
THE IMPACT OF FULFULDE FOLKTALES ON THE MORAL
DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN IN A SOCIETY

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Abstract

This research examines the impact and relevance of ffulde folktales in the moral development of children in a society. The study bridges the vacuums of looking or referring folktales as a mere entertainment without making any impact. This study focuses on availing a reliable information from a real-line and a meaning sources. Folktales is a manifestation of the creativity of humans who live in collective and owns it, where these creativity are passed down from generation to next generation orally. It is very popular with people because it can be used as a role model and humorous consolation. Therefore, tales usually contains shaping of character or moral education and entertainment for the people. The study reveals that today's children have abundant opportunity to access this oral genre through current technological gadgets available for use in collection, documentation, dissemination and promotion of folktales. It also made significant impact to the cultural, social and educational heritage of the Fulani people and beyond, where this contribute meaningfully to society in many ways. It is concluded that these tales significantly make impact on the moral development of the younger generation on the struggles that can be used as a lesson for every daily life of human being.

Keywords: Fulfulde Folktales, Moral Development, Muyal, Semteende, Teaching Morality.

Introduction

This paper explores the contributions cultural fulbe folktales offer in the moral development of children in a typical society. this study offer a giant stride in discussing how fulbe folktales contributes in the upbringing of younger generation, in order to making them useful to their societies. Children nowadays were distorted with western moral values, where generational influence emanate from the peer group and the attitude of community members towards the cultural heritage of fulbe. Moral values are crucial for personality development, acting as an inner compass that guides ethical choices, builds strong character (honesty, empathy, integrity), fosters self-discipline and promotes positive social behavior, enabling

individuals to navigate challenges, build trust and contribute meaningfully to society, forming a foundation for a principled and resilient life.

According to Hurlock (1977), morals are ethical norms, the idea of life that's promoted by most specific social orders. The moral is expounded to understanding good and bad. Good is taken into account moral, while crime is taken into account immoral behavior. Barcalow (1994) says that morals is analysed by the activities and possible activities of others and might be analysed nearly as good or bad; and feasible or infeasible; mandatory; for bidden or permissible; commendable or answerable.

Every society has its own hereditary narrative literature which can be traced

from its folklore (Kuna, 2025). This study outlined the contributions of folktales offer to the moral development and how it depicts the society in general. It is important to study tales narrated by Fulbe speakers and how it serves as tools in setting the moral standard of the children. The significance of children participating in narrating or listening to the tales was highlighted in this paper. The value of folktales was evaluated in order to see how they fit in a fast changing society (Kuna, 2025).

To grasping qualities, morals are a portion of values, to be specific morality. Moral values are associated with behavior of human around good or evil. This can be a form of belief received by the general public about attitudes, actions, behavior, obligations, morals and politeness. Awareness of certain great and awful things is relative. It implies that anything that is generally calculated good for somebody might not be good for one more person. An individual's assumption about morals and values is normally affected by the perspective.

In addition, moral values are values related to habits, manners and behavior. The word "moral" is usually meant permanently as a bad person so that in human life, it is found in the wording of goodness as people in general (Budiningsih, 2004). Roundly, moral education is the norm and understanding that determines things that are calculated good and bad. Darajat (1977) within the book Hurlock's Child Development says that morals are:

- (1) Behavior that's per social standards and is meted out sincerely by individuals;
- (2) Responsibility for his or her actions; and
- (3) Consideration for group peace, while personal desires or benefits

are passed on to the opposition who has secondary interests.

Children study good or bad, right and wrong from their parents and other relations or their immediate surroundings. They learn everything they have like learning a way to eat things in a very great way, a way to talk, a way to act etc. And after they are adults, they are going to interact with others who don't seem to be usually relations like neighbors and therefore the community. Children need socialisation to search out how they must act amid the community and cultural environment.

Moral values are individuals' convictions and values that adjust to normal principles of what is good and bad also about individuals. Different moral and ethical standards are supported determining standards of right and wrong and supported people's habits or agreements. If people think that some behavior is sweet, then it is also good for his or her values. Moral emerges from human cognisance to create themselves and society, create approaches to address mistakes and improve what has been good. The moral is that the basis of human existence as a controller of the perfection of life. Moral values rise out of human conscience, which is capable to determine behavior.

On the other hand, an understanding of Character Building concerning language is constructed from 2 syllables builds (character) and character. Meanwhile, a character may be a behavior, manner, personality, or character which distinguishes one another from others. Module Introduction to characteristic conduct and good behavior supported fulbe values. The purpose of character building is to develop the nation's character to be able to realise the noble values of fulbe. This character building serves to build up the essential potential to be kind, think well and behave well;

correcting poor behavior and reinforcing good behavior and separate cultures that are not following the noble values of Fulani. The scope of character building includes families, education units, civil society, political society, government, the business world and mass media. Researching moral values and character building in folklore can help children learn things related to moral development, determine what is beneficial and what not to do in their social environment.

Folklore Conceptualisation

Folklore is a traditional story which plays an important role in shaping character(s) of children because it is full of moral values, guidelines and lessons because in folklore, there is an implied meaning containing advices and moral messages, (Nadeak, 2020). Folklore is a culture that has been attached to community groups. Therefore, the storyline, languages, traditions and cultures that are present in the stories are frequent have closeness to the owner or even a reflection of it (Daulay, 2014). Folklore could give a big effect for shaping character, full of messages of moral values to be conveyed in one generation to the next generation. They provide and deliver their children and grandchildren into society with good values (Siregar, et.al. 2018).

One of the ways in which a child is delivered to his community with such moral is by telling folk tales to them. Folklore become guidelines and also become a role model to behave well because in folklore there is an implied meaning containing advice and moral messages. Desi (2019) said that; folklore as one cultural heritage holds various mysteries, in the form of history and values the past that must be explored and its existence calculated. Folklore are not only used as the conveyor of opinions, ideas and values but can also

be used for understanding information to others, storing and passing on these ideas and values from generation to the next generation (Syukria and Siregar, 2018).

The Components of Teaching Morality through Folktales

The way something appears when viewed from a certain direction or perspective and how it appears when construed from a certain point of view. The significant view or description of one's appearance or expression with regard to the situation which enables one to look in a particular direction, in relation to his character can be seen and easily detected from his moral capability. Morality is a product of basic human psychological characteristics shaped over pre-historical and historical time by dialectical transaction between what individuals do and what they are supposed to do in the culture in which they live. The sources of morality these days include religion which defines right and wrong, human nature which is the standard of good and evil, secular morality such as consequentialism and free thought, the treatment of the family and the school are also sources of moral knowledge and there is also morality in marital living.

The components of teaching morality through folktales include religion, home, environment, school, family, textbook, and so on. The research has come across some tales that teach the acts of religion and also shows the importance and significance of being a religious person. Religion as a source of morality is defined as the right and wrong by the rules set forth by God and interpreted by religious leaders with the respective faith. There are many types of religions in Nigeria but the major ones are Islamic religion, Christian religion and traditional religion. Morality and religions are inseparable children learn

morality from the rules governing the religion. These three religions mentioned above are built in the list of do's and don'ts of codes by which their adherents should live. Individuals who are followers of a particular religion will generally uphold that religion's behavioral code.

Religion

Many religions have values through folktale regarding personal behavior meant to guide adherents in determining between what is right and wrong. This include good thoughts, respect the views of others, good deeds, children should tolerate one another, and work together for the progress of the society. These folktales are outlined and interpreted by various sources such as in Holy Book, oral and written traditions, and religious leaders. Children from different religions may derive ideas of morality by the rules and laws set forth in their respective authoritative guides and by their religious leaders. The religions through tales provide different ways of dealing with moral behaviors.

Socializations

There are some that teach us how to mingle with the immediate people around us. The people are within our social environment. Although some social rules can be seen, folktale as the result of their reification of customs is seen to be reproductive by being successful. Thus, social intercourse between spouses is usually required and the children should be informing that religion forbids contraception; intercourse during menstruation may forbid especially to female children. Despite that, there are social factors that cause immorality on the society, which include lack of parental guidance; greed and selfishness are also the major causes of immorality to the society. Children should be aware of these immoral acts other like corruption, examination

malpractice, and lack of loyalty which provoke sanction, including ostracism, and in war time even more severe penalties.

The School

School is another component of teaching morality. This is where the moral can be obtained through folktale. This authority is clear in the treatment of the family and the school as sources of moral knowledge. The image of the family in the contemporary society is ambiguous, for although, parents, siblings and other relative are portrayed as central fact of the child's own moral duties, they are hardly ever portrayed as sources of moral enlightenment. That place has been usurped by the public functionaries of the school itself, making the family the target of moral development rather than the source.

The Home

Home can truly be the base where the act of tale telling is being done. It is well known to everyone that morality begins at home. So, some parents especially the mothers used to teach their children the aspects of humanity through tales. This research also comes across some tales that teach moral lesson and provide the forum for child cognitive preparation.

The Textbooks

Textbook is another source of morality in school. Textbook is used as a moral source of knowledge. It helps to define its institutional context as authoritative. We have already seen that lessons have sometimes been altered in newer textbooks to move away from stories and plays, but this has not been the case universally. It is still an important pedagogical strategy not to set out moral precepts in isolation, but to nest them within an image of idealized life whether within the family, on the streets or elsewhere. In primary school, textbook is also the sole representative of the state. We read stories in our

literature books. Those kinds of tales teach us so many things in our life, how to respect our elders, teachers, seniors and how to acquire knowledge and some certain skills of education. Even in our traditional schools, a child likes to learn moral behavior regarding his entire life through the narrative he heard from his teachers or narrators and also some adventures of the past schools and leaders. For example, the myth of Bayajidda and the Legend of Arabia and so on, all those kinds of stories prepare the child's mind in so many ways like being brave, strong, hearted, well mannered, trustworthy, confident as well as distinguishing between the good and bad going. Therefore, the above points are the sources of moral lesson.

The Fulani Cultural Influence on Children Socio-emotional Development

In Fulani cultures, children grow up with many social interaction partners. This is usually the case in extended families where children live in addition to their biological parents, with grandparents, uncles, cousins and aunties in majority of cases. The Fulani ethnic group has a strong moral cultural value known as "pulaaku" a social capital that refers to the social relationships within a community that include trust, norms, and social networks (Green & Haines, 2011). Pulaaku is defined as a 'moral code of conduct' or a 'way of proper being' of Fulani ethnic group (Riesman, 1998). The concept of pulaaku is also understood as a set of behaviours that occurs in many areas of human relationships, through actions, behaviors or attitudes in which it is expected that a person shows decent behavior, good manner and restraint. The dominant traits of Laawol Pulaaku or the Fulani way are munyal, hakkiilo, semteende, sagata and an intimate understanding of

both the Fulfulde language and people (Burnham, 1996).

These fulani concepts will be explained below as they represent the core foundations of emotional development of Fulani children.

Munyal

This is a cross between strength and courage in adversity and a stoic acceptance or endurance of the supposedly pre-ordained vicissitudes of life. It is often translated as patience. According to Fulani cultural tradition, Munyal has to be shown in the face of adversity and even if it is harmful to the individual. For instance Hardo Djaligué a Patriarch in Kongola Said village told us that "a Fulani person despises humiliation and values a sense of dignity. In order to avoid humiliation, he is ready to undergo hardship and will resist it without showing any weakness and to him this is Munyal," which to us can be understood as being patient in the face of adversity? He added: "our children too, are raised with the sense of Munyal so that they can face any life tribulations; they can show ngornkaku that is manhood."

Semteende (shame)

This is best described both as a lacking of restraint (gacce/yaage) and self-control in daily social interactions. It is most often translated as shame but it also connotes shyness. When someone acts shamefully, Ful? e say "o semti" which means the person has done something of shameful nature, or alternatively, "o walaa semteende", here it means the person has no shame. In other words, a pullo must know of the social constraints on behaviour and be able to avoid contravening them in all situations, especially in front of others. A true Fulani is in total control of his emotions and impulses. Developmentally a Fulani child is groomed not to express his or her

emotions in public. How do parents help him/her develop *semteende*? It is done by helping children manage their emotion which involves creating and maintaining children's feelings of safety, calm and optimism. To achieve it, their needs have to be met by a caring adult which is equally similar to the stand of theoretical developmental psychology as stated through emotion reflections which according to when an adult recognizes the emotions a child may be experiencing and reflects this back to the child using words to name the emotion, matching voice tone and body language. This can provide great emotional learning.

Hakkiilo (hakkille)

This conveys a blending of prudence and shrewdness in livelihood management and face-to-face encounters. Fulani people in general and children in particular are expected to show a behaviour that is based on *hakkiilo*. During our observation, we realized that most often mothers scold children for not showing *hakkiilo*. While carrying out his/her chores be it fetching water or bringing a chair to a visitor, the child is not supposed to make a single mistake and he/she does so, he/she is reminded for not having foresight or not being prudent. More often you can hear a mother reprimanding a child saying “*wala hakkiilo*” which means that the child has no foresight. One can equate the concept of *hakkiilo* with emotional understanding as it requires shrewdness and being prudent in dealing with others especially with the elders. Right from childhood, children in Fulani culture are expected to be careful in dealing with others so as to avoid affecting others' feelings and when they do so, the behavior is qualified as shrewdness.

Inaande

This refers to courage or hard work. Children are expected to be courageous

in the face of challenges and be involved heavily in whatever they do. It is equivalent to self-regulation which is acquired through sensitive and comforting care from warm, supportive and trusted adults helps children develop self-regulation. Children can also learn how to regulate their feelings by watching their parents and caregivers manage their own feelings and behaviors.

Contributions of Fulfulde Folktales on the Moral Development of Children

Fulfulde folktales have made significant impact to the cultural, social and educational heritage of the Fulani people and beyond, this can contribute meaningfully to society in many ways which include;

Promoting Cross-cultural Awareness

As noted from the subsection 4.1 above, it is observed that the identified dominant themes can help the young understand other culture that has common ground with their culture and how other cultures prepare younger ones against future challenges, this is indicated from the tale *Still the mind is not at rest* where a statement;

One day, they had a meeting and said; we all know what our problem is in this forest, we don't have any peace of mind because of this strong one. So, we need to provide a lasting solution to this bitter situation.” They made a stand that “from today onward, we will make a selection, and whoever the selection falls on, will be taken to the strong one to eat at its house; so that it wouldn't be coming and taking them one after another.

From the statement, it clearly showcases how the animals are trying to unite against the strong one. This demonstrated cooperation among them

to fight against their right and freedom in the forest, with which if they couldn't unite and realize their position the strong one will finish them one after another.

Similarly, such types of folktales allow children to realize the impact of doing things together, thereby developing and realizing the impetus of doing things in united form, as such this will make them develop the habit and continuing supporting each other positively. This can not only be found in Fulfulde folktales, but it is being a subject in most of the cultures, where the mode of narrations differs from one culture to the other. However, having such moral value in mind which was narrated for them will allow them to realize that folktales harness and strengthen the way they think and do things, while helping them develop cultural awareness as they mingle with others. This will as well support them understand that the inculcated moral value gain from the stories and folktales can not only entertain them, but as well support them to understand the shared common value of their culture with other cultures; and in most cases such will make them understand the significant value of the folktales, because whatever good can significantly be adopted and considered positive to all cultures.

Preserving Cultural Heritage

Folktales are passed down through generations and can help preserve a society's history, customs and tradition. It is noted that Fulfulde folktales have been recognized as an important part of the intangible cultural heritage of the Fulani people and efforts are being made to document and preserve them for future generations. So, many moral values are recognized and specific to the Fulani people akin to *semteede*, *nyadam*, *ngorgu*, *edaam*, etc these accumulated properties are tied to the Fulfulde culture. Children were trained to meet up the

demand of the culture, so they can not deviate from the core value of the culture. It is noted in a statement from the tale of the **two co-wives** as thus;

"I will be giving out my cows for you to breed them for me." Inna Mamman quickly said, Ah! It is surprising! Is it only breeding? I can do that!"

From the above, it was observed that Inna Mamman is a typical Fulani woman, where she agrees to rear his cattle's without hesitation. It is a common fact that only Fulani people were known with rearing of cattle's and it continues to be one of the most noticeable property that can be preserved for many generations to come; whoever is seen with animals s/he usually be mistaken as a Fulani even if s/he is not, because rearing of animals is one of the most basic property that connects one mind set to the Fulfulde culture. So, such things are usually seen from folktales and when narrated to the kids, will always remain in them to remember is part of they inherited from their forefathers. In connection to the main subject, folktales of this nature contribute immensely to the moral development of Fulani children.

Entertainment

Fulfulde folktales have provided entertainment for generations of Fulani people, offering a window into a rich and vibrant cultural heritage. This can be observed from the **tale of the two co-wives** as thus;

By evening, she planned to take them home, among these cows there's a cow that can speak. As they were heading home, the cow sped to the front and started singing. "Buu-Buu nyaako! Buu-Buu nyaako! We were the ones

*that ate the delicious soup,
we drank from the clean
water. Take good care of
their child!"*

*She continued breeding the
cows nicely, and the cow kept
singing that her child be
taken care of.*

From the above, it signifies the psychological contributions such accrued in the mind of fulfulde child. From the song sang by the narrator, you will realize how happy they are, because anything with singing a song remain in the mind of the a child, s/he remember whatever lesson drive from it easily and try to devoid being a victim especially if such experience is negative; and also share his emotional connection to the song; as such it has connection when it is positive too. Again, this significantly contributes to the psychological development of the child to remember a lot and gainfully harness any ill feeling that come around him.

Social Commentary

Folktales can help children develop reflective thinking about social life. Many Fulfulde folktales offer social commentary, addressing issues such as social justice, inequality and the human condition. This factor has a positive impact on the moral development of the children, thereby reflecting them to understand his/her right, what is being prescribed by law, what is allowed and what is not etc and also inequality and human condition. A statement from the tale of the two co-wives showcase as thus;

*"upon hearing this, the
native doctor took care of
Mamman and repaired his
broken bones better than
he was when he was born!
When they were on their
way home every person
that sees him, keeps*

*staring at his
handsomeness".*

From the above quote, this signify that Mamman is been facing challenges of inequality treatment based on his condition from the people, but through native doctor Mamman broken bones were repaired and became normal even better than may others. This showcased that folktales can equally change the mindset of the children to understand human condition is not permanent, miracle can just happened one day and the story can be change within the glimpse of an eye. However, through folktales children can still understand the value of one another, so that inequality of treatment between them will not be surface, all this can be understood through folktales narrations and it is as well help in developing and sustaining the moral development of Fulani children in addressing the social need of the community.

Promoting Character Education

Folktales can help children learn about positive values, traits and consequences of their actions and decisions. The character of a child can emerge to be highest due to the fact that through what he learns from the folktales, s/he positively became conscious of ill doing to others that s/he should never harm other, s/he should be too conscious of what is good and bad. This very factor consumes almost all the tales, because no tale without any moral lesson that it's portrays; there must be something one should pick from. For example; In the tale of **the Spider and the Hyena** moral value of sharing is portrayed as thus;

*The hyena said to the
spider as they were about
to drink; "Gijo taste my
own".*

From the above statement taste my own seems to emphasise on giving/sharing even if it is small. So, this act is one of

the very required moral values that folktales develop in us and we all need it for the sustainable development. This moral value and many more are what constitute character education to support the moral development of fulbe children in the society.

Conclusion

This study focuses on the significance of fulbe moral values on the development of children, where selected folktales were sourced from the major key informants. The study had provided valuable insights into the use of folktales on the contributions fulbe children, where the study demonstrates extent at which folktales morally uplift the younger generations, the relevance of Fulfulde folktales and its' contributions to the moral development of children in our societies. The study concluded that these tales significantly make impact on the moral development of the younger generation on the struggles that can be used as a lesson for every daily life of human being.

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