

EXPLORING THE AFRICANNESS OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AS A FRAMEWORK FOR INDIGENOUS PEDAGOGY IN AFRICA: EVIDENCE FROM A UNIVERSITY PRIMARY SCHOOL IN NIGERIA

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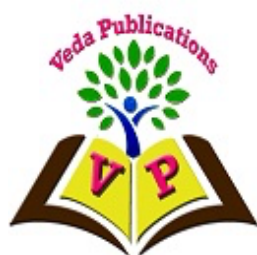
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Abstract



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African pedagogy emphasizes the importance of integrating African knowledge systems and culture into education, to empower learners, promote cultural identity and pride. Principals, the appointed school leaders set the tone for educational practices, curriculum implementation, pedagogy and school culture. The principals' "Africanness", such leaders' perspectives of African culture, knowledge systems and experience would go a long way in advancing African pedagogy within the schools they lead. This exploratory study identified the principal's perspectives of Nigerian cultural values and tradition, determined the influence of these perspectives on incorporation of African pedagogy into school activities, investigated the extent of learners' participation in African pedagogy and the benefits to learners and teachers. Significance of this study for determining the future of African culture were highlighted. Data for the study were gathered by means of semi structured interviews with twenty pupils of the university primary school, six teachers and the school principal

Keywords: *Principal Africanness, Indigenous Pedagogy, University Primary School, Learners.*

Introduction

Pedagogy has been ascribed varying definitions by different researchers. It has been described as the art and science of teaching (Kirsi & Toom, 2020); the presentation of curriculum content to Learners (Ligozat & Almivist, 2018; Carballo *et al.*, 2021, Garzon & Bacca- Acosta, 2025), “the relationship and interactions between teachers, students, teaching environment and learning tasks.” (Murphy, 2008, p.35). Some researchers have explained pedagogy as teaching and learning activities of children (Shah & Campus, 2021, Abanoz & Kalelioğlu, 2024) It has been defined as the theory and practice of teaching, (what is taught and how it is taught) and how these subsequently influence students learning (LaVelle *et al.*, 2020, Ul-Zaman,*et al.*, 2025). Researchers have also described pedagogy as the method of teaching and learning, outcomes of which cannot be extricated from the environment in which it occurs. That is, the presumptions of teachers and actions that teachers make about what and how students learn (LaVelle *et al.*, 2020; , Ul-Zaman,*et al.*, 2025). These guide how the teachers subsequently design instructional processes, and how learning is assessed. Pedagogy entails “giving oneself over to someone else’s passions and vision, thoughts and experiences about the world and integrating these with one’s own.” (Dovey, 2020, p4). This means that effective pedagogy must be “capable of transforming society by imaging and inspiring new, more positive,... respectful futures.” (Dovey, 2020, p26). This study adopted a synthesis of definitions and described pedagogy as teaching knowledge according to the prescription of the official curriculum, shaped by the cultural and social values of the teachers involved in the process. This definition implies that pedagogy is influenced by the assumptions, values, attitudes, experiences and feelings of the teacher and other stakeholders involved in the instructional processes within the school, particularly the school principal, who is the instructional leader of the school.

African pedagogy, is teaching and learning utilizing an African pedagogical perspective’ an approach that humanizes the learner (Ngubane & Makua, 2021,Oelofsen & Mqalo,2025). It is focused on engaging African Students with their identities as Africans and linking them up with the culture, history and heritage of Africa. This pedagogy, which is integrative and holistic in nature, has been found to embrace the oral culture of storytelling and sharing where learners are actively involved in drawing lessons from narratives, thus encouraging introspection and analysis (Van Wyk, 2014; Olawale, 2025; Paul- Kolade, 2025).

Africanness is an identity that is not bound by ancestry, skin colour or spatial boundaries. Rather, it is the ability of individuals to self-define and enact their Africanness through their own choices (Voster, 2011; Kelly *et al.*, 2024; Bradshaw- Beaumont, 2025). These choices, according to researchers, can only be made after the exposure of the individual to the available options. Researchers have described African identity as the sum of characteristics or beliefs by which an African individual or society can be recognised and appreciated Oko & Ogbodo, 2022; Ogbo & Ndubisi, 2024, Britton, 2024). Although these attributes cannot be generalized all through Africa, Africans identify themselves through cultural values rather

than geographical spaces or racial indicators (Oko & Ogbodo, 2022). Africanness is described not by skin colour, geographical spaces occupied, or, of origin, but rather in terms of cultural values possessed, one of which is the spirit of communal belonging or corporate interest.

Isife and Arinze (2022) defined Africanness as a combination of identity and values which are portrayed through self-realization and self-awareness in relation to other members of the community. This identity possesses features of both spatial (geographical) and biographical elements Oko and Ogbodo (2022). Identity can be corrupted and abused if not well preserved as seen in values already being eroded by westernization and uncherished identity easily forgotten (Oko & Ogbodo, 2022; Bradshaw - Beaumont, 2025; Olawale, 2025; Paul - Kolade, 2025). “Thus the need for Africans to reassert their identity, which entails ancestry and socio-cultural peculiarities in the modern world. The culture of people should be of prime importance to them, as the worth of culture can never be quantified entirely in monetary terms” (Oko & Ogbodo, 2022, 217). Africanness is therefore described as the identity of an individual as a member of a community in terms of culture, language and ideologies, indigenous to people of the African continent. Cultural identity is localized and it is thus not restricted by geographical boundaries. Even though place of origin is essential, it is no longer sufficient for the description of an individual as being African (Osei – Tutu, 2021a, Liu *et al.*, 2025). Africanness in the context of this study, is therefore the value an individual places on his/her cultural identity, experience, knowledge and historical orientations, wherever the individual is resident, in Africa, or outside the continent (Dei, 2012; Marovah, 2015; Osei – Tutu, 2023).

The principal as the appointed head of a school and instructional leader, leads the implementation of national curriculum, through pedagogy to attain school success (Akinola & Akingbade, 2020; Chan *et al.*, 2022; Giovindasamy & Mestry, 2022; Ayanda & Yaw, 2025). Research has shown that Principals influence curriculum implementation in the schools they lead and thus, pedagogy (Chan & Ridley, 2020; Chan *et al.*, 2022; Ula *et al.*, 2024; Ayanda & Yaw, 2025). The values such principals possess influence pedagogical processes in the schools they lead (Törnsén, 2009; Warwas, 2015; Berson & Oreg, 2016; Gu *et al.*, 2018; Alazmi, 2023).

The Nigerian National Policy on Education (NPE, Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) 2014) described Primary (elementary) education as that which is “given to children aged six to twelve years” (FRN 2014, 9). Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) stated some of the goals of this level of education as:

- a. *inculcate permanent literacy, numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively;*
- b. *lay a sound basis for scientific, critical and reflective thinking;*

- c. *promote patriotism, fairness, understanding and national unity; and*
- d. *instill social, moral norms and values in the child (10).*

To achieve these goals of the National Policy on Education, one of the compulsory subjects in the National Curriculum is Cultural and Creative Arts (CCA). This subject was introduced into the fourth edition of the National Curriculum published in the year 2004. According to Ojo (2023) incorporation of CCA into the Nigerian Curriculum was meant to aid the “acquisition of cultural skills, knowledge, values and creative responsiveness” in learners (44). Considering the number of subjects that primary school pupils have to take as specified by the curriculum, and the fact that the time allocated to the subject per teaching period has been found to be insufficient for the effective teaching of this vital subject (Ojukwu, 2019), this time constraint may result in subtle restrictions that may not permit the principal and teachers, as educators, to directly transmit cultural values and ethos to their learners, nor include innovativeness that should transmit these in the school environment. It therefore becomes necessary for the principal as the instructional leader to devise a method that will enhance the goal for which the subject was introduced in the curriculum. This will depend greatly on the values the principal has ascribed to the goals of the subject: which are basically cultural.

Literature Review

To preserve African identity or Africanness, researchers have found and recommended that culture, language and values must be kept alive (Oko & Ogbodo, 2022; Ogbo & Ndubisi, 2024; Osimen *et al.*, 2025). Retaining Africanness by people of African ancestry has been found to depend on intentional choices made by such individuals (Osei-Tutu, 2023; Castañeda, 2024; Omanano, 2024; Asifat, 2025). Osei –Tutu (2023) found that Africans in diaspora had to be willing to resist two categories of agents that dissuade them from retaining native African Languages. The first set were Africans who had lost their Africanness and thus encouraged other Africans not to speak the native language to children born to such parents outside the shores of Africa. Considering speaking indigenous languages as a waste of time, detractors assigned false identity of “white kids” to children of African descent born in diaspora (63). The second level of resistance identified was on educational and societal basis, where the ability of an African to fluently speak English with an accent was considered a mark of assurance of belongingness and acceptance by the adopted community. Another factor found to influence Africanness in terms of use of native African languages was the misconceptions and wrong perceptions about the worth ascribed to native indigenous languages when compared with the language of people who colonised Africa, by the educated Africans, majorly English, French and Portuguese. This resulted in the inability of Africans, born and bred in urban areas of Africa, to speak their native indigenous languages fluently and in some situations not at all (Ngugi, 2018; Osei –Tutu, 2023), This wrong perception was found to have influenced parents insistence on the use of English alone as the medium of

communication for preschoolers in South Africa. The parents considered English as essential for the socio economic development of the children and their families as a whole (Msila, 2011).

Wrong perception is also a factor that was found to have contributed to loss of Africanness. An example is when South African youths and their parents/guardians perceived indigenous languages as being inferior in status when compared with English (Cakata, 2015). Lack of Government will to promote indigenous languages was found to have contributed to this to a large extent (Cakata, 2015). In a similar study undertaken in Kenya, to determine the position of youths as regards perception of African culture, positive perceptions of African culture were on African attire, foods, traditional dances and festivals (Churu & Wachiri, 2022). The participants also showed appreciation for the African portrayal of respect for God, respect for elders and human dignity. Participants in the study had negative perceptions about some African cultural systems such as female circumcision, wife inheritance and polygamy among others. These practices were recommended to be expunged from African culture. The study concluded that there was a moderately high appreciation of African culture by youths which was perceived as a sign of willingness to draw values from the culture. Sustainability of culture through the level of knowledge of African culture was found to be highest in terms of material and social values and lowest in aspects of spiritual, philosophical, and cosmological values, which were barely evident. The absence of in depth philosophical teaching of African culture in educational institutions within Africa was cited as the reason why African youths assumed African culture to have been overtaken by technological advancement. The researchers were of the opinion that ignorance of depth of cultural meanings led to a sense of inferiority in the African youths. Similarly, Osei- Tutu (2021b) found that parents' lack of pride in their Africanness and social experiences contributed greatly to children of African descent not being interested in their African identity. Disaffection of Africans with indigenous culture in terms of its relevance in modern society is a negative phenomenon that could lead to being in "a vulnerable position of abuse by agents of displacement" (Churu & Wachiri, 2022, p.208).

Osei- Tutu 2021b in a study of school experiences of a family in diaspora found that a child who was taught by the parents to stand up for his identity as a child of God (claiming equality of all human beings irrespective of race or colour), had an oppressing child (a bully) in Elementary school apologise for regarding the African child as different and inferior, on the basis of skin colour.

Dei (2018), emphasizing the need for Africans to reclaim their identity, reaffirmed that African languages survived through the process of orality "...music, dance, and other aspects of African folkloric production" (p.8). Osei Tutu 2021 , stemming from her study of immigrant children's negative school experiences recommended that by including the perspectives of Africans and identifying with African identities, through the introduction of pedagogical aspects that incorporate indigenous languages, food and culture in the curriculum of education, respect for diversity will be encouraged and educational spaces will

be progressively decolonized through the use of a “curriculum of de- micro-colonialization” (Osei- Tutu 2021, p.13). This was in line with Olawale’s (2025) recommendation of including cultural aspects into Mathematics pedagogy. Osei-Tutu (2023) opined that engagement in African pedagogy will curb “the assault on African language, worldviews and identities” (p. 62). Non – engagement will retain colonization and restrict attainment of the complete version of the African identity.

African pedagogy, according to Bangura, 2005, resulted in changes in values and attitudes of students. During pedagogical processes, teachers did not just teach learners to imitate what the African forebears had done but the learners were engaged in tasks that resulted in intellectual growth, constructive thinking and creativity. This is similar to the findings of George (2017) study, where Afrocentric pedagogy made students value their heritage and take pride in it. The method of pedagogy enhanced the effectiveness of students’ learning processes, and made students imbibe the culture of connectedness, looking out for one another and helping each other with academic issues.

Osei- Tutu (2022) found construction of African identity, cultural retention and language use to be nonexistent at the higher education level, where retaining African accent and sharing African worldviews and culture in class were perceived as negative resistance and a determination to take up unnecessary space. Kumi – Yeboah (2018) and Osei –Tutu (2021) advocated for spaces within the formal school setting where African identities and experiences would determine school culture and policy.

A lot of emphasis has been placed on the need to reclaim indigeneity at the higher education level (Dei 2018; Osei – Tutu, 2023) but this researcher is of the opinion that indigenizing children when they are still young and malleable (from birth to early teen ages) will be more beneficial than when they are older (at the higher education level), when most of them would have already formed their values and priorities and may already be set in their ways.

Principals as instructional and pedagogical leaders have been found to influence the pedagogical processes undertaken in the schools they lead. The values they portrayed are entrenched in the schools and inculcated in the learners of such schools based on the characteristics of such principals and values they possessed.

Gu *et al.* (2018) found that principals of successful schools in England and Hong Kong were value driven, built cultures, and relationships “...that reflected their deeply held humanistic educational values”. In these schools, even external policies were only incorporated on the basis of alignment with the values of the principals (p. 327). In a longitudinal study undertaken in Israel, elementary school children’s values were found to be malleable, they became similar to the values their principal expressed in actions, behaviours and consequences considered worthy of reward after a two year period (Berson & Oreg, 2016). The learners formed value priorities similar to those experienced in the school. (Berson & Oreg, 2016).

This study was hinged on two theories, the Path - goal Theory of leadership (House 1971) and the Collective Five Finger Theory, developed from the Ubuntu Theory of African humanism by Mbigi (1997). The Path - Goal Theory postulates that for a principal to lead, s/he must know the way and clarify paths for followers (all workers and learners of the school) to attain success. For the principal to lead the school in African pedagogical processes, such a principal must first have the vision to create such processes, the principal cannot envision this without possessing the African identity that will guide the envisioning. This is the Africanness of the principal put into action.

The Collective Five Finger Theory posits that in spite of the strength the thumb possesses, it cannot kill aphids on its own but needs the support of other fingers. Within the school, though the principal has the strength of possession of Africanness and being the appointed pedagogical leader of the school, the principal cannot single handedly inculcate the values of African identity in the school children. The principal needs the support of the teachers and even the learners to achieve the collective goal of African pedagogy.

In line with the five fingers representation of the five key values of Ubuntu: compassion, dignity, respect, spirit of solidarity and survival, the principal empathised with the learners who may not appreciate the African identity and thus lose out on the values they need for self-identification as Africans. These may never be regained in the future, if not instilled in them at the elementary school level, where they are still malleable. The cooperation encouraged by the principal will promote the spirit of love and connectedness among the pupils, teachers and the principal. African pedagogy is expected to encourage in the pupils, the perception of their African identity as something worthy of honour. The African pedagogical processes should elicit in the learners and their teachers, admiration for their language, food, dress and other aspects of African identity.

Removing obstacles implies that the principal must have necessary skills, experience and perspectives that will guide leading. As principals' skills, perspectives of cultural values, tradition and experience influence interpretation of curriculum through pedagogy, specifically African pedagogy. Research studies have also examined how school principals' values influenced the values of learners in mediated paths (Chan & Ridley, 2020; Huang *et al.*, 2020; Leithwood *et al.*, 2020; Chan *et al.*, 2022; Tan *et al.*, 2022; Ula *et al.*, 2024) and directly (Berson & Oreg, 2016; Gu *et al.*, 2018). But studies are sparse on how school principal's African identity and values can serve as a panacea for incorporating African pedagogical processes into the school activities and how these influence pupils' perception of African identity.

Objectives / Research Questions

On this premise, this study therefore:

- a. identified school principal's perspectives of Nigerian cultural values and tradition,

- b. determined the influence of these perspectives on incorporation of African pedagogy into school activities,
- c. investigated the extent of learners' participation in African pedagogy and
- d. examined the benefits of African pedagogy to learners and teachers.

The objectives of the study led to the formulation of four research questions to guide the study.

- i. What are the principal's perspectives of Nigerian cultural values and tradition?
- ii. How have these perspectives influenced the incorporation of African pedagogy into school activities?
- iii. To what extent did learners and teachers participate in African pedagogy?
- iv. What are the perceived benefits of African pedagogy to learners and teachers?

Methodology

The study adopted a case study approach. The primary school of a university in Southwestern Nigeria, situated on the university campus that enjoys patronage of mainly university staff, considered middle class, was chosen as the sample school for the study. The rationale for choosing the university primary school as the case for this study was two pronged. First the motto of the university that owns the school is "For learning and culture". Second, is that although Cultural and Creative Arts is on the national curriculum for primary education in Nigeria, the school is one in which the principal has decided to have a day every term, dedicated to the teaching of the subject, the African way. On the cultural day, teachers and learners of all classes come together to learn about different aspects of Nigerian culture. Nigeria is a multi- ethnic African nation with three major ethnic groups. Though the primary school is situated in the southwestern part of Nigeria, mostly inhabited by the Yoruba ethnic group, the school being a university school, caters mainly for children of university staff representing the diverse ethnic groups of Nigeria, with different cultures and languages.

The participants in the study were the school principal, six teachers and twenty pupils selected from primaries five and six classes. Three of the teachers were members of the cultural committee of the school while the other three who were active participants in the programme, were randomly selected. Selection of senior class pupils was based on the assumption that pupils in these classes would be able to give more reliable responses than their junior counterparts, as they were considered more mature by the researcher.

Data for the study were primarily gathered by means of semi structured oral interviews with each of the participants. The investigator also observed the African pedagogical processes on the school cultural day. The interviews were conducted in English with occasional probes for clarity. All the participants responded in English, except the principal who sometimes interjected in Yoruba, her native language which is the same as that of the researcher, to clarify some points which she felt would be better explained in the language

that would retain the essence of what was being communicated. The participants were approached separately after seeking for and getting permission from the school head in lieu of parents for the children. Each participant was then told about the study, all the pupils and teachers approached indicated interest in participation. Background information was sought from each of the participants before the basic questions as appropriate for each category of participants were asked. The researcher manually recorded responses of the participants. The interviews were also tape recorded after consent for audio recording was sought and approved by the participants. This was done to compensate for the limitations of the manual recording (Noor, 2008). To ensure trustworthiness of the data, the data collected were subjected to member check, where the participants validated the data (Birt *et al.*, 2016). To achieve this, the researcher recanted what was recorded on paper and played the audio recording to the participants. This was to ascertain that what was recorded was actually what the participants intended to say.

RESULTS

Research Question One: What are the principal's perspectives of Nigerian cultural values and tradition?

To the question- What are your perspectives of Nigerian cultural values and tradition? The female principal said that:

I believe our cultural values and traditions are very important for us as Nigerians. They are beautiful, they guide us positively and help us appreciate who we are and appreciate our commonness even in diversity.

The principal went on to make statements with proverbs which translated, meant “you will not adopt other peoples cultures at the expense of your own. Your traditions are sacred and cannot be replaced with other traditions. Whatever it is, every culture is rich enough for its own people. You can never replace your ancestry”.

Research Question Two: How have these perceptions influenced incorporation of African pedagogy into school activities?

To the Question – How have these perceptions influenced the incorporation of African pedagogy into the activities of your school? The principal said:

It is important that our offspring know about our traditions and cultures, particularly our indigenous languages. They should learn how to prepare and eat African dishes, appreciate our dressing, live the communal life so that they will appreciate the diverse cultures of our land (Nigeria) without feeling one is superior to the other.

Considering our environment and the kind of children in this school (children of University and University Teaching Hospital Staff, who travel outside the continent and more often than not migrate , especially to western countries), even if they leave the country, they will not be severed completely from the culture of their people. They will not lose sight of their heritage. This is the reason why even though the children in

their individual classes are taught Nigerian languages, and Creative Cultural Arts, it is good to come together as the school family to learn about our native languages, dress in traditional attires of the various Nigerian ethnic groups, be free to speak native languages, engage in cultural storytelling and learn to prepare our traditional dishes.

You can see that the children are very happy, they are all engaged, dressed up in the attires of their ethnic groups. They will surely appreciate their culture. They did not really appreciate the ways of our people before, because they were not exposed to it. This is because most of us do not value what we have. We do not appreciate our language, we turn our children to second class citizens even in their own land (when they cannot speak their ethnic dialects nor the language of the immediate environment). This is because we don't believe in ourselves.

I believe they should be taught when they are still young.

With the continuation of this programme, the children will be able to tap from its uniqueness to develop culturally. It is better to know who you are and that you cannot become another person.

The principal included a Yoruba adage in her response which means:

It is when children are much younger (preteen age years) that they can be trained, once they are older, they become rigid and can no longer be tamed.

Research Question Three: To what extent did learners and teachers participate in African pedagogy? This question was answered from two angles. The first response was made by the principal and the second was through the observation of the researcher.

Principal's Response: *My teachers really supported this idea when I presented it to them at the staff meeting. Since discussion at the meeting, the teachers had been taking part. For preparation, a committee was set up, with representatives of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria as members. All the members (of the committee) and even teachers not direct members have participated fully, as you can see.*

Further probe by the researcher on what the principal meant by "idea", led to the explanation:

The communal get together, where we all teach the pupils together with each of us teachers, contributing from the perspective of our ethnic group and area of strength. The teachers were also involved in weeks of rehearsals to prepare the pupils for the activities presented today.

The researcher observed that all the teachers were involved in the activities at different levels. The teachers and principal dressed in outfits representing their various ethnic groups (see figures One to three). The teachers taught the pupils how to cook indigenous food of the three major ethnic groups (See Figure Four). The pupils were told stories to teach morals, in the indigenous languages (See Figure Five). These were some of the activities the teachers were observed to have been actively involved in.



Figure 1: Teacher In Yoruba attire



Figure 2: Teacher in Igbo attire



Figure 3: Yoruba Male and female attire



Figure 4: Cooking Igbo Soup



Figure 5: Igbo story telling



Figure 6: Yoruba Traditional dance

The researcher observed that the pupils were active participants in the activities. Instead of the regular school uniform, all pupils came to the school, dressed in indigenous outfits (See Figures Seven to Nine). The pupils were involved in the different activities, which they had practiced for, after school hours, for weeks: Cultural dances; answering questions on morals learnt from stories told by the teachers and poems they recited, in the major indigenous languages, among other activities.



Figure 7: Girls dressed in indigenous attires of different ethnic groups



Figure 8: Male South south attire



Figure 9: Male Yoruba dressing



Figure 10: Hausa dance



Figure 11: Igbo Dance



Figure 12: Yoruba dance

Research Question Four: What are the perceived benefits of African pedagogy to learners and teachers?

To answer this question, the researcher posed two questions to the learners. The first- What did you learn from this programme? The second – Do you want this programme to continue? After responding to the second question, the learners and teachers were asked to give reasons for the answers they gave.

The researcher and an academic colleague, categorised and codified the responses of the pupils independently, with reference to the questions asked. After preliminary coding and resolution of observed differences in the manually and audio recorded responses by the two people, a common checklist with all the independently coded data was drawn. To measure the proportion of agreement between the two categories of responses, the calculated Cohen's Kappa Statistic of 0.74 was used.

Lessons from the Programme

All the twenty children reported that they learned positive lessons from the cultural day programme. The lessons learned are presented on Table One. It is necessary to note that the number of responses in the table exceeds the number of participants. This is because some of the learners had more than one response.

Table 1: What Learners Learnt from the Programme

S/N	Lessons Learnt	No.	Percentage
1.	About my culture	6	30
2.	About other people's cultures and traditions	9	45

3.	About the dance of other cultures	4	20
4.	About different traditional religions	3	15
5.	All cultures have positive aspects	8	40
6.	Always stay true to my culture	6	30
7.	Culture is very important to us	10	50
8.	How to make food and drink of different cultures	17	85
9.	It is good to speak my language	18	90

Responses of three of the Learner participants (two females and one male) struck the researcher as worthy of direct presentation in the study because of the way the children emphasised positivity about Africanness. This might be a consequence of their level of maturity. All three were in Class Six.

First Female Learner in response to the question, what did you learn from the programme:
Said:

I learned that I should always stay true to my culture because it is who I am and will always be. Staying true will make me understand my culture better. I should not lie that I am this or that, instead of what I actually am.

The learner personalized the lessons she got from the programme, emphasizing her need to maintain her identity as a Nigerian, without ascribing false identities to herself. She was convinced that retaining her culture will deepen her knowledge about her Africanness and help her appreciate it the more.

Second Female Learner responded to the question, what did you learn from the programme, as follows:

If we stay true to our culture, we will feel proud about ourselves. Knowing my culture has many benefits. It will make me improve on my own culture (aspects of my cultural identity). It will attract people who want to learn about my culture to me. I will teach them.

The second female learner, as a result of the programme, perceived her culture as not just beneficial to her as an individual, but worthy of emulation by other people. She was willing to propagate her culture through sharing.

The male Learner who also made striking comments on lessons learned from the programme, had this to say:

I learned that no matter what, we should be thankful (appreciate) about our culture. It has brought unity among Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa people. It has shown that we are one. I learned how to cook. I also learned that we should help one another. I learned a lot of things I did not know about other cultures; dance, dressing. I did not like native dressing before, but I like it now because it is attractive the way we all look. I used to feel ashamed before, but now, I have something to be proud of.

This child learned to value and be proud of his African/ Nigeria identity/heritage. He learned to appreciate the concept of unity in diversity. He also learned to appreciate the beauty and significance of cultural dressing.

What Teachers Learnt

All the teachers reported that the programme was beneficial to them and the pupils. Even the parents were said to have actively participated in the programme by ensuring compliance with traditional dress code for the children. The specific thematic details of what teachers learned from the programme are presented for better clarity on table two.

Table Two: What Teachers Learned from the Programme

S/N	Lessons Learnt	No.	Percentage
1.	More about my culture through research in preparation for the programme	3	50
2.	More about the dressing of my ethnic group	1	16.7
3.	Most of the children did not know about their Culture	4	66.7
4.	It is good to sometimes teach pupils communally	5	83.3

Some of the teachers explained that they learned a lot in the course of preparation for the programme, they had to research on some aspects of their particular culture and thus gained new and deeper knowledge about it. Examples of knowledge gained and deepened were proverbs with high moral values and information about traditional religion. Some teachers came to the realization that most of the pupils did not know anything about their culture, except a few who had knowledge of just basic greetings. These greetings, most of the time could not be presented in clear recognizable language. The teachers appreciated the fact that they could all contribute to the teaching of all pupils, irrespective of class, as a community, without losing sight of the objectives of the programme. A female teacher admitted that it was the dressing of the children for the programme that made her realise that the way males dress in the South southern part of Nigeria, where incidentally, she hails from, differ from community to community.

Why Learners want the Programme to continue

All the learners responded that they wanted the programme to continue. The reasons for wanting the continuation of the programme are listed on Table Three. Some of the learners gave more than one reason.

Table Three: Learners Reasons for continuity of Programme

S/N	Reasons	No.	Percentage
1.	It was fun and exciting	10	50
2.	I will be able to celebrate culture	8	40
3.	I will have better understanding of my culture	18	90
4.	I will know more about my identity	3	15
5.	I will learn more about my culture and that of other people	6	30
6.	It will make all cultures united	2	10

Table Four: Teachers Reasons for continuity of Programme

S/N	Reasons	No.	Percentage
1.	It is an avenue to celebrate Nigerian culture together	5	83.3
2.	I will learn more about food and drinks of other cultures	5	83.3
3.	It will be good to continue to teach and learn together as a family	4	66.7
4.	It will deepen my knowledge of Nigerian culture	6	100
5.	It will help me appreciate my culture better	6	100

Discussions

The results of this study show that the principal perceived Nigerian cultural values and tradition as vital aspects of an individual's identity that should be revered and a source of dignity to the individual. This finding is not surprising, considering the background information that the principal provided. In her family, her native language, Yoruba is used at all times for communication, the children are trained to greet their elders the traditional way, by kneeling (female) and prostrating (male). The principal also informed the researcher that from primary school her children were able to write their traditional names putting the correct accents on the names. This implies that whatever the culture of children anywhere globally, it should be emphasised to them in all ramifications to give them the correct perspectives of their identities.

The perceptions of the principal reflect the high value she placed on her culture and tradition. The principal's incorporation of African pedagogy into school activities can be ascribed to the influence of her perception of Nigerian culture and tradition. The principal's consideration of knowledge and practice of traditional culture as dignifying, influenced her action of transmitting these values to the members of the school community, teachers and learners alike through incorporation in school activities. It should be noted that the inclusion of Creative and Cultural Arts as a compulsory subject in the primary school curriculum, to enable learners at that level of education acquire cultural skills, knowledge, values and creative responsiveness enhanced the principal's ability to interpret the curriculum in a way that served her purpose of transmitting cultural values to members of her school community. This finding shows the strong influence of school leader's values on the value formation of learners. This finding is in line with that of Gu *et al.* (2018) where the principals only incorporated policies aligned to their value priorities.

All the learners and teachers participated fully in African pedagogy as incorporated into the Cultural Day Programme. It should be noted that participation in African pedagogy in the school was not a one day affair. The teachers had undertaken research to have in-depth knowledge of the culture and traditions to be presented to the school. Some teachers and learners had also rehearsed the activities, such as dance, oral poetry and drama, they were to take part in, for weeks before the programme. The entire school community converged at the school hall, thus participating actively as actors/actresses or spectators. All the learners and teachers of the school were dressed in traditional outfits for the programme, no one was left out.

All the participants, teachers and learners perceived participation in African pedagogy as being beneficial to them at different levels and for different reasons. It can be seen from tables one and two that most of the learners 90 percent, got to know that speaking in their indigenous languages was good for them. They might not have noted this before, because their attention was not drawn to it. Some of the learners (50%) and (30%), as a consequence of the participation in African pedagogy, realised the importance of culture to them as individuals of Nigerian extraction. They also acknowledged the need to retain one's culture, as this will prevent loss of identity. Learners' participation in African pedagogy must have heightened this realization. The malleability of children at this level is reflected in their values becoming similar to those the principal expressed in action and behaviour through the incorporation of African pedagogical processes into school activities. This is similar to the findings of Berson and Oreg (2016) about elementary school pupils in Israel. The findings of this study are also similar to that of Bangura (2005), where the practice of African pedagogy and incorporation of the African value system in the school led to changes in values and attitudes of students. Some of the learners (90%), perceived that speaking indigenous languages was beneficial to them. A learner, who was previously ashamed of his culture and indigenous outfits had a change of perception. The learner decided that cultural activities and way of dressing were dignifying, and practices to be proud of.

The beneficial nature of the African pedagogical practices in the school was portrayed in the desire of all the learners and teachers to continue with such activities in the school. It led to enhanced value of their heritage (as shown by those who learned that they should stay true to their culture (30%); those who perceived culture as being very important (50%), all cultures have positive aspects (40%), and developed a sense of cultural pride in the learners. The incorporation of indigenous languages, food and culture into educational practices of the school in this study (in line with the advocacy of Osei –Tutu, 2023) promoted the removal of restrictions to complete versions of Nigerian/ African identity as reflected in the submissions of the learners and teachers in this study

Conclusions and Implications

It is apparent from the results of this study that the principal's Africanness and thus African identity and values had significant influence on the incorporation and interpretation of African pedagogy in the school. This in turn influenced the perceptions and attitudes of learners and teachers in the school to African cultures, traditions and practices. It can be inferred from the findings of this study that the value ascribed to the culture of the school community by the school leader influenced the transmission of such culture to the learners and other stakeholders within the school, thereby influencing the value such people will place on their native identities. This suggests it is a viable panacea for incorporation of cultural pedagogy in schools. There is an imperative need for principals to include native traditional pedagogical processes in their institutions for the enhancement and development of the native identities of the learners of such schools.

It will be good to replicate this study to cover more schools, longitudinally and, in other climes that have had the history of foreign intrusion in terms of colonization, so as to be able to empirically tease out how principals' native values will influence that of learners, over a period years, to be able to ascertain the level of influence and determine if the findings of this study were truly as a result of the influence of the principal or a reflection of interest developed as a result of the novelty of African pedagogical processes in the school. A longitudinal and more globally focused study will also empirically ascertain which aspects of culture the learners consider as positive and decide to stay true to.

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