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DIALOGUE AND THE FUTURE
PERFORMING ARTS

**OF
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Edited By:

Osakue Omoera, Tunji Azeez, Bunmi Adedina, Ganiyu Bamgbose, Sodiq Adesokan



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AND
38TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SOCIETY OF NIGERIA
THEATRE ARTISTS (SONTA)**

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Theatre as Pedagogical Strategy in Higher Education for Global Competitiveness: Spotlight on Teaching and Learning Educational Management in Nigerian Universities

by

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Abstract

The integration of drama-based pedagogy as a coeducational tool to foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and practical application in Nigeria higher education curricula is underexplored. This study investigates how theatre, as a coeducational tool, can enhance the teaching and learning of educational management in Nigerian universities. The research problem centres on the inadequacy of interactive and experiential learning approaches, which often result in limited engagement and understanding among students. The study aims to examine the potential of drama-based pedagogy to foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and practical application of educational management principles. It adopts qualitative methodology; the research employs case studies, focus group discussions, and classroom observations in selected Nigerian higher institutions. The theoretical framework is

grounded in Constructivist Learning Theory, emphasizing active learner participation and knowledge construction through experiential activities. Key findings reveal that techniques, such as role-playing and simulation, were particularly effective in illustrating complex management concepts and fostering leadership skills. The study underscores the significance of integrating theatre into higher education programmes to enhance teaching efficacy and student learning outcomes. It advocates for policy reforms and curriculum design that incorporate creative pedagogical approaches, contributing to the broader discourse on innovative education in Nigeria and Africa at large.

Keywords: Theatre-based learning, Educational management, Coeducation, Higher institutions, Nigeria.

Introduction

Education, often seen as a straightforward process of imparting and receiving instruction, is critically important for individual success in today's society, particularly within the rapidly evolving and highly competitive global economy. It represents the fundamental method by which teachers guide their students, and students, in turn, are expected to absorb and retain the information presented. Educational management and drama, though seemingly distinct fields, have been extensively analyzed by scholars and researchers. Their combined roles in various facets of society and socio-economic development cannot be overstated, primarily due to their education dynamic and artistic features that significantly enhance students' skillfulness. A comprehensive approach to education ensures students are prepared to make impactful contributions to their communities and beyond.

Educational management encompasses the administration of the education system, wherein a group integrates human and material resources to supervise, plan, strategize, and implement structures to execute an educational system effectively. Theatre, on the other hand, serves as the representation or imitation of real life, primarily for the purposes of information dissemination and education, among other objectives. Drama emphasizes key skills such as collaboration, effective communication, proficient problem-solving, and heightened emotional intelligence. It also mirrors the inherent challenges and opportunities that arise in managing educational institutions, both in Nigeria and across the broader African continent. This method aims to make concepts easier to retain.

However, discussions with leaders and stakeholders within the higher education sector in Africa have revealed that higher education programs are confronted with a multitude of challenges and myriad issues. These issues include limited access to higher education services, broader governance concerns, and institutional leadership and management crises. Further compounding these challenges are constraints in the finance of higher education, limited research investment and output, and questions surrounding the quality and relevance of learning, discovery, and public engagement. The governance structure of African higher education at the system level presents challenges for both public and private institutions alike, impeding progress and innovation.

This study consequently underscores the significance of integrating theatre into educational management programs as a means of enhancing teaching efficacy and student learning outcomes. It equally advocates for policy reforms and curriculum design that incorporate creative pedagogical approaches, thereby contributing to the broader discourse on innovative education in Africa. By integrating new teaching styles, educators can increase the chances of students retaining the lessons for longer. By addressing the identified challenges and promoting innovative educational practices, African institutions can improve outcomes and foster development.

Theatre as Pedagogical Strategy: A Literature Review

Literature review expose that, various aspect of drama or theatre are explored in education and its integration into educational management curricula in higher institutions across Africa, particularly in Nigeria, where traditional teaching methods dominate becomes pertinent. Contextual information exposes how various components of society, technology, business, and governmental policies contribute to socio-economic growth and lack of same. It further reveals that, educational advancement, training; administration, organizational relationships, project management, delivery of services curricula are influenced by information and creativity or lack of it. If technical skills are transferred effectively and sufficiently to students by professionals through collaboration or co-education efforts, the impact would effectually explain complex management concepts and foster leadership skills.

In the an article titled “Effects of Drama-Based Geometry Instruction on Student Achievement, Attitudes, and Thinking Levels” by Asuman Duatepe-Paksu and Behiye Ubuz, while their study does not directly discuss the use of theatre in higher education, it does provide some insights that could potentially be applicable to that context. Paramount in their study is the proposition that, enabling students to contextualize concepts in real-world situations through role-playing and improvisation, can lead to better understanding and retention of the material. The study states that “contextualized geometric examples affected their learning positively because they were more logical, interesting, and familiar to them and because the examples made them realize the connections between life and mathematics with the help of daily life context” (281). This suggests that using theatrical techniques to bring abstract concepts to life could have similar benefits in higher education.

This study highlights another role of theatre in education which, is promoting active engagement, communication, and collaboration among students as they work together to solve problems and share ideas. The article emphasizes that “drama-based activities brought the necessities of communication” (282) and that “social interaction among the students assisted the construction of knowledge” (282). These findings indicate that incorporating theatre-based approaches in higher education could foster more active and collaborative learning. More so, creating an exciting, motivating, and interesting learning environment that can improve student attitudes and engagement. The study notes that the “exciting and interesting classroom environment got students' attention and enabled them to learn better” (282).

This suggests that using theatrical techniques in higher education teaching could potentially enhance student attitudes and engagement with the subject matter. These findings suggest that incorporating theatrical techniques and active learning strategies into higher education teaching could potentially have similar benefits, such as enhancing student understanding, participation, and attitudes toward the subject matter. However, more research would be needed to directly investigate the applicability of these drama-based instructional approaches in the higher education context.

In another study titled "The Use of 'Drama in Education' in Primary Schools from the Viewpoint of the Classroom Teachers: A Mixed Method Research," authored by Özge Özgür İşyar and Cenk Akay, the authors explore classroom teachers' perceptions and efficacy regarding drama in education. The research investigates teachers' sense of efficacy, opinions, and metaphorical perceptions of drama in education. It uses a mixed-method approach to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. The study emphasizes drama in education as both an area of study and a teaching method that strengthens communication. It highlights the increasing need for human- and society-oriented teaching methods in a technologically advancing world. As stated in the paper, "Students experience the sense of socializing while learning with the drama method in education which is an area in itself and a teaching method at the same time" (215). The research also points out that drama is involved in all kinds of actions and deeds of a person.

Furthermore, the research explores teachers' views on drama, revealing it aids in students' personal development, serves as an effective teaching method, and provides learning through doing and experience. It was found that teachers consider drama in education an effective and powerful method, but they do not always trust their abilities to apply it due to a lack of information and poor environment. The study notes, "Examining the opinions of the classroom teachers on the concept of drama in education, it is found that the drama in education helps the personal development of the student, is an effective method and provides learning by doing and experience" (215). The paper also delves into the metaphorical perceptions of drama in education, describing it as a support in lessons, "the life itself," and "enlightening". Data analysis included both quantitative methods, such as descriptive analysis, T-tests, and ANOVA, and qualitative methods, such as content analysis and coding. These findings contribute to understanding how teachers perceive and utilize drama in primary education.

In addition to the foregoing, drama promotes creativity and skill discovery, enabling students to connect subjects to real-life scenarios, fostering innovative problem-solving. The study also links drama to emotional intelligence, a critical attribute for leaders. It suggests drama can compensate for technology's drawbacks by fostering social communication and a sense of belonging, crucial in higher education where technology is prevalent. Teachers' metaphors for drama, such as "life itself" and "illuminator", emphasize its ability to provide life experiences and self-discovery (216). Addressing negative perceptions, such as poor resources or practice, is essential when implementing theatrical strategies in higher education. Overall, the paper suggests that incorporating theatrical techniques can create more engaging, creative, and emotionally intelligent learning environments in higher education, especially in educational management.

In Elaine Faull's study titled, "The Impact of Theatre Performance in a School Setting on Children's Learning", the concept of "Theatre with Education" is introduced as a mutually beneficial partnership, where theatre develops imagination and provides aesthetic experiences, while education focuses on knowledge and understanding (115). This aligns with the use of theatre in higher education to create engaging learning environments. Teacher intervention, similar to that observed in primary school settings, can significantly impact the learning outcomes (256, 252). For instance, post-performance discussions can consolidate understanding, clarify concepts, and enhance recall, mirroring how interactive theatre exercises in a university setting could reinforce educational management principles (253). A teacher noted "giving the children the opportunity to do some follow -up work is important, because as we said, it gives them the opportunity to clarify, to summarise, to question – important skills that they would be applying normally through their reading" (252-253).

Research indicates that live theatre can have significant educational benefits, including improved tolerance, social perspective taking, and a stronger grasp of plot and vocabulary. Greene et al (2018: 246) found 'significant educational benefits from seeing live theatre, including higher levels of tolerance, social perspective taking, (SPT) and stronger command of the plot and vocabulary of those plays.' (87-88). This can be translated to higher education by employing theatrical techniques to explore complex topics in educational management, fostering empathy and deeper comprehension among students. The "in-person experience" of theatre creates greater emotional connections compared to other mediums, which resonates with the idea of using role-playing or simulations to enhance emotional intelligence and leadership skills in management education (88).

However, it is crucial to strike a balance and avoid making the theatrical experience overly instrumental or burdensome (252). Pitt (2018:5) suggests extensive work "could put off some children in wanting to engage with the theatre later, because if their only memory of the show was "I watched a show and I am expected to do a huge piece of writing afterwards", then perhaps that might deter them from enjoying the show. It seems like work" (253). Similarly, in a university setting, the pedagogical use of theatre should be carefully designed to avoid overwhelming students with excessive analysis or assessment, ensuring that the focus remains on the enjoyment and intrinsic learning value of the experience.

While focused on children's theatre, the study title is "Playing and Learning through Drama: A Study of Scribbles Kiddies Show" highlights elements applicable to theatre as a broader pedagogical strategy, even in higher education settings such as the teaching of Educational Management in Nigerian Universities. The core idea is leveraging drama and performance to enhance learning and engagement (1). Several concepts within the paper align with this application. Engagement and active learning are critical. The paper emphasizes how children's theatre makes learning fun and engaging. This aligns with the need for active learning strategies in higher education. The "Scribbles" kiddies show, for example, uses drama to teach safety precautions, demonstrating how abstract concepts can become relatable and memorable through performance. This approach can be adapted to teach complex topics in educational management (1).

Role-playing and simulation are also key. The concept of "Mantle of an Expert," where students assume roles to increase engagement and confidence (1), translates directly to pedagogical strategies in higher education. In educational management, students could role-play school administrators, teachers, or policymakers to grapple with real-world challenges and develop problem-solving skills. Furthermore, the paper notes how teachers can use drama productions as instructional materials. Similarly, in higher education, theatrical techniques can be integrated into lectures or workshops to illustrate concepts, analyze case studies, or facilitate discussions. The importance of design elements, such as costumes, props, and sets in children's theatre, highlights the significance of engaging presentation in any educational setting. This translates to incorporating multimedia, interactive activities, and visually appealing aids to enhance the learning experience in higher education.

Finally, the "Scribbles" kiddies show uses characters like Tiktok and Cindy to represent relatable personalities for children (3). This highlights the power of character-driven narratives in education. In higher education, instructors can use case studies and storytelling to connect with students on a personal level and make abstract concepts more memorable. Overall, while the study examines children's theatre, the underlying principles of engagement, role-playing, and effective presentation are relevant to using theatre as a pedagogical strategy in higher education, including the teaching and learning of educational management.

The study, "Theatre for education" by Hafize Guner and Hasan Nami Guner , while not directly addressing theatre in higher education or educational management, presents several concepts applicable to using theatre as a pedagogical strategy in those contexts. The paper emphasizes student involvement and process over theatric result, which aligns with a focus on learning and development (328). Several ideas from the article resonate with the use of theatre in higher education. The core aim of fostering positive attitudes, respect, responsibility, and critical thinking through theatre directly supports the goals of educational management programmes. The study adopts Baltacioglu's "Authentic Theatre" concept (328), which prioritizes the educational process and student development over performance quality (329). This is highly relevant to pedagogical applications.

The paper also highlights the importance of student-driven content and improvisation (330). Baltacioglu's ideas emphasize that the teacher should act as a guide, providing clues and direction, while students shape the script and the theatrical elements remain secondary. This approach can foster critical thinking and awareness (331). As stated, "In critical thinking, the students think independently about observations and information, and besides reaching conclusions, with creative thinking they make assessments about the factors which affect the conclusion" (330). Although the study focuses on younger students, the principles of engaging students in thinking, discussing, and animating subjects, and fostering creativity and spontaneity, are transferable to higher education. The paper concludes that theatre activities give students "freedom to show their natural born creativity and spontaneousness and gives them a chance to think, discuss, search, observe and produce" (331), a sentiment applicable across educational levels.

The above reviews highlight several ways theatre can be a pedagogical strategy in higher education, particularly for teaching educational management, while also delineating potential challenges. A central theme is using theatre to enhance

engagement and understanding by contextualizing abstract concepts. Role-playing and improvisation allow students to actively participate and connect with the material, fostering communication and collaboration. "Contextualized geometric examples affected their learning positively because they were more logical, interesting, and familiar to them and because the examples made them realize the connections between life and mathematics with the help of daily life context". This active approach contrasts with traditional lecture-based methods.

However, the reviews also point out potential pitfalls. Overly instrumentalizing theatre or burdening students with excessive analysis can deter engagement. The focus should remain on the intrinsic learning value and enjoyment of the experience. Teacher intervention is crucial to guide the learning process without stifling student creativity. Furthermore, while the benefits of theatre, such as improved tolerance and emotional intelligence, are applicable to higher education, more research is needed to directly investigate the application of drama-based instructional approaches in higher education contexts. The teacher acts as a guide, providing clues and direction, while students shape the script and theatrical elements.

Theoretical Underpinning

This study is grounded in Constructivist Learning Theory, which posits that individuals actively construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experience and reflection (Bhattacharjee 65). It emphasizes that learners are not passive recipients of information but active creators of their own knowledge (Bada 67). This theory suggests that when encountering new information, individuals reconcile it with their prior knowledge and experiences, potentially altering their beliefs or discarding irrelevant information (67). The process involves actively asking questions, exploring, and assessing existing knowledge to build new understandings. Constructivism contrasts with traditional objectivism, which views knowledge as an external reality to be passively absorbed. Key concepts within constructivism include assimilation, where new experiences are incorporated into existing frameworks, and accommodation, where existing mental capacities are reframed to accommodate new experiences (67). Fernando and Marikar reinforce this by advocating for a participatory approach, where students actively engage in the learning process, building knowledge rather than passively receiving it. Knowledge is actively built by the learner, and cognition adapts to organize experiential reality. Teachers, therefore, should facilitate learning and view students as active participants (110).

Several characteristics define constructivist learning environments. Knowledge is shared between teachers and students, and authority is also shared, with the teacher acting as a facilitator or guide rather than a directive authority. Learning groups consist of small numbers of heterogeneous students (Bada 68). Constructivist environments aim to provide experience with the knowledge construction process, encourage multiple perspectives, embed learning in realistic contexts, foster ownership and voice in the learning process, embed learning in social experiences, encourage the use of multiple modes of representation, and promote awareness of the knowledge construction process itself. Effective teaching, therefore, recognizes that meaning is personal and unique and that students' understandings are based on their own unique experiences (68).

Applying Constructivist Learning Theory to a study on "Theatre as Pedagogical Strategy in Higher Education: A Spotlight on the Teaching and Learning of Educational Management in Nigerian Universities" would highlight how theatrical techniques can create active, engaging learning experiences. Theatre, as a pedagogical strategy, inherently promotes active participation, collaboration, and reflection, aligning with constructivist principles (Bhattacharjee 67). By engaging in role-playing, improvisation, and scene creation, students actively construct their understanding of educational management concepts rather than passively receiving information. The social interaction and collaborative nature of theatre allow students to share perspectives, negotiate meanings, and build knowledge together (69). Furthermore, the authentic context provided by theatrical scenarios helps students connect theoretical knowledge to real-world applications within Nigerian universities, fostering a deeper and more meaningful learning experience.

Methodology

This research adopted a qualitative methodology, employing case studies, focus group discussions, and classroom observations to explore the use of theatre as a pedagogical strategy in the teaching and learning of Educational Management within selected Nigerian higher institutions. This approach was chosen for its ability to capture the nuanced teaching and learning experiences and to understand the complexities of adopting theatrical techniques in this specific context. The selection of institutions was purposeful, targeting universities known for their interest in innovative pedagogical practices. The researchers' role was that of a participant observer, with potential biases addressed through reflexive journaling, peer debriefing, and member checking to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings.

The data collection process utilized three primary tools. Case studies involved in-depth explorations of specific courses or instructors using theatrical techniques, analyzing course materials and conducting interviews. Focus group discussions with both students and instructors were employed to gather perspectives on the benefits, challenges, and overall impact of theatre as a pedagogical tool. Classroom observations systematically documented the implementation of theatrical techniques, focusing on student-teacher interactions and learning dynamics. The combination of these methods allowed for a comprehensive, multi-faceted understanding of the role of theatre as a pedagogical strategy in Educational Management education in Nigerian universities.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This research, conducted by Toyin Ogunsina from Lead City University and Solomon Idyo, investigates the effectiveness of theatre as a pedagogical strategy in Educational Management programs within Nigerian universities. Recognizing the inadequacy of purely lecture-based methods, the study adopts a qualitative methodology, incorporating case studies, focus group discussions (conducted via WhatsApp), and classroom observations to capture the complexities of teaching and learning experiences. The selected institutions—University of Jos and Lead City

University—provide diverse contexts for examining this pedagogical approach, allowing for a richer understanding of how theatrical techniques can be implemented in different educational settings.

At the University of Jos, a case study of Dr. Emeka Okafor's Educational Management course highlighted the use of role-playing to illustrate complex leadership theories. Moving beyond traditional teaching methods, Dr. Okafor integrated active learning strategies into his curriculum. Students actively engaged in simulations of school board meetings, assuming roles of principals, teachers, and parents. Classroom observations demonstrated heightened student engagement and improved understanding of the challenges faced by educational leaders, suggesting that experiential learning can be a powerful tool in management education.

The impact of this approach was further illuminated through a WhatsApp focus group discussion with students from the course. This discussion revealed that the interactive nature of the simulations made the theories more relatable and memorable, fostering a deeper connection to the subject matter. One student, "Ngozi," noted that "the role-play helped in understanding the pressures faced by a school principal when making difficult decisions." This sentiment aligns with findings that contextualizing concepts through role-playing leads to better understanding and retention, transforming abstract ideas into tangible experiences. The research underscores the importance of creating an environment where students can actively apply their knowledge, thus reinforcing their learning.

At Lead City University, Professor Aisha Adebayo's curriculum demonstrated a focused effort to integrate improvisational theatre as a tool for teaching conflict resolution in educational settings, with course materials designed to cultivate emotional intelligence among students. Classroom observations revealed that students were actively engaged in spontaneous scenarios that mirrored real-world disputes between teachers and administrators. This hands-on approach allowed students to directly apply theoretical knowledge to practical situations, fostering a deeper understanding of conflict dynamics and resolution strategies.

A WhatsApp focus group discussion with Lead City University students highlighted how these theatrical exercises served as a valuable complement to traditional teaching methods, especially in mitigating the potential drawbacks of technology by fostering social communication and a sense of belonging. As participant "Dayo" emphasized, "The improv sessions helped in developing empathy for different perspectives." Furthermore, the study underscored the broader benefits of drama in promoting skill discovery, enabling students to connect academic concepts to real-life scenarios and fostering innovative problem-solving skills essential for effective leadership in educational management.

The findings of this research strongly support Constructivist Learning Theory, which champions active participation, collaboration, and reflection as cornerstones of effective education. Unlike traditional methods where students passively receive information, engaging in role-playing and improvisation allows them to actively construct their own understanding of educational management concepts. This active engagement fosters a deeper and more meaningful learning experience, as students grapple with real-world scenarios and develop their problem-solving skills.

Furthermore, the social interaction and collaborative nature of theatre naturally allows students to share perspectives, negotiate meanings, and build knowledge together, reinforcing the principles of constructivism. This collaborative environment not only enhances understanding but also cultivates essential skills such as communication, teamwork, and empathy, which are crucial for effective leadership in educational management. The research also corroborates that theatre fosters creativity and skill discovery, enabling students to connect subjects to real-life scenarios and promoting innovative problem-solving, as well as the ability to think critically and independently.

In addition to these cognitive benefits, the study highlights the positive impact of theatre on emotional intelligence, a critical attribute for leaders. Moreover, the integration of theatre can compensate for technology's drawbacks by fostering social communication and a sense of belonging, elements often lacking in technology-driven learning environments, especially within higher education. By creating a more engaging and interactive learning experience, theatre addresses the inadequacy of traditional approaches and promotes a more holistic and effective educational model.

While recognizing the significant potential of theatre as a pedagogical tool, this research also acknowledges potential pitfalls that must be carefully navigated. It is crucial to avoid overly instrumentalizing theatre or burdening students with excessive analysis, as this can detract from the inherent enjoyment and intrinsic learning value. The goal is to create an engaging and stimulating experience, not to transform it into another form of rote learning. Therefore, teacher intervention is essential to guide the learning process, providing clues and direction without stifling student creativity and spontaneity. The instructor's role is to act as a facilitator, encouraging exploration and critical thinking while ensuring that the theatrical activities remain a source of inspiration and discovery rather than a source of stress or academic pressure.

Overall, this research underscores the potential of theatre as a coeducational tool for fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and practical application of educational management principles in Nigerian universities. The active participation, collaboration, and emotional engagement fostered by theatrical techniques align with constructivist principles and can significantly enhance teaching efficacy and student learning outcomes. The integration of theatre into higher education programmes can address the inadequacy of interactive and experiential learning approaches, offering a dynamic alternative to traditional lecture-based methods that often result in limited student engagement and understanding. By incorporating creative pedagogical approaches like theatre, educators can increase the chances of students retaining lessons for longer and promote a more profound connection to the subject matter.

Conclusion

This study investigated the effectiveness of using theatre as a co-educational tool to improve the teaching and learning of educational management in Nigerian universities. The research team used a qualitative approach, employing case studies at the University of Jos and Lead City University. Data collection involved analyzing course materials, conducting focus group discussions via WhatsApp with students and instructors, and performing classroom observations to document the implementation of theatrical techniques and student-teacher interactions. The study was grounded in Constructivist Learning Theory, emphasizing active learner

participation. For instance, role-playing was used to illustrate leadership theories at the University of Jos, while improvisational theatre was integrated to teach conflict resolution at Lead City University.

The findings support the idea that engaging in theatre, such as role-playing and improvisation, allows students to actively construct their own understanding of educational management concepts. The research indicates that theatre fosters creativity, skill discovery, and innovative problem-solving by enabling students to connect subjects to real-life scenarios. Furthermore, theatre positively impacts emotional intelligence and compensates for the drawbacks of technology by fostering social communication and a sense of belonging. This study thus posits that theatre holds significant potential as a coeducational tool in Nigerian universities, particularly for enhancing the teaching and learning of educational management. It addresses the inadequacy of traditional, lecture-based approaches by offering a dynamic and engaging alternative that fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and the practical application of management principles.

The research demonstrates that theatrical techniques align with constructivist learning principles, leading to improved teaching efficacy and student learning outcomes. Moving forward, this research advocates for the integration of theatre into higher education programs to address the limitations of traditional methods and promote a more holistic and effective educational model. By embracing creative pedagogical approaches, educators can increase student engagement, improve learning outcomes, and foster a more profound connection to the subject matter, ultimately contributing to the development of innovative and skilled educational leaders in Nigeria and beyond.

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WhatsApp Focus Group Discussions. Conducted by Toyin Ogunsina and Solomon Idyo, April-May 2025.

Design in *Aworan Owe*: An Enhanced Artistic Engagement for Young Audience on Social Media

by

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Abstract

Innovations in the digital field have transformed the educational field, especially among children whose learning habits are becoming affected by social networking sites like Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp. In this regard, the issue of conservation of indigenous knowledge has taken center stage with the current culture of transmission of knowledge through traditional means being eroded by the new generation. In this paper, I introduce *Aworan Owe* (Proverbs in Pictures) a current research and creative experiment aimed at teaching children Yoruba proverbs using visual design, illustration and animation. The project lies at the crossroads of cultural preservation, education, and digital experimentation since it turns the traditional proverbs into visual stories that attract the interests of a young audience worldwide. The paper has cited the Multimedia Learning Theory by Richard Mayer to explain the importance of incorporating elements of visual images like bright colours, fun graphics, simplicity and harmony in promoting understanding, memory and culture in children. The methodology is the process of adopting the chosen Yoruba proverbs into the short-animated episodes with the contextual translation into English and spreading them over social media platforms that people could easily access. The method does not only encourage intergenerational communication but also allows language competence, reinforces cultural identity, and instills moral lessons within the Yoruba traditions. The results support the significance of design in the process of making indigenous knowledge more attractive to children in the era of digital entertainment. Through safeguarding the

integrity of Yoruba proverbs and modifying them to fit into the modern consumption, *Aworan Owe* is able to exhibit the possibility of social media as a mode of cultural learning. Finally, the research suggests design-based approaches to connect the traditional knowledge with contemporary education in the globalized society.

Keywords: *Aworan Owe*, Proverbs, Design, Social Media, Young Audience

Introduction

Technological evolution has introduced radical innovation to almost all areas of life, transforming the way people interact, educate and maintain culture. The current globalized world has not only increased interactions but it has reshaped the ways of production and transmission of knowledge due to the introduction of new communication technologies. According to Combi (2016), technological evolution is continuously shaping and changing culture and this has impacted the traditional mechanisms of heritage transmission in the ever-changing world. Among the African societies, where culture and intergenerational knowledge have traditionally been passed down orally, this fact presents a major challenge. It is thus highly important to critically look into the extent to which cultural values can be maintained in the wake of a rapidly changing technological environment.

Early exposure of children to digital devices and platforms is one of the dire outcomes of the technological progress. Children are already exposed to virtual world at a very tender age and they are navigating smartphones, tablets, and social media spaces that take center stage in their daily lives. The trend necessitates the need by teachers and cultural custodians to come up with new models and codes of learning that resonate with the cognitive development of children and at the same time provide a bridge between the past, present, and future. This change is required not only to prosper and be aware but also to guarantee the survival of indigenous knowledge systems. Unless new strategies are applied, the homogenizing impact of the mass media, or, in other words, the leveling out of cultural practices, as Combi (2016) states, might cause the loss of valuable traditions as technologies spread worldwide.

This is an urgent issue considering the seismic shift in younger audiences to the consumption of digital content. The child audience, especially, has turned into an insatiable consumer of visual and interactive content and tends to use the storytelling form with more emphasis on images, animations, and short videos. Their interest in visual narration through Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok has increased at a worrying pace and has in most cases replaced the original oral ways of cultural transmission. To African cultures, where proverbs, folktales, songs and rituals have been the main way through which wisdom, moral guidance and cultural identity is passed on to the people, this is a danger of losing culture. Unless new strategies are developed, a lot of oral traditions are facing the risk of being taken to the background.

Social media, which is defined in the broadest possible terms as an interactive internet application that allows (collaborative or individual) creation, curation, and sharing of user-generated content (Davis, 2016), is at the heart of this cultural change. Social media platforms unlike the previous forms of mass communication are based on active engagement whereby users are able to consume and create content. They have not only impacted on entertainment but also on shaping identities, interpersonal relations, religious beliefs and ideologies as well as economic practices. Davis (2016) focuses on the multidimensionality of the influence that social media has on the daily life of people, including the way it has penetrated

both the personal and the public domain. Social media like Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter (X), or even microblogging or wiki space have now become a complex digital ecosystem through which knowledge, culture, and social life intertwine.

The mere strength of these platforms can be determined by the fact that they influence not only the way in which children amuse themselves but also the way in which they understand culture and knowledge. That is why researchers, such as Bennis and Ghourdou (2024), claim that social media should be viewed not only as communication tools but rather as the immersive cultural surroundings, which can be perceived as the means of creating the day-to-day fabric of life and shaping social behavior. Children also consume visual entertainment in ways that refine their thoughts, affect their behaviours and constructions of their cultural identities. They are also subjected to ideology, stereotypes, and worldviews in the contents of media productions that mirror the interests and predispositions of the owners and controllers of media production means (Bennis & Ghourdou, 2024).

On this backdrop, the present research is a creative answer to the issues of cultural preservation in the digital era. In particular, it is devoted to preservation and popularization of Yoruba proverbs (one of the most lively and symbolic elements of Yoruba oral culture) visualized on the social media. As brief statements of ethical and moral wisdom, proverbs represent and summarize the worldview of the Yoruba people and have played a historical role in teaching, social control, and the construction of identity. However, the more children lose touch with oral communication, the more likely they are to lose these cultural treasures.

This paper will therefore present *Aworan Owe* (Proverbs in Pictures) which is a creative project that transforms Yoruba proverbs into more graphic forms like animation and Illustrations. Using the most popular platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp, the project will be located in the digital places where children spend their free time, thus making cultural learning accessible, relatable, and entertaining. The logic behind it is to combine the richness of traditional proverbs and the immersive capability of design so that the younger audiences do not only see Yoruba wisdom but internalize it in the forms that are meaningful to their digital literacy.

By so doing, the study will help towards achieving three inter-related objectives. First, it shows how visual narration can be employed strategically in order to safeguard the integrity of Yoruba proverbs as they are adapted to new forms of consumption. Second, it is aimed at establishing intergenerational communication through reviving children to cultural knowledge that has shaped Yoruba identity over centuries. Third, it frames design as one of the key instruments of cultural preservation, demonstrating how specific aspects, like colour, harmony, and playfulness, can be used to contribute to better learning results among children.

This introduction, in the end, places *Aworan Owe* beyond an artistic experiment; an intervention in culture, it is. Through the recognition of the transformative power of technology and the creative use of the same, the research achieves the balance between tradition and modernity. It notes the possibility of design-based approaches to preserve indigenous knowledge in an era in which both globalization and digitalization are both destroying and transforming cultural borders.

Designs for children's content on social media

Proverbs are an acceptable means of communication within a particular cultural context, either for formal or informal learning. They are short and condensed memorable sayings that contain wisdom, morals, views, and truth, and are handed

down orally from generation to generation. Proverbs are often used when older people or adults intend the learner to learn a lesson, be conscious of a situation, be mentored, or guided. They are an embodiment of important coded facts drawn from experiences to give advice, direct orders, or prohibitions to communicate essential and profound meanings (Ehondor, 2017). Yoruba proverbs are part of the rich culture and traditions of the Yoruba people, passed down through generations. They represent a compendium of wise sayings laced with metaphorical expressions that intricately reflect the Yoruba culture, beliefs, values, and experiences, and carry important lessons about life. Several researchers and scholars have been making efforts to document Yoruba proverbs and their meanings in written form using social media. However, the new audience for social media prefers engagement with effective visual narratives or learning and entertainment. Children find it easy to learn through photo collages, animation, and short videos shared on social media platforms

The use of design for children has expanded with technology. Children at the childhood stage are exposed to design in toys as a concrete artifact fantasy. Since the 21st century, design for children has rapidly gained ground beyond the television to the digital space. Children in this category are open to multiplicity, diversity, and are voracious consumers of technology through smartphones, tablets, iPads, laptops etc. To them, the virtual world has become significantly “important, or even more, than the real world (Cotrim & Ribeiro, 2016). They live in the virtual world and perceive social media as an extension of their daily lives. This profound interaction with social media is almost compulsory with children who are now exposed to the use of gadgets from childhood. Social media has increasingly become popular with children as an entertainment medium to promote creative content.

Design for children's content production on social media is now a critical influence on young children. Just like technology is advancing, children's needs for content are on the increase. Creators navigate this platform to produce diverse content with ethical implications and complex interactions that are beneficial or detrimental to children's experiences on social media. The emergence of video games in the 1970s introduced children as consumers in the digital landscape. Gradually, the interaction of children with social media was significantly transformed in terms of communication, socialization, education, and entertainment. Social media has become a critical player in the new millennium for children. It engages them in activities (content) where they freely share information within their social circle and the society (Ersoy, 2018). Children are exposed to online materials at younger ages more than ever in the digital age. To match the high demand for children's digital production, creators have prioritized design to attract and engage them in digital experiences. Specific contents are now made available online for appropriate learners to match the demand for online content. In some cases, children's content is designed to meet their cognitive abilities and development. This makes children a distinct target audience.

Theoretical Framework

Multimedia Learning Theory (MLT), proposed by Richard Mayer (2001) offers a handy base to appreciate how learners learn and retain information using multimedia materials. The main point of the theory is that people learn better with the combination of words and pictures than with the words only. That is, learning is enhanced when the information is presented in both oral and visual aspects in a manner that elicits active thinking. Against the background of the modern digital world, where learning information is becoming more mediated by social networks

and multimedia technologies, the principles of MLT have acquired yet greater significance, especially in the case of children who are exposed to visual narratives in the learning environment.

According to Mayer (2001), three assumptions form the basis of MLT: dual-channel processing, limited capacity and active processing. The first principle, dual-channel processing, is the belief that the human mind has two distinct channels of processing information; the visual channel that deals with images and written language and the auditory channel that deals with spoken language and sounds. What this implies is that, by presenting learners with material that adequately stimulates both channels, they will be in a better position to develop coherent and integrated mental models of the subject matter. The second principle, limited capacity, acknowledges that the two channels have a finite capacity in terms of the information that they can process at one time. Because of this, teaching materials have to be well planned so as not to overwhelm learners with too much information. Active processing is the third principle that states that learning is not passive and that a learner must actively pay attention, process, and organize the information into the existing mental structures. In absence of this active engagement, multimedia learning may turn out to be shallow and inefficient.

Malamed (2021) elaborates on these concepts by demonstrating how they can be used in digital learning contexts and emphasizing that content creators in the educational field have to strike a balance between visual and verbal communication and consider the developmental needs of the learners. The balance is especially important when applied to children since the working memory of children is smaller and their attention span is shorter. Consequently, good multimedia learning should be clear, emotionally appealing, and simple such that the learners are not overwhelmed with the cognitive load but rather, they get a chance to learn in a meaningful way.

These principles are clearly put into practice in the *Aworan Owe* project that aims at teaching children Yoruba proverbs using illustrations and animations on Instagram, YouTube and WhatsApp. The project has a clearly intentional avoidance of long oral discourse and uses a mixture of colourful animation and brief written captions in Yoruba and English. Through this, it implements the principle of dual channel because it combines images with text, although the latter is not a sound but a written form. The design allows children to use their visual and verbal systems and provides bilingual reinforcement to children who are learning to navigate both Yoruba and English at the same time. Furthermore, the short length of each episode of the animation, which is less than a minute, indicates sensitivity to the low level of cognitive abilities of children. Due to the emphasis on one proverb in each episode along with the use of clear but evocative images, the project avoids the risk of information overload and allows the learners to focus on the main lesson without being distracted.

It is also vital how *Aworan Owe* promotes active processing. The animations use common things, animals, and daily situations that enable children to relate the proverbs to what they live. As an example, the proverb *Esin iwaju ni teyin n wo sare* (Followers take a cue of leaders) is presented in an imagery that makes the lesson easily relatable to children who will be challenged to contemplate about matters of leadership and behaviour within situations they can relate to. The project allows children to engage in the process of interpretation, which helps them not to be passive recipients of information but active participants in its perception, including cultural knowledge in their vision of the world. The emotional connection is further

boosted by the use of bright colours, playful graphics and culturally identifiable images, which has been proven as an important aspect of enhancing memory and long term retention.

The larger implication of using MLT to *Aworan Owe* is the fact that it shows the possibility of preserving indigenous knowledge systems in the context of globalized digital space. The theory was initially conceived by Mayer in the Western teaching and learning environment, but its concepts are flexible and very applicable in the African cultural teaching and learning. *Aworan Owe* combines MLT and Yoruba oral traditions, thus filling the gap between international educational research and local culture requirements. It demonstrates that multimedia learning theories are not culture specific but can be localized to deal with emerging problems like cultural erosion and generation gap. Through this, the theory does not only contribute to the pedagogical design of the project but also justifies the project as a viable method of preserving culture.

Aworan Owe is crucial in terms of its design and implementation based on Multimedia Learning Theory. The fundamental assumptions presented in it which include dual-channel processing, limited capacity, and active learning can be observed in the project of delivering proverbs in the form of short animations, bilingual captions, and visually appealing illustrations. The theory is firmly positioned to meet the goal of the project of making Yoruba proverbs accessible and meaningful to younger audiences by being close to the mental processes and online habits of children. Finally, MLT highlights the significance of design in cultural learning, demonstrating how the traditional wisdom can be successfully passed in the era of digital learning when education is more and more mediated by the multimedia platforms.

Rationale behind *Aworan Owe* (Proverbs in pictures)

Aworan Owe is a specially devised social media content for children between the ages of 5-12. It is an illustrated concept of edutainment (education and entertainment) devised to teach Yoruba proverbs to children. The inspiration to embark on this experiment is born out of the quest to constantly connect or reconnect children to their culture. The human race is presently at a phase where native language, cultural practices are going into extinction. With migration, many languages have become greatly endangered, especially with the shift from indigenous languages and emphasis on learning other languages, which are socially or economically advantageous. Fart (2014) reiterates that language extinction takes place at a faster pace than language evolution, which takes place at a slow pace.

Yoruba proverbs are spoken in the south-west states of Nigeria, with varying dialects spoken by different communities. The Yoruba ethnic group constitutes 30% of the Nigerian population and is the second biggest ethnic group among the three major groups in Nigeria (Akinkulere, 2018). Apart from being spoken in Nigeria, the Yoruba language is spoken in West Africa, especially in neighbouring countries such as Togo, the Republic of Benin, and also in the Diaspora in Cuba, Brazil, and the Caribbean (Akinkulere, 2018). It is, however, disheartening that most young children and youths cannot speak the Yoruba language. By so doing, a large part of the Yoruba language is gradually being eroded. Without language, communication becomes impossible. Yoruba cultural beliefs, customs, traditions, ideologies, and norms are fast disappearing, too. Cultural transmission is impeded due to the inability of children to comprehend, express speak the language. Without spoken language, future generations lose vital components of cultural heritage. A cogent reason for the decline of the spoken Yoruba language among children is the inability

of parents to train their children to speak the language due to man-made causes. Other factors such as non-availability of Yoruba teachers, Japa syndrome (migration), the prevalence of English language, the diverse entities in Nigeria, and the perceived locality of the language. These are some of the factors that necessitated the social media content of '*Aworan Owe*'.

***Aworan Owe* as a social media content for Children**

Aworan Owe is a well thought out online project that converts the Yoruba proverbs into formats that are appealing to children. As the name suggests, it gives proverbs (owe) in pictorial or animated form (aworan) that are more attractive to the younger generations and it is a combination of culture and fun. The project was developed as an extension of a broader plan to retain Yoruba cultural heritage amidst globalization and digital oversaturation, and it went online in April 2025. In essence, the production is a groundbreaking experiment in cultural pedagogy, as it strategically uses the influence of social media to bring the show to the very place that children already devote a lot of their time.

Aworan Owe design starts by identifying the Yoruba proverbs of cultural significance, which are then translated into stories of illustrations. These proverbs are taken out of the rich source of Yoruba oral tradition, which holds moral lessons, social advice and philosophical thoughts. Every proverb is being chosen not only because of the cultural significance but also because it is easy to visualize and comprehend by a child. The chosen proverbs will be translated into graphical images and simple animated videos, which will describe the wisdom behind the saying in the form that would appeal to the whimsical interest of children.

The episodes are specially designed to be short (one minute or shorter), as it is known that children have low attention spans and prefer short-form content, a trend that is popularized by such applications as TikTok, YouTube Shorts, and Instagram Reels. Although the episodes are short, they are purposefully pedagogical. It starts with a theme song that underlines the significance of proverbs in the Yoruba culture, and this forms an aural reference point to remind the viewer that the episode is not only cultural but also educative. Right after the song, the series title *Aworan Owe* is shown, which strengthens the brand recognition of the series and reminds the children that they are participating in a special cultural learning process.

The visual format of every episode is the same and helps to recognize and understand it. To begin with, the proverb under consideration is presented at the top of the screen in the original, Yoruba, and the children will be exposed to the language in its original form. At the bottom of the drawing, the contextual meaning or translation is written in English so that even people who know little Yoruba will comprehend the message. This bilingual approach has two functions: it supports Yoruba linguistic identity and at the same time appeals to a wider international audience of children who might feel comfortable in English. Notably, the design does not feature spoken narration, but it is based on the use of text, visuals, and animation to make meaning. This decision is relevant to the current trends in the digital media of children, where visual narrative can be stronger than the verbal one.

The animations are also very lively and creative, using bold colours, basic shapes, and familiar images that kids can relate to, as a way to pull them into the plot. As an example, the proverb *Esin iwaju ni teyin n wo sare* (Followers take a cue from leaders) can be acted out by a group of animals running one after another with the leader being the first to move and the others following its motion. This illustration

turns the wisdom of the proverb into a tangible, easy-to-remember lesson that children can easily accept. Likewise, the proverb *Eni to sin si koto, ko ara iyoku l o gbon* (It is wise to learn with the mistakes of other people) can be depicted by means of a humorous but educative scene, when one of the characters falls into a pit and the rest circumvent it with great care. In both instances, the animation is not just used to decorate the proverb but actually to teach the moral lesson by the visualization of metaphors.

The other notable aspect of *Aworan Owe* is the strategic social media distribution. The episodes are posted on the site (boabpurplearts) and passed broadly through many platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram. Such decisions are not accidental because all of these platforms have their distinctions in terms of engaging children. YouTube offers a convenient archive in which episodes could be watched again and again, which is an important aspect of strengthening memory. Sharing, comments, and community interaction are possible through Instagram and Facebook, which makes parents and educators engage in discourse about the material. WhatsApp is less public, but it can be a convenient way to distribute episodes in trusted groups of parents, teachers, or community groups. Through the affordances of such platforms, *Aworan Owe* guarantees the spread of its content to a large number of children in a variety of contexts.

The other design strategy is the lack of spoken words in *Aworan Owe*. The project does not depend on the narration; it focuses on the universality of visual communication. Such a decision renders the episodes not only to the Yoruba-speaking children but to the other children who are not part of the linguistic group but can still get the meaning of what is happening by the illustrations and the English translations. It is also in tune with the increasing desire of children to image based content that does not require much explanation. With the use of pictures and animations, *Aworan Owe* is able to turn proverbs into lessons that can be communicated to everyone regardless of language and still able to assert Yoruba cultural identity.

Aworan Owe is more than entertainment as it positions itself as an educational intervention. The project aims to combat the diminishing of the Yoruba language among children who are exposed to an English dominated environment as many of them grow up. It reintroduces children to the mother language in a soft manner by exposing them to proverbs in both Yoruba and English hence building their bilingual competence. Besides this, the focus on moral teachings that are contained in the proverbs is consistent with the larger aim of character education, which fosters values of respect, responsibility, wisdom, and community.

Below are examples of the proverbs used for the research.

1. *Esin iwaju ni teyin n wo sare*
Meaning: Followers take a cue from leaders
2. *Eni to jin si koto, ko ara iyoku l'ogbon*
Meaning: It is right to learn from other people's mistakes
3. *Ti a ko ba t'ori isu je epo, a ot'ori epo je isu*
Meaning: Actions are interconnected and must be properly considered before making decisions
4. *Owo omode o to pepe, tagba lagba o wo akeregbe*
Everyone is relevant in the scheme of events
5. *Agba kii wa loja, k'ori omo titun owo.*

Meaning: An adult is not expected to remain inactive while things get out of hand.

Design Elements in *Aworan Owe*

The production and success of *Aworan Owe* is based on design because the project does not merely consist of reproducing the Yoruba proverbs but rather redesigning them to the extent that they can be perceived by children in a way that does not interfere with their sensibilities and learning styles. Because children are the main target group, all the design choices were based on a child-centered approach, which takes into account cognitive, emotional and aesthetic needs of the child. This material did not only aim to entertain but also to learn about culture, learn a new language, and create principles. In order to realize this, the project used several purposeful design approaches which in combination amplified its educational and cultural effects.

The use of bright colours is one of the most conspicuous features of *Aworan Owe*. Studies of visual perception in children are uniform in their findings that children are attracted to bright and contrasting colors that evoke attention and emotional response. The use of a broad range of colours used in the animations made the images look fresh, joyful and instantly attractive to children. The variety was achieved with the help of a number of shades and tones, and monotony was avoided because every episode was left fresh and exciting. As an example, human characters in the visuals were portrayed in various colours of hues and clothing colour, and backgrounds usually contained contrasting landscapes. This strategic application of colour did not only draw attention, but also assisted the kids in distinguishing between items within the drawings, thus making it easier to understand. The choice of brightness and contrast prioritizations made the design match with the visual preferences of children and strengthened their ability to stay focused on the learning material.

The visual storytelling was also a major component in the design of *Aworan Owe*. As opposed to abstract verbal explanations, visual storytelling transferred the metaphors of Yoruba proverbs into real, relatable situations. In both animations, scenery, objects, and characters were used to tell the proverb in action, so the lesson behind it becomes tangible. As an example, to explain the proverb *Eni to sin si koto, ko ara iyoku l ogbon* (It is wise to learn from other people mistakes), the animation may depict one of the characters falling to a pit and others avoiding it. This type of imagery conveys the moral of the proverb better than spoken words alone, and in particular to children who do not yet have well defined abstract reasoning capabilities. Through this, visual storytelling was used to bridge the gap between the traditional wisdom and the cognitive development of children to make sure that proverbs were not only read but felt.

The other noteworthy design decision was the use of humorous graphics. Learning in children involves playfulness since it makes the education content an enjoyable process as opposed to an activity. The art of *Aworan Owe* used exaggerated facial expressions, comic situations, and fantasy designs of characters that fit into the cultural background of the proverbs as well as being attractive to the children in the aspect of fun. This playfulness was not frivolous but educationally calculated: the more children like what they see, the more they will look and listen and remember and use it later in a practical situation. Presenting moral teachings in a form of play, *Aworan Owe* managed to teach serious cultural knowledge and, at the same time, not to take it away.

The other characteristic of the design philosophy was simplicity. The drawings were not complicated and instead of being abstract, they displayed objects, animals, and human beings in their realistic but easily identifiable features. This way, children could easily distinguish the elements of the visuals without any confusion and this is the key to successful learning. Designs can be too complex or abstract to the point of overwhelming the working memory of children and the simplicity of *Aworan Owe* meant that there was less to distract the reader and keep them focused on the message of the proverb. The visuals were also clear which helped to encourage inclusivity since the children with various learning abilities could easily access the material. Simplicity, in turn, served as an aesthetic and pedagogical approach, which guaranteed its accessibility and understanding on the part of the broad range of young audiences.

Although they were based on contrast and simplicity, the designs of *Aworan Owe* still had a high level of harmony. The colours, figures, and the story were well balanced to fit in each other, and yielded the images that were not only pretty to the sight but also informative. Design harmony made sure that the content was not aesthetically displeasing but rather pleasant to the eye which is a crucial element in maintaining attention in the long term. The use of contrasting colours to bring out certain aspects was also done in a manner that brought balance and not confusion. This balance was a reflection of the balanced world view of Yoruba proverbs themselves which tend to emphasize equilibrium, moderation, and coexistence as values to live by. The series incorporated harmony in the design and it also echoed the cultural spirit of Yoruba wisdom besides offering children learning experiences that were coherent in visual terms.

Collectively, these design principles show how *Aworan Owe* applied child-friendly principles to convert Yoruba proverbs into interactive digital media. The use of bright colours attracted children, the visual narrative made abstract lessons tangible, graphical elements created fun, simplicity made them clear and inclusive, and harmony created coherence and balance. What was more important, all these elements interacted with each other to provide the immersive experience that was not only interesting but also educative in terms of cultural knowledge. The project in the process showed that design is not a decorative element but it is part of pedagogy and cultural preservation. Through purposeful use of these measures *Aworan Owe* managed to close the gap between the traditional proverbs and modern children and make Yoruba wisdom not only applicable but also enjoyable in the digital era.

Cultural Relevance of *Aworan Owe* to Young Audience

The cultural significance of *Aworan Owe* is that it is able to integrate Yoruba children with their cultural history and at the same time instill within them the skills and worldview required to succeed in a multicultural and digital world. Turning the Yoruba proverbs into graphically appealing children stories, the project is not just entertaining it also reinvigorates the cultural values and gives a stronger sense of identity. Its applicability is reflected in various ways, including the development of language proficiency, enhancing identity and fostering intercultural knowledge.

The contribution of *Aworan Owe* is one of the most significant ones as it helps to develop language competence. Like most native African languages, the Yoruba language is threatened with extinction due to the increasing use of English and other dominant languages in school, media, and family communication. Children are becoming more and more alienated to their mother tongues, and they may not have the vocabulary and/or fluency to adequately communicate in their mother tongues.

Through the introduction of proverbs in the Yoruba language, and English translation, *Aworan Owe* reminds the children about their ancestral language in a realistic, fun manner. The fact that written Yoruba words are repeated in the form of memorable proverbs contributes to recognition and understanding. This bi-lingual structure does not only help the Yoruba children to reconnect to their native language but also helps to learn the language by the non Yoruba readers hence bringing Yoruba closer to the people. In this way *Aworan Owe* helps preserve language and, at the same time, gives children the ability to communicate in two languages, a valuable skill in the globalized world.

The project, in addition to the language, enhances ethnic identity of the students as Yorubas. Proverbs are not only linguistic expressions but repositories of cultural philosophy, moral teaching and historical memory. As children learn these proverbs in an interesting visual manner, they remind themselves of their origins and their values which constitute their community. This is especially needed in the era when most children are alienated to cultural practices through urbanization, migration and global media. Through *Aworan Owe*, children learn proverbs and thus internalize wisdom of their ancestors and learn to be proud of their heritage. This identity is a stabilizing force, it defines their self-concept, and helps them make sense of all the complexity of the modern world and stay strongly connected to their cultural roots.

Aworan Owe also creates a feeling of belonging in a society. The Yoruba people have a traditional way of using proverbs in group situations like familial gatherings, societal rituals, and informal lessons. The project recreates that feeling of common learning in the online environment by resurrecting these proverbs in a digital form. Not only do children learn through the content, but they also get to interact with a broader network of Yoruba users and cultural faithfuls around the globe. This community aspect is particularly relevant to children with the diaspora that could feel alienated to the mother country. They are able to have access to cultural resources through *Aworan Owe* that validates their belonging in a larger Yoruba identity thus fostering social cohesion and belonging.

Moreover, the project provides children with new insights that break the assumptions and stereotypes. Proverbs can be very sophisticated in their worldview, emphasizing respect to the elderly, the value of diligence, or the interrelation of deeds and their consequences. When given in the form of visual narratives, these proverbs make children think critically about their day-to-day lives and relationships. Such as, a proverb on leadership or responsibility would teach the children to doubt the assumptions of authority and to recognize the value of role models. By doing so, *Aworan Owe* does not just teach facts about the culture; it trains critical thinking and ethical thinking. Experiencing proverbs in fun but provocative manners, children learn to challenge the stereotypes and to reconsider the established norms, not only in their own culture but also in comparison with other cultures.

Lastly, *Aworan Owe* enhances cultural competence in children by training them to socialize with individuals of different identity groups without any inhibition. Living in a multicultural world, one cannot do without the skill of appreciation and respect of other cultures. With *Aworan Owe*, Yoruba children are able to get familiar with their cultural heritage and thus have more confidence to share that with other people. Meanwhile, non-Yoruba children who come across the animations would be exposed to another worldview, which makes them sensitive and appreciate cultural diversity. This inclusivity is further promoted by the bilingual nature of the presentation of the proverbs whereby, cross cultural audiences are able to access

and enjoy Yoruba wisdom. In this way, *Aworan Owe* is perceived as the cultural bridge, because it allows the groups to communicate with each other and fosters the appreciation of diversity. Children are taught to appreciate their own customs and learn to appreciate the beauty of the customs of others, a sentiment that is essential to peaceful coexistence in the globalized society.

Aworan Owe has a much wider cultural context than that of children amusement. It is a pedagogical device that develops Yoruba language proficiency, ethnic identity, a sense of belonging, critical thinking and intercultural awareness. The project will make it so that Yoruba proverbs are alive and meaningful to children, by framing cultural wisdom in a form that digital natives can relate to. By so doing, it shows how cultural traditions can be modified to fit on new platforms in a reasonable manner and still remain relevant and help to influence future generations.

Conclusion

This paper has shown that *Aworan Owe* is not just a creative experiment in digital entertainment of children, but a conscious cultural and pedagogical intervention that would preserve the proverbs of Yoruba, and pass it to younger generations in a manner that is relevant to their learning patterns. The project is a response to the globalization, technological developments and the increased loss of indigenous languages, especially Yoruba among children and youths. Through the use of design as a key instrument, the study has demonstrated that it is feasible to maintain the cultural heritage and at the same time transform it to fit in the modern platforms.

In the discussion, it was established that children are digital natives who learn and pay attention to short, visually appealing information on social media. The conventional oral methods of instruction of proverbs, which was strong in the olden times, are losing ground in the modern media-saturated world. *Aworan Owe* closes this gap by incorporating the traditional Yoruba knowledge into contemporary design concepts that include use of bright colours, visual storytelling, playful graphics, simplicity and harmony. Such design measures were well applied in order to attract the attention of children, maintain interest and cognitive retention of the lessons incorporated in proverbs.

The fact that the project was based on the Multimedia Learning Theory developed by Mayer was a way of reinforcing the fact that children learn more when multimedia design is made to suit their cognitive abilities. The use of the MLT principles, i.e. the dual-channel processing, the limited capacity, and the active learning made the episodes not only interesting but also pedagogically effective. This theoretical congruency makes the educational value of *Aworan Owe* more credible as opposed to it being a kind of cultural entertainment.

Additionally, it is impossible to overestimate the cultural importance of the project. Using proverbs in Yoruba and English, *Aworan Owe* fosters language competence and cultivates bilingualism in children by reintroducing proverbs to the child. It enhances ethnic identity in the Yoruba children, gives a feeling of belonging in cultural groups, and also gives room to critically analyse social values. It also promotes intercultural competence as the non-Yoruba children are able to access, appreciate and learn Yoruba wisdom. By doing so, the project not only establishes Yoruba proverbs as local assets, but also as global resources in moral, social and cultural learning.

Aworan Owe is an illustration of how design-as-strategy can be used as a powerful tool of cultural preservation and teaching in the era of digital culture. It poses a challenge to educators, custodians of culture and digital creators to view

social media not only as a threat to the traditional ways, but as an avenue of innovation. The project uses the immersive and participatory affordances of the digital platforms creatively and makes the Yoruba cultural identity remain lively and significant to the lives of the children in Nigeria, Africa, and the diaspora. The implications of the research are lessons to a larger body of knowledge on how indigenous knowledge systems can be maintained in the world that is fast becoming globalized and technologically mediated.

Recommendations

Teachers and children theatre professionals are advised to adopt design as a major aspect in the creation of culturally-based learning resources. The success of *Aworan Owe* shows that better chances of attracting the attention of children and reaching the educational goals are content developed with regard to the cognitive and aesthetic needs of children. The work on child-friendly design principles (i.e., simplicity, playfulness, and visual storytelling) should hence become the focus of future projects when it comes to incorporating them into all kinds of cultural education.

Social media networks should be identified as important instruments of cultural transfer and not as learning interferences. The cultural educators and the content creators should take an initiative to create the high-quality educational content on the platforms where children spend much time, including YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp. Local creators need to work together in order to create content that builds on indigenous knowledge but in a professional, aesthetically pleasing and interactive form that children have come to expect on digital media, rather than compete with international entertainment brands.

It requires wider institutional and governmental backing of such projects as *Aworan Owe*. More educators and artists need funding, training, and infrastructure to be able to create digital cultural content, which should be provided by cultural policymakers, ministries of education and heritage organizations. This involves incorporating such programs in school curricula and the proverbs and other oral traditions can be taught in the classrooms as well as through the digital media available in households. This support by institutions will make sure that the cultural initiatives get out of experimental phases and become sustainable interventions.

Collaboration across disciplines should be encouraged. Cultural scholars, educators, linguists, animators, and designers can collaborate to come up with comprehensive methods of preserving cultures. Such richness as Yoruba proverbs can be supported when the linguists translate the proverbs correctly, designers make the visuals interesting, and educators match the content with the learning outcomes. This interdisciplinary work is culturally faithful and has a maximum educational impact.

Finally, continuous innovation and evaluation are necessary. Digital technologies are developing at a very fast pace, and preferences of young audiences are as well. Cultural educators should be adaptable, reflecting and refreshing content and trying new formats: augmented reality, gamification, or virtual storytelling. Meanwhile, the responses of children to the content should also be systematically assessed to guarantee the achievement of the learning goals and to make sure that cultural knowledge was successfully transferred.

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