

EXPANDING *NWANEKUNWA*'S INFLUENCE ON THE EDUCATION OF A CHILD: APPRECIATING GILLIGAN CAROL THEORY WITHIN AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

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Abstracts

This paper is titled “the influence of *nwaneku* on the moral formation and education of a child as one expands moral development theory by Gilligan Carol within African philosophy of education. *Nwanekunwa* is an Igbo concept meaning a child that nurtures a baby. It is an old traditional African practice where a child, sometimes from a different sociocultural background, is brought into a family for the purpose of nurturing another child. This paper tries to evaluate the possible challenges meted on the nurturer, in her inexperience, and the baby, in her motor sensory stage and consequent academic excursus. The question is ‘can a child nurture a child?’ What we do here, can it in anyway be likened to what is obtainable globally? The researcher among using available data and child development theories discovered that *nwanekunwa* is not a nanny nor a babysitter, neither a childminder nor a governess in the true formal sense of these concepts. *Nwana-ana-eku* at the end of the day develops double moral standard: that of the mother and that of *nwanekunwa*. It was recommended among other things that since a mother’s love is unquantifiable, in choosing our educational career, we must take into consideration our primary role, and get a more experienced person to do the job.

Keywords: *Nwanekunwa*, moral education, African philosophy of Education,

Introduction

Odibo-bu-nne otherwise called *nwanekunwa* is the Igbo concept of a babysitter or nanny. Babysitting means to temporally care for a child. It can be a paid job for all ages. In most Western countries, the type of work for babysitters varies from watching a sleeping child, changing diapers, playing games, preparing meals for the child, and to teaching the child to read or even drive (if the age is right). Depending on the agreement between parents and babysitters. However, there are various organizations who have professionalized this kind of job by producing courses for them (baby sitters), many focusing on child safety, appropriate first aid for infants and children, knowledge of the developmental stages of every child. On the other hand, all information about babysitters are taken including personality details, bio-data, criminal record and so on; This is to ward off possible hebephiles, paedophiles and other unsuitable applicants. All of this is done to ensure safety for both the child, parents, babysitters and their employer.

In the Igbo setting, *odibobunne* performs all these roles and many more. The majority of the, *odibobunne* tend to be an adolescent young boy or girl (from age 7 to 15) from a very poor background usually brought from a village to the city on the promise for a better life. In Igbo setting, *odibobunne* is usually an in-home childcare. The type of work they do includes but not usually limited to cooking for the whole family, cleaning the house, taking care of the children, washing and other domestic tasks in a household. It is worthy to note that most household, prefer female *odibobunne* in their homes. They receives no salary and in most situations, are not sent to school. The common Nigerian would refer to them as maid. They are uncared for and the females are left at the mercy of the male master as they often get sexually molested in all forms. The level of maltreatment meted on them is classified as inhumane by human rights. Hence, it is considered as the most common form of slavery in the modern times (Vanguard Newspaper; December 3, 2017). This paper, therefore, explores through an appreciation of human beings as persons for moral education unto theories of moral formation crowned in Gilligan Carol’s ethics of care and African Philosophy of education.

Human Person as Being-for-Education

Scholars name education, organization and discipline as the three ingredients of development. And the greatest elemental factor of development is *education*. Education is a continued

process of leading one out of ignorance (*educere*) and the consequent act of cultivating or leading one into knowledge (*educare*). However, the primary aim of development is human well-being. The main development is development of the people which nevertheless borders on human, social, economic, industrial growth and sustainable development. And indeed, man is at the centre of it while *education* is the sure way to achieve as no nation grows nor develops beyond the quality of her education that will actually lead to *sustainable development*. According to Iroegbu, (1994) the term development with technology, progress, civilization and jet age are existential catch words as well has become a symbol of neo-colonialist domination of the so-called developed nations against the not-yet developed ones. Many developmental strategies meted out to these poor nations (underdeveloped world, third world, especially with regard to African continent caught between the hinges of third world under-development, ideological progressivism and western hyper-development) are nothing but new sinister methods of assuring their continuous domination.

African Philosophy of Education

Onebunne (2023) has continue to sound that Africa is resourcefully blessed with humanity and naturality. This blessedness attracted the explorers and informed the exploiters. Africa's encounter with the West, in the much lauded exploration that turned into exploitation, left her with indices of developmental growth more wounded: her education was truncated; her politics was bastardized with an alien system of governance; her economy was chancefully fugacious; her socio-cultural life was stifled of any human countenance; her human capital development was ignored and neglected, and her other legacies were completely blackjacked, extorted and stolen. Predicaments is synonymous with Africa since the Imperial intrusion into the continent. Africa remains an unfortunate continent with litany of crisis of continental growth. African civilization was rudely interrupted by colonization and exploration that later turned into exploitation which made African men and women to be scattered all over Europe, America and Latin America, (Onebunne, 2024). This kind of situation has been described by many scholars as part of African predicament, (Onebunne, 2024). The worst scenario to all these predicaments is the carting away, the stealing of precious African heritage. The African heritage they were not able to steal, they demonized. Worst still, their act of twisting history and every attempt to rewrite history to accommodate their prowess while presenting Africans, the cradle of civilization as uncritical remains an act of bad-faith while truncating our education historical contribution to the world. This is why Africa's encounter with the West, in the much lauded exploration that turned into exploitation, left her with indices of developmental growth more wounded: her education was truncated; her politics was bastardized with an alien system of governance; her economy was chancefully fugacious; her socio-cultural life was stifled of any human countenance; her human capital development was ignored and neglected, and her other legacies were completely blackjacked, extorted and stolen.

African civilization was rudely interrupted by colonization and exploration turned exploitation as our men and women were all scattered all over Europe, America and Latin America, (Onebunne, 2024). Then come African Philosophy and by implication African Philosophy of Education. No known discipline nor culture is devoid of critical influence of philosophy. Hence, philosophy cuts across every human knowledge to be acknowledge as such as *mater scientia*, mother of sciences or mother of all knowing. Obenga, T. (1990: 51), in his philosophical discourse writes: "*Philosophy has nourished science. It preceded the sciences. Science ...was born of philosophy*". This is why the place of philosophy in every facet of human excursus is profoundly significant and very unique. Maritain (2005:72) in consonance with these ideas maintains that philosophy is the highest of the human *sciences*, that is, of the sciences which know things by the natural light of reason.

Before now, philosophy was presumed to be of Western heritage. Hence, a question of who is the first philosopher receives Thales as the answer. But a good knowledge of the traditions of philosophy cancels such when it is a historical fact that Socrates and his Ionian scholars of

whom, ancient history as well as contemporary history, proved that all Greek Philosophy often referred to as Ancient Philosophy had an Oriental source, (Onyewuenyi, 1993). Obenga (1990) reiterated this age-long hidden but necessary facts when he writes of the Ancient Greek philosophers thus: “having studied in Africa of Pharaonic period went back to Athens to philosophize”, (p.1). Onyewuenyi (1993), supported this age long view of Egypt’s philosophy predating the Greeks in his book: *The African Origin of Greek Philosophy: An Exercise in Afrocentricism*. This history is equally reckoned with different philosophical traditions as: Western Philosophical Tradition (WPT), Eastern-Eastern Philosophical Tradition (EOPT), Abrahamic (Judeo-Islamic) Philosophical Tradition (AbPT) and African Philosophical Tradition, (APT). In our context, therefore, African Philosophy, *africana philosophia*, love of African wisdom. African Philosophy remains a disciplinary movement. Therefore, it is a philosophy borne out of African philosophical tradition. As result of this, African Philosophy becomes part of African civilization opening doors to great civilizations and development.

The focus on the diversity and wealth of African heritage is prodigiously extraordinary. It ranges from its galactic ecosystems to large-scale modern architecture through the memory of exploration that lead into exploitative slavery unto imperial exploitation and colonial heritage to cultural landscapes and sacred sites. African philosophy has come to be like other philosophies sharing in the world philosophical heritage. The immortal words of Chinua Achebe (the prominent Nigerian novelist and essayist, in a 1994 interview with the *Paris Review*) resounds thus: "Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter". It is time to tell our story as Africans more as African philosophers. African philosophy in its unique way holds a distinct and defined place as a critical heritage in a vibrant tapestry of critical thought which has continued in reshaping the societal norms and intellectual discourses. Obenga (in Wiredu, 2004) maintains that “in remote times African philosophy was mainly located in the Nile Valley, that is, in Kemet or ancient Egypt and in Kush (Napata-Meroe). Philosophy flourished in Egypt from about 3400BC to 343BC and in Kush (also known as Nubia or Ethiopia by the Greeks) from about 1000BC to 625BC”, (p. 31). Onebunne (2024), reiterates that the grandeur and wonder of ancient Egypt of the Pharaonic period shows the intellectual and cultural achievements of ancient African civilizations that enriches the study of African philosophy with its deep and profound impact on the contemporary African identity and culture while at the same time links the interconnectedness and continuity of African critical thoughts throughout history. During the established Pharaonic period (2780-330 BC), African philosophy showcased.

African Development is a projects for the developmental strides from the binoculars of African heritage. As a critical project, African heritage helps in the appreciation of African trado-cultural disposition influenced by the mores of traditional values derivable from proverbs, words, symbols and signs inherent in African world-views. These give credence to traditionalism within the bounds of Globalism. However, after many years of socio-economic cum political emancipation of many nations of continental African from exploration, slavery, colonialism, Christianization, commercialization, islamization, imperialism and racism through the so called independence, many nations of Africa living within lamentable vagaries of dependency via neocolonialism and underdevelopment in Africa are: poverty, famine, AIDS, social, economic and political crises. This is why as the west champions eurocentricism and Africans dwell on Afrocentricim, cosmocentricims eludes all. There is African philosophy of African philosophical tradition. No body doubts that African as the mother or cradle of civilization is home to historical facts and historical figures. This is 21st century. Century of great potentials and possibilities. As the world celebrates 21st century breakthroughs in science and technology, Continental African Nations battles for good leadership as it struggles against bad leadership and corruption leading her to a form of gerontocratic kakistocracy system of governance, (Onebunne, 2023).

Differential Definitions of African Philosophy of Education

The idea of linking education and African philosophy with prepositional conjuncts like *and*, *of*, *in*, *at* and *for* was borrowed from the unique work of Smith, G. (1964), *Philosophy of Education*. African philosophy can be conceivably appreciated in many ways alongside the idea of education. *In lato sensu*, African philosophy of education can be understood in many ways. Primarily African philosophy can be seen as an activity of the mind while education remains a process of personal development, (Smith, 1964). This is why African philosophy of education is appreciated more within the conjunctive bounds and comprehensible propositional limits of African philosophy and education, African philosophy in education as well as African philosophy for education. The concepts of African philosophy and education show a relationship between African philosophy as a discipline and education as disciplinary meaningful process of *educere* and *educare*. The *and* in between African philosophy and education connects the two concepts. It links the conceptual ideas of African philosophy and education. Beyond the sequential appreciation of *and* in the theme above it expresses a joint action and shared characteristics between African philosophy and education. African philosophy, therefore, studies and is greatly concerned with the products of education as regards nature of reality, knowledge and values.

The relationship between African philosophy and education is deeply rooted in the values and principles of traditional African societies. African philosophy provides a framework for understanding education as a holistic, communal, and utilitarian process that aligns with the cultural, moral, and practical needs of African communities. In African philosophical dispensation, education goes beyond formal schooling to encompass moral, spiritual, intellectual, and physical development; emphasizes learning by doing, that is acquiring practical skills that ensures learners are equipped to contribute meaningfully to their communities. Education in this relationship entails and involves the community participation in nurturing values and skills that benefit everyone, reflecting the belief that "a person is a person through other people". African education within the limits of African philosophy is utilitarian in nature. Hence, African philosophy of education challenges colonial legacies by reclaiming indigenous knowledge systems, integrating African values and perspectives into curricula, emphasizing the preservation and celebration of African heritage. African philosophy views education as a process of enculturation, aimed at preserving cultural identity, fostering social cohesion, and equipping individuals for meaningful participation in their societies, (Smith, 1964)

The preposition "of" primarily indicates a relationship or connection between two elements in a sentence. Its meaning can vary depending on the context, but it often denotes possession or belonging, part-whole relationship, origin or source, cause or reason, material or content, subject or reference and apposition or identification. *of* serves as a versatile connector, linking ideas and clarifying relationships between nouns, (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). By way of definition, African philosophy of education is an applied philosophical discipline that explores how African cultural, ethical and philosophical traditions while reshaping the purposes, processes and ideals of education. African philosophy of education encompasses the onerous acts of directing, guiding and regulating education as a product (of knowledge, truth and value), process (*via* mentoring, training, teaching, instruction, *et cetera*) and a discipline (as one of the formal subjects and courses in our schools and institutions of learning). Major Projects for African philosophy of education borders on the proper and functional formation of an integral child meant for the human society. That is the major project of African philosophy of education is producing healthy, responsible and response-able students in consonance with the changing times. And this can only be achieved *via* development of the content of curriculum, continuous revision of curriculum, teacher education and updating of educational needs-21st century teaching

The Concept of Morality

The concept of morality is seemingly subjective because people tend to have strong beliefs about what is right and wrong. Morals vary from person to person, and culture to culture but

many morals are universal because they result from basic human emotions. The term morality is (derived from the Latin word “moralis” meaning manner, character, proper behaviour) the differentiation of intentions, decisions and action between those that are distinguished as proper and those that are improper. Morality can be a body of standards or ethic from a code of conduct from a certain religion or culture (philosophy); morality can also be seen to be a standard that person believes should be universal (psychology), (Bujo, 2003).

One cannot begin to talk about the moral formation of a child without looking at the moral developmental processes that every child undergoes. Moral development is concerned with the emergence, change and understanding of morality from infancy through adulthood. The concept of moral development focuses on the role of peers and parents in facilitating moral development, the role of conscience and values, socialization and cultural influences, empathy and altruism and positive development. In other words, moral development focuses on questions of origins and change in morality across the life span.

On the Theories of Moral Development

Morality is within the borderline of human nature homo rationale as well as freedom and conscience. The interest in morality encompasses many disciplines (e.g, philosophy, biology, economics, and political science) with its specializations in psychology (e.g social, cognitive and cultural). The theories are:

- Psychoanalytic theory: Sigmund Freud (1962) proposed the existence of a tension between the needs of society and the individual. According to Freud, moral formation begins when the individuals selfish desires are repressed and replaced by the values of important socializing agents in one’s life (for instance, one’s parents). That is to say that a sense of right and wrong is forged in the context of highly charged, close interpersonal relationship (*id est*, parents), (Thornton, n.d.).
- Classical /Operant Conditioning: B.F Skinner (1972) focused on socialization as the primary force behind moral development. According to Skinner, behavioural contingencies help to shape morality. By behavioural contingencies, it looks at the power of external forces that is reinforcement contingencies. This is in contrast to Freud’s motion of a struggle between internal forces. One’s sense of right and wrong is learned through a history of reinforcer and punisher, much as any behaviour or traits are learned, (Skinner, 1938).
- Cognitive Developmental theory: Jean Piaget (1965) conducted an experiment, (concentrating only on boys) on children’s moral development. He indicated that thinking about right and wrong is related to sensor motor pre-operations, concrete, and formal operational thinking. Piaget focused on the children’s construction, construal and interpretation of morality from a social-cognitive and social-emotional perspective. Using the clinical interview method, he found that young children were focused on authority (legalities) mandates, and that with age children become autonomous, evaluating actions from a set of independent principles of morality. This theory is of the view that children’s understanding of right and wrong develops in line with their understanding of other problems to be solved, (Piaget, 1965).
- Kohlberg Morality of Justice: Kohlberg (1953) expanded on Piaget’s notions of moral development. Unlike Piaget who viewed children as little logicians, Kohlberg viewed them as moral philosophers. He believed that it was not possible to study moral understanding without also coming to grips with philosophy. Kohlberg (1963) assessed morality by asking children to consider moral dilemmas situations in which right and wrong action are not always clear. He was less concerned with the children’s decision on certain actions that were right or wrong, he was rather interested in their reasoning (that is how they arrived at their conclusion). It was based on this study of children’s responses to dilemmas that Kohlberg provided a systematic

3 – level 6-stage sequence that reflects changes in moral judgement throughout lifespan. Kohlberg's levels of reasoning

- Pre-conventional morality (stages 1 and 2): Being able to follow unwinding rules with regards to their rewards and punishments.
- Conventional morality (stages 3 and 4): Approaching problems in terms of their own position as good, responsible members of the society. Having more objective perspective on right and wrong.
- Post conventional Morality (Stage sand 6): there tends to be a universal moral principles that is bigger than societal concerns. Here, the emphasis is more on idealized and personal principles rather than societal standards of morality.

● **Carol Gilligan's Theory of Moral Development**

Gilligan developed a theory on "morality of care" where she challenged the earlier psychologists for narrowing sexism in studying (in most cases) men, and then generalizing their results to both genders. Gilligan in her book argued that women and men differ in their conceptions of moral understanding. She claimed that men and boys are concerned with a morality based on rules and abstract principle of justice, woman and girls are based on care and compassion, (Wikipedia, n.d.).

Thornton (n.d.) is of the opinion that Frauds theory viewed moral behaviour to be under the control of psychological compulsion. To Freud, parents help to mould a child's moral development. Skinners theory as shown above stressed on observational learning by which children learn to identify with their parents or others. Piaget and Kohlberg as demonstrated earlier placed emphasis on the role of thoughts and judgement in moral development. Gilligan placed emphasis on a mother's care giving attitude towards the child.

However, Wikipedia (n.d.) maintains that children's interactions with care givers and peers have been shown to influence their development of moral understanding and behaviour. Researchers have addressed the influence of interpersonal interactions on children's moral development form two primary perspective: socialization and internalization. It focuses on the ways in which adults pass down standards of behaviour to children through parenting techniques.

Gilligan Carol's Theory on Morality of Care Through Education as Human Enterprise

From the above illustrations, it is pertinent to state that a lot of these servitudes, being under-aged, are still passing through the early process of their moral development. Also, coupled with their family environments, have deficiencies in the little moral development they have acquired and are most likely to have questionable characters. One may want to ask the possible impact of these servitudes to the children within the bounds of morality and academic performance.

Thornton (n.d.) noted that the impact of domestic servitudes to children's development could be positive as in teaching the child good behaviour and negative if the servitude has poor academic upbringing, bad behaviour or equally mistreats the child. The age of these servitudes remain a factor of interest because a lot of them are under-aged (8-15 years) and an under-aged child has little or nothing to offer that could aid a child's moral development. It is therefore paramount that there will be an influence which can either take a positive form or negative form. Children are at a stage where they absorb everything that is done and said to them. In the end, they internalize it and reproduce what is being said depending on their level of development.

Gilligan Carol in her "morality of care" theory argued that children are more influenced by their mothers than any adult due to the mother-child attachment. Inculcating morality and other educational orientations on children is every parents priority. However, the economic situation of the nation has made it less a priority. Building character in children is now

approached as merely a goal than a priority. Gilligan opined that mothers interactions with their children increases their developmental processes. In other words, mothers contribute more to the moral development of their children than any other adult. The morality of care theory has placed major emphasis on mothers attachment to the child thereby neglecting the concept of the “Servant Care” and its degree of influence on the children. With more and more women taking up full time jobs, getting a domestic servant to take care of their children is becoming a norm. The way the *odibo-bu-nne* behaves, speaks and acts is keenly observed by the child in her care. This brings about behavioural issues in the child and sometimes hurdles in the child’s development.

Research has it that it is only natural for children to copy everything they see because they are in the learning process. If the *odibo-bu-nne* is the only one they see and interact with for hours, they will do whatever they do. The *odibo-bu-nne* is under-aged with no proper training and ironically she as a child is placed with the responsibility of taking care of another child. According to research, some basic behaviours the child could possibly learn from the servitude are;

Indiscipline- the child often emulates disrespectful behaviours from the servitudes thereby disrespecting the parents and other adults. Apart from indiscipline, children brought up by domestic servants are known to develop insecurity, confusion and low self-esteem. Some children tend to have maid dependency and this can reduce the child’s learning skills and ability. Some develop separation anxiety when the servant goes home or on leave. It is common to see children crying for the servant and not the mother. The ramifications can sometimes become very serious.

Nevertheless, it is evident that the child does not only learn from the mother but also from the *odibo-bu-nne*. In most instances servant care is known to have reduced parent-child bonding. Conclusively, having seen that the domestic servant does not entirely replace the mother but helps in bringing up the child, one can say that the *odib-bu-nne* contributes to the moral development of children. Thus, the servant care theory should have a place in the morality of care theory of development coined by Gilligan Carol.

There is, today, this growing awareness of the beauteous blessedness of Continental Africa with regard to her rich natural resources and prosperous human resources that are yet untapped in Africa. These facts of untapped natural endowments make Africa to be steadily attractive as it were before the time of acclaimed world inglorious exploration that later turned into Western exploitative plundering of Africa *via* slavery and colonialism as well as the subsequent neocolonialism with all manners of contemporary capital flights. Life is an opportunity for few achievements. Often we began form where others before us ended. There is therefore a kind of continuum in life achievements as well as improvement on peoples way of life. Hence, culture grows. And traditions are borrowed as long as they stand with the test and taste of time. Life is an opportunity for the appreciation and proper Understanding of Humanity. Humanity is the common name for that animal with potentiality for unaided critical reasoning and aided intellection. This act of rational thought singles him out from animality while at the same time links him to divinity. Therefore, Human Person is Being-for-Education. Humankind as Created Creatures for possibility of impacting knowledge. To this extent humanity becomes beings for education. Nature has shown us that opposites compliment each other. Physical law has it that negatives and positives attracts while likely charges dispel each other. In nature, realities were created in pairs of opposite nature and contrasting forces. The Scripture was bold in recognizing that in the story of creation, God made them male and female, in His own image and likeness (cf. Gen. 1:28f). Therefore, it is ironic that modern man has achieved important goals in knowing the forces of nature, science and technology and, at the same time, he’s lacking in ideas for adequate coexistence within society so as to give everyone an acceptable and dignified existence. What perhaps has been missing so far is the joint development of civic opportunities with an educational plan that

promotes the reasons for cooperation in a united world. The social question, as Benedict XI said is now an anthropological question, which involves a form of educational components and competencies that can no longer be deferred. For this reason, one needs to have “*a new trajectory of thinking in order to arrive at a better understanding of the implications of our being one family; interaction among the peoples of the world calls us to embark upon this new trajectory, so that integration can signify solidarity rather than marginalization*”. Amidst all these, there is need for a kind of humanizing education, that is an educational humanization. That is a kind of education with a human face of values and reorientation towards ethical morality. It is a humane education.

It is up to education, then, to offer this hope to the peoples of the world, as a message conveyed by reason and active life. Globalizing hope is the specific mission of education to fraternal humanism. Globalizing hope also means supporting the hopes of globalization which has multiplied the opportunities for growth and opened up new social relations and new possibilities. Education to fraternal humanism must make sure that learning knowledge means becoming aware of an ethical universe in which the person acts. In particular, this correct notion of the ethical universe must open up progressively wider horizons of the common good, so as to embrace the entire human family. This inclusive process goes beyond the category of people living now on earth. Intellectual or technological progress has shown in recent years that the choices made in the present are able to influence the lifestyles, and in some cases the very existence of future citizens. Education to fraternal humanism develops cooperation networks in the various fields of education, especially within academic education. Firstly, it calls for educators to take a reasonable approach to collaboration. In particular, one must prefer joint efforts of the teaching staff in preparing their formation programmes, as well as cooperation among students as regards learning methods and formation scenarios. Moreover, as living cells of fraternal humanism, interconnected by an educational pact and intergenerational ethics, solidarity between teachers and learners must be ever more inclusive, plural and democratic. The university should be the main breeding ground for forming people to cooperate in academic research, so that – within the framework of fraternal humanism – there is a preference for establishing joint research in all areas of knowledge, the results of which can be confirmed by academic objectivity in the application of suitable logic, methods and techniques, but also by the researchers’ own experience of solidarity.

***Nwannekekunwa* as Model Teacher for the Child**

In the African context, particularly within the framework of *nwannekekunwa*, a term embodying kinship, communal responsibility, and nurturing care, a babysitter's role extends beyond mere supervision. As a surrogate caregiver, the babysitter can significantly influence the child's academic and educational development through nurturing, mentorship, and modeling positive behaviors.

- Firstly, a babysitter as *nwannekekunwa* creates a supportive and loving environment that encourages curiosity and learning. By fostering trust and emotional stability, the child feels safe to explore, ask questions, and engage with their surroundings, essential for cognitive and academic growth.
- Secondly, the babysitter can serve as an informal teacher, reinforcing lessons learned in school through storytelling, problem-solving activities, or guiding the child in completing homework. The babysitter's ability to weave moral and educational lessons into daily interactions helps ground the child's learning in cultural and ethical contexts, as seen in African Philosophy of Education.
- Lastly, the babysitter acts as a role model, demonstrating discipline, patience, and a positive attitude toward learning. By embodying values like perseverance and respect, they inspire the child to approach education with similar enthusiasm and responsibility.

Thus, a babysitter in the *nwannekekunwa* tradition plays a vital role in shaping not just the academic, but also the holistic development of the child.

Relational Influence of African Philosophy of Education on Gilligan Ethics of Care within the Moral Formation of a Child

African Philosophy of Education and Carol Gilligan's Ethics of Care share a foundational focus on the moral formation of the child, emphasizing relationality and communal values. African Philosophy of Education is deeply rooted in the conceptual modalities of *ubuntu*, *igwebuike*, *ibuanyidanda*, *belongingness*, *EBUB*. These are forms beliefs in interconnectedness, where an individual's moral growth is tied to the well-being of the community. Similarly, Gilligan's Ethics of Care emphasizes relationships, empathy and the moral importance of responding to others' needs.

Both perspectives prioritize nurturing environments over rigid, impersonal principles. In African Philosophy of Education, moral development occurs through storytelling, mentorship, and communal engagement, fostering virtues like respect, compassion, and responsibility. Gilligan's approach, likewise, suggests that care-based reasoning enables children to develop moral sensitivity by understanding and addressing the needs of those around them.

Together, these frameworks advocate for education that integrates emotional intelligence, empathy and active participation. They reject individualistic, abstract moral systems in favor of practical, context-sensitive approaches. By harmonizing communal African values with the care ethics framework, educators can shape morally grounded, socially responsible children who value human dignity and prioritize collective harmony in their decision-making.

Expansion of Carol's theory on Morality of Care using the Servant Care Theory

From the concept of *Odibo-bu-nne* (babysitter/nanny), and the variety of roles they play out in the family system, mostly in the lives of the children, one can say they perform more of a parental function to these children than their biological parents who rarely have time for them. Having seen that they are in charge of taking care of their children from toddler to school-age, it is evident that these children's level of moral development comes from them. With this assumption, one can say that Gilligan theory on "morality of care" should be directed to the *Odibo-bu-nne* rather than just mothers.

The steady growth of women in the labour market in the past two decades worldwide (The Worlds Women 2010), reflects the efforts women have put in to retain their jobs. The Nigerian women of this working status are determined to participate fully in the labour market. This increase in participation is a welcome phenomenon as it has economic values, helps eradicate poverty, raises women's status in the family, community and nation at large. It is in a bid to fulfil all these responsibilities that the women majorly employ an *Odibo-bu-nne* (domestic servitude) to reduce their loads of work. The *odibo-bu-nne* who are under-aged stand in the gap of these women in their homes as carers. Rural children dominates the so called under-aged servitudes. Rendering of domestic services are necessitated by economic compulsions of the parents for so many reasons:

- It is seen as a means of getting away from early child marriage
- Some servitudes work to survive but some take up the offer because they come from a family with many siblings and the parents have problems feeding the children.
- Most domestic servitudes generate income for their family's needs
- Some take up the offer to be able to further their own education
- Some are forced into it as a way of punishing them for being stubborn and difficult to handle by their parents.

Conclusion

The babysitter as *nwannekunwa* integrates African Philosophy of Education and Carol Gilligan's Ethics of Care to influence a child's moral formation and education. In the *nwannekunwa* framework, the babysitter embodies communal responsibility and nurturing care, acting as both a moral guide and an informal educator. By fostering emotional security, empathy, and relational understanding, the babysitter aligns with Gilligan's emphasis on care

and interconnectedness in moral development. In African Philosophy of Education, storytelling, mentorship, and lived examples are central to teaching virtues such as respect, compassion, and responsibility. The babysitter as *nwannekwunwa* incorporates these practices, reinforcing ethical behavior and supporting the child's cognitive and academic growth. This approach expands Gilligan's theory by embedding care ethics within a communal and culturally rooted educational model. Thus, the babysitter influences the child holistically, shaping their character, values, and intellectual development through culturally grounded and relationally driven practices. This synergy highlights the role of nurturing relationships in fostering morally grounded, socially responsible, and academically capable individuals.

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