

Reinventing the Modeling of Moral Values in Children: Bibliotherapy To The Rescue

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ABSTRACT

Traditional storytelling is one of the methods used to teach youngsters about diverse societies' beliefs, morals, and culture, particularly in Africa. Africans have a rich storytelling culture since it is one of the social activities that adults engage children in during their free time. In the African context, storytelling is used to instil moral ideals in youngsters and to warn them about the consequences of bad behaviour in the community. Unfortunately, due to civilization, scientific advancements, and instruments, the culture of storytelling in African communities is progressively eroding. Moral values are eroding as a result of this culture's deterioration. As a result, many African societies are experiencing moral degradation today. Many children participate in unwholesome habits such as stealing, cheating, lying, yahoo plus, greed, bullying, abusive, dishonesty sexual promiscuity, and many more because they lack respect for their elders. Because the culture of storytelling is rapidly fading, there is a need to look at alternative approaches that may be used to impart moral values in African youngsters. As a result, this study looked into bibliotherapy as a possible alternative to traditional storytelling.

Keywords: Storytelling, Bibliotherapy, Moral values, Modelling, Children

INTRODUCTION

In many African communities today, there is an urgent need to combat the incidence of moral degeneration among children. Values and morals are eroding on a daily basis as a result of technology advancements and modernism eradicating the culture of traditional storytelling, which was used in the past to warn youngsters about or instruct them to refrain from unwholesome behavior. The culture of traditional storytelling is increasingly slipping away as more people become educated and move to the city, and children are daily exposed to various materials capable of robbing them of morals on various media. Traditional storytelling, particularly by moonlight, has been displaced by television, DVDs, games, and other forms of entertainment; also, many parents are so busy that they have little time to spend with their children (Nwakaego, 2016).

Meanwhile, many of the traditional African stories that were formerly passed down orally have been written down. There are also more stories in textual form that are designed to teach youngsters values and can be accessible for amusement and education of these children. Such literature could be used to reprove, correct, instruct, and model children in Africa in order to restore morals. In this study, bibliotherapy, or the use of books for soul healing, is offered as an alternative to storytelling for instilling moral values in youngsters and correcting those who are already engaged in various immoral acts. School librarians who are to act as Bibliotherapists must take on the task of restoring qualities to African children through the use of a wide range of children's literature available in the school library.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

CHILDREN'S MORALITY MODELLING AND TRADITIONAL STORYTELLING

Children all around the world are enthralled by stories, and there is a method that stories may capture and hold their attention for an extended period of time. Storytelling, according to Painter (1997), is the practice of retelling a genuine or fabricated experience or experiences in order to educate or entertain. Storytelling can be used to teach morality and pass on cultural values in an educational setting. Because they engage children's hidden abilities and develop positive behavior in them, storytelling has become a veritable instrument that has been used for therapeutic purposes among children long before the emergence of modernity. Traditional storytelling has been utilized to instill moral values in children from generation to generation, as well as to treat youngsters with negative morals. Traditional storytelling differs from story reading in that the stories are told orally and not read from a book as in story reading.

According to Miller (2011), storytelling not only entertains listeners but also adds purpose to human life by sharing experiences and expressing values that listeners are intended to internalize. It also imparts moral lessons to both adults and children, as well as transmitting a people's culture from generation to generation. These tales are conveyed in a creative manner, with music, dance, and action demonstrations frequently included. According to Friedberg (1994), the action in storytelling conveys important information about children's emotional functioning while also instilling psychological truths. According to Rahim and Rahiem (2012), stories are frequently presented to teach a people's customs and traditions, as well as religious, cultural, and health values. Thambu (2017) claims that storytelling as an interaction between the teller and the listener allows children to develop social skills, confidence, an appreciative attitude, and respect for others.

Stories are therapeutic because they are used to treat a specific problem in children by allowing the child to identify with a character in the story who has a similar condition. The youngster may gain consolation, inspiration, and encouragement as a result of the identification in order to overcome the problem or take a different path in life. Storytelling has been used to model behavior at various times and has consistently produced favorable results. The effectiveness of storytelling in reducing non-compliance and anger control difficulties in children was explored in a study by Painter (1997). According to the findings, narrative is effective in lowering both issues. This confirmed a long-held African belief and observation that storytelling is an effective way to model desired behavior in

youngsters. Friedberg (1994) used storytelling to help a youngster with self-efficacy and fear of independence; the child's self-efficacy and fear of independence improved, and he was able to overcome both challenges.

In a separate study, Liu (2017) looked at the use of storytelling from the perspective of a psychological counsellor, and the results showed that storytelling is regarded as a viable strategy for assisting children who are resistive to psychological counseling. It can be argued that storytelling is appropriate since it is amusing, allowing the youngster to relax and not feel judged because he or she can project himself into the story's character and empathize with him or her. The youngster will be able to empathize with the narrative's character as a result of this, and may consider mimicking the character in the story by performing similar actions to get the desired result. Carlson and Arthur (1999) also pointed out that the successful use of storytelling for behavioural modification in children might be assessed as having elicited a positive response in children if the child exhibits delight in listening to the story on a regular basis. According to the researcher, a youngster's request to be read a specific story from time to time indicates that the child has identified with the narrative's character and that the story has been beneficial to him.

Storytelling has proven to be successful in training youngsters and instilling social wellbeing in them, which may prepare them to be active participants in their community's affairs. Storytelling is mostly employed as an instructional tool rather than as therapy in traditional African communities. Through storytelling, children are taught the moral principles that are acceptable in society and are warned about the repercussions of indulging in improper behavior. Children are taught to ingest virtue and despise vices through the use of storytelling, to put it another way. This isn't to suggest that storytelling isn't employed for therapeutic purposes in the African community; when a youngster is observed engaging in undesirable behavior, an elder summons the child and tells him or her a story on how to deal with the situation. The child's attention is also drawn to the negative consequences of such behavior, which are typically unpleasant. Storytelling in traditional African communities takes the form of folklore since it includes songs, proverbs, and poems in addition to spoken words.

In most stories, both human and animal characters are depicted, and they are intended to highlight many vices in society, such as dishonesty, sloth, pride, indulgence, greed, and so on. Children are also taught diverse qualities through narrative, which helps to balance the curriculum (Amali, 2014). Ijapa is a common animal figure in African legends, particularly among Nigeria's Yoruba socio-cultural group (tortoise). In several of the legends, this animal is described as clever, self-centered, lethargic, haughty, and unforgiving. Ijapa, according to Ikoye (2011), always depicts evil forces and negative behavior that must be faced, denounced, and kept in check in society. "The tortoise and the birds" is one of Ijapa's (tortoise) fables that depicts the evil of avarice and self-centeredness. The animals of the animal kingdom were invited to a festival in heaven, according to the narrative. When Ijapa learned of the information, he begged the birds to take him along, and they eventually agreed.

However, the tortoise, being a smart animal, planned how he would be the one to devour all they would be given at the festival before they left the land. He advised the birds that they should each take on a new name that they would respond to when they arrived at the festival. He addressed some of the birds as "you," "them," and "them," while addressing himself as "all of you." Ijapa was the only one that ate and drank all of the food and liquids that the animals were provided when they arrived in paradise on the day of the festival. He was always the first to ask their

host who the drink or food given to the animals was for, and the host always replied, "all of you." So he'd turn to the birds and say, "You heard the host say the food is for him because he's the one who adopted the name "all of you," referring to the birds. The animals' hosts believed the birds refused to eat, but by the end of the celebration, Ijapa had consumed so much food that he could barely move.

When the birds and tortoise were ready to return to earth, the bird that had brought him to heaven refused to bring him back because the birds were upset with him for misleading them into adopting names. The birds later decided to return Ijapa to the ground; however, the birds had a plan that he was unaware of. As the birds said their goodbyes, Ijapa was brought back to earth by the large bird that had carried him to heaven. As the birds approached the ground, she veered violently, causing Ijapa, who was already heavy from the foods and liquids he consumed on his own, to get exhausted and sleepy, and fall off the giant bird easily. He fell on a stony area, which caused his shell to break and disperse all over the ground. It took the intervention of a native doctor to bring him back to life and reassemble the shell.

In the meantime, the shell could not be restored because some sections were missing. This is how Ijapa's polished shell was shattered by greed and self-centeredness. Because the tortoise was eating and drinking alone at the time, he did not consider how he would return home, the story demonstrated how hunger in a human may blind them from logic. It also showed Ijapa's damaged shell as a permanent result of avarice. When youngsters hear such stories, they are frequently afraid that something similar would happen to them, causing them to avoid any act of greed that could result in such irreversible loss. This story, along with many others, has been used to effectively educate children about the dangers of unwholesome behavior and characters. As a result, many children in African civilization would avoid displaying characters associated with the tortoise in order to avoid being compared to it. Children are then constantly reminded to be cautious in all they do, developing moral ideals in them.

Tuwe (2016) gave empirical evidence in support of the argument in a study on the job experiences of Africans living and working in New Zealand, in addition to the conventional evidence that storytelling is beneficial in establishing morality and resolving human vices. Storytelling, according to the researcher, is an useful and acceptable strategy for dealing with human experiences and issues. Ikyoive (2011) also used empirical evidence to back up the effectiveness of storytelling as a teaching and learning aid. Not only in children, but also in adults, storytelling has been proven to be an effective instructional tool for enhancing education and learning (Edosomwan and Peterson, 2016). Storytelling is also crucial for children's social development and well-being. Akanwa (2014), citing prior research, asserted that storytelling has a positive impact on children's emotional and moral development, as well as their social domains of integrity, honesty, and self-control, among others.

It is impossible to overestimate the power of storytelling in guiding children toward becoming morally upright members of society. The reason for this is that there are several benefits to human living and well-being, including assisting children in developing self-confidence, survival instinct, patriotism, and moral uprightness (Nwakaego, 2016). However, as stated by Adeyemi in Amali, the rich legacy has been undermined by the arrival of Europeans and the adoption of their culture into Nigeria (2014). Traditional African civilization has suffered as a result of the loss of storytelling traditions due to Europeanization. Meanwhile, the same Europeanization has made children's

literature and reading more accessible. Because children's literature, when directed toward modeling children, has the same potential for instructional and therapeutic purposes as storytelling, it may be beneficial to African society to investigate Bibliotherapy as a modern alternative to storytelling, especially since many African societies have become urbanized.

AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO STORYTELLING, THERE IS BIBLIOTHERAPY.

The use of books for therapy may be traced all the way back to the first library in ancient Greece, but it became well known following World Wars I and II, when it was used on returning troops suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder (Shechtman, 2009). The use of books for developmental adjustment and growth is defined as bibliotherapy; it is also a process of interaction between a reader and literature aimed at personality assessment, adjustment, and growth (Eich, 1999; Harper, 2010). Meanwhile, there are two opposing perspectives on bibliotherapy: cognitive and affective bibliotherapy. Cognitive bibliotherapy advises the use of factual books for the process because the learning process is thought to be a primary strategy for transformation. As a result, cognitive bibliotherapy maintains that any educational material, written or unwritten, can be used for Bibliotherapy as long as it provides a learning opportunity (Shechtman, 2009). Affective Bibliotherapy, on the other hand, is based on the concept that only fictitious literature is presented in such a way that the reader becomes emotionally involved in the story, identifies with the characters, and gains insight into their difficulties as a result. The opposing viewpoint on bibliotherapy does not suggest that it is useless in the sense that the desired outcome is achieved regardless of the materials employed.

Bibliotherapy, such as storytelling, could be utilized as both preventive and remedial strategies in addressing both social and emotional problems in children, according to Mumbauer (2018); Rozalski, Stewart, and Miller (2010). The researchers also stated that bibliotherapy is used to assist youngsters who are dealing with difficult life circumstances and are unable to concentrate in the classroom. As one could assume, such youngsters would struggle in school, resulting in poor academic achievement and misconduct in the community. The usefulness of bibliotherapy in the treatment of emotional difficulties has been thoroughly explored, and it has been found to be effective in addressing issues such as anxiety, hostility, rage, grief, frustration, self-esteem, and sadness, which are sometimes side effects of other issues (Abilash and Jothimani, 2019). When compared to another sort of therapy, clinical therapy, Yuan (2018) found that bibliotherapy is more beneficial since patients have more privacy because the procedure does not require the therapist's regular intervention. Bibliotherapy, according to the study, also minimizes patients' exposure to stigmatization and loss of productive time, in addition to other benefits such as lower costs and less participation of a third party, which are connected with clinic visits.

Identification, catharsis, and insight are the three steps that individuals undergoing bibliotherapy will go through in the healing process. Humans, being emotional beings, frequently empathize with others in stressful situations, which is what happens during the identification stage. As the reader reads the book, which also confronts the same difficulty that the reader is facing, the reader will come to recognize himself in the book's characters and empathize with them (Rozalski, Stewart and Miller, 2010). As the reader recognizes himself in the book character, the feeling of being the only one going through such a tough time fades, and he realizes that he is not alone in this situation. This will lead to the catharsis stage, in which the reader will begin to release the emotion that has built up in him through tears, writing, sketching, music, conversing with a trusted individual, and any other means available to him.

After the client's emotions have been calmed, the client can proceed to the final stage, insight. At this point, the individual is composed and able to ruminate on the activities to take in order to experience behavioural change, which is the goal of Bibliotherapy (McKenna, Hevey and Martin, 2010).

Both preventive and remedial measures should be employed in bibliotherapy, just as they are in storytelling, for it to be an effective strategy for modeling good character in children. Many studies on bibliotherapy have concentrated on its use as a remedial solution to problems, but studying its use as a preventive approach, as advocated in this paper, is likely to offer superior results. This is because it would be more suitable to provide youngsters with adequate understanding of the various obstacles that man faces, as well as possible techniques for dealing with them without being traumatized. The use of bibliotherapy as a treatment for emotional and psychological problems in children has been documented in numerous research. Harper (2010) and Khalik (2017), for example, looked into the efficacy of bibliotherapy in resolving violent behavior in children with emotional and behavioral disorders. Bibliotherapy was shown to be a successful technique for attaining behavioral change in such youngsters by both of them.

If, as reported in various studies, bibliotherapy can help children with behavioural disorders change their behavior, it may also be able to prevent behavioural disorders if these children are exposed to literature that discourages activities that can lead to behavioural disorders in the first place. According to McPherson-Leitz (2018), bibliotherapy has been found to be useful in boosting self-confidence, emotional intelligence, social skills, self-development, coping abilities, a healthy attitude, and empathy. A previous study by Eich (1999) that showed the usefulness of Bibliotherapy in promoting personal and social development is also a confirmation. In a recent study by Sevinç (2019), the potency of Bibliotherapy as a preventive treatment for mental health was also demonstrated, with the researcher confirming the positive results observed in employing Bibliotherapy to address behavioral difficulties and emotional illnesses.

Because bibliotherapy is most effective when administered by a competent librarian, its usage as an alternative to storytelling is mostly dependent on the school librarian (Abilash and Jothimani, 2019). As a result, the school librarian must devote sufficient planning time to the execution of the book reading period in order to keep the children engaged in the tale being read. The school librarian should be well-versed in both cultural and psychological development of children in order to select books that will appeal to their emotions while also addressing their cultural value (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 2003). After understanding the children's cultural and psychological development needs, the school librarian must choose a suitable book that will promote the children's community's cultural virtues while also assisting their psychological growth.

The length of the book, the subject, the artwork in the book, the concept, the language, and the ability of the book to encourage audience involvement and emotionally connect the children could all be considered when choosing a book for Bibliotherapy sessions (Carroll, 2015). Whatever book is chosen must be motivating and teach virtues since children learn moral values by imitating the character in the story read in the book; moreover, such books foster empathy and community values by revealing the characteristics of moral and immoral characters (Narvaez,

2002). It is also anticipated that books used for moral instruction have stories that are relevant to the child's cultural background and are thought-provoking. The stories in these books should be simple to comprehend and relate to, with either a happy or negative ending so that children can learn from them.

The atmosphere should then represent the distinctiveness of African storytelling, which is communal, amusing, teaches morals, and satisfies curiosity, so that children remember the tale reading time for bibliotherapy. It should also reflect the rich African culture of sending messages, cautions, traditional beliefs, and culture through proverbs. According to Tuwe (2016), the strategy of repeating essential words, phrases, and lines used in storytelling to help children grasp the story and retain the lessons should be reproduced in story reading to achieve the same aim. Ikyoive (2011) also suggested that, just as the African storyteller must be skilled at bringing life to the story he tells in order to paint a picture of what he is saying in the minds of the listener, the story reader must be skilled at embedding life into the story as he reads in order for the story to leave a lasting memory in the minds of the children.

These tactics have the potential to not only instill moral principles in African youngsters, but also to promote the African people's rich cultural practices and customs. The usage of proverbs, a practice that is rapidly fading in many African societies, is one such method of instilling moral ideals in children. As a result, books of African origin, rich in proverbs and moral lessons, should be chosen for the bibliotherapy tale reading to revitalize this practice and restore moral values in African communities.

The school librarian should make a deliberate effort in their selection because doing so may not only result in the instillation of moral principles in the children, but it may also assist them in rediscovering who they are, so increasing their self-esteem. This is significant because, as Edosomwan (2016) points out, Western society has conditioned many children to regard African values and behaviors as antiquated and useless in today's world. To avoid a complete loss of African values, culture, customs, beliefs, and tradition, school librarians must intervene in the development and implementation of story reading sessions in school libraries to compensate for storytelling that is already dwindling. The exercise has the potential to keep African children morally upright and relevant in the development of their societies.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Psychodynamic theory, commonly known as Psychoanalytic theory, established the framework for the. Sigmund Freud proposed the theory first, although it was later extended and expanded by a number of other thinkers. The theory assumes that a person's behavior is driven by unconscious motivation, and that adult behavior and relationships are the product of childhood events (Vinney, 2019). Based on this hypothesis, it is possible to infer that varied experiences offered in Bibliotherapy stories can influence children's behavior. Children's exposure to various characters in stories may serve as an unconscious motivator to change their behavior. According to the hypothesis, the behavior acquired in childhood as a result of unconsciously driven characters in stories read to children predicts the behavior that the child will exhibit as an adult. Thus, if moral ideals are instilled in children through Bibliotherapy, it is likely that these values will be carried into adulthood. Another assumption of the theory is that people's mental understanding of themselves, other people, and relationships influences their social interactions

(Hossain, 2017). Based on this idea, it's possible that a youngster could identify with a character in a narrative and get a mental grasp of himself and others in his community through Bibliotherapy. This could aid the child in conforming his behavior to the norms and expectations of society.

CONCLUSION

This essay proposes bibliotherapy as a type of instruction rather than treatment to save African children and communities from moral degradation. This decadence appears to dominate the atmosphere as a result of a lack of effective moral precepts resulting from the vanishing storytelling culture brought about by urbanization and Europeanization of African communities. Because many parents are rarely accessible to read to or with their children, it is up to the school librarian to canvass for Bibliotherapy as a form of instruction. To this end, numerous ways for school librarians to examine in order to make tale reading effective as instructional bibliotherapy have been proposed. The school librarian is expected to take on the role of story reader, reading to the students and drawing their attention to moral teachings in the story. It may be tiresome for the school librarian to achieve success in this duty on her own; as a result, she must urge for teachers' and parents' cooperation so that success in restoring moral values to African communities may be documented.

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