



Yoruba Folksong Philosophical Approach to Health Education: Curbing the Spread of COVID-19

Oluwatoyin E. Ayeyemi 🐷 & Marvelous O. Ayokunmi

ABSTRACT

n the history of the world, there have been records of an epidemic in almost all countries of the world, states and communities at different times. In the dark ages, in Africa, diseases of various kinds caused premature deaths of children, youths, adults, and even aged people in clans and communities. In recent times, the cause of outbreaks of epidemics was believed to be the fierce anger of the gods of the communities, but the dirty environment and the unhygienic life the people lived were impetus without educative encouragement for a solution. These made the people remain perpetually endangered to the incessant outbreak of epidemics. However, the rich traditional culture of the Yoruba in Southwest Nigeria among others is bonded in the daily life and nature of the people. Music as part of culture accompanies all aspects of individual life and community. Education is key to good life and health. The method of instilling education into the growing citizenry among the Yoruba people from the beginning of the neo-colonial era to date is diversified and encapsulated in every aspect of life. These methods include the teaching of folk songs, folk tales, poems, proverbs, and, of course, learning values and norms of society by imitation. The emergence of COVID-19 and its deadly implication on humans globally is dreadful. Each Country, State and Community thought about the measure to first prevent it from spread through education, before considering treatment and cure. The prevention of the spread becomes the responsibility of individuals and corporate bodies at the local, national and international levels. This discourse analyzes the impact of an educative Yoruba folksong that teaches self-restrain on curbing the contact with this deadly disease. Typical examples of such folksongs are x-rayed in this discourse and their adoption at the local level of human habitation recommended to help all comprehend and adapt themselves to the measures of disease prevention and control.

Keywords: Yoruba folksong, Health Education, Spread of COVID 19, Treatment, Cure.

INTRODUCTION

It sounded like a play or joke when the news of coronavirus zoomed into Africa through

Western countries from Wuhan, China, in December 2019 and consequently spread through every region of the world (Gupta et al., 2023). Hansa (2021) described the outbreak of the pandemic, which began in Wuhan as a Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, otherwise known as SARS-CoV-2, which originated in bats and infected human beings at open-air "wet market," where customers buy fresh meat and fish, including animals killed on the spot. Hansa (2021), however, posited that "Swarmed conditions can let infections of the virus from various creatures to trade qualities." At times, the infection changes so significantly that it can begin to contaminate and spread among human beings. As the virus spread within and outside Wuhan and China as a country, it continued to contaminate individuals who had no immediate contact with animals and other objects that carried the virus, meaning that the virus started transmitting the infection from one human to another. The transmission of the virus between human beings was confirmed by the Pharmaceutical Society's statement that "Expanding quantities of affirmed analyze, together with medical care experts, have demonstrated that individual to-individual spread of SARS-CoV-2 is happening. The primer proliferation number or the normal number of cases a solitary case produces throughout its irresistible period presently estimated to be between 1.4 to 2.5, meaning that each infected individual could infect between 1.4 and 2.5 people" (Stewart et al., 2021). From China, it spread through the United States of America and around all continents. The implication then was that people were unwittingly catching and passing on the coronavirus, whose global transmission developed into a pandemic.

THE HEALTH EFFECTS OF COVID-19 IN NIGERIA

In a study analysis, Fadipe et al. (2021) describes the initial announcement and situation in Nigeria when the first cases of coronavirus were recorded in the country. He submits that "pneumonia of unknown etymology was recorded to have started spreading among the inhabitants of Wuhan in Hubei Province of China. It was confirmed that these symptoms were caused by a beta coronavirus, known as SARS-CoV-2, and the resultant disease was eventually coined as COVID-19". In Nigeria, the first recorded case of coronavirus was on the 27 of February, 2020. The rapid rising spread of infection of the pandemic spurred the Federal Government of Nigeria to impose a strict two-week lockdown like in countries, before it was extended later. The imposition happened to eradicate the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The infection had no immediate treatment and vaccine, and the current Nigerian update of coronavirus confirmed cases included 209,546, recoveries from the sickness is 197,546 while death tolls reached 2,838 as at October 20, 2021 (Worldometer, 2021).

Long before the outbreak of COVID-19, there had been various contagious diseases among the Yoruba of Nigeria. Major cities and towns were attacked with transmitted diseases. For example, Johnson in Ogundiran (2020) reported that in 1921, 'Pehe, an infectious disease of the respiratory organs which ravaged Oyo-ile, the capital of Oyo Empire in 1831'. The disease reportedly killed thousands of people, including the Alaafin Majootu. Ogundiran further states that pestilence of 1831 seems to culminate the four-year recurrent epidemic outbreaks in the capital. The outcome of the virus on the Empire was debilitating famine, which caused the empire the loss of her workforce because of political instability. Another record of epidemic outbreak in Yoruba region, especially the ancient city sonpona lle-lfe. was (smallpox) epidemic, to the friction traceable between the groups of Obatala and Oduduwa 'over the control of the nascent city' in tenth-century (Ogundiran, 2020). Horton (1992) expressed concerns over the city at the end of the epidemic that 'what was once a city of abundance became a land of scarcity, in other words, the mortality rate was so high that the epidemic reduced the city to almost half of what it used to be. These accounts are just pieces of evidence of a few transmitted diseases among others such as Iko efee (tuberculosis), ete (leprosy), arun onigba meji (cholera), and so on that existed before the outbreak of COVID-19 in Yorubaland.

The Yoruba Way of Handling Transmitted Diseases

Transmitted diseases among Yoruba have raised a lot of quarries which may be seen as a product of the socio-cultural environment: in some cases. Yorubas hold to the belief that some families are carriers of some specific sicknesses based on heredity. They also take preventive measures to curb the spread of such diseases by avoiding relationships with the families in terms of company and selection of spouses. Nobody would want to marry into such a family, nor maintain a friendship amongst them (Jegede, 2002). Centuries ago, kinds of symbols were displayed at the front of houses or any area to mark the environment where transmitted diseases have infected the dwellers in rural settlements. This sign alerted neighbors, friends, customers, and passersby of the danger of contracting the disease. This method was how Yoruba elders educated the folks to maintain social distancing to avoid the spread of transmitted diseases.

Global Preventive Measure for COVID-19

According to Jewell (2021), there's at present no solution for a contamination brought about by Covid-19. Be that as it may, numerous medicines and antibodies are as of now under study. The most effective way to forestall the transmission of the infection is to stay away from or limit contact with individuals that show

indications of COVID-19 or any respiratory contamination. In addition to keeping distance from people exhibiting symptoms of respiratory infections, the other thing you can do is practice good hygiene and physical distancing to help prevent bacteria and viruses from being transmitted. Prevention tips include;

- 1. Cleaning up as often as possible for somewhere around 20 seconds all at once with warm water and cleanser.
- Trying not to contact one's face, eyes, nose, or mouth when one's hands are filthy.
- 3. Trying not to go out when feeling debilitated or experiencing any symptoms of cold or influenza.
- 4. Keeping 6 feet (2 meters) away from individuals. Keep away from groups and huge social occasions.
- Covering the mouth with a tissue or the elbow when coughing or sneezing and discarding used tissue paper immediately.
- 6. Wearing a veil or mask openly.
- 7. Cleaning all items one touches by using sanitizers on things like telephones, PCs, and door handles and using cleanser and water for cook, eating, and drinking utensils (Jewell, 2021).

From the beginning, it is obvious that there are conventional and traditional ways of curbing the spread of contagious diseases. However, this paper concentrates on the method of educating the masses, especially Yoruba culture carriers through folksongs.

Concept and Role of Music in Traditional Culture

Evaluating music as a discipline in the arts and its mutual relationship with nature and man reveals that music is a common phenomenon in the human race. Music is a form of artistic expression. It is concerned with combining vocal and or sounds for instrumental emotional expression, usually according to cultural standards. Music is a workmanship that pervades each human culture globally but varies widely among the cultures in style and structure. Music performs many functions across different cultures (Woodruff, 2008). Blacking (1995)observes that, 'not only can the "same" patterns of sound have different meanings in different societies, they can also have different meanings within the same society because of different social contexts. Music is type of а and correspondence. it assumes а utilitarian part in African society. Music accompanies almost all ceremonies in Africa because of the various specific functions it performs. Vidal (1988) found that "The metaphysical concept of sound makes music an important mode of communication religious at rituals. Musical sounds have referential and symbolic roles. Several West African have divinities their corresponding repertoires by which they are identified, summoned and communicated with. The

communication may take the form of invocation, propitiation, purification, eulogizing or absolution, in which the divinity is asked to intercede to prevent a catastrophe in a community."

Indigenous music is that which the users are born into. Such music remains and unchangeable unadulterated. Sometimes, the users cannot explain the fundamentals of the music, based on the long practice in the same pattern. Traditional music, is also the music of indigenous people, which could be influenced by modernity. There could be the introduction of foreign ideology in its performance, which could gradually and fundamental erode the basic principles of the performance. The mixture of the new ideology would later metamorphose into Folk Music.

Music as a Means of Communication of Ideas

Music is a phenomenon that wraps up the daily life of an African man, and it is multifunctional in all activities in the society. Few of the functions include the reinforcement of collaborative work, the praise of heroes, exposition and correction of societal ills, fulfilment of rites and rituals during religious activities, historical exposition, the teaching of norms, ideals and values of the society and a means of expression of ideas to create environmental awareness (Ayeyemi, 2015a). In many parts of Africa,

the utilization of music isn't restricted to amusement. Rather, music fills a need to the nearby local area and helps conduct every day schedules. Traditional African music supplies proper music and dance for work and for strict functions of birth, naming, rites of passage, marriages, and burial services. In rural community life, people take interest in and respond to their cultural music because of the metaphysical function in African societies, especially, the concept of sound that makes music an important mode of communication. According to Vidal (1988), "the pre-European West African societies share a common lack of modern technological means of communication. They had no telephones, radio stations, television stations and video sets. Musical Instruments constitute the principal modes of communication." The most and closest method important communication in rural life is the town cry. The town crier is a message bearer whose voice is a medium for delivering messages from the ruler. This mode as an effective medium of communication embodies the right terms of address, and it carries certain statements, information and messages in social, religious, joyful, mournful, peace and crisis settings (Obielozie, 2005). This is a major identity of any recognized race in the world which familiarizes people of the same culture and common ideology. Societies with culture may be better able to survive based on the use of the same language. Language organizes their feelings, assists significant messages with being imparted

into the people (especially in ritual); it also motivates them to identify with and support each other.

Yoruba Folk Song and Poem that Teach Hygienic Values

The essential acquisition of norms and values are not limited to Africans or Yoruba people only. In the history of Greek education, for example, the Plato and Pythagoras theory gave credence to music and gymnastics as 'essentials in education' being avenues to build people and inculcate ideas in them. "The chief function of education in the early Greek era was building individuals of character, grace and stamina. To accomplish these goals the early organization of Greek education was structured with rhetoric or oratory for the development of mind, gymnastics for body and music for soul." In the same vein, Ayeyemi (2015b), declared that, "African philosophy of instilling and imparting education on the younger generation, though through oral tradition and cultural participation, was to train the soul and music being the best teaching and assimilation method stand a better chance than other disciplines." Music as a functional phenomenon in African context is used in almost all avenues to communicate and teach durina societal norms rituals. entertainment, relaxation, festival and other socio-cultural ceremonies.

METHODOLOGY

Basic moral education is mainly acquired traditionally in the rural environment. In the urban cities, among the high social class citizens, the basic norms and values have been jettisoned. The folk songs and poems that advance moral education have long been forgotten by the youth, creating a gap between the expected and exhibited characters. However, this paper wishes to bring to the limelight, a Yoruba folk song and a poem which educate maintenance of hygiene according to the set functions and philosophies in the society. The practice of sinaina, memorizing and repeating the same thing or activity ease learning generally and help to remember what has been committed to memory. The hygiene issue is an essential factor in curbing the spread of the deadly COVID-19. Albeit, the administrative. State. and Local Governments have put in all efforts through the medical and physical devices to alert Nigerian citizenry of the existence of coronavirus and its deadly impact if it finds its way into the body of the people. There were music composers performers at the local, national and international levels who used traditional. choral. popular musical styles communicate the message on taking cushion not to be infected with the COVID-19. However, proactive measure for creating further awareness, especially among the local dwellers in Yoruba of southwest Nigeria, is very pertinent. This

method goes a long way by using familiar folksongs and poems in their mother tongue or the language that the children, youth, adult and aged could comprehend. Among the numerous songs that cut

across all areas of Yoruba and, which educates the topic of hygiene includes; Imototo lo le segun arun gbogbo, meaning only by hygiene can all diseases be conquered.

Yoruba version	Interpretation
Imototo lo le segun arun gbogbo,	Only by hygiene can all diseases be conquered
Imototo lo le segun arun gbogbo,	Only by hygiene can all diseases be conquered
Im Imototo ile,	House hygiene
Imototo ara	Body hygiene
Imototo aso	Wears hygiene
Imototo enu	Mouth hygiene
Imototo ounje	Food hygiene
Imototo lo le segun arun gbogbo.	Only by hygiene can all diseases be conquered

The above folk song establishes that cleanliness is the only way to avoid contracting any disease. There is a Yoruba proverb which sheds light on this fact, thus, Ibi ti imi ba gbe wa ni esinsinkesinsin n ba a si literarily means wherever feces are deposited, kinds of flies hibernate. The cultural meaning of the proverb is that in any place feces is found, the environment is unclean. Flies in this context represent diseases. In other words, a dirty climate invites disease. In the same vein, Yoruba say arun iwosi tinu egbin la wa, Ina ni I wo aso onida which, literarily means that an insulting disease emanates from filth, fire enters the garment of the filthy one. Culturally, it means that anyone who is

careless about his environmental hygiene will be unexpectedly visited by a burning disease. There is no section of this folk song that is repeated, but for the meaning to be established, for mastery and memorization, it has to be sung rhetorically.

From the beginning, Yoruba people originally frown upon unhealthy environments and unhygienic behaviors. For instance, a Yoruba folklore says when someone pound yam in the mortal, he or she is not expected to talk, and the reason was to prevent him or her from dropping saliva in the food being prepared to avoid any dangerous bacterial or contagious virus from the drop. Therefore, the song

clearly stated that cleanliness is the only tool to conquer disease and this applies to the whole house, body, cloth/wears, mouth and food. All these are points of contact to any sickness.

Poem	
Yoruba Version	Interpretation
Ji, ko rorin	Wake and brush your teeth
We, ki o mo	Wash and be clean
Ge, eekanna re	Cut your finger nails
Jeun to dara lasiko	Eat good food to time
Ma jeun ju	Do not over eat

This melo-rhythmic poem is mostly taught at the lower primary school level. It is very important to know at this level of life, even though the pupils might not be able to comprehend the usefulness of the message of the poem. However, they consciously or unconsciously recite it both at home and amongst themselves. The poem's message is an instruction to brush their teeth, clean their body and cut their fingernails. Orin in the poem is otherwise called pako (chewing-stick) in the Yoruba language. It is a local means of encourages people to clean the mouth to prevent mouth odor. The last two lines instruct that one should balance diet to avoid kwashiorkor.

The Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) organization, through The World Bank (2020), advocates for the management and use of clean water and maintenance of a good environment. In its

effort to curb the spread of COVID-19, the organization expressed its concern about clean water, which if not provided, can accelerate the spread of water-borne diseases, including potential infection episodes like cholera, especially where the illness is endemic. Most of these diseases also break out through air, but regular and legitimate hand cleanliness is one of the main measures that could be utilized to forestall disease and prevent infections. For COVID-19 all these measures to work, people must be made aware of the measures and their impact.

CONCLUSION

African traditional music, especially in Nigeria, experienced turbulence and insecurity in the course of transition from the diverse traditional cultures in favor of

a modern and popular cultural identity. This occurrence is attributed to different factors in southern Nigeria, including the emergence of the European missionaries, who influenced the traditional musical orientation of the people by introducing Western religion and education using European musical idioms in the nineteenth century (Omojola, 1995). However, African traditional music was revived when the pupils and students were recruited into the school choir and music education. Series tauaht contextual folk music composition including Imototo bori arun mole (though the specific composers of some songs were anonymous), emerged, and have since been in circulation among Yoruba people. The compositions, such as the above piece of music meant for the specific and important purpose of curbing the spread of diseases such as the deadly Covid-19 through the air, water and body contact were used primarily in schools to teach students hygiene, and stand out among other compositions for that exact reason.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given how crucial the above folk song is to the health of the people, particularly the Yoruba of Southwest Nigeria during this ravaging COVID-19 pandemic, this paper hereby recommends that the music be recorded for video as with the audio in both acapella and instrumental modes to be:

- Transmitted at the public and private radio and television stations all over Yoruba speaking States as jingle or interlude,
- 2. Translated to as many languages in Nigeria to be used as ringing tone by all the communication companies since everyone carries one or more GSM phones powered by the existing communication companies.

Similar folk songs from other cultures within the nation could be researched and collated for the purposes mentioned in 1 and 2 above that could be sponsored by both and health organizations.

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A musical response to sensitize and orientate everyone to prevent COVID 19 pandemic

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR(S)

Oluwatoyin E. Ayeyemi

Corresponding Author Adeyemi College of Education

mailto:olueben01@gmail.com

Marvelous O. Ayokunmi

University of Lagos

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