

**RE-INSTILLING MORES AND MORAL VALUES IN THE YOUTHS OF EMOHUA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA THROUGH FOLKTALES AND PROVERBS****Esobie, Obinna****(M.Sc COMMUNICATION AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES) (RSUST)****ABSTRACT**

Mores and Moral values remain the bedrock of every healthy society. Its adherence promotes wellbeing of a society. However, mores and moral values appeared to be relegated to the background by some youths in Emohua Local Government Area through their involvement in criminality which has made the place unsafe and unconducive for native and non-native residents, thereby pauperizing the people and hindering meaningful development in the area. Worried by the trend of moral erosion in the L.G.A., this study sought to investigate the use of folktales and proverbs in re-instilling mores and moral values in Emohua Local Government. To achieve this, a purposive sample was drawn from the population of Emohua LGA and focus group discussion, interview and participant observation were used to generate data. Findings revealed that the causes of moral decadence in Emohua Local Government Area are lack of parental influence on children, peer pressure to indulge in nefarious activities, glorification of social vices by government officials, lack of proper upbringing, illiteracy, paucity of welfare packages for the less privilege in society and the moral bankruptcy of the political class. It further disclosed that integration of folktales and proverbs into school curricular, a community quiz competition on folktales and proverbs as well as gatherings that teach folktales and proverbs can help in restoring morally upright, society in Emohua Local Government Area. It also revealed that folktales such as snail and tortoise, carnivorous mother and her son, a rich man and his eight wives and tortoise and a stout can champion moral rebirth in Emohua Local Government Area. Finding further showed that introduction of folktales and proverbs in homes as well as availability of folktales in a readable form can reawaken societal norms and morals in Emohua Local Government Area. The study lamented the neglect of folktales and proverbs in the area. It, however, recommend that youths within the Local Government Area should be meaningfully engaged to prevent them from being attracted to cult groups which is a vehicle for social vices in society.

**INTRODUCTION**

Mores have served as a guide for a healthy and functional society from time immemorial. They mould the behaviour and conduct of the members for the betterment and advancement of society. Mores stand as a shield that protects individual members of a society against immoral act. They effectively deter people from engaging in social vices. In the olden days, members of a culture or society were more concerned about violations of mores.

Mores are vital to the well-being and survival of a society. People usually attach high moral significance to mores and they define people who violate them as sinful, wicked and evil. Consequently, the punishment for violators of a society's mores is severe. Mores are enforced by the members of a society.

Mores are rules developed by societies to govern how people should behave and engaged in social interactions. The term, mores, was introduced by the US Sociologist, William Graham Sumner, which can be understood as the norms which are very strictly enforced due to their importance in maintaining the well-being of the group. They are considered essential to the core values of the society, so widely observed and have great moral significance. As they are thought to maintain welfare of people and bring prosperity to society, deviation from them is a loss for the society. Without them, a society is believed to become weak and the social structure fragile. These are more specifically stated and hence, are more effective. "Mores are norms which members of society consider very important for the continuation of human groups and society" (Ifeanacho, 2015, p. 158).

They portray a society's sense of morality. Therefore, anyone that violate the Mores of a society could be subject to Moral indignation. The violation of Mores evokes strong social disapproval and their fulfillment brings significant social approval.

Moral values, on the other hand, play a great role in nurturing and promoting good behaviour in a society. It teaches the young what is morally accepted standards of behaviour in a given society. It serves as a means by which the youths are orientated regarding what is morally good among the people. Moral values remain one of the necessary ingredients to produce the desired citizens. They are determinants of what is good and bad. They give meaning and strength to a person's character by occupying a central place in the person's lives (Majebi *et al.*, 2021 p. 90). They reflect one's personal attitude, judgment, decisions and choice, behaviour and relationships, dream and vision. They influence thought, feelings and actions. They are the guiding principles of life which are conducive to all-round development. They give direction and firmness to life and bring joy, satisfaction, quality and peace to life.

Moral values are the criteria people use in assessing their daily lives, arranging their priorities, measuring their pleasures and pains and choosing between alternative courses of action.

"Moral values are principles of life which are conducive to one's physical, social and mental health" (Saka, 2021 pp. 121). "Moral values are broad preferences concerning appropriate courses of action or outcome. They boost self-esteem both personal and cultural, promote respect and tolerance for others as individuals and as members of ethnic and cultural groups and create a sense of belongings" (Ajitoni & Omoniyi cited in Saka, 2021, pp. 122). "Moral values help to describe the personal qualities that we deem important to guide our actions, what we want to be in life, how we treat others and the way we interact with people around us" (Minez, cited in Soberekon, 2021 p. 170).

It is a collection of guiding principles that an individual considers to be morally right and desirable in life, especially regarding personal conduct. It determines what individuals find important in their daily lives and help shape their behaviour in each situation they encounter.

Moral values are developed in various stages during a person's upbringing and they remain relatively consistent as children mature into adults.

"Moral values determine how people behave in such society which means that moral value is tied to individual disposition in any human society" (Shittu & Gamde, 2021, pp. 181).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Moral values and Mores remain the pillar and foundation of a healthy society. Its observance and adherence actively promote the wellbeing of society. It places importance on the good conduct and behaviour of every member of a culture with a view to establishing a morally upright society as well as maintaining peaceful co-existence among the people in the society. That is why its violations attract widespread and social disapproval.

However, it appears that the moral values and mores which serve as the bedrock and pillar of a society have been disregarded and relegated to the background by the majority of youths in Emohua Local Government Area through their involvement in social vices such as kidnapping, killing, armed robbery, oil bunkering, stealing and what have you, which are against the values and mores of the people of Emohua Local Government Area.

The actions of these youths have led to a high level of moral decadence in the area which has caused the deserting of the area by investors, visitors, native and non-native residents of the area thereby impoverishing the people and causing a high level of underdevelopment in the Local Government. Worried by the trend of moral erosion, this study seeks to investigate the use of

folktales and proverbs in reinstilling moral values and mores in the youths of Emohua Local Government Area.

### Objectives of the Study

This study seeks to:

- (1) determine the causes of moral decadence in Emohua Local Government Area.
- (2) ascertain the relevance of folktales and proverbs in re-instilling mores and moral values in the youths of Emohua Local Government Area.
- (3) find out how folktales and proverbs can be used to restore morally upright society in Emohua Local Government Area.
- (4) know how folktales and proverbs can be used to reawaken societal values in Emohua Local Government Area.
- (5) explore ways by which folktales and proverbs can be used for moral rearmament of youth in Emohua Local Government Area.
- (6) Know which folktales and proverbs that can be used to champion moral rebirth in Emohua Local Government Area.

### Research Questions

1. What are the causes of moral decadence in Emohua Local Government Area?
2. What is the relevance of folktales and proverbs in re-instilling mores and moral values in Emohua Local Government Area?
3. How can folktales and proverbs be used to restore morally upright society in Emohua Local Government Area?
4. How can folktales and proverbs be used to reawaken societal values in Emohua Local Government Area?
5. In what ways can folktales and proverbs be used for moral rearmament of youths in Emohua Local Government Area?
6. Which folktales and proverbs can be used to champion moral rebirth in Emohua Local Government Area?

### Theoretical Framework

This study is hinged on public sphere theory as well as social cultural theory.

#### Public Sphere Theory

This theory was propounded by Jurgen Habermas in 1962 in his book entitled *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, he refers to public sphere as a notional space which provides more or less autonomous and open arena or forum for public debate. He states that public sphere is like an intermediary system of communication between formally organized and informal face to face deliberations in arenas at both the top and bottom of the political system Habermas (2006). This sphere is not made up of experts or intellectuals, but ordinary citizens who ordinarily would not have the opportunity of deliberating issues with the political class. It is not a unilateral discussion or communication platform. It is, in the view of Hauser (2007), a place for information seeking, discussion of issues, exposure of multiple perspectives and responding to the views and arguments of others.

Hauser, (2007) further notes that a public sphere is not a debating society but a multiple discursive arena where complex public problems are discussed. This arena is so wide and large that it cut across nations and societies. This discussion provides an ordinary citizen the opportunity of engaging in dialogue that effects his or her life.

McQuail cited in Nwachukwu *et al.*, 2013 opines "Access to the space is free and freedom of assembly, association and expression is guaranteed" (P. 86).

Gutman, (2007) sees public deliberation as a discourse among people on issues that concern the public good and that is initiated in a specific social context and carried out in manner aiming to be reflexive and egalitarian. Through this, public sphere provides individual citizens with more educative goals, contributes to more informed and reflective public judgements, enhances civility and creates a greater sense of political efficacy.

The theory is, in the view of Habermas, 2003, "rooted in network for wild flow of messages with an informative polemical educational of entertaining content" (p. 45). The contents do not come from one central source but from multiplicity of sources, all trying to influence the opinion of one another. Habermas, however, does not believe that the mass media system can provide a good platform for this type of discussion. His fear is rooted in the fact that the system where media moguls turn the content of news coverage into advocacy for a political agenda, format news programmes for entertainment value and structure news programming to garner advertising dollars does not support the deliberative nature of public sphere.

This theory is germane to the study because of its promotion of an arena or forum for discussing issues that affect the people.

In other words, it encourages the coming together or gathering of people in a forum or town hall to seek solutions to their problems.

On the other hand, socio-cultural theory, according to Scott Palincsar (2013 p. 16), Legev S. Vygotsky, a psychologist in Russia who began his work following the Russian revolution of 1917, mostly associated with socio-cultural theory. (Vygotsky 1979), cited in Wertsch & Bivens (1992), argues that the "social dimension of consciousness is primary in time and in fact. The individual dimension of social consciousness is derivative and secondary" (P. 30). The work of socio-cultural theory is to explain how individual mental functioning is related to cultural, institutional, and historical context; hence, the focus of the socio-cultural perspective is on the roles that participation in social interactions and culturally organized activities play in influencing psychological development. In other words, human development, behavior and cognition are shaped by cultural and social factors. This mental functioning of the individual is not simply derived from social interaction; rather, what can be traced to the individual's interactions with others are the specific structures and processes revealed by him or her.

Vygotsky claimed that human cognition, even when carried out in isolation, is inherently socio-cultural because it is affected by the beliefs, values, and tools of intellectual adaptation passed to individuals by their culture. These values and intellectual tools may vary dramatically from culture to culture. In other words, this theory emphasizes the role of culture and society in influencing individual thoughts, beliefs and actions.

This theory is important to this study because it states how culture influences people's behavior in a society.

## **Review of Concepts**

### **Mores**

The term, mores was coined or introduced by US Sociologist, William Graham Sumner which can be understood as the norms which are very strictly enforced due to their importance in maintaining the wellbeing of the group. They are considered essential to the core values of the society, so widely observed and have great moral significance. As they are thought to maintain welfare and bring prosperity to society, deviation from them is a loss for the society. Without them, a society is believed to become weak and the social structures fragile. These are more specifically stated and hence are more effective.

Since mores deal with higher values of people, violating them threatens those values. In order to protect the values, there is some kind of a norm, rule or law that goes along with it to ensure its

effectiveness. They help in classifying and deciding the values of right and wrong and form the instruments of social control. They are deeply rooted in society such that they hardly change. They include repugnance for societal taboos, contribute in the creation of legislation in order to prohibit those taboos and help in giving proper direction to the actions of the people by making them aware of what the norms of the society are and the needs to be followed compulsorily.

Although, mores are not written down and are informal, their violation is accompanied by severe punishment and can even result in societal or religious exclusions. Such violation in a society can be of many types, such as stealing things from others, engaging in sexual relations before marriage etc.

Mores emerge through group interaction. The people learn these norms within their groups lives and seek direction to their activities with their help. These are formed within the groups which become so important with time. Many times they touch the border of law. People feel strongly about the more prevalent in society and believe that without them the society would collapse (Sabnam, 2019 p. 26).

In any society, there are practices and behaviours that are considered customs, traditions or social norms. These are things like etiquettes, forms of dress for different occasions and much more. Some of these are loose rules that societies follow and others are strict rules that have consequences when they are broken. "Mores are norms which members of society consider very important for the continuation of human groups and societies. They portray a society's sense of morality therefore anyone that violates the mores of a society could be subject to moral indignation" (Ifeanacho, 2015, p. 158). Failure to conform to mores will result in a much stronger social response from the person or people who resent one's failure to behave appropriately. Mores arise when groups live together long enough to develop shared understandings about how members should behave. They can be based on customs, religion or peer pressure.

They are a set of moral standards and moral obligation as dictates of reason that distinguishes human acts as right or wrong or good from bad. Furthermore, "mores are the traditional customs and codes of behaviour that are typically followed in a place or in a group, but are not codified by law. In other words, mores are the unwritten rules of social behaviour backed by morality" (Rotzer cited in Nickerson, 2023).

In other words, Mores refer to what is

morally right and morally wrong. That is why its violations result in strong disapproval and even severe punishment. Persons who violate the norms are ostracized, imprisoned or killed. As such, mores exact a greater coercive force in shaping our values, beliefs, behaviour and interactions (Bagunas, 2023).

### **Folklore**

One of the most important aspects of life in traditional African societies is the act of relishing different aspects of folklore.

Folklore of a people is known through riddles, legends, myths, proverbs, folktales, poetry and other forms of artistic expression and passed down from generation to generation through oral tradition. Folklore, therefore, is the totality of all the above activities which originate among a people. Wikipedia defines folklore as that which includes "Stories, music, dance, legends, oral history, proverbs, jokes, popular beliefs, customs and so forth, within a particular society comprising the tradition. It is also the set of practices through which those expressive genres are shared.

Indeed, it is the vehicle through which these constituents of a people's lore are passed down from generation to generation via oral tradition. Oral tradition is the verbal transmission of messages by word of mouth. Oral tradition is made up of verbal testimonies about the past which are transmitted from one generation to another. According to Toyin Falola. "Oral traditions have many forms and types and these include songs, genealogies, proverbs, legends, folktales, praise, poems, place names, myths, rituals etc" (2015 p. 61). This shows that oral tradition is an indispensable tool for passing information of the constituents of folklore from generation to generation.

The term folklore is generally used to refer to the traditional beliefs, myths, tales, and practices of a people which have been disseminated in an informal manner. The term 'folklore' was first coined by William J. Thoms in 1846. Thoms was a British antiquarian who wanted a simple term to replace various awkward phrases floating around at the time to discuss the same concept; phrases such as 'popular antiquities', 'the lore of the people', and 'the manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, proverbs etc, of the olden times'.

Oring (2011) writes that Folklore can be described as traditional art, literature, knowledge, and practices that are passed on in large part through oral communication.

According to him, the information thus transmitted expresses the shared ideas and values of a particular group. And that folklore is that part of culture that 'lives happily ever after'.

In the academic world, the study of folklore is most often known as *folkloristic*, although it is sometimes also termed folklore studies or folk life research. As an academic discipline, folklore shares methods, and insights with literature, anthropology, art, music, history, linguistics, philosophy, and mythology.

From the above, it can be deduced that the most common definitive element in folklore is its representation of oral tradition, meaning traditions that have been transmitted in an oral manner.

Moreover, even in literate societies, there are many activities, such as brushing one's teeth or driving a vehicle, which are orally transmitted and yet not usually thought of as folklore.

Accordingly, oral transmission alone is not seen as something that is enough to make something folkloric. Also, problematizing the link between folklore and oral tradition is the fact that some practices that are widely deemed folkloric - such as epitaphs or chain letters, folktales also involve transmission through text. Similarly, some other folkloric practices, such as traditional dances, games, gestures, and symbols, are often transmitted visually rather than orally.

Perhaps' it will be better put in the sense Ricky (2005) says it, 'Folklore can be expressed in various forms, in African society, its beauty is best perused in oral form, it represents one of Africa's longest traditions, and come in the name of night entertainment, educative narrative, allegory etc,' (p.22)

Various views have been expressed about folklore in human society with some describing it as the most important means of expressing African culture.

Babara, et al (1961) assert that folklore as an integral of oral tradition has remained strong despite the growth of formal education and marked increase in literacy rate.

Cowley (1971) reiterates this when he notes that orally transmitted tradition is not only limited to the illiterates in a literate society, but rather can be found at virtually every level in every society and is in no danger of dying out.

Babara et. al & Cowley both agree that the threats posed by the presence of Western education and the resultant technology have not been able to erase the power and vibrancy of folk tradition, as folklore has continued to be reckoned with by people .of classes.

Sutherland (1976) is in alliance with this line of thought, he says:

Folklore is the most functional aspect of the traditional verbal art, and through it the beliefs morals and social attitudes of the people are transmitted from one

generation to another. So powerful is this medium that it survived the destructive influence of the missionary activities and colonialism (p.89).

She however regrets that in cotemporary African society, there is dearth of official patronage of this cultural means of expression. According to her, it is unfortunate and very necessary to encourage African arts experts to acquire more knowledge of their own indigenous games in the first place.

Continuing, Sutherland (1976) says:

In view of this, one cannot say with any measure of equanimity that the highly educated segment of our people knows and gives it worthy notice. The necessity arises because of the dreadful history of how these games have been discouraged, or virtually banned by educational policy; neglected or with disdain in educational institutions (p.212).

According to Chaudhury (2013) the term folklore has acquired a variety of meanings down the ages, however, in common parlance, the term folklore could be understood to denote the traditional expressions of a people as seen in their proverbs, songs, tales, legends, myths and riddles.

He describes folklore as an inviolable part of the life of an African community, being a favourite recreation to many and a means of educating the mind within the fold of the community. In Chaudhury's view, folklore in traditional societies has highly educative value, it imparts knowledge on the groups' history, values of warfare, morals, wise sayings etc.

Folklore is usually expressed through word of mouth, although in modern times the Internet has become a pivotal source of folklore. The term folklore may also be used to define the comparative study of folk knowledge and culture. Folklore is oral history that is preserved by the people of a particular culture, consisting of traditions belonging to that culture. These traditions usually include music, stories, history, legends, and myths. Folklore is passed down from generation to generation and is kept active by the people in the culture.

### **Oramedia in Africa**

Africa has different forms of traditional media and communication systems called by several labels: Folkmedia, popular arts, folklore, oral poetry, indigenous communication practices, informal communication, or oral tradition. Although these terminologies manifest specific nuances and diverse intellectual standpoints, they come under the ambit of what Ugboajah (1985) calls oramedia. This view has influenced the interpretations of African traditional communication since then. In specific terms, he conceptualizes oramedia as popular arts, which cover Africa's opera, dance, music, idioms, poetry and folktales. He also argues that oramedia is useful for both interpersonal communication and cultural orientation.

A different typology is proposed by Salawu (2004) which looks at oramedia from the literary arts domain. Three main types of oramedia are identified: (i) Folklore (myths, legends, observances, ballads, practices, beliefs, customs, and superstition); (ii) folktales (fictions, stories and tales told by griots to transmit values and cultural heritage) and (iii) oral poetry (dirge, satire, praise poetry, epic stories, and erotic songs sometimes by local professionals). This classification delves into the literary domain and socio-cultural messaging approaches of the African society. It is similar to the perspectives provided by Panford et al. (2001) which equates oramedia with folklore comprising, storytelling puppetry, proverbs, visual arts, drama, role- j playing, concerts, gong beating, dirges, and songs, drumming and dancing, fables, mythology; legends, and genealogies.

In a documentation of oramedia in East Africa, UNESCO (2008) describes oral tradition as non-physical components of a people's culture which cover performing arts, social practices, social craftsmanship and cosmology and which are part of the intangible cultural heritage integrated

into the social processes and traditions of various populations in the region. They are also essential for transmitting values that embody the history, culture and collective wisdom of the society. However, Ogwezzy (2008) encapsulates all previous typologies in a comprehensive perspective of African traditional communication systems. To her, African communication systems span. Both tradition, verbal and non-verbal communication; iconographic and demonstrative channels; membranophones and aerophones; interlocutors (mediums) and intermediaries; poetry and incantations; and dance, music and songs.

The various classifications described above demonstrate significant overlaps in their conceptions. But the span of elements brought under the rubric of traditional communication is too broad and unwieldy. Some delve into social practices and conventions while others are beyond the realm of oral transmission of information and ideas. Some embrace elements from psycholinguistics and oral literature which are on the borderline of media and communication. In addition, what is described as oramedia is a conglomeration of communication formats, messaging, channels and media types. It also reveals that oramedia is a set of media or a group of channels of communication as well as a pattern of codification peculiar to the African society. This diversity also creates a major challenge in making assumptions and generalizations on oramedia. Despite the conceptual challenges, it is safe to conclude that oramedia expresses a rich tapestry of African traditional communication channels, modalities, approaches and processes.

### **Folktales**

Folktales, as an aspect of folklore, are fictional in nature and the authorship is unknown. A folktale is, therefore, impersonal and could not be taken seriously by the audience. Folktales usually come in the form of fictional stories of persons, villages, animals, gods etc in an attempts to drive home certain messages to the listeners. The nature of folktales normally carries certain meanings, themes, genres and styles of storytelling, and thus differs from culture to culture.

Animal tales are best known as one of the various types of African folktales. Though tales of legends, hunters, adventures, kings and commoners etc are equally common, these tales are usually centered on themes that apply to human experiences. This may include gratitude and ingratitude, loyalty and betrayal, fidelity and infidelity, jealousy between co-wives, rivalry between brothers etc.

These tales, in traditional African society, were told by elders at night, sometimes around a mother's or grandmother's fire while the evening meal was being cooked.

It would amount to stating the obvious to assert that folktales are ingrained in the African traditional system. Accordingly, folktales are part of the folklore of a given culture. The defining element in a folktale is its fictional characteristics (Olarinwoye, 2013). Similarly, the African communication system is replete with elements of folktales. Indigenous techniques of communication include songs, role playing, riddles, proverbs and telling of folktales that are used in most indigenous societies (Fabusuye, 2014). It reflects blatantly in every sphere and fabric of the African society, sticking with its people from cradle to the grave. Listening to folktales momentarily transports the audience, mostly children, to a different world. Later reflection connects the folktale world to the real world that they would soon face as adults (Penjore, 2005). It goes without saying that folktales reveal the identity and uniqueness of a people. A society expresses itself through oral tales. These, in turn, reflect the society and its beliefs (Obiechina, 1967, cited in Kekinde, 2000).

### **Proverbs**

Proverb is an element of folklore which is usually concise but carries with it a deep meaning for thought. There is hardly any African society without proverbs. Proverbs are, however, not the exclusive preserve of Africans. All societies of the world use proverbs to add flavour to arguments and topical comments. They are used to instruct, admonish starts or parry a verbal attack, soothe,

or caution. Many tales, particularly those told to children, have a moral ending which makes use of proverbs.

Among the Yoruba-speaking people of Nigeria, "the proverb is believed to be the words horse, just as the word is the proverb's horse. If a word is lost, a proverb is used to search for it" (Taiwa, 2016, p. 36). Proverbs are used to 'sum up a situation, pass judgment and recommend a course of action' (Awe, 2010, p. 5) Nwoga 2016, divides proverbs into two groups namely:

"Those which directly reinforces ideas by recalling traditional wisdom to support a given statement and those commenting on situational behavior in praise or rebuke. These kinds of proverbs are often indirect. The audience is not necessarily the culprit as it is aimed at smoothening the rough edges of communication" p. 36.

Proverbs play a great role in passing knowledge of the ancient wisdom and experience of several ages from one generation to another. This is why the Nigerian author, Chinua Achebe, in his book *Things Fall Apart*, describes proverbs as "the wisdom of many and the wit of one" p. 23

Proverbs are drawn from all activities of society, natural activities and phenomena. In many society, proverbs act as a catalyst of knowledge, wisdom, philosophy, ethics and morals which provoke further reflection and call for deeper thinking and wisdom and consideration of issues.

Proverbs are viewed in many societies to occupy a very central position in creative arts, oration and moral teachings. It is also used to bring about peace where there is hatred particularly during settlement of disputes, conflicts and misunderstandings to facilitate pardon where there is injury.

Both on traditional and modern Africa societies, proverbs are generally accepted as the quintessence of passage of ideas and ethics to the old and the young. In fact, a scenario is best explained when a speaker encapsulates his thoughts and ideas in a suitable and appropriate proverbs. Proverbs have become ingrained in Africa societies as such no single individual or a group can claim sole authorship of the proverbs that have come to be part of communication in contemporary society. This is because almost all the proverbs in use in today's world have their versions and meaning in every society. Africa is rich in its oral arts and proverbs are the most widely used of the continent's traditional oral arts. Proverbs do not only play an aesthetic role of beautifying speeches and ideological representations. They serve as an acceptable medium of transmitting knowledge and convention from one generation to another. Proverbs are methods used mainly by old people to express themselves tactfully and concisely while giving warnings, moral lessons and advice.

The traditional wisdom which is contained in proverbs can be applied to understanding the values of the society and personal abilities. Indeed, proverbs are potent in giving one the energy to undertake ventures that can change one's society for the better.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted Focus Group Discussion (FGD), participant observation, and interview which are qualitative research methods aimed at assessing critically the roles of folktales and proverbs in re-instilling mores and moral values in the youths of Emohua Local Government Area.

### **Population of the study**

The population of youths in Emohua Local Government Area is projected to be 130,191 using annual projection rate of 2.7 as available on the website of the National Population Commission.

### **Sample size and sampling Techniques**

This study used purposive sampling techniques to painstakingly select 22 participants from the 14 wards of Emohua Local Government Area who are knowledgeable about the culture of the people as well as the importance of folktales and proverbs in inculcating mores and moral values to the youths in Emohua Local Government Area.

Out of the 22 Participants, 14 interviewees were selected for interview while 8 participants were selected for focus group discussion.

According to Okwandu (2016), in this sampling method, "selection of sampling units is based upon the assumption that a researcher can identify sampling units that serve the research purpose (p. 122).

*Qualitative researchers usually opt for a small sample size. As a result, sampling in qualitative research is purposive. Meaning that research subjects/samples are selected for their typicality as the best exemplar that represents or reflects all the attributes of other samples that were left out (Maxwell, 2017, p. 8).*

In the same vein Fussch et al (2017, p. 932) explain that the non-use of statistical sample premises the fact that "one is not looking for a representative sample but instead the sample one looks for in qualitative research is a sample that represents particular participants who have the knowledge, skill and expertise to answer the research questions". They further argue that in qualitative sampling, one should focus on quality as opposed to quantity data.

Similarly, Silverman and Marvasti (2008) affirm that qualitative sampling is based on how relevant what is to be sampled will be to the explanation the researcher would pursue in their research. In the words of (Silverman & Marvasti, (2008) "qualitative sampling targets settings and interactional contexts that are replete with the kind of data necessary for the explanation the researcher will construct" (p.167).

## **Findings**

In the course of carrying out this study, a number of findings were uncovered. To this end, it was revealed that the causes of moral erosion in Emohua L.G.A. are lack of parental influence on children, peer pressure to indulge in nefarious activities, glorification of social vices by government officials, lack of proper moral upbringing, illiteracy, paucity of welfare packages for the less privilege in society, bad governance, corruption, moral bankruptcy of the political class and poverty.

Furthermore, it was discovered that folktales and proverbs play a vital role in re-instilling mores and moral value in society by encouraging member of a given culture to conform to standard of behaviour acceptable within their domain and imbibe values, such as, honesty, kindness, humility and respect for elders as well as shape the behaviour of people.

Moreover, finding also showed that integration of folktales and proverbs into school curricula, community quiz competitions on folktales and proverbs as well as community gatherings that teach folktales and proverbs can help in restoring morally upright society in Emohua L.G.A.

It has also been revealed that introduction of folktales and Proverbs in homes as well as availability of folktales and proverbs in a readable form can reawake societal norms and moral values in Emohua L.G.A.

Additionally, findings discovered also that sharing folktales about heroes, heroines as well as role models who have demonstrated good values and norms together with sharing folktales and proverbs that connect youths to their cultural roots highlighting traditions and customs which reward good behaviour can morally rearm the youths in Emohua LGA.

It was also revealed that folktales such as snail and tortoise, carnivorous mother and her son, a rich man and a stout can be used to champion moral rebirth in Emohua LGA.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Drawing from the findings, the following recommendations are hereby put forward:

- (1) There should be re-introduction of folktales and proverbs in homes so as to teach children and youths the vital norms and moral values of traditional African society which will effect moral rebirth in Emohua L.G.A.
- (2) Again, importance should be placed on the teaching of folktales and proverbs in school since it will bring about good behavioural change by inculcating values and good norms of society to children and youths in Emohua Local Government Area.
- (3) It is also germane to submit that folktales and proverbs should be converted into readable forms like books since it will help in teaching moral lessons and values to children and youths as well as speed up the restoration of morally upright society.
- (4) Elders and community leaders should continually organize quiz competitions on those folktales and proverbs that contain moral lessons that touch on values and good norms of society that will make the youths and children conform to morally acceptable behaviour within their area as well as reawakening societal values and re-instill mores and moral values in the youths of Emohua L.G.A.

### CONCLUSION

Social vices have been pervasive across communities in Emohua Local Government Area because of moral turpitudes that have become prevalent and trendy among a number of youths within the Local Government Area who viewed indulgence in criminality and depravity as a means to achieve fame, wealth and respect within their domain leading to lack of meaningful development in the area.

Parents, however, should live up to their responsibility of proper upbringing of their children in order to bring about moral values and norms which will foster peaceful co-existence among the people within the Emohua Local Government Area.

There should be re-introduction of folktales and proverbs in homes to inculcate needed values and norms to the youth. It is worrisome that this important driver of moral values has been relegated to the back ground in society that is in dire need of moral reawakening for restoration of peace and it is the reason for speedy erosion of our moral values and norms that has become a big threat to society. For this reason, there must be a decisive action geared towards returning families in Emohua Local Government Area to where values and norms of society will be taught and imbibed in homes.

It is when parents begin to mould the character of their children from homes that we will have responsible and law-abiding citizens who will bring about the much desired peace and re-instill values and norms as well as development in Emohua Local Government Area.

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