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## Facts and Values of Traditional Cultural Art: The Implications for National Development

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### Abstract

The issue of traditional cultural arts is a global concern. Every society has cultural tradition that guides every stage of human life. Traditional societies from history have no formal and documented way of educating the citizenry other than through oral tradition, that is, the 'act for the arts'. The traditional arts- Music, from which emanate folk music, children play songs, and so on, drama, folktales, folklores, dance, proverbs (owe), communication mode and so on are the activities that traditional societies engage in for building the minds of the people. It is observed that in the recent times, the moral ethos imbibed via these traditional activities is being relegated. These have been exchanged for foreign culture. This paper explores into the facts and values of traditional cultural arts in order to examine the use and function of music and theatre in the development of the nation. The methodology adopted to carry out the research is the ethnography. Through the findings, useful suggestion that could retrieve and maintain these fading values would be proffered.

### Keywords

Facts, Values, traditional cultural arts, implication, national development

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## Introduction

African continent is made of about 54 countries of rich mixture of cultures, people of history, ideas and ideals, economy and of course nativity. Africa as a whole is not only rich in diverse cultures but from one society to another within the continent. The culture of every society or ethnic group is centered on individual, family, clan and community as the case may be. It is observed through music, oral tradition, oral literature and other arts peculiar to each ethnic group. However, culture is given diverse descriptions, definitions and interpretations from scholars' diverse experiences. Zimmermann (2012) defines culture as the characteristics of a particular group of people, defined by everything from language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts. Benedict, cited in Keesing and Keesing (1971) likens culture to an individual in having a more or less consistent pattern of thought and action, while Fisher (1986) describes culture as the ideas and behaviour people share as a result of being in more or less close contact and adding tools and technical know-how for dealing with their environment in the premise of cultural determinism. Keesing and Keesing (1971) also emphasize taking each culture as a separate universe of experience, values, and meanings, and examining it in its own terms because all cultures differ not only because one trait is present here and absent there, but more importantly because they are oriented as wholes in different directions. All culture behaviour is symbolic and each comes to have its own characteristics, purposes, emotional and intellectual mainspring, configurations and goals which pervade the behaviour and institutions of the societies concerned.

The Macmillan English Dictionary for advance learners defined fact as things that are true or that really happened, rather than things that are imaginary or not true. It is also used for talking about a situation that is real or true, especially when one wants to emphasize it. The question of value is a fact in to human activities. Every society has set of values, covering every aspect of human endeavor Kanu (n.d.). The societal values are the guiding principles for all the members. Every ethnic group in Africa, especially Nigeria has her own cultural values or values system which covers the whole endeavours of every member of the group, even when they are regroup into smaller units. It further controls the human relationship in order to stabilize the societal contents. The outlook of every individual reveals the extent of the understanding of value and culture systems of the society he or she belongs. On the other hand, in the literary, values is seen 'the degree to which someone or something is important or useful or something of particular interesting quality that something has'. However, in the context of culture, value has been described as 'the principles and beliefs that influence the behaviors and way of life of a particular group of community'. Talor cited by Farooq (2011) opines that Culture is that complex while including beliefs, art, religion, values, norms, ideas, law, taught, knowledge, custom and capabilities acquired by a man as a member of a society. Culture as heritage therefore is cherished by the practitioners having been born into it, survived through it and as well die in it. It is the attitude, beliefs, behaviours and actions that are cherished and acceptable standards of behaviour which each society expects that the members should abide by Awoniyi (2015:4). The main purpose for viewing cultural values as indispensable to man is that they play the role of appropriate placement, refinement and of course amendment of human life in order to be relevant at every level of society.

Reference to the present cultural levels of Nigerian societies, every individual or group of people from different backgrounds had already in one time or the other learned, shared, imbibed the transmitted culture and as well been integrated into the culture. In the course of growth, the above should have accumulated into making such individuals or group of people refined as the growth continues. In spite of the process through which cultural values (moral, religious, economic, political, aesthetic and social) are incorporated into Nigerians, over the years, there have been the agitation and clamour for invigorating and maintaining durable and lasting positive values Kanu (n.d. 149). This becomes necessary because the coming of the Europeans with the introduction of formal education and civilization brought about embracing their culture the expense of traditional norms and beliefs.

Suffice to highlight some of the learn values common to every ethnic group in the country irrespective of language or regional settlement. 1) Brotherhood affection which brings about recognition and belonging to a family, clan and community that have the same belief. 2) Communalism is a value that is much cherished by Africans. It expressed and appreciated in the common social life, caring for others, solidarity, communal obligations Awoniyi (2015). However, the existence of individualism could not be totally expunged from communities. People in the communities where it exists frown at this because it always allows for separation among relations and it breaks law and order, norms and values of the society. 3) Morality is highly esteemed in African traditional cultures. African societies are socially bound that hardly could any activity take place without community participation. In the light of this, there is no existence of non-individualistic morality. This kind of morality is held as enjoined by social life itself. There is a preoccupation with human well-being in the African moral thought and practice Awoniyi (2015). The efficacy of

character is stressed as it the core of moral life in the society. 4) Family in African society is an organized institution which 'living together' strengthens and cements cordiality and sense of belonging. This comprises of the father, mother, uncles, aunts, cousins and nieces though the African societies have no general definition for these like the Westerners. The family is the centre of education for every child born or adopted in Africa. From the age of one (1) to the age somebody is able to own a home as a man or to the time she is sent out in marriage as a woman, he or she is a child under tutelage. From the first age, such child begins to acquire education that would mold him or her for moral maturity. 5) Respect for authority and elders is one of the important characteristic features of Africans. The learning starts within one's immediate family with greeting pattern, communication mode and so on. This is with the believe that it would be reflected in the attitude of any member of the family outside.

In the recent time, it is observed that there existed pollution in the traditional values among Nigerian citizen or better still among the Nigerian youths. This is as a result of urbanization, civilization, and acculturation and of course ignorance in the part of the 'culture eunuch'. Gross moral decadence has taken over the lives of personnel in almost all government parastata and private organizations in the nation. It is reflective in their relationship and activities to the extent that, it seems difficult to control. This paper is focuses on the possible ways of rejuvenating the cultural facts and values that exist in traditional settings in order to re-orientate Nigerians through music, especially the children and youths (leaders of tomorrow) and preserve the already exiting integrity for nation building.

### **Basic traditional domestic activities that transform to moral**

When talking of about ethic or moral value, one referrer to the acquired discipline that deals the knowledge of good and bad, right and wrong and with moral duty and obligation. The home where person is born is also the first point of contact that forms the basis for learning. The domestic activities, interaction with people both within and outside one's community are sources of moral lesson. For example, parents that are properly cultured are the first teachers and hold the duty to give their children training. According to traditional Yoruba religion, it is the duty of parents to bring up their children ethically and in the knowledge of God.

Yoruba tradition stresses that the parents are the first teachers of their children, instructing them in the "proper" way of relating to their elders and people of the same age group. In the communal atmosphere of the traditional family, parents of children who behave in approved ways are approved as successful; parents whose children misbehave are shamed and advised to "put their houses in order". (The Yoruba family; 14)

Parents teach their children by sending them on errands and that they should report back to the parents with any gestures of others within and outside the home. Such errands educate children in some sequential instructions; carrying objects and relating to other members of the family in the neighborhood. It also teaches children social skills needed for verbal communications. The actualization of the errands is highly valued, because it gives opportunity to the child to relate and interact with others.

Furthermore, in Yoruba homes for example, disobedience, ignorance of what a child is expected to have been acquainted with, and failure of any kind attracts punishment. One major measure of punishment is flogging. Sometimes children are also exposed to hardship in order to be able to solve problems they are faced with by themselves. The punishments are aimed at making them realize mistake and make amends. It is also to prepare them for the capability of handling both human and material resources maturely. However, the punishment may look like harshness, hatred and maltreatment to the child at the time of training, later they realize the importance and appreciate their parents. Yoruba belief that any parents that gloss over their children's fundamental education with the pretense of not having time for them or over-pampering them would be blamed.

### **The concept of music in culture**

Music is found in every known culture, past and present, varying widely between times and places. All peoples of the world, including the most isolated tribal groups, have a form of music. Okafor (2005:88) claims that 'music is more integral with life in Africa and among Africans than it is in most other societies... In this respect, it is central to life in much the same way as is culture'. Agu (2011:16) notes that;

the power of music lies in its ability to evoke experiences and state of consciousness in people, ranging from exaltation to despair. Folk/traditional music in particular, arouses strong emotions than the pop and contemporary genres because of what it earns to the society in terms of human experiences derived from culture.

A culture's music is influenced by all other aspects of that culture, including social and economic organization and experience, climate, and access to technology. The emotions and ideas that music expresses, the situations in which music is played and listened to, and the attitudes toward music by players and composers all vary between regions and periods.

### **The fact and value of music in culture**

Music evokes strong emotion and changes state of awareness by communication. Societies with a musical culture may be better and able to survive because music coordinates their emotions, helps important messages to be communicated within the group (especially in ritual area); it also motivates them to identify with and support each other. Music is a fundamental vehicle for communicating beliefs, emotions, and goals. It has long been used by humans to articulate their emotions. Musical topics frequently mirror societal issues that manifest in the musicians' worldviews, their audience, and the geopolitical climate in which they find themselves (Ogunrinade, 2015:55).

Generally, the form of musical communication involves melodic, rhythmic and movement patterns as well as the communication of intention and meaning. Music of individual culture is capable of interpreting or being interpreted as articulating simple and complex propositions that may bear specific and unambiguous meanings (Cross and Woodruff, 2008). As a primary communicator of meaning and interpreter of emotional response in the direct and indirect speeches, language transacts with music in achieving a prescribed action in music performance. The drive includes vocal, instrumental, choreographic, poetic, symbolic and extra-musical languages (Nzewi, Anyahuru, and Ohiaurumunna, 2001:91).

However, in impacting in individuals the norms and values of African culture through traditional musical art, some characteristics features of music are put into consideration. This allows for cultural integration into societal systems.

1. African musical art has a participatory nature which gives opportunity to all members of the community at all occasions to be involved through the various contextual activities. In this regard, Willoughby (1996:166) affirm concerning African musical characteristics that 'traditional music still occupies a position of great importance in the cultures of black Africa, and it is an art in which nearly all Africans participate'.
2. It is closely connected with other performing arts. The performing arts range from vocal and instrumental music, dance and theatre to pantomime, sung verse and beyond UNESCO (n.d.). Music seems to be the most universal of the other arts being found as integral part of human culture; rites, festivals, oral tradition, socials, religion, having ability to recount community's history, sing the praise of political icons and so on.
3. Call and response in nature. This is one of the styles of African music performance. It is a community and contextual events where every member gathers to partake in the singing, drumming, dancing, hand clapping, finger popping, foot tapping as well as exhibit the emotional feeling physically.
4. Repetitive in nature: Community music (singing of song texts) in African society is repetitive. The music is characterised with emphases on the messages of the song texts in context. This act aids the mastery of the song texts and makes participants internalize the meaning of the messages.
5. Proverbial and satirical in nature. These are important aspect of African community music. They are used in most times to correct societal ills, expose individuals who engaged in immoral conduct. Proverbial and satirical songs are used to ignite rivalry. For example, Yoruba people demonstrate their grievances, support, antagonism and joy through music. They use proverbial songs to antagonize their rivals. This happens between political parties and women (wives) in polygamous homes Ayeyemi (2017:8).
6. Spontaneous performances. So many occurrences take place among people on daily basis. These include joyful incidences which when they happen in a community for example, people out of joy and excitement troop out to celebrate what has happened or the individual (warrior, political or economic giant etc) family or people that it happened to. In their excitement intuitive musical compositions would be done to praise the concerned in the course of the celebration. In other word, when an unexpected evil happens in the community, the perpetrator(s) would be exposed through their compositions. They would also indicate that such evil doer should either be expunged from the society.

When talking generally of the function of African music, it depicts an operating force, having a role or playing an active part in occasions in the societies which use it. From the above points, music is seen as indispensable fact provides operational functions which teach moral and hygienic education to children most times, religion, work, and entertainment in African societies and so on.

### Some Yoruba folk songs and poems that teach moral values

The thrust of this paper is to expose the area of departure of Yoruba youths from the fundamental norms and values that are basic to molding and building character as individuals grow. This basic acquisition of norms and values are not limited to Africans or Yoruba only. In the history of Greek education for example, the Plato and Pythagoras theory gave credence to music and gymnastics as 'essentials in education... The chief function of education in the early Greek era was building individuals of character, grace and stamina... To accomplish this goal the early organization of Greek education was structured with rhetoric or oratory for the development of mind, gymnastics for body and music for soul'. In the same vein, Ayeyemi (2015:79) claims that;

African philosophy of instilling and imparting education on the younger generation, though through oral tradition and cultural participation, was to train the soul and music being the best teaching and assimilation method stand a better chance than other disciplines. Music as a functional phenomenon in African context is used in almost all avenues to communicate and teach societal norms during rituals, entertainment, relaxation, festival and other socio-cultural ceremonies.

The basic moral education is mostly acquired traditionally at the rural environment. In the urban cities, among the high social class citizens, most of the basic norms and values have been jettison. The folk songs and poems have been forgotten by the current youths, therefore, creating gap between the expected and exhibited characters. However, this paper wishes to bring to limelight, some of the Yoruba folk songs and poems which teach morals according to their set functions and philosophies in the society.

#### Song 1. Song against the art stealing

#### English Translation

1. Kini n o f'ole şe laye ti mo wa?  
Kini n o f'ole şe laye ti mo wa?  
Laye ti mo wa, kaka ki n jale,  
Kaka ki n jale, ma kuku dèru,  
Kini n o f'ole şe laye ti mo wa?

What is stealing to me?  
What is stealing to me?  
Instead of stealing  
I'd rather become a slave  
What is stealing to me?.

2. Èni ba jale, a dele ejọ  
Èni ba jale, a dele ejọ  
Adajọ a wa f'ewon si lẹṣe  
F'ewon si lẹṣe bi olugbe  
Èni ba jale, a dele ejọ

He who steals will be prosecuted  
He who steals will be prosecuted  
The judge will judge him  
And jail him  
He who steals will be prosecuted

3. Aye ẹ ma f'ole s'omọ ti mo bi  
Aye ẹ ma f'ole s'omọ ti mo bi  
Omọ ti mo bi ewon ko sun won  
Ewon ko sun won f'omoluwabi  
Aye ẹ ma f'ole s'omọ ti mo bi

Evil people should not hypnotise my child with spirit of theft  
Evil people should not hypnotise my child with spirit of theft  
My child! Jail is disgracing  
Disgracing to a man of integrity  
Evil people should not hypnotise my child with spirit of theft.

4. Oluwa ma f'ole s'egbe ti mo ni  
Oluwa ma f'ole s'egbe ti mo ni  
Egbe ti mo ni kaka ko jale  
Kaka ko jale bob a ku o to  
Oluwa ma f'ole s'egbe ti mo ni

Lord, let not the spirit of theft possess my colleagues  
Lord, let not the spirit of theft possess my colleagues  
Instead of my colleagues to becoming a thief  
Death is preferable  
Lord, let not the spirit of theft possess my colleagues

5. Bẹni to jale ba lola laye  
Bẹni to jale ba lola laye

If a thief becomes wealthy  
If a thief becomes wealthy

Bo lola laye, kole rorun wọ	If a thief becomes wealthy on earth, cannot enter the kingdom of heaven
Ko le rorun wọ bọlọjọ ba de	cannot enter the kingdom of heaven at the end

The above song expresses that stealing is evil and shameful. It is not in any way good to be engaged in by a courteous and cultured person. The first verse started with a question that of what benefit is stealing and that it is better to be a servant than to engage in stealing. It further expresses that theft land someone in jail and that if at all the perpetrator of the evil makes himself wealthy through the act while alive, it is sure, he cannot enter God's kingdom because no evil enters into the place. However, Nigeria has turned to the home of thieves and rubbers who steal from government treasury and also engage in money laundry, with believe that they can do that and go scot-free. The song is one of the Yoruba folk songs that discourage the act of stealing.

### Song 2. Song against the act of laziness

Ẹni b'ọlẹ, ko rọmọ bi,	The mother of a lazy man has no child,
Ọlẹ f'asọ iya bora sun,	The lazy man covers himself with garment of affliction
Ọlẹ alapa ma ọṣẹ	The man who has a hand and would not work
Ẹ wa waye ọlẹ lode o	Come, see carcass of a lazy man

This short song is a destitute to the mothers of lazy children. It mucks mothers because such mothers might not receive the dividend of their motherhood from such children. As a result of this, it is assumed that such mothers have not got any children at all. The worthless life of a person who has arms and would not work would be exposed.

### Song 3. *Ìwà ọmọlúwàbí*

#### Good character:

Call	response
Ọmọ rere kii purọ	talo fi jọ?
Ọmọ rere kii purọ	talo fi jọ?
Ọmọ rere kii purọ	talo fi jọ?
Kii purọ	talo fi jọ?
Kii purọ	talo fi jọ?
Ọmọ rere kii ọṣẹ	talo fi jọ?
Ọmọ rere kii ọṣẹ	talo fi jọ?
Ọmọ rere kii ọṣẹ	talo fi jọ?
Kii ọṣẹ	talo fi jọ?
Kii ọṣẹ	talo fi jọ?
Ọmọ rere kii ọṣẹ	talo fi jọ?
Ọmọ rere kii ọṣẹ	talo fi jọ?
Ọmọ rere kii ọṣẹ	talo fi jọ?
Kii ọṣẹ	talo fi jọ?
Kii ọṣẹ	talo fi jọ?
Ọmọkọmọ to n purọ	Ọmọ ibi ni

Qmọkọmọ to n šeke	Qmọ ibi ni
Qmọkọmọ to n sọlẹ	Qmọ ibi ni
Mapurọ	Qmọ rere
Ma jale	Qmọ rere

### The English Translation of the above song

Good child don't lie	Who do you resemble?
Good child don't lie	Who do you resemble?
Good child don't lie	Who do you resemble?
Don't lie	Who do you resemble?
Don't lie	Who do you resemble?
Good child don't deceive	Who do you resemble?
Good child don't deceive	Who do you resemble?
Good child don't deceive	Who do you resemble?
Don't deceive	Who do you resemble?
Don't deceive	Who do you resemble?
Good child is not lazy	Who do you resemble?
Good child is not lazy	Who do you resemble?
Good child is not lazy	Who do you resemble?
Not lazy	Who do you resemble?
Not lazy	Who do you resemble?
Good child don't lie	Who do you resemble?
Good child don't deceive	Who do you resemble?
Good child is not lazy	Who do you resemble?
Don't lie	Who do you resemble?
Don't deceive	Who do you resemble?

The song teaches young ones that any child who would grow to become honorable does not engage in lying, deceit and laziness. These three cankerworms and many more bring ill and shame to the families of those engage in them. It expresses further that there is no person among the family members, where such culprit belongs who had ever engaged in such misconduct. This is a general phenomenon among the Yoruba. Yoruba race for example value and cherish good name and integrity, which they do not allow any member of the family to drag in the mud.

### Traditional Music as a Means of Moral Development

As traditional music contributes to the promotion of Nigerian cultures in the areas of religion, social, physical and material lives of the people, it is also obvious in the spheres of the following areas of life.

**Education;** music could facilitate learning and understanding of societal norms and values when integrated into the practices of and used by the societies,

**Symbolism;** traditional music serves as a symbol of the cultural identity to the people who performs, use and appreciate the formal structure of the music,



**Communication;** all aspect of traditional music: dance, singing, drumming, chanting, costumes, props, procession, declamation, poetry, etc are communicative in nature. Carriers of the culture receive it as in form of message and respond to its meaning,

**Situational/Emotional Expressions;** music generally takes care of human feelings; traditional music especially addresses deep and strong emotional feeling according to the dictate of surrounding situation. For example, Alakinyede of Ado-Ekiti chants *rara* during burial ceremonies. This music dampens people's morale for the loss of their loved one snatched by death. On the other hand, traditional music heightens the spirit and creates excitement in its listeners. Emotional feelings not permissible in words or speech are expressed in music countless of the effect on individuals as the message is disseminated, either for correction, resolution of conflict, exultation or admonition, encouragement etc,

**Social control;** Traditional musicians stand likes watch dog to people in traditional societies, he has the information of credible and worthy dignitaries the evil perpetrators, he is the custodian of history of almost every family, icons, the community at large and incidents in the society. He stands the chance to expose through his music the evil deeds in the society and move to curb such evil. Sugarman, cited in Dissanayake (2006) that traditional music is rarely an end in itself, but a means to social ends,

**Aesthetics;** Beauty makes one excited and uplifts the spirit. The sound of music adds to the beauty of social, cultural and religious environment when it is put to practice. A desired change is brought about the surrounding by the dictate of the performers. Traditional music informs events by its numerous functions and affecting the subtle aural sensibilities which enhances the individual's aesthetic perceptions of the environment and atmosphere (Ijeoma, 2011:32),

Maintenance and continuity of history, tradition, norms, and values of the people are in the custodian of performers of the different traditional music genres.

## Conclusion

Music is important in Nigerian cultures, whether in work, in business, in play, in power and authority, in religion. It exert its magic upon people, its value is reflected in education.

Music is a cultural phenomenon centres on enlightening and teaching individuals, train the mind and soul to be matured, be self-sufficient, confident, self-reliant and to be of good character in the society. Through the ethics acquired at the cultural background of individual citizen of Nigerian society, it is believed that the national government should by now harnessed the different ethnic values, interpolate it with the Western and religious education to make the country a worthwhile. Since music is a phenomenon that wraps up the daily life of an African man, especially Nigerians and it is multifunctional in all activities in the society. Therefore, scholars at all levels of learning should be given the opportunity for its professionalism, intelligence guidance and at the same time, encourage individuals to enter the vocation. Music education is, therefore as a school subject and to train students' minds for a better nation.

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