attitudes via parables and proverbs (Obiechina 1993).
- IV. Storytelling's power: People preserve and sustain their core cultural values via their stories. Narrating stories is a very effective strategy (Achebe 1987).
- V. Moral lessons: Giving children a sense of identification and belonging as well as imparting moral values are the main goals of oral African storytelling (Kunene 1991).

VI. Educational Significance: African folktales are a wonderful means of imparting wisdom and information. Telling stories improves people's imagination and creativity, changes their behaviour, raises IQ, and teaches them how to control their emotions, among many other benefits (Chinyowa 2001).

The aforementioned factors demonstrate that incorporating African oral traditional storytelling via educational theatre into the curriculum is an effective means to instil moral values, cultural nuances, and knowledge in children. It is also a useful strategy for a person's general development.

Conclusion

This study emphasizes the value of educational theatre as a teaching strategy for developing essential life skills. Drama in education offers a comprehensive approach to exploring sensitive socio-political themes like multicultural cohabitation, through creative and engaging pathways. These approaches rely on universally recognized communication styles that align with humanitarian principles. However, engendering tolerance and unity in the classroom can be challenging, particularly in the current social context where technology can distract students and disengage them from reality. Educational theatre techniques foster meaningful and deep intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships, empathy, and environmental awareness, while also broadening students' perspectives on a variety of cultural traditions. To facilitate "whole person development," students must build connections with others, promoting a deeper understanding of global cultures. It is against this backdrop therefore that this study recommends the incorporation of African Indigenous narrative art into educational theatrical initiatives and the Nigeria Junior Secondary School CCA curriculum to promote African Indigenous pedagogy and culture; which aim at creating a distinct identity for Africans.

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