

A Study of The Inculcation of Moral Values Using Prose Literature-In-English Among Senior Secondary School Students of Ewekoro Local Government Area of ogun State

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Abstract:- Human society anywhere has a set of core values to live by. The importance of inculcating these values in our children is acknowledged universally. Here, we investigated the role of prose literature in English language on moral values among senior secondary school students of Ewekoro local government area of Ogun state, Nigeria. The respondents of this study were 120 SSII students selected from four secondary schools in Ewekoro local government area of Ogun state. The data for this study were collected from the respondents through an adapted questionnaire with twenty (20) items. Analysis was done using simple statistical tools such as frequency counts, percentages, means, standard deviation and standard error. The result of the study indicated that prose literature to a greater extent determines the level of acquisition of moral values by secondary school students. This research work, if properly harnessed, would go a long way in curbing immorality among students and by extension encourage students with a zeal for self improvement and achievement of excellence.

Keywords: *Prose Literature, English Language, Moral Values, Students and Secondary School.*

I. INTRODUCTION

A desire for an effective moral order has become an issue of both serious and urgent concern to all rational minds in recent times. The concern for a sound moral status is occasioned by the alarming rate of decline in the moral consciousness among students in Nigerian secondary schools. This decline has become a disease eating systematically into the very vein of the entire nation (Ohwovorione, 2013). Immorality has eaten up the hearts of most students. Acts of immorality as exhibited by most Nigerian students include; dishonesty, rudeness, absenteeism and lateness to school, gambling, rape, cultism, smoking, examination malpractices, disloyalty, indecent dressing to mention a few. These cases of immorality are more pronounced among secondary school students, because at that stage, most students would have started observing certain biological changes signaling maturity in their body, and when they notice these changes in the course of their growth and development, they tend to misbehave by faulting school rules and regulations (Yarason, 2004). For effective war against societal problems, the proper strategy is to target the young and instill good character and morality in them while in school. Through good character education, the school would help the students develop integrity, trustworthiness and other essential virtues. If students are properly educated and their minds and hearts are disabused from corruption, they will grow up knowing what is right and wrong, and become aware of their social responsibilities and limitations (Oroka, 2005). The study of literature in the form of short stories and novels forces students to find moral lessons everywhere. When students read stories and fables having a moral behind them, they learn to monitor their behaviours. Every fable with a moral leaves a deep impression in their minds and imbibe such values in their day to day living. The use of prose has, undoubtedly, made learning more engaging. The students learn values effortlessly when they are taught through prose. When students are taught a certain prose, they become confident to express their thoughts, feelings and emotions and also to respect others. It is a very authentic learning experience which ignites the imagination of the students. Thus, through literature students know the value of being responsible, helping each other, developing tranquility of mind, subdue rude and uncultivated nature, awaken sympathy and promote harmony (Jaspreeet, 2014). Though, there are sufficient research works which had proved the impact of literature on academic performance of senior secondary school students in Nigeria, information on moral values of literature are sketchy. To this end, this study attempts to evaluate the effect of prose literature in English on moral values among senior secondary school students of Ewekoro local government area of Ogun state, Nigeria.

II. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The problem of indiscipline among students in Ewekoro Local Government Area has persisted over the years and its becoming a boil in the marrow. These acts include students' absenteeism from school, lackadaisical attitude to duties, persistent lateness to schools, raping, cultism, absenteeism from classes without

reason or permission, illicit affairs between students and teachers and among students, direct disobedience to school regulation and so on. The negative implication of this is nothing but frightening. If nothing is done to arrest this ugly trend, then we can be sure of producing uncouth, unruly, thoroughly depraved and intellectually spineless adults. It is therefore necessary to investigate the prevalence and level of immorality among students in Ewekoro Local Government Area, and how prose literature in English can be used to manage this menace in secondary schools.

III. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Arising from the problems above, the purpose of the study is as follows;

1. To investigate the benefits of the literature text, "Faceless", to students in senior secondary school.
2. To determine the effects of the literature text, "Faceless", on students' acquisition of moral values.
3. To examine the relevance of the literature text, 'Faceless', to cultural development among students.
4. To investigate the effects of teachers' methodologies in teaching the literature text, "Faceless", on students' acquisition of moral values.

Research Questions

The study attempts to proffer answers to the following questions based on the purpose of the study.

1. What are the benefits of the literature text, "Faceless", to students in senior secondary school?
2. What are the effects of the Literature text, "Faceless", on students' acquisition of moral values?
3. What is the relevance of the literature text, 'Faceless', to cultural development among students?
4. What are the effects of teachers' methodologies in teaching the literature text, "Faceless", on students' acquisition of moral values?

IV. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The descriptive survey research was adopted for this study. This technique dwelled more on the analysis of various factors that will enhance the acquisition of moral values through reading of prose literature texts among the population sampled.

The Study Population

The target population for this study comprised SSII students in selected government secondary schools in Ewekoro Local Government Area of Ogun state.

Sample Size

A total of 120 SSII students were selected from four secondary schools by simple random sampling technique (30 Students from each school).

Data Analysis

Frequency counts, percentages, means, and chi-square are the statistical tools used for analyzing the data for this study.

V. RESULT

The results are presented around the research questions:

Demographic Data

Table 1: Sex Classification of Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	45	37.50
Female	75	62.50
Total	120	100.00

Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age (Years)	Frequency	Percentage
12-14	73	60.83
15-17	35	29.17
Above 17	12	10.00
Total	120	100.00

Research Question 1: What are the benefits of the literature text, “Faceless”, to students in senior secondary school?

S/No	Items	Frequency/Percentages			
		SAU	A	SD	D
1	The prevalence of immoralities among secondary school students would be drastically reduced if the literature book, “Faceless”, is made a core and compulsory text, irrespective of a student’s area of inclination.	63 2 52.50 1.67	47	3 2.50	5 4.17
2	The book, “Faceless”, fills my leisure moments and also serves as a relaxing escape from daily problems.	58 2 48.33 1.67	47	9 7.50	4 3.33
3	I have been exposed to correct sentence patterns, standard story structures, and varied word usage after reading the book, “Faceless”.	52 4 43.33 3.33	49	5 4.17	10 8.33
4	The book, “Faceless”, keeps me more informed and allows me to come up with creative ideas and reasoning skills.	49 10 40.83 8.33	42	8 6.67	11 9.17
5	The book, “Faceless” improves my reading ability.	51 5 42.50 4.17	53	3 2.50	8 6.67

Question 2: What are the effects of the Literature text, “Faceless”, on students’ acquisition of moral values?

S/No	Items	Frequency/Percentages			
		SAU	A	SD	D
1	With the literature book, “Faceless”, I have been able to shun truancy, bullying and examination malpractices.	63 1 52.50 0.83	50	2 1.67	4 3.33
2	The book, “Faceless”, with its succinctly-presented theme improves my attitude towards the less-privileged and needy.	58 3 48.33 2.50	49	3 2.50	7 5.83
3	The book, “Faceless”, allowed me to make a good career plan and free myself of old bad habitual thoughts.	60 2 50.00 1.67	51	4 3.33	3 2.50
4	After reading the book, “Faceless”, I have been able to develop the courage to do what is right even when it’s difficult.	49 6 40.83 5.00	47	11 9.17	7 5.83
5	The book instills in me the responsibility for doing my homework and completing house-chores, without constant reminders or resistance.	45 3 37.50 2.50	52	14 11.67	6 5.00

Question 3: What is the relevance of the literature text, ‘Faceless’, to cultural development among students?

S/No	Items	Frequency/Percentages			
		SAU	A	SD	D

1	The book, "Faceless", is a good reservoir of cultural heritage.	42 7 35.00 5.83	60 50.00	7 5.83	4 3.33
2	The book, "Faceless", helps me value people from different cultures and ethnic groups.	52 4 43.33 3.33	51 42.50	3 2.50	10 8.33
3	The book, "Faceless", gives me a glimpse into other cultures and places, and this directly improves my attitudinal behaviour.	44 4 36.67 3.33	57 47.50	6 5.00	9 7.50
4	The book, "Faceless", is sensitive to a broad range of cultural experiences.	45 5 37.50 4.17	43 35.83	10 8.33	17 14.17
5	The book integrates the cultural activities and values of different ethnic groups.	62 1 51.67 0.83	50 41.67	4 3.33	3 2.50

Question 4: What are the effects of teachers' methodologies in teaching the literature text, "Faceless", on students' acquisition of moral values?

S/N o	Items	Frequency/Percentages				
		SA U	A	SD	D	
1	My social and moral behaviour is positively influenced by my teacher's style of teaching.	47 39.17 4.17	51 42.50	11 9.17	6 5.00	5
2	I have learnt a lot of values from my teacher's mode of conduct in literature classes.	59 49.17 0.83	51 42.50	4 3.33	5 4.17	1
3	I easily get a good grasp of the literature text, "Faceless", because my teacher uses instructional materials to teach us.	47 39.17	43 35.83	9 7.70	11 9.17	10 8.33
4	My teacher uses dramatization in describing the theme of the literature book, "Faceless".	57 47.50 1.67	50 41.67	7 5.83	4 3.33	2
5	My teacher asks questions at the end of each class to ascertain the impact of lesson learnt from the book, "Faceless".	59 49.17 4.17	51 42.50	3 2.50	2 1.67	5

VI. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In the first phase of this study, the respondents were in agreement that prose literature contributes positively to the lives of secondary school students. In this respect, Ayo (2003) describes the benefits as the general utilities of Literature. According to him, "the utilities of Literature could be educational, cultural, moral, recreational and socio-political. Literature helps to develop the learner's linguistic performance because it arouses their zeal and keeps in them an ever-ready inclination to read. Moreover, it helps the learners to develop fluency and the ability to comprehend what is read". Adding his voice to the utilities of Literature as a school subject, Unoh (1981) quoted in Ogunnaike (2002) posits that a good literature can be an important aid to cultural assimilation or acculturation; language development and competence; conflict resolution; emotional development and stability; development of positive and good-oriented attitudes to life; a good liberal education, entertainment, relaxation and the sharing of vicarious experiences of positive value; the development of desired and desirable moral or other attributes; and as a consequence of all these, a stable and mature personality. According to Koutsompou (2015), literary texts are a rich source of classroom activities and can surely prove to be very motivating for learners. No wonder the use of literary pieces play a significant role in English Language Teaching. Literature opens a new world to the students. It cultivates the critical abilities of the

students. It encompasses every human dilemma, conflict and yearning unraveling the plot of a short story is more than an automatic exercise. The study revealed in the second phase that the literature text, "Faceless", has an immense effects on students' acquisition of moral values. The issue of moral education has recently received much attention at both the state and federal level. Legislators, teachers, and parents are all grappling with how best to instill in students not merely information but also the character traits known to promote success and happiness in life, and which will best enable students to maximize their use of their education and knowledge. One approach that shows particular promise is that of using literature as a pedagogical device (Brynildssen, 2002). Some educators believe that literature can be a very powerful tool. According to Weaver (1994), "Literary characters have almost the same potential for influencing the reader as the real people with whom a reader might share a reading experience". Given this, the implications for literature's role in moral education are great.

In the third phase of this study, the respondents agreed that the book restores in the reader lost cultural heritage that are important in the achievement of targeted goals in life through hard work. This finding is in agreement with María, (2001) who opined that culture is transmitted to new generations through education but is known and learned by others cultures through art and literature. Literature allows us to transmit the profound meanings of a determinate culture, its stereotypes, and archetypes and collective in conscience creating the possibility of social change through a critic that is able to act into the subliminal world of emotions. Finally the responses of the respondents revealed that literature teachers are not exception in the inculcation of moral values in students. If students at the secondary school level must gain mastery of the English language and literature-in-English, they must be taught well. If they must be taught well, teachers must make use of various methods to enhance their teaching. The method or strategy employed by a teacher to generate or illuminate a task in the classroom situation can either make or mar the learners' academic performance. Ntekim (2009) is of the opinion that difference in performance of students is attributed to teacher's method of lesson presentation and that whenever an individual is determined to succeed and is properly guided using effective strategy, the students more often than not perform excellently.

To Oyetunde (2004), besides the selection of the appropriate instructional strategy, effective teaching calls for other critical considerations such as the teacher's clear understanding of the subject matter and his appreciation of what makes some topics or concepts difficult to students. The teacher's understanding of the status, background, knowledge, interests and experiences of the student is equally important. This is in addition to his frequent evaluation of whether or not students have learnt (and to what degree) what is being taught. The Federal Government of Nigeria in National Policy of Education (2004) outlines, among other goals, that the secondary school education shall inspire students with a desire for academic success, provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development. In order to achieve these, secondary school teachers must be innovative, creative and strategic in their teaching. The Federal Government recognizes the importance of the teacher and declares that, "no education can rise above the quality of its teachers." The curriculum implementation at the classroom level is basically the responsibility of the teacher. It is the teacher who translates the objectives, concepts and topics in the curriculum into activities that are meaningful to the learner (Robinson, cited in Oyetunde, 2004).

VII. CONCLUSION

This study has effectively demonstrated the positive impacts of prose literature as a major tool in enhancing students' acquisition of moral values. It is my opinion that, if this research work is well harnessed and literature is consequently made compulsory irrespective of a student's area of inclination, it would go a long way in curbing immorality among students and by extension encourage students with a zeal for self improvement and achievement of excellence.

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