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BENEFITS OF MOONLIGHT PLAY ON THE ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT OF PUPILS IN IREPODUN LOCAL GOVERNMENT OSUN STATE

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Abstract

This study centred on the influence of moonlight play on pupils' cognitive development in Irepodun Local Government Area of Osun State. The targeted populations are the pupils in the primary schools within the study area. Five (5) middle schools were selected and twenty (20) pupils were randomly selected from each school to make a total of 100 samples for this study. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, section A comprises respondents' demographic data. Section B comprises items on the influence of moonlight play on pupils' cognitive development. Frequency counts and percentages, mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the demographic data and research questions respectively. Independent t-test was used to test the hypotheses generated. The findings show that, moonlight play has positive influence on the cognitive development of pupils' in Irepodun Local Government Area of Osun State, pupils' cognitive development is influenced by moonlight play based on school type, (p -value < 0.05 ; $p = 0.000$) and there is no significant difference in the influence of moonlight play on pupils' cognitive development based on gender (p -value > 0.05 ; $p = 0.493$). It was recommended that, awareness campaign in promoting the use of folklore and folktales should be made to all primary school teachers and Osun State Universal Basic Education Board (OSUBEB) should make it compulsory that every Yoruba Language teacher in primary school has adequate knowledge of folktales and folklore. Possession of such knowledge could be used as one of the requirements for employment and promotion.

Key words: Moonlight play, cognitive development, moral development, play, folktales, folklores.

Introduction

Moonlight play forms part of the Yorùbá culture. This is the reason why different scholars, have at one time or the other, written on the significance of this Yorùbá cultural practice. Moonlight tale or folktale is of a very great value in the Yorùbá environ. It is an old practice transferred from one generation to another, among the Yorùbás. It is often practised during the moonlight period. Hence, there is the nomenclature "moonlight plays" (Akinyemi, 2004). The setting is always staged in front of the house or within a large compound. Children form the larger number of the audience because of their curiosity always. An elderly person, whether a man or a woman, normally tells the story. Although the setting always comprises and is inclusive of family members, people from the neighbourhood also form part of the listening audience.

Àlò is the most communal, domestic and democratic of Yorùbá verbal art forms. It is being told within the compound in the evening after work with the entire household present. All were entitled to tell a tale if they wished, even the youngest; and all were expected to support the others' performances by supplying a chorus to each of the songs. The moral values which are the issue in these stories are correspondingly those which make for harmonious communal living. Good neighbours, loyal friends and faithful wives are contrasted with tricksters, betrayers and deceivers. The important point is not so much that the *Àlò* are didactic, imparting values to the young, but that the ground and framework of every story are the values of everyday, ordinary human world. What is tested, experimented with and sometimes imaginatively abolished is the morality of communal living, based on common decency, humanity and generosity. (Akinyemi, 2004).

in telling the story, the narrator must be eloquent, versatile and must be able to carry his audience along in the story. Akinwemi (2004) buttressed this when he says: The enjoyment of Yorùbá moonlight stories is usually attributed to the ability of the storyteller to instantly create the stories as he narrates them. A story ends well when its inherent moral values become apparent to the audience. He must be able to tell the story in such a way that the listeners will understand the lesson inherent in it.

Moonlight tales are in two parts. One part is precluding the other. We have *Àlô-àpamô* (riddles) and *Àlô-àpamô* comes before *Àlô-àpaghè*. *Àlô-àpamô* is normally used to awaken and to arouse the interest of the listeners and make them ready for the story proper. It is also used to awaken and to arouse the intelligence of the audience. Olatunji (1984) cited in Akanni (2014) stated five functions served by *Àlô-àpaghè*.

They help in keeping the audience mentally awake before folktales are told.

They also serve some entertainment value before the folktale is told.

They exercise the intellect and wit of the audience.

They serve as instruction in social and material culture.

They serve as an escape mechanism for the repressions brought about by the sanctions of the Yorùbá society.

It is pertinent to say that *Àlô-àpamô* always tasks the intellect of the audience. Most of the answers to *Àlô-àpamô* are always hidden in the riddle itself. For example:

- *Pẹ tẹ rọ yò, Pẹ tẹ rọ bọ*; the answer is *àtẹ̀lẹ̀sẹ̀* (i.e. the sole of the foot). *Pẹ tẹ* sounds like referring to an object that looks flat. And when "*àtẹ̀lẹ̀sẹ̀*" is considered, it looks like a flat object.
- *Awẹ obi kan, Àjẹ r'ò yó àjẹ bọ*; The tongue which is the answer to the riddle looks like a lobe of kola nut.
- *Mò n r'ò yó, Mò 'kọju s'Ọyọ, Mò 'n t'ò yó bọ, Mò 'tún kọju s'Ọyọ* has the talking drum as its answer. The talking drum has two "faces" and there is no way it cannot be facing the same direction whether coming or going if each side of the drum is considered as a "face".

After some riddles have been given, the story teller now starts his story. Telling moonlight tales requires some protocol. The protocol, if not followed will show the narrator as either an eophyte or a novice. *Àlô* are always preceded by calling the audience into attention. The narrator does this by saying the following:

- Narrator: *Ààààlo oooo*
- Audience: *Ààààlo*
- Narrator: *Àlô mi da firigbagbó ó da lérí...* (Abiodun, 2010).

Having said this, the narrator goes into his story. In telling the story, the story-teller must be articulate, versatile and oratorical. Unlike *òwẹ* "proverb" in Yorùbá of which the giver will acknowledge the ancestors and or the elders (Abiodun, 2000). Nobody credits *Àlô* to anybody; either to the forefathers or progenitor. This in mind when he says: The *Àlô* (folktales) is clearly distinct from other prose forms. Its origin is unknown as it lays no definite claim to authorship. It professes a description of actual occurrences; but in fact, it is purely imaginative, mainly intended to entertain and instruct the audience. The narrator, in telling the story, delivers it as if he were a witness to the happening he is out to narrate. He does all this

in order to make his story impacting on the listeners. As mentioned earlier, a story may be intended to teach the audience the benefit of hard work; that whatever a person does, he will reap the reward whether sooner or later. For instance, a story that bothers on the gain of hard work is narrated thus: (Abiodun & Akanni, 2014).

Long time ago, there was a man who had two wives. The first wife was an energetic person. She was not an eye-service individual and would never look at anybody's face before she did her work. But the junior wife was a lazy individual. She was an indolent person. She had energy but she was not ready to work. Their husband was a farmer. The two wives had children for their husband. This husband had a very big farm where he planted yams. Eventually the yams were to be harvested. He went to the farm, harvested the yams and gathered them in a barn. He thereafter told his wives to go and carry the yams from the farm to the village. They all agreed to go. However, the second wife did not leave for the farm on time. It was after the first wife and her two children had gone and come for about three times before the second wife took off.

She did not go for more than three times before she stopped and started making jest of the other wife. "I cannot kill myself, leave her let her continue to labour. If our husband wants to bring his yams from the farm, let him go and hire labourers", she started saying. All this did not deter the first wife from continuing with the work. The senior wife continued on the job until darkness fell. In the evening, the husband called the two wives and announced to them that the quantity of yams each of them had carried for the day belonged to them. On hearing this, the junior wife burst into crying and wept her heart out. But the deed had been done.

The moral lesson in this *A/ô* gives credence to hard work and diligence. It tells both the young and the old to be up and doing in what they set out to do. And that sooner or later, reward will come. It also brings out the fact that we should not look at others in setting a standard for ourselves. We should always be prepared to do what we believe is the right thing to do. Apart from this, the story also teaches that whatever we do will surely be rewarded. Those who labour tirelessly will receive the reward for it and those who do otherwise will also get theirs. All these lessons are tailored towards building the moral and cognitive development of the child.

At times, as said earlier in (Akanni, 2014), moonlight tale may be narrated in such a way that song may accompany it. When song is introduced, it serves two major purposes; one is to allow the audience to be alert. Since moonlight tales are given in the evening time, especially after the day's work and when everybody must have eaten, there may be tendency for the listeners to want to fall asleep. But when they are asked to sing the chorus of the song introduced midway in the story, whoever had already started to doze off would wake up and follow the trend of the story. Secondly, it enables the listeners the opportunity to contribute to the activity; if only through the song they sing (Abiodun, 2010).

Considering the foregoing, it will be observed that there are crucial lessons that could enhance the peaceful co-existence of people living within a community. If the lessons are imbibed, the world will be a harmonious place to live in. if this assertion is true, it is therefore imperative that folktales should be put in the curriculum of students both in the primary and secondary schools. Just as religious instructions are given to the students in schools for the purpose of inculcating the fear of God in them, so also, we believe that

...are part of what the pupils have to be taught in schools, it will go a long way in inculcating... and morality in the youth and develop them mentally. It is a known fact that all the immoral... young children are known within this present age are due to lack of moral discipline. If... tales are put in the curriculum of schools, these will be used in instilling moral and cultural... in our children. This fact is noted by Moser (2007) when she said: Traditional folktales play an... educational role in African societies. They express cultural values through metaphorical... and they contain covert meanings and messages that are both amusing and thought provoking.

Purpose of the Study

The major rationale of this study is to investigate the influence of moonlight play on pupils' cognitive development. Specifically, the study intends to examine the influence of moonlight play on pupils' cognitive development in Irepodun Local Government Area, Osun State. Based on these, one research question and two hypotheses were generated.

Research Question

What is the influence of moonlight play on pupils' cognitive development in Irepodun Local Government Area, Osun State?

Hypothesis

- H_0 : There is no significant difference in pupils' opinion on the influence of moonlight play on their cognitive development based on their gender.
- H_0 : There is no significant difference in the influence of moonlight play on pupils' cognitive development based on the school type.

Methodology

A descriptive sample survey was adopted for this study. According to Gay (1987), the descriptive sample survey involves collecting data in order to test hypothesis or to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of study. The descriptive sample survey has also been recommended by Babbie, (2001) for the purpose of generalising from a sample of a population so that references can be made about some characteristics, attributes or behaviour of the population. The aim of a survey is to obtain information which can be analysed and patterns extracted and comparisons made. Irepodun Local Government has 12 middle schools and 32 Elementary (SUBEB 2016). The targeted population of this study would be 5 middle schools in Irepodun Local government Area, of Osun State. The study also focused on middle school pupils (Primary five pupils), 20 pupils would be randomly selected from each school. Simple random sampling was used to select 100 participants in this study. The research instruments for this study were researchers' questionnaire. The instruments validated by both the experts in the field of test, measurement and evaluation and the researchers. All their corrections and suggestions were incorporated into the final copy of the instrument before proceeding to administration of the questionnaire. The instrument was subjected to reliability coefficient using test re-test method and the reliability coefficient obtained was 0.69.

Results

The results obtained from the statistical analysis of data were presented in this section to answer the research questions and testing of hypotheses generated in this study with the use of frequency counts and percentage and independent t-test. The data were run with Statistical Package for Social-Sciences (SPSS 22.0) window version.

Demographic Description of Respondents

This section describes demographic characteristics of the respondents using frequency counts and percentage. Out of 100 respondents that participated in this study, 45 were Male, while 55 were Females. 61 were public school pupils, while 39 were private school pupils; 10 were between the age of 7 – 9 years old, 76 were between the age of 10 – 12 years old, while 14 were above 12 years old.

Research Question: *What is the influence of moonlight play on pupils' cognitive development in Irepodun Local Government Area, Osun State?*

In order to answer this research question, mean of responses of the pupils to each item on the questionnaire that addressed the influence of moonlight play on pupils' cognitive development were calculated and 2.5 was used as cut-off because of the four (4) Likert response format of SA (4), A (3), D (2), SD (1). The output of the analysis reveals thus:

Table 1: Mean and Standard deviation Analysis showing the influence of moonlight play on pupils' cognitive development

S/N	ITEMS	X	SD
1.	Folktales or folklores are best used as part of methods of teaching.	3.61	.709
2.	Teachers tell folktales and folklores often in the classroom.	3.02	.953
3.	Pupils like to listen to folktales and folklores.	3.68	.601
4.	Pupils always pay attention whenever their teachers tell them folktales.	3.55	.821
5.	Folklores make pupils to think fast when questions are asked from them.	3.77	3.168
6.	Moonlight play always teaches pupils morals and the norms of their society.	3.68	.584
7.	Folktales build up pupils' thinking capacity.	3.52	.759
8.	Pupils' reasoning capability is built up through folktales and folklores.	3.35	.880
9.	Folktales make pupils to be talkative in the classroom.	2.69	1.152
10.	Folktales help pupils to check and correct their behaviour.	3.56	.770
11.	Moonlight play makes pupils to be too playful.	2.96	1.014
12.	Moonlight play helps pupils' performance in other subjects like mathematics, social studies and basic science.	3.08	.971
13.	The story in folktales makes the classroom boring especially when the story is too long.	3.00	1.101
14.	Folklores make pupils to be attentive when learning is taking place.	3.30	.948
15.	Folktales are full of fables and untrue stories.	2.75	1.067
16.	Moonlight play makes pupils to know what is right from what is wrong.	3.62	.736
17.	Folklores make pupils to reason and think independently.	3.55	.783
18.	Folktales might be time consuming if the story is too long.	3.22	.871
19.	Folktales teach pupils to be good citizens.	3.54	.858
20.	The classroom used to be too noisy whenever stories are being told.	2.87	1.089
Weighted Mean		3.32	

Table 1 reveals the influence of moonlight play on pupils' cognitive development in Irepodun Local Government Area, Osun State, this is evident by the mean value of all the items in the table (4) above, which are all greater than 2.5. The overall mean of 3.32 also indicates that moonlight play influences the cognitive development of pupils. It can therefore be deduced that, there is positive influence of moonlight play on pupils' cognitive development.

Hypotheses Testing

Two research hypotheses were postulated in the course of this study, and they were tested using the independent t-test at 0.05 alpha level.

H_{01} : There is no significant difference in pupils opinion on the influence of moonlight play on their cognitive development based on their gender.

In order to answer this research question, independent t-test of responses of the pupils to each item on the questionnaire enquiring the influence of moonlight play on pupils' cognitive development based on gender were calculated.

Table 2: Summary Table of independent t-test Analysis showing the influence of moonlight play on pupils' cognitive development based on gender.

Gender	N	X	SD	DF	Cal. value	P. value	Decision
Male	45	65.76	5.71	98	0.688	0.493	Accept
Female	55	66.86	6.82				

Table 2 shows that the p. value of 0.493 is greater than the significance level of 0.05, thus, the null hypothesis H_{01} which states that there is no significant difference in pupils' opinion on the influence of moonlight play on their cognitive development based on their gender is hereby accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference in pupils opinion on the influence of moonlight play on their cognitive development based on their gender.

H_{02} : What is the influence of moonlight play on pupils' cognitive development in Irepodun Local Government Area, Osun State based of gender?

In order to answer this research question, independent t-test of responses of the pupils to each item on the questionnaire enquiring the influence of moonlight play on pupils' cognitive development based on school type were calculated.

Table 3: Summary table of independent t-test Analysis showing the influence of moonlight play on pupils' cognitive development based on school type.

School Type	N	X	SD	DF	Cal. value	P. value	Decision
Public	61	68.60	6.936	98	3.853	0.000	Reject
Private	39	62.70	8.256				

Table 3 shows that the p. value of 0.000 is lesser than the significance level of 0.05, thus, the null hypothesis H_{01} which states that there is no significant difference in pupils' opinion on the influence of moonlight play on their cognitive development based on their school type is hereby rejected. Therefore, there is significant difference in pupils' opinion on the influence of moonlight play on their cognitive development based on their school type.

Discussion of findings

It is clear from the findings that, moonlight play has positive influence on the cognitive development of pupils in Irepodun Local Government Area of Osun State. This is evident with the weighted mean value of responses of the pupils to the items measuring the influence of moonlight play on their cognitive development greater than 2.5. It's also seen that the use of folktales and folklores in teaching is helpful in the classroom.

Findings also revealed that, Yoruba Language teachers in Irepodun Local Government Area of Osun State frequently use folktales and folklores during teaching-learning process. This is evident by the mean value of all the items used to test the usage of folktales and folklores among Yoruba Language teachers greater than 2.5. The grand mean value of 3.32 of the responses to the statement also indicates frequent use of folktales and folklores by the teachers who participated in this study. In addition, many Yoruba Language teachers use moonlight play to shape and correct ways of thinking of the pupils which brings about great development in their cognitive domain. This finding corroborates the submission of Amali (2014) that, there are lessons from folktales which teach the child to stand against vices such as stealing, rudeness, hatred, wickedness and dishonesty, and this brought about changing in their ways of thinking.

Findings also revealed it in Sesan (2014) as it was observed that: Folklore is a significant factor in the life of every pupil. A pupil's heritage includes the folk heritage of all the groups with which he is associated. In the pre-literate Yoruba societies, folktale narrators can therefore be seen as performers, socialisation agents, epitome of knowledge and experience, social commentators and teachers of moral. Combining all these roles, folktale narrators are highly respected by the children. This is to show that, folklore and folktales serve as a tool that can be used to shape and re-shape the life of pupils and the way they think. Findings also have it that, pupils' cognitive development is influenced by moonlight play based on school type, and this is justified by the (p -value < 0.05 ; $p = 0.000$). This means that, folktales and folklores are mostly used by the Yoruba Language teachers in public schools than Yoruba Language teachers in private schools.

Lastly, it is equally seen from the findings that, there is no significant difference on the influence of moonlight play on pupils' cognitive development based on their gender, and this is justified by the (p -value > 0.05 ; $p = 0.493$). This means that, gender has no influence on how pupils' cognitive level develops through moonlight play.

Conclusion

Through whatever medium the child accesses moonlight play, the lessons derivable from it are of important benefit in his educational training and upbringing. Furthermore, they learn of the traditional norms and values of their community. Education entails a systematic instruction for the development of character or mental powers. Moonlight play possesses educational potentials. (Adeyemi 1997) attested to this assertion by stating that moonlight play can be used to inculcate in the children of pre-school age virtues such as humility, gratitude, respect for elders and constituted authority, perseverance, conformity to societal norms, co-operation, hospitality, truthfulness, honesty, willingness to take advice, patriotism, courage, love, loyalty to one's fatherland, hard work and the fear of God. Yorùbá is rich in diverse cultures and these cultures are full of moral values, some of which are got from moonlight tales. If the young children are taught these moral values in schools, all the decadence we are witnessing today among the youth of our society will be minimised if not totally eradicated. In conclusion, moonlight play has positive influence on pupils' cognitive development in Irepodun Local Government Area of Osun State.

Recommendations
The following suggestions are hereby proffered if primary school teachers would have to be very effective in the use of folklores and folktales as a method of teaching.

1. Awareness campaign in promoting the use of folklores and folktales should be made to all primary school teachers.

2. Our culture and cultural practices can still survive the challenges of postmodernism through our strong political will and dogged determination. The attitude of Nigerians to their culture and cultural practices needs to be corrected.

3. There should be intense national re-orientation for Nigerians on the need for cultural renaissance. The culture of a nation identifies it among the community of nations. With this, Nigerians will show renewed interest in their culture and valuable cultural practices. Having done this, folklorists and literary experts should be encouraged to do a fresh reading (collection, analysis, transcription and storage) of folktales in Nigeria.

4. Osun State Universal Basic Education Board (OSUBEB) should make it compulsory that every Yoruba Language teacher in primary school has adequate knowledge of folktales and folklore. Possession of such knowledge could be used as one of the requirements for employment and promotion.

5. The folklorist should also work in collaboration with computer animation specialists for animation. This approach will create change in society. This opinion is given because Nigerians have cultivated a good watching culture. These animated folktales can become a veritable source of income for individuals and the government through exportation. *Tom and Jerry* and *The Lion King* are sorts of folktales in America. Today, in Nigeria, these animated folkloric stories are household means of entertainment among the Nigerian children.

6. Nigerians, therefore, need to respond to the opportunities offered by the facilities of computers. Computer technology has made animation very sophisticated and complicated and at the same time simplified, easier, faster and less expensive (Ogbonna 2011).

7. Literature curricular (in Yoruba Language) should be redesigned. There should be adequate consideration for Yoruba oral literature in the primary and secondary schools curricular of literature. This will ensure the continuity of the oral literary culture. We should appreciate what we have and preserve our culture for posterity.

8. This study has critically examined the nature of Yoruba folktales. It is discussed in the paper that Yoruba folktales are triangular in nature showing the relationship between the performer and the audience. The paper is of the opinion that postmodernism is not the problem with the survival of Yoruba folktales but the problem is the inability of Nigerians to manage the challenges posed by postmodernism.

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