

DRAMA, THEATRE AND CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT: A STUDY OF SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN AGO-IWOYE, OGUN STATE

Babajide O. Ogunlana
Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye

Abstract

This study investigates the application and roles of drama and theatre as a means of educating and developing the children in some selected primary schools in Ago-Iwoye in Ogun State. This study is a quantitative and qualitative research that employs both survey with the use of a designed questionnaires and oral interview methods. The research findings reveals that theatre and drama production in school has contributed to the language development, the social development, the appreciation of cultural heritage, the development of retentive memory in pupils, as well as the appreciation of human and ethical values in the pupils of schools in Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State. This study concludes that since most of the public primary schools especially in Ago-Iwoye have incorporated drama and theatre as either co-curricular activities that are used in developing the social lives of their schools and for general child's development, parents will be encouraged and proud to see their children engaged by the school in activities such as drama and theatre because of the overall effects in building confidence and retentive memory in their children. This study therefore recommends that Local governments should employ more specialist teachers in Theatre Arts, Cultural and Creative Arts and performing Arts as teachers in public primary schools, and also organize periodic drama competitions, in order to develop and the arts of drama and theatre at primary schools level.

Keywords: Theatre production; Drama production; Child's development

Introduction

Historically, the field of drama for children in America and other parts of the world has been associated more with pedagogy than with theatre studies; hence, theories are generated more from education than theatre arts or performance studies. However, practitioners cannot agree on one specific title to define their art, so all the terms listed above have been used. These terms usually reflect the various methods practiced by these theorists (Woodson, 1999). "Drama" and "theatre" generally refer to the process and the production, respectively; however, in classroom application, the focus should be shifted from learning drama to emphasizing the process of learning through drama. In this Digest, activities that incorporate drama and theatre methods will be referred to as "dramatic activities."

Theatre and drama are old art and practice that are recognized as a powerful educational tool in schools, offering literacy, emotional, and other social learning opportunities for the pupils, especially in primary schools. Among the African children in primary schools, participation in theatrical activities goes beyond mere entertainment; it plays a crucial role in their literacy, ethical, moral and history and cultural education. In Nigeria, most primary schools in see drama and theatre as ways of entertaining the children or the guests like parents when they pay visits to school. This is why most dramatic or theatrical production in schools are organized mainly during the end of the year or Christmas special concerts to entertain the guest. Apart from this, drama and (or) theatre production are also organized as a competition between couples of schools as special event in some schools year calendar; while some corporate or educational organizations also occasionally

organize drama competitions among schools.

Among the Yoruba people in the South-West Nigeria, especially the people of Ogun State which is mainly occupied by the Egba, Yewa and the Ijebu people, drama and (or) theatre remains a powerful tool imparting knowledge needed for children's development and integration into the culture and values of the people. This is also extended to the primary schools because most of their teachers are also members or indigenous people of the Ijebu Drama and theatre production in these schools play so many important roles in both curricular and extra-curricular activities. This study therefore, is an enquiry into the application of drama and theatre as a means of educating and developing the children in some selected primary schools in Ago-Iwoye in Ogun State. This study aims at identifying the methods use in achieving the desired outcome and its impact, which focus on providing comprehensive literacy and moral education for the children's full and positive development in the society.

Theoretical framework

This study employs Schechner Richard's Performance Theory which stresses on the use of theatre performance in supporting the cognitive and emotional benefits of theatre for children. Studies have shown that participation in theatre can improve literacy and language skills, boost academic performance, and enhance cognitive flexibility. Theatre activities have also been found to promote emotional intelligence, helping children develop empathy, self-regulation, and social skills. This theory is found to be most appropriate for this study because apart from literacy education, theatre performance has been found to be a very useful tool for child's development because it orientates them into the real life experience and general humanity.

Music in Schools

Since music curriculum which is a formal system of learning experience is not properly framed and designed in line to our cultural background for music education, it will continue to have adverse effect to the development and growth in music. Time has come when music educators should look inward to proffer solutions to these problems and improve on the structure of music in our schools in order to help teachers impart the knowledge that will promote lifelong education. The result of this according to Akomolafe (2011) is to bring new innovations to our teaching and learning experiences. When this is done, those who are interested in music education will begin to appreciate the need to pursue the subject as a course of study. As a result of the fact that the present syllabus on music for secondary schools is weak, Faseun (1994) observed that most of the learning content contained on music in the document does not address the reality of Nigerian situation. However, the broad aims of the secondary education within our overall national objectives are to prepare learners for a useful living condition within the society and for higher education (Federal Government of Nigeria 2005). At the junior secondary schools level, Creative Arts which is integrated in nature is made up of the following subjects; Arts, Music and Drama. With Fine Arts-the subject content includes drawing, painting, pattern and design, 3-dimensional works, crafts and arts appreciation. The music scheme of work has the following-introduction to music, theory of music, learning how to play an instrument, listening and history, rhythm, creative music (performance), dance and singing. While for drama, it has play writing and play production in the curriculum content. From here music teachers can make a lot of difference in bringing new methods of teaching to improve on transfer of learning which will increase the motivation and interest of student towards making a career in music.

Furman (2000) observes that numerous researchers have emphasized the tremendous effect drama and theatre can have on children's cognitive and affective development as well as provided abundant

resources for teachers, there still exists a gap between understanding its value and actually applying it. The reasons teachers still hesitate to embrace the ideas of utilizing drama and theatre in classroom activities can be summarized subsequently. In the search for drama resources to develop curricula, teachers are easily overwhelmed by various terms used in drama and theatre, such as creative drama, creative dramatics, developmental drama, process drama, educational drama, improvisational drama, improvisation, informal drama, classroom drama, drama in education and drama in general school activities. Woodson (1999) observed that historically, the field of drama for children in America has been associated more with pedagogy than with theatre studies; hence, theories are generated more from education than theatre arts or performance studies. However, practitioners cannot agree on one specific title to define their art, so all the terms listed above have been used. These terms usually reflect the various methods practiced by these theorists "Drama" and "theatre" generally refer to the process and the production, respectively; however, in classroom application, the focus should be shifted from learning drama to emphasizing the process of learning through drama; in this digest, activities that incorporate drama and theatre methods will be referred to as "dramatic activities."

According to McNamee, McLane, Cooper, and Kerwin, (1985), dramatic activities are crucial to early literacy development because children can be involved in reading and writing as a holistic and meaningful communication process. In addition, researchers have discovered that the mental requirements for understanding drama are similar to those for reading; in relation to the above, Schneider & Jackson, (2000). Stress that the meaning of a reading is generally grasped in a transaction between the reader and the text. "Process drama" refers to a teaching method that involves children in imaginary, unscripted, and spontaneous scenes, in which the meaning is made from the engagement and transactions between the teacher and students. In addition, reading can also stand for a "process of interpreting the world," which endorses drama as a powerful learning medium because it provides a context for children to relate to their lived experience. McNaughton (1997) also observes that in writing development, children who experience drama also appear to be more capable of making appropriate linguistic choices as well as expressing opinions or suggesting solutions

Methodology

Research Design

Aaker et al (2002) define a research design as the detailed blue print used to guide a research study towards its objectives. Method design, sample design and analysis design was used. Cross section studies were used during data collection. According to Saunders et al (2004) a cross sectional design allows data to be collected at a single point in time without repetitions from a sample selected to represent some large population and therefore using minimum time and resources. In this study, the design was favourable because of limited resources like time, labour (personnel) and transport.

Sampling Procedure

The study population involved all community/public primary schools in Ago-Iwoye, Ijebu-North Local government in Ogun State. The main target groups of sampling were the teachers and students. The sampling methods that were used to get the required sample included systematic random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. 10 public primary schools in Ago-Iwoye community of Ijebu-North Local Government area of Ogun State were purposely selected for data collection.

Populations

The population for the study consisted of all the public primary Schools in Ago-Iwoye in Ijebu-

North Local Government Area. There are over 20 public primary schools in Ago-Iwoye in Ijebu-North Local Government Area of Ogun State, out of which ten (10) public primary Schools and five (8) teachers from each School and one (1) head-teacher and one (assistant head-teacher) were randomly selected for the study. The total number of respondents amounts to one hundred (100).

Sample Size

In the study area, 10 schools were selected for data collection, and in each school, and ten five (8) teachers from each School and one (1) head-teacher and one (1) assistant head-teacher were randomly selected to filled semi-structured questionnaires. In each school, head of the school and the music teacher were also orally interviewed. The population studied comprised of both sexes regardless of age, literacy levels and also included persons with disabilities. The total number of respondents was 100.

Table 1

No	Respondents' Distribution	Type of respondents	Number of respondents
1	1 per school	Head-Teachers	10
2	1 per school	Assistant Head-Teacher	10
3	8 per school	Teachers	80
Total respondents			100

Description of the Study Location

The study involved public primary schools which are located in Ago-Iwoye in Ijebu-North Local Government area of Ogun State. Public primary schools were chosen by the researcher because most public primary schools in this area are day schools and therefore all students live with their parents or relatives who are inhabitants of Ago-Iwoye in Ijebu-North Local Government area of Ogun State. The main data sources were from questionnaires and oral interview

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection procedures for this research work employed the primary sources which include the administration of questionnaire for students and teachers in some selected schools in Ago-Iwoye in Ijebu-North Local Government area of Ogun State. Also oral interview with key informants was also conducted. Other procedures include the secondary method which involves getting data through books, journals, magazines and other literary sources.

Key Informant Interviews

Respondents that are directly involved in teaching, leaning and assessment were involved in the interviews. This include the heads of the schools, teachers and few pupils were involved in the study

to capture the key information on the impact of drama production in raising academic performance and child's moral development

Secondary Data

Extensive review of secondary data especially previous studies or research, and previous district reports on the effects of drama productions on academic performance in primary schools and were conducted. Also, the video recording of various drama presentations in different primary schools in Ago-Iwoye were also viewed in order to retrieve relevant information. Other secondary data were collected through consulting different publications relevant to the study from internet and other written documents from books, journals, magazines and others.

Primary Data

Primary data was collected from the field using questionnaire and oral interview with the key Informants.

Instrumentation

Research instrument is a survey, questionnaire, test, scale, rating, or tool designed to measure the variable(s), characteristic(s), or information of interest, often a behavioural or psychological characteristic. In this research, questionnaire, and Interview checklist were used.

Questionnaire

The study involved the use of questionnaire with both open ended and close ended questions. Data was collected from all respondents forming the necessary study population.

Pre-testing was done involving 05 respondents in the study area. Self-administered questionnaire was used where by the respondent was required to read and answer the questions given, while at a given condition i.e. inability to read, the researcher would ask a respondent a series of questions.

Interview Guide

An interview is a conversation between two people (the interviewer and the interviewee) where questions are asked by an interviewer to obtain information from the interviewee to get more information concerning the particular study (Rampur, 2010). In this study the interview guide was constructed to capture supplementary information and for triangulating information that was obtained from respondents. In this case, teachers and heads of schools were picked to be involved in the study.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Data was verified, compiled, coded and summarized prior to analysis. Quantitative data analysis was used to determine the distributions and magnitude of individual variables among respondents which included percentages and frequencies. Percentages under multiple responses were established in open ended questions to describe various issues on the subject matter.

Research Findings

The findings of this study include the data collected through oral interviews and the questionnaire administered in 10 selected public primary schools in Ago-Iwoye, Ijebu North Local government area of Ogun State. The respondents includes the total numbers of 80 teachers and 20 Head-teachers. The information gotten from the research instruments are hereby provided under each tables and

subsections subsequently.

List of the Selected Public Primary Schools in Ago-Iwoye

The names of selected schools, number of teachers in each school and the type of public primary schools for this study in Ago-Iwoye, Ijebu North Local government area of Ogun State are listed in the table below

Table 4.1:

Nos	Name of Schools	No of Music Teachers	Nature of Schools	of Local Government
1	Imososi Primary School	8	Mixed	Ago-Iwoye
2	Omoedumare Primary School	8	Mixed	Ago-Iwoye
3	Imere Moslem Primary School	8	Mixed	Ago-Iwoye
4	Ako Moslem Primary School	8	Mixed	Ago-Iwoye
5	Nawarudeen Primary School	8	Mixed	Ago-Iwoye
6	Local Government Primary School	8	Mixed	Ago-Iwoye
7	Ansar-udeen Primary School	8	Mixed	Ago-Iwoye
8	Olabisi Onabanjo Staff School	8	Mixed	Ago-Iwoye
9	Ahmadiya Primary School	8	Mixed	Ago-Iwoye
10		8	Mixed	Ago-Iwoye

Summary of Information of Respondents

Table 4:2

Participants	Expected Number	Actual Number	Percentages
Teachers	80	80	100%
Head-Teachers	20	20	100%

Table 4.1 above indicates that all 80 questionnaires for teachers and 20 for Head-teachers who were sampled to participate in the study were returned to the researcher, which makes 100% of the expected respondents from teachers and head-teachers. 100% of the expected teachers managed to fill and return the questionnaire to the researcher.

Demographic Information for Students (n= 100)

The students demographic information comprises of sex of all students in all schools.

Table 4.2:

SEX		
MALE:	Frequency	40
	Percentage	40%
FEMALE:	Frequency	60
	Percentage	60%
TOTAL:	Frequency	100
	Percentage	100%

Table 4.2 shows that out of 100 teachers that participated in the study 60% were female and 40% were males. Equal proportion of respondents were done in order to get the opinions on the effectiveness of the instructional materials across classes irrespective of gender. Gender presentation by classes was almost considered.

Demographic Information of the Teachers' Academic Qualifications (n= 10)

This provides the information on the academic/professional qualification of teachers in selected secondary schools for this study.

Table 4:

Non qualified (Professionally)	5	5%
NCE	40	40%
H.N.D (and equivalent)	10	10%
Degree	35	30%
Master	10	10%
Ph.D	0	0%

Table 4.3 above shows the academic qualification of the teachers in the study area. The findings indicate that apart from 5% of teachers that are not professionally qualified to teach in a primary school because they are on teaching practice, the qualification is satisfactory. 40% have NCE, 10% have HND, 35% of teachers have University degree, 10% have masters and none has a Ph.D degrees. In the teaching profession, the teachers in the study area have the required amount of education for teaching in secondary schools.

Demographic Information of the Teachers' Working Experiences (n= 10)

This gave information on the teachers' teaching experience in schools/ This includes the total number of years spent in their present school and their previous schools.

Table 4.4

Teachers' Experiences	Frequency	Total
Between 1-5 years	2	20%
Between 5-10 years	3	30%
Above 10 years	5	50%
Total	10	100%

Table 4.5 indicates that half of the teachers in the study area are relatively newly employed staff of less than 10 years in the teaching profession. 50% of the teacher respondent pointed out that they had less than 10 years in the teaching, while the remaining 50% have over 10 years of music teaching experience in secondary school. The percentage of teachers with above 10 years music teaching experience is satisfactory.

Analysis of Teachers' Responses to the Questionnaire Administered on the Assessment on the Roles of Use of Theatre and Drama on Child's Development

The teachers' responses to the questionnaire administered by the researcher on the assessment on the roles of the use of theatre and drama on Child's development are hereby interpreted in the table below:

Availability of Theatre and Drama as Co-curricular Activity in Primary Teachers' Responses

Information on the availability of theatre and drama as co-curricular activity in Primary are provided by the respondent students from the 10 selected private secondary school in the area of this study as shown in the table below.

Table 4.5.

Availability of Theatre and Drama Production in Primary Schools	Frequency	Percent
Availability of Theatre and drama in Schools	8	80%
Non-availability in schools	2	20%

The table 4.5 above has shown that eight (8) out of ten (10) which is 80 percent of all the schools under this study have theatre and drama production as part of the co-curricular activity in their schools, while only two (2) which is 20 percent of the schools do not have theatre and drama production as part of the activities in their schools.

Table 4.6

S/N	ITEMS	Strongly Disagreed	Disagreed	Agreed	Strongly Agreed
1	Theatre and drama presentation are part of the activities in your school	20 20%	0 0%	20 20%	60 60%
2	Theatre and drama are expensive to organize in primary schools	60 60%	20 20%	10 10%	10 10%
3.	Using theatre and drama for pupils develop a deeper appreciation of co-curricular activities in your school	0 0%	10 10%	25 25%	65 65%
4.	Teachers should receive training on how to effectively use drama presentation as part of the teaching and learning activities.	5 5%	5 5%	50 50%	40 40%
5.	Adequate props and productions stage in theatre hall are available in your school	40 40%	20 20%	20 20%	20 20%
6.	Pupils are encouraged by their parents to take part in Theatre and drama presentations in your school	5 5%	10 10%	65 65%	20 20%
7.	Parents are always financially support theatre and drama productions in your school	6 6%	14 14%	56 56%	24 24%
8.	The choice of drama presentation depends on the content of the lesson	50 50%	30 30%	10 10%	10 10%
9.	There are teachers in field of theatre arts in your school to mentor the students	0 0%	10 10%	80 60%	10 10%
10.	Drama and theatre presentation has contributed to the building of self-confidence in the pupils	0 0%	5 3%	60 60%	35 35%
11.	Theatre and drama production in school has contributed to the language development in the pupils of your school	0 0%	5 5%	75 75%	20 20%
12.	Theatre and production in school has contributed to the social development in the pupils of your school	0 0%	0 0%	80 80%	20 20%
13.	Theatre and production in school has contributed to the appreciation of cultural heritage in the pupils of your school	0 0%	0 0%	90 90%	10 10%
14.	Theatre and drama and production in school has contributed development	0 0%	0 0%	90 90%	10 10%

15.	Theatre production in school has contributed to the appreciation of human and ethical values in the pupils of your school	0	0%	3	3%
		85	85%	12	12%
16	Drama is taught as a subject in your school	10	10%	90	90%
		0	0%	0	0%
17	Theatre and drama should be taught as a subject in public primary schools in Ogun State	10	10%	60	60%
		24	24%	6	6%

Discussion of Findings

From the item 1, 2 and 5 on the table above, it is realized that the most selected schools make provision for theatre and drama production in their schools because the cumulative percentage of the responses for 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed' is 80%. This is because there is encouragement by the school and also there is moral support for the pupils by their parents as shown in item 6 on the table 6.4 above. Only 20% of all the selected schools do not make provision for theatre and drama presentation due to the fact that organizing drama and theatre productions and buying of props needed for the productions are expensive as shown in the responses for 'disagree and strongly disagree' in item 2 and 5 and there is no financial support from the pupils parents as indicated in item 7 on the table 4.6 above. Due to the cumulative percentage of responses with 'agree and strongly agree' in items 10,11,12,13,14 and 15 on table 6.4 above, the findings shows that theatre and drama production in school has contributed to the language development, the social development, the appreciation of cultural heritage, the development of retentive memory in pupils as well as the appreciation of human and ethical values in the pupils of schools in Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State.

From the item 4 on the table above, it is realized that teachers should receive training on how to effectively use drama presentation as part of the teaching and learning activities because the cumulative percentage of the responses for 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed' is 90%. However, the research findings also reveals that drama and theatre is not taught as a subject in all the ten primary schools used as case study in this research work because the cumulative percentage of the responses for 'disagreed' and 'strongly disagreed' is 100%. Despite the fact that none of the ten primary schools in Ago-Iwoye offers drama and theatre as a subject in their curriculum, the cumulative responses in item 17 for 'disagreed' and 'strongly disagreed' was 70% against that theatre and drama should be taught as a subject in public primary schools in Ogun State.

Summary

In Nigeria, most primary schools see drama and theatre as ways of entertaining the children or the guests like parents when they pay visits to school. This is why most dramatic or theatrical production in schools is organized mainly during the end of year or Christmas special concerts to entertain the guest. Apart from this, drama and (or) theatre production are also organized as a competition between couples of schools as special event in some schools year calendar; while come corporate or educational organizations also occasionally organize drama competitions among schools. The Yoruba people in the South-West Nigeria, especially the people of Ogun State which is mainly occupied by the Egba, Yewa and the Ijebu people, drama and (or) theatre remains a powerful tool imparting knowledge needed for children's development and integration into the culture and values of the people in any society. This is also extended to the primary schools because most of their teachers are also members or indigenous people of the Ijebu society. Drama and theatre production

in these schools plays so many important roles in both curricular and extra-curricular activities in the schools.

The research findings in this study have revealed that most selected schools make provision for theatre and drama production in their schools. This is because there is encouragement by the school and also there is moral support for the pupils by their parents. However few schools that do not make provision for theatre and drama productions is due to the fact that organizing drama and theatre productions and buying of props needed for the productions are expensive. Findings also reveals that theatre and drama production in school has contributed to the language development, the social development, the appreciation of cultural heritage, the development of retentive memory in pupils, as well as the appreciation of human and ethical values in the pupils of schools in Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State. The research findings also reveals that drama and theatre is not taught as a subject in all the ten primary schools used as case study in this research work. Despite the fact that none of the ten primary schools in Ago-Iwoye offers drama and theatre as a subject in their curriculum, the teachers and head-teachers are still of the opinion that theatre and drama should not be taught as a subject in public primary schools in Ogun State.

Conclusion

As a result of the research findings as revealed through the data collected for the purpose of this study, this study therefore conclude that, Ijebu-North Local government is one of the local government area in Ogun State with large numbers of public primary schools. Also, Most of the public primary schools especially in Ago-Iwoye have incorporated drama and theatre as either co-curricular or extra-curricular activities that are used in developing the social lives of their schools. and for general child's development This is because the majority of the parents that could not afford the payment of school fees for private Nursery and primary are low-class parents in status will be encouraged and proud to see their children engaged by the school in activities such as drama and theatre because of the overall effect in building confidence and retentive memory in their children.

Recommendations

This study hereby recommends that the Federal government through the Ijebu-North Local government should encourage the public primary schools in the Local government to adopt the use of drama and theatre production as part of the co-curricular activities in primary schools. The Local government should also organize periodic drama competition for primary schools both at zonal and the Local Government levels. Also, government should employ more teachers that are specialists in Theatre Arts, Cultural and Creative Arts and performing Arts as teachers in public primary schools in order to develop and the arts of drama and theatre at primary schools level.

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