

CULTURAL REFORM IN EDUCATION: IGBO CULTURAL VALUES AS THE CASE STUDY

Obayi, Joy Ifeadike
Humanities Unit, School of General Studies/ Arts Education
University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
Joy.obayi@unn.edu.ng

Abstract

Western culture has made inroad deep into Igbo culture and this has affected the lives of the youths in Igbo society. This study examined the cultures that wired into the good culture of Igbo people which has affected their lives and which needed to be reformed through education to curb the eroded of positive family values witnessed in Igbo society. Few individuals from south east zone of Igbo speaking area were interviewed to ascertain their views about the bastardized nature of Igbo culture witnessed this time by the younger generation. The results of the interview showed that Western culture has eroded the Igbo's beautiful cultural heritage. The inroad is so devastating that women don't have regard for their pride which women are respected for and also men have lost their prestige of having a guarded home. There were some suggestions on how to curb this as: making sure that moral education is made compulsory in the university education where moral should be inculcated to every individual that entered the university so as to arrest the situation. Indecent dressing should be abolished in tertiary institutions, this will curtail the nudity that is seen everywhere on campus. Braided hair and tattoos of bodies should not be worn by students on campus. Traditional rulers should create an avenue of reaching their communities so as to inculcate their culture to the young ones.

Keywords: Cultural Reform, Education, Igbo, Igbo Cultural Values and Western Culture

Introduction

The society is going crazy and it is affecting every sector of life and this calls for urgent attention in education. Education is very important in life and can never be overemphasized, without education, man is nothing for it goes into a person and comes out to make the person better person irrespective of the age and the group. This agreed with Demey's (1944) theory of learning which says that education is a form of learning in which knowledge, skills and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next through teaching, training, research, simply through experience that has a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels or acts. This is what is happening these days; the transfer of learning is having both positive and negative effects. Positive if the learner learns the good values and negative when the learner gets the values that are contrary to the tradition of the people. This relates to this study for the transfer of knowledge to the younger generation is necessary these days to arrest the ugly situation of things being witnessed today in society.

Evil communication they say corrupts good manners. It moves like oil, once one moves with some people of questionable character, definitely it will infect one. This is why the book of Psalm (26: 5) says, I hate the company of evil doers and never to seat with the wicked; for evil communication corrupts good manners (1st Corinthians 15: 33). Therefore, care should be taken in seeing that the youths are properly guarded especially as an adolescents, their characters needed to be molded otherwise they will miss the track, especially Igbo people who value their way of lives seriously. Every average Igbo man needs to have a woman as wife who will give him peaceful mind. When one marries a wife and both cannot enjoy their marriage peacefully, that man can never be happy in life hence the Igbo adage *nwaanyi buulo* meaning

the woman has the house. Such a man normally stays away from his house to avoid mental stress. Some of them prefer staying in the beer parlor where they would see other men charting and cracking jokes to keep life going.

The behavior of girls these days call for reform for most of them lack morals, home training and in fact etiquette in general. Sometimes you begin to ask if such a person really come from a home. Sometimes one may notice that even the parents behave alike showing that it is a trait from the parents. That is why the Igbo people believe in enquiries before marriage to get proper information about the lineage before they fall into the wrong hands for such must surely come if they reproduce (Obayi & Ezema, 2020). Most of the girls this time lack manners. Their style of their dressing, the way they live their lives needed attention for such life is not in Igbo tradition. A newly married girl would wake up early in the morning, sweep the compound, and come inside the house to sweep the house; after which the girl come to prepare the meal for the family, but such is not in existence this time.

A married woman is not supposed to put on shabby dress but this time, young married women would put on short knickers, some even wear bumps and move on with it without being ashamed of themselves. Such is an eye saw and disgrace to Igbo tradition. A woman supposes to expose her body only to her husband and to every dick and harry that enter their house. This is why most women fall victims of adultery for they seduce some men who do not have control of their body. They will now approach the woman extending the hands of fellowship to the woman who now flouts herself to the public. There is no way such a person would resist it.

Conceptual clarifications of the concepts:

Cultural Reform:

Cultural reformation is the change of the way a culture does things. As a Christian, our culture is supposed to reflects the fullness of the kingdom of heaven. Sometimes you see that such expectation is not working the way it should be and that needed to be reformed to get back to the statuesque which is the culture. Culture according to Anichebe (2010) is a gamut of the knowledge, beliefs, customs, traditions and skills that are available to the members of a society and they are deliberately fashioned to guide the people's way of life.

Women had lost their respects for the sake of western civilization that they don't care about the sanctity of women in the family (Okafor, & Ejioforbiri, 2020). This is the character Igbo people abhor so much. A woman who does not respect her integrity as regards to marriage sanctity is not regarded as married woman in Igbo culture for in some part of Igbo land such attitude kills the husband if the woman cooks for the husband.

Igbo man does not joke with culture. They trace people's character back to the person's generation and deduce conclusion about the person's life. This is true to a great extent in what is observed from families. A family that is known with issue of emotional control carries it on to the extent that people that have one thing with them must experience such that they must have one story to tell about such family. Such a family may think that it is normal but that is a serious issue because it runs in the family and it affects their character. Sometimes, one person from such a family might commit suicide for lack of self-control.

This is what education is meant to bridge for people should be meant to understand that there are individual differences and people need to be reformed to be better person in life. Moral education is very necessary here for one should not always have his or her way in everything. Learn to let things go whether you are favoured or not. Holding things so firmly can be suicidal for your mind will be so fixed that one could not remember any other thing.

Education

Education is reforming character to be better. It is a process of changing one to another state. It is a process of reformation, and many educationists see it in different forms just like Fafunwa (1992) see education as the aggregate of all the processes by means of which a person develops ability, skills and other forms of behavioural positive and sometimes negative value in the society in which we live. Education can be formal and informal. Formal if it is practiced in the school and informal if elsewhere. It is the totality of experience for there must be a process of acquiring knowledge. Mind must develop through the process of learning. This is why theory of learning by Demey (1944) agreed that education is a form of learning in which knowledge, skills and habits of a group of people are transferred from generation to the next through teaching, training, research, simply through experience that has a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels or acts. This is true for there must be effect in the character, whether positive or negative otherwise learning has not taken place.

Education has been in existence before the pre-literate society, for our forefathers had been teaching and training their young ones through oral transmission, making sure skills are transmitted and knowledge being gained by the young ones.

Igbo

The Igbo are the people living at the eastern part of Nigeria. They speak Igbo language as their mother tongue. Igbo people are one of the populous tribes in Nigeria (Echeruo 2011). Igbo occupied places like Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo states. Igbo people are sometimes seen in parts of Rivers state, Cross river, Delta, and Kogi states. Igbo people are good loving people. They love strangers a lot hence the adage *nwanne di na mba* (Obayi, 2021). They would protect strangers a lot more than their relations. Igbo people travel a lot in search of greener pastures. This is why people often say, *ebe obula ijere ma ihughị onye Igbo, biko, gbawa ka okpa gi ha* meaning, anywhere you go and you do not see an Igbo man there, you should quickly pack and leave that place. This mean the place is not habitable and it is hostile to people. Igbo man tolerates people a lot and can easily adjust their lives. Igbo people are too accommodating provided it does not come to taking away lives. They believe in rising up brothers. This means, anybody who stands first should help others stand.

Igbo Cultural Values

Igbo people have values for life in so many ways: Girls getting married to the right man. When a girl is ripe for marriage, it is necessary to have a good man as the husband. If a man eventually comes to ask for the girls' hands in marriage, the family will begin to ask questions concerning the prospective husband wanting to know everything about him and the family hence Igbo language *ijụ ese* (Ubesie, 2015). The family questioning is, either way, both families will be enquiring so that one does not make mistakes.

Igbo man value way of dressing a lot: A married woman is supposed to dress decently to maintain her dignity. Recently one sees married women showing off their private parts in the name of style or being enlightened. This is western culture as they see it. Even girls dress nude to attract men. This is not normal and this needs to be addressed. The Dean of School of General Studies University of Nigeria, Nsukka has a task force that check-mates the indecent dressing amongst our students. No student is allowed to dress naked in the class. That they obey while coming to GS classes but immediately they leave, they go back to their reckless lives. Most of our young men now wear braided hair not minding where they come from. This is western culture and their life as they see it. Women and girls fix nails and eye lashes something that Igbo people abhor

Igbo people value greetings a lot but what the society experienced today is lawlessness; People who cannot greet their elders. Children will by-pass their elders without a word of mouth. Igbo people are not known like that. This needed to be reformed for the younger ones are going crazy in the name of western culture.

The same thing is applicable to respect for the elders. Children no longer respect their elders. A child can rain insult on the elder without any remorse. Some of them would struggle with their elders while passing on any walkway. If possible, push you down with abuses to let him be.

Another cultural value in Igbo land is bearing children with the right spouse. Women had lost their respect for the sake of western civilization that they don't care about the sanctity of women in the family (Okafor, & Ejioforbiri, 2020). Many women go about bearing children from different men all in the name of civilization. Some unmarried girls go about bearing children for the men they love without getting married.

Igbo people value life more than anything but what is happening in the society is appalling. A man was shown in the social media on 13th of March, 2024 where about three men held him and forced him to seat on the ground and one of them was busy crushing the man's legs with pestle, despite the plea to leave him. They were speaking Igbo language not bordering the pains the man was going through. Every indication showed that the victim knew one of them because he was shouting in-law have mercy. They made sure the legs were crushed that the man couldn't get up. He was bleeding profusely on the ground where he was lying.

Igbo man value their names hence the adage *ezi aha ka ego*. Igbo man take time before answering name or naming his children for they believe that peoples' names come after them. People now bear adulterated names that one no longer recognize where they come from hence Nneka Emmanuel, Emeodi Sampson and others. One can hardly understand where this person comes from.

Western Civilization

Western civilization is the development seen from the developed world around the Igbo cultural group. This influences the life of Igbo people. In other words, it is the influence of European culture on Igbo nation. This means the way of lives of the Europeans on our people. It has affected the lives of Igbo people that people have left the Igbo culture and imbibe the white man culture to the detriment of Igbo culture. Culture as Ugwu, Enweonwu and Eze (2021) elaborated what Tylor described as culture as that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, moral, law custom and habits acquired by man as a member of society. This means that Western civilization has influenced the knowledge of Igbo man so greatly that most of them now reason like the Europeans. It has affected their belief, their arts, that are how they view thing and what they produce, moral life, that is Igbo norms and values, their style of living and some of their habits.

Method of collecting data was through interview. 20 students from five Igbo states that offer GSP 208 from University of Nigeria Nsukka were interviewed to ascertain the cultural values of Igbo people with regards to western cultures. The discussions made were as follows:

1. How do you see the Igbo cultural values in terms of girls waiting to marry the right man?
2. How do you see indecent dressing in this campus?
3. Do you see greetings as something the youths should imbibe with?
4. Do you think that the young ones respect the elders the way it should be?

5. How do you see the rate of infidelity in the family?
6. Do the young people really have value for life these days?
7. What about the names young people love to answer?

The researcher purposively picked 20 students from five Igbo states that offer GSP 208 from their various seminar classes through the help of their lecturers and their class representatives who helped the to get their names and their state of origins. They equally helped the researcher to arrange for the interview.

The above questions were used to interview the students

S/N	Item Question	Accept	Reject	Percent (%)
1	How do you see the Igbo cultural values in terms of girls waiting to marry the right man?	2	18	90
2	How do you see indecent dressing in this campus?	1	19	95
3	Do you see greetings as something the youths should imbibe with?	3	17	85
4	Do you think that the young ones respect the elders the way it should be?	4	16	50
5	How do you see the rate of infidelity in the family?	10	10	50
6	Do the young people really have value for life these days?	01	19	95
7	What about the names young people love to answer?	06	14	70

Discussion

Igbo people value their in-laws so much; that is why one often hear Igbo people say, *ogọ bu Chi onye* meaning that one's in-law is the person's strength. This is why girls should be careful before they choose their husbands so as not to make mistakes in marriage. Almost every student agreed that most girls do not exercise patience in waiting for their right partner to come before jumping into marriage. 95% of the interviewee said that value of waiting for good man has gone. For the indecent dressing in the campus, students about 95% of them agreed to seeing indecent dressing as the bane in the society. It is now normal and people do not even care seeing such people. Once such people come ones way, one would just glance and look away without having any feeling.

For the greetings, 85% of the students said that there is need to reform students on greetings for many students do not care for greeting any adult as the western culture has influenced their lives of minding yourself as you move. About the value of respect, the students said that about 80% of the young ones do not value respect. They no longer respect the adults as it is used to be. Some of them would say that respect is reciprocal. If you respect me, I will also respect you no matter whom you are. For the infidelity, students said that about 50% respect the sanctity of marriage. But some of them both male and female misbehave in their marital lives. The way some of them live their lives made some of them to fall victims of living adulterous lives.

Young ones do not value lives as before. People often kill and waste lives without minding the consequences. Even if they are caught, they will not show any remorse. About 95% of the students agreed that people no longer value peoples' lives. Young ones answer all kinds of names especially the young adults. Most of times the young married couples change their names to their baptismal names, which normally bear English names and that would not make the name lose its potency as Igbo name. 70% of students agreed to that. One can longer

identify where the person came from hence Igbo people says that *aha onye ka e ji ama onye*; meaning your name identifies you.

Conclusion

There is serious need for reform in education for many students are missing out hence the pursuit of western culture. Many of them now forget the cultural values of our people. It is not that they purposely refused to learn, but some are not aware of the right value for they were not taught. This is really affecting them even our parents. So many vices in the society among the youths needed to be curbed. This is in line with Bandura theory of learning in 1962 which says that character influence peoples' behavior. If you are living with somebody, you are somehow being influenced in one way or the other either positive or negative. But one needs to be taught about something so that one should be careful on what to adopt as they mix up with peers and as they watch certain videos.

Information gathered from the youths, it is obvious that western culture has really filtrated into Nigerian culture and youths seem to imbibe in it. The truth is that it is affecting our beautiful culture of Igbo man to adapt to western culture which our people seems not to accept whole and entire since it is affecting our culture, for instance, the way some married women put on almost pant and move on without being ashamed of exposing their legs and buttocks; such that are meant only for the husband to see are now exposed to the public without minding.

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