

# **THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL FESTIVALS ON ECONOMIC ADVACEMENT: IMPLICATION ON THE TEACHING OF LITERAURE AND LANGUAGE**

**<sup>1</sup>Oluwadare Beatrice Idowu**

**Email:** [beatriceoluwadare@gmail.com](mailto:beatriceoluwadare@gmail.com)

**Phone Number:** +2348121752106

**ORCID Number:** ID <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1849-9554>

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## **Abstract**

Cultural festivals are part and parcel of life. Civilization produced erroneous image of African cultures as awkward, barbaric, fetish, archaic and useless others regard cultural festivals as channels through which literature and language learning can be developed interaction at communal level, nationally and internationally to enhance economic advancement. However, cultural festivals are bundles of traditional heritage, recreation, values, and avenue for transmitting and enhancing socialization, can be harnessed for socioeconomic development. This paper projects the impact of literature and language with a positive orientation to cultural values. It enunciates the values and roles of cultural festivals in human and societal development, language learning, and by extension literature. It bemoans the negligence of people at cultural festivals in Nigeria. This highlights the role of festivals in promoting literature and language learning for economic advancement. Strategies that could be used to promote literature and language learning for school development were identified. It concludes with an emphasis on the fact that festivals bind us together and recommend parents, teachers, schools, and societal authorities to take advantage of those festivals to enhance the teaching and learning of language, both oral and written literature, in schools and at home for our nation's economic interactions, exposure, and venture making.

## **Introduction**

Festivals crave great opportunities for tribes and groups to get together, whether through their religion, views, social beliefs, or interests that bind them. Festivals are full of celebrations and include commemorating or observing both big and small events (Hall,2005). It reflects the culture of society, is planned with food and is spontaneous.

Arreola Arreola, Deal, Petersen and Sanders (2008) defined culture as encompassing knowledge, attitudes, and behavior shared by and passed on by members of a specific group. It acts as a blueprint for how a group of people

<sup>1</sup> Languages and Communication Department, The Federal Polytechnic, Ado-Ekiti. Ekiti-State, Nigeria.

should behave if they want to fit in with the group. It ties us to one group, separates us from other groups, and helps us to solve the problems that humans face. There are different celebrations to showcase the cultural heritage of people from different locations in Nigeria. The diversities of these cultural heritages in form of festivals attract patronage from national and international tourists, through which there can be advancement in our economy. This was supported by Okpoko (1990) who stated that African countries like Nigeria have festivals that are rich in mythology, which can be managed to generate revenue. Festivals compel people from different disciplines of life and offer a re-union for natives of the land. There are various displays of traditional music, dances, foods, and dresses to appreciate the Almighty God and bring them to a new season of abundance, peace, joy, and divine protection. (Umar and Ahamad, 2019).

According to the Minister of information and culture in Nigeria, there are more than 365 festivals in Nigeria, and the government is working hard to harness these festivals as a way of showcasing and boosting the country's diverse cultures. In Nigeria, there are different types of festivals. Nigerians living in different areas of the country have learned to adapt to their different environments because this determines the various kinds of culture they practice in their particular environments. Virtually, all states in Nigeria have their own cultural festivals to celebrate in a specific time and place.

This paper, however, observes that as important as festivals are in our society, the connections among these festivals, language, and literature are not emphasized and utilized through which literature and language learning can be developed through interaction at communal level, nationally and internationally to enhance economic advancement. However, cultural festivals, which are bundles of traditional heritage, recreation, values, and avenues for transmitting and enhancing socialization, can be harnessed for socioeconomic development. This paper projects the impact of literature and language with a positive orientation to cultural values. It enunciates the values and roles of cultural festivals in human and societal development, language learning, and the extension of literature. It bemoans the negligence of people at cultural festivals in Nigeria. This highlights the different types of celebrations and their place in promoting literature and language learning for economic advancement. Strategies that could be used to promote literature and language learning for school development were identified. It concludes with an emphasis on the fact that festivals bind us and recommend parents, teachers, schools, and societal authorities to take advantage of those festivals to enhance the teaching and learning of language, both oral and written literature, in schools and at home for our nation's economic interactions, exposure, and venture making.

Jacob (2021) asserted that in Nigeria, there are different cultural festivals that are very popular even beyond the shores of our country. Nigeria has many traditions and cultures. These cultures and traditions are celebrated through different festivals that always attract travelers from different parts of the world to witness such festivals. The majority of travelers affirm that Nigeria is not for faint heart people. Nigerians are popular in party celebrations, and this is the same zeal they have for their festivals, as they showcase their traditions.

According to Jacob (2021) The List of Top 10 Traditional and colorful Festivals in Nigeria are as follows:

1. Lagos Theater Festival
2. Eyo Festival
3. Lagos International Jazz Festival
4. Lagos Carnival
5. New Yam Festival
6. Durbar Festival
7. Osun Festival

8. Ojude Oba
9. Ofala Festival
10. Calabar Carnival

### **1. Lagos Theater Festival**

Lagos Theater Festival is the first among the first ten festivals to take place in March, each year in Nigeria. This festival covers a wide range of national events. Local artists showcase their customs and traditions through theater. Plays, dance, and musical performances are different ways in which different traditions and cultures are enacted, and tourists are always attracted to travel down to celebrate this festival.

### **2. Eyo Festival**

Eyo Festival is the next to attract tourists and Nigerians to the cultural festival of Eyo, although it is not likely to be the most colorful of celebrating the masquerades. It is described as fake because of false belief that the celebration of this festival is accompanied by healing virtues for the sick, prosperity for the poor, and wisdom for the fools. The masqueraders in their immaculate regalia denoting purity and truth, and the decorated and fanciful hats with different colors depict the tribes they hail from. This festival is celebrated in February in Lagos State.

### **3. Lagos International Jazz Festival**

This festival is more about music than a festival. Both international and local artists are present for performances. It always comes up on 30<sup>th</sup> of April every year to coincide with International Jazz Day. Mike Aremu and Lekan Babatola are always present at international jazz festivals, and they usually attract a large crowd with other Jazz musicians and lovers of music across the globe.

### **4. Lagos Carnival**

This festival has been in operation for over a century and is the most popular carnival in West Africa. The carnival is remembrance of emancipated slaves from West Africa. It is a prototypical carnival in Brazil. The carnival brings together the local tribal rulers who appear in their tribal regalia, making the carnival radiant and honorable. It is celebrated between November and April, during the dry season, so that rain will not disturb the participants.

### **5. New Yam Festival**

This festival celebrates the season of the arrival of the new yam. It is the harvest season for the yams. The farmers are happy to witness the harvesting of their crops, which symbolizes the success of farmers. The biggest yams are exhibited, and pounded yams with various delicious vegetables are provided. It is celebrated in different parts of the country. The month of August is usually dedicated to this event. Old yams are disposed of, which marks another season of planting new yam sets. Yams are presented to the kings, community leaders, and farmers who buy new clothes for their wives, children, and family members. Women and young people carry yams on their heads as they parade to showcase these big yams and the fertility of their land. Some believe that it is also a time to worship the god of fertility. Various fashion shows, masquerades, and beauty pageants accompany the festival celebration.

All these festivals are unique and have a lot of influence on people and Nigerians and even attract people outside the coast of Nigeria to travel down to celebrate with them. These festivals have specific months in which they are held, and this is another factor that makes the population high for the festivals. Apart from the above-mentioned festivals, there are other festivals in different local governments or at the state level that attract people's attention. For example, in Ondo town in Ondo State, indigenous peoples in Abroad always travel to witness 'Ogun' festival, 'Aeregbe' festival in Akure. Also, in Ire-Ekiti 'Ogun' in Ado-Ekiti, we have *Udi-Iroko* Festival. In Ikere-Ekiti, we have *Olosunta* Festival and a host of others.

### **Importance of Festivals**

From record in United Kingdom Music, 3.4 million people attend festivals in the country yearly, which gives the economy E550 boost, while Glastonbury alone contributes E 100 m annually to the economy.

Festival serves as an escape, people are able to switch off from normal routine life to relax, especially if it is music festivals, people to meet in their different costumes, displays are the things that occupy people no need of listening to TV, news, magazines and no advertisement either.

2. Festival celebrations bring abundant joy, happiness, and a blissful life.
3. Festivals allow individuals to relax and enjoy with others.
4. Festivals help celebrate other cultures.
5. It brings a lot of fun and excitement.
6. Enhance opportunities and encourage friends, family, and people from different societies at local, national, and international levels to gather for celebrations.
7. The young are exposed to what matters in life, and they easily learn about their cultures and festivals as they witness them.
8. To be precise, Nigerians in a stressful period we are in now are able to diffuse tension in festive moods, and they overlook the stresses by doing what they love as they judiciously spend their time as they move away from stress.

### **Literature and Values**

Literature generally is any written work that can be of appreciation of traditions and cultural values, which could be in the form of prose, poetry, or drama, which can be of creative writing or non-creative writing. It can be historical or of various artistic features, etymologically the term derives from Latin literature/literature “writing formed with letters” or sometimes spoken texts.

Literature has a literary advantage, and language foregrounds literariness, unlike normal language. Literature can be classified as creative writing or non-creative writing, and it can be classified as prose or poetry. It can also be distinguished into major forms, such as the novel, and is classified according to historical periods, or according to its devotion to certain artistic features or expectation genres. (Ibitola 2015). This means that whatever is written is a literary material that supports the views of Hills in 2011.

Another perspective to view Literature is that it is a significant aspect of culture through which communication is enhanced among members of society. It engages the literary facet of communication with the use of language for esthetic value creating and recognizing originality, intellectual magnificence. Literature is a more important form of language that is used in a more special and beautiful manner to express views, thoughts, ideas, ways of life, and emotions (Fakeye, 2015). This implies that because culture entails the totality of life of a people, Literature cannot be divorced from the culture of a people. The settings, plots, and characters of any literary text can reflect the people.

In a similar vein, Oluwadare (2018), citing Bu (2012), describes literature as creative imagination experiences of human beings that can be expressed in written or spoken form, taking readers on an excursion of great and dynamic discovery. He affirmed that being proficient in reading literary texts is of great importance as being proficient in language usage. For learners to get into the imaginative world of the writer, they require a good proficiency in the language of the text to understand and respond to it. Bu’s opinion on Literature here supports the assertion that literature deals with images. It takes the power of creative thinking to imagine what a writer pens down for society to read.

Ihejirika (2014) postulated that literature can help to make culture or acculturation to be captivating, also

advancement of language learning and competence, developing emotional growth and constancy having positive attitudes toward life, educative entertainment, sharing various positive attitudes for moral values that enhance all round mature personality. In the same vein, Oluwadare (2020) asserted that literature helps students learn about their cultures even during festive moods, so also having positive attitudes toward moral values in language learning, developing emotional growth, and educative entertainment.

### **The Impact of Cultural Festivals on Economic Advancement**

In overall economic advancement, the role of culture is highly under-recognized (CSES, 2010). This is the reason for people questioning the reason utilizing public treasury on cultural festivals, and this adversely affects cultural policy issues among the top ranks because it is economically unproductive. Leaders in our country must be responsive and respond to this.

According to Kovari and Zimanyi,(2010) tourism has a link with the culture of people i.e. culture is one of the good products of tourism and must be well cared for to promote the economy.

Cultural festivals stimulate the growth and development of industries because culture revolves around various activities and resources produced in other sectors of the economy.

In addition, Zang and Deng (2022) reported that cultural festivals have a great impact on the culture of people. Cultural festivals help promote, preserve, and transform cultural heritage. The cultural identity of a society is portrayed in exhibiting the arts and crafts of traditional local communities during cultural festivals. These cultural practices are being encouraged to fight against going into extinction as there are performances of traditional dances and different arts and crafts exhibitions.

Salma (2024), citing Chabrra et al, 2013 affirm that festivals and tourism have great financial impact on the economy of the local community, with many benefits because revenues are gained through visitors expend on food, accommodation, transport, and entertainment.

In the same vein, Snowball and Antrobus (2020) found that various empirical studies conducted have revealed that such festivals have helped increase the financial stability of local communities. For instance, studies on music festivals and sports events have discovered that these events can generate millions of dollars to impact economic advancement from different local businesses and create employment through the hospitality and service sectors. Associated with this spending, economic activity can have a multiplier effect that may economically boost secondary activities. Apart from direct economic profits, festivals give room for creating a potential boost for tourists to desire more visits to such communities that celebrate festivals, and such places become tourist attractions. Businesses benefit greatly from festivals as they promote various products that people may need during the festival celebrations. Apart from the gains made by businessmen, this growth increases local and national economic growth, which may permit further investments in infrastructure and services. Policymakers at both local and national levels and businessmen who have this understanding strengthen sustainable economic advantages through festivals.

Green and Edwards (2023) in Salma (2024) affirmed that researchers majorly delved into the short-term goals of benefits, promotion, advancement, and profit from cultural festivals, but much has not been done about the benefits of long-term goals of the way which the short-term goal could be sustained and improved upon.

Bye and bye, having long-term economic benefits can positively accumulate and upgrade destination branding and tourism marketing. In contrast to this, some studies have highlighted the negatives such as higher cost of living for the people living in such communities, and there are no equal benefits among the residents. There is also the problem of insecurity.

Salma (2024) remarked in her study that all businesses in tourism need to rise up and lay hold of opportunities that festivals bring to improve the patronage of customers and revenues. They must also be ready to find solutions

to the challenges of a high number of people coming in for such festivals and the likely disruptions that may be envisaged.

### **Festival Celebrations, Literature, and Language Learning in the Classroom**

According to Ofodu and Olasehinde (2020), festival celebrations integrate lesson skills among students. Students can discuss different festivals in their communities, states, or nations; collaborate, share information about the different festivals in their environment; and discuss which one they like or prefer and wish to attend or that they have already attended. Through this, students can develop an imaginary festival celebration by working together. This will help students learn and practice vocabulary for describing festivals and other programs. Students can develop integrated skills: speaking, reading and writing. It promotes positive interactions and the ability to reflect good characters and develop good human relationships with friends, peers, and even seniors in schools and elders in the society at large. Students are comfortable in engaging in respectful discussions, explanations, arguments, or debates. It further creates room for high expectations.

Culturally, festivals significantly promote and help preserve the local heritage and traditions of our country. It is opportune for people to exhibit indigenous crafts, arts, and cultural practices to many people from different communities, states, and countries. Thus, they contribute to national sustainability. Therefore, the students learn about their culture and the practices of the land. In the same vein, the people may be carried away with the profits made, in showcasing their cultural expressions that there may be threats to authenticity and ingenuity. It is very important that they maintain genuineness and integrity when showcasing culture for tourists. (Salma 2024)

### **Innovative Strategies for Promoting Festival Celebrations in Teaching and Learning.**

#### **Writing and Maintaining Journals**

A journal is a book in which the personal ideas of a learner are expressed.

- i) It allows the writer to express himself comfortably.
- ii) Writing is free.
- iii) This can be done in softcopy or hardcopy correspondence between two students online or on ground.

Journals keep consist of

1. Individuals are exposed to various writing processes.
2. The learners wrote independently without interference from pairs and groups after the teacher's explanation.
3. Through brainstorming, the learner learns to rewrite, free write, draw, or use other techniques. The learner is taught to prewrite using brainstorming, free writing, diagramming, or other techniques. Then, this is revising, editing, and proofreading. It is not the same as the conventional school writing process where the teacher allows the learner to write without engaging them in the prewriting, writing, and post writing activities.
4. Grading is not the focus of the teacher in this type of method but on the processes by which learners can write well with no stress. During the editing process, learners are able to identify their own errors.
6. Journal keeping is a process through which students keep all their write-up records.

#### **Purposes of Journal Writing.**

According to Ofodu and Olasehinde (2020), some purposes for journal writing are as follows:

- i) It encourages and arouses learners' interest in recording different events such as festival celebrations and things they might have forgotten.
- ii) Expansion of learner's vocabulary.
- iii) Enhances thinking exploration and thinking skills.
- iv) Writing papers helps students solve their problems.
- v) Create a dialog between teacher/ student, student/student, student/material.
- vi) Provides a good companion in time of loneliness. A good companion for students against loneliness.



- vii) Establishes confidence of writing.
- viii) Creates time for relaxation and helps suppress negative thoughts, feelings, and emotions.
- ix) It allows learners to experiment.
- x) Develops learners' imaginative power.
- xi) As they share with their partners or friends, communication skills are developed in speaking, listening, reading and writing.
- xii) The thinking faculties of learners are well developed.
- xiii) Ability to develop autobiographical writing skills and a tool to learn about oneself.

### **The Procedure for Writing a Journal**

1. Listing: list ideas or images on a topic.
2. Webbing words or phrases: outlines words or phrases around a topic.
3. Close observations and descriptions: using many sensory details.
4. Simplicity: Write simple and short sentences.
5. Think about activities of the day and reflect on what is important to you.

(Ofodu & Olasehinde 2020)

### **Storytelling and retelling as strategies**

Story telling is about the exchange of ideas in different aspects or phases of life, drawing knowledge that gives understanding and encompasses growth that aids or leads to learning. Lani Peterson (2017) opines that organizations should encourage storytelling and should be at the heart of learning. Through storytelling, learners are inspired, encouraged, engaged, influenced, and taught to tell stories or listen to stories and continually encourage others to tell stories with you. This will make one at an advantageous position in science. He further explained that the more a speaker tries to convey information in story form, the more he convinces and the listeners, the closer their experiences and understanding are to the intention of the speaker. The storyteller is telling the story as listeners listening attentively. The listeners are called one by one to retell the story, and the storyteller asks questions about the story. E.g. What is the title that fits the story. Mention the good characters in the story. What are the stories taught or lessons to learn? Identify the theme of the story.

Ofodu and Olasehinde (2020), citing Onukaogu (2017), stated that as teachers tell stories to their students, students also learn to tell stories. They observed that teachers changed their voices in dialogs and emphasize repetitive phrases. Teachers use puppets and other props. Modeling is very important, and teachers can use mini lessons to explain lesson procedures.

There are four major steps to follow in storytelling:

1. Choose the story: In choosing a story, the storyteller should tell a story that he/she likes, understands it well, is ready to tell it, and answers any questions asked by the listeners.
2. Prepare to tell the story: Students plan and rehearse a familiar story before telling it. They do not need to memorize it. Tin (2006) recommends that students choose a familiar story that they really like and reread the story once or twice to bring out or review details of the characters and list out phrases and the morals and values portrayed in the story.
3. Add props: Props include flannel-board pictures, puppets, small stuffed animals, and other objects. Ofodu and Olasehinde (2020), citing Rahman (2003), explained that to retell a story, students can use pictures and drawings as needed.
4. Tell the story: Teachers can fix students in the same class into small groups, and each student prepares and rehearse to tell his or her story in their group while others listen with rapt attention. Students are to use phrases

and props as they tell their stories. Students should be able to identify the theme of the story and moral lessons in the different stories beginning from the introduction to the end of the story.

The qualities of good stories, as suggested by Mansor (2005)

1. A simple, well-rounded plot
2. A clear beginning, middle and end
3. An underlying theme
4. A smaller number of well- defined characters
5. Dialog
6. Repetitions
7. Colorful language or catchphrases

Ofodu and Olasehinde (2020) asserted that teachers should assess the process students use to tell stories and the quality of storytelling productions, but more importantly, they should assess the process of developing interpretation to such stories. Students are to follow.

According to Leslie Holwerda (2015), communication skills development for students' success in schools is enhanced through the art of storytelling. Storytelling motivates children to develop their listening skills, analyze, promotes verbal skills, increases the power of imagination and visualization and develops comprehension and retention skills. The teacher can start the story that the children are familiar with. Make use of folktales, and you can use the child's favorite picture book. Allow the children to first listen to the story being read and to later take turns reading and relating the story without assistance from the teacher or other students. Use a conducive place that is good for you and your students.

### **Conclusion**

The festival demonstrates the rich cultural heritage of Nigeria and the world. It makes people happy and a source of renewing their strength, unity, and structure to our socioeconomic well-being and reveals to people the importance and relevance of our customs and traditions that we do not know about. It is a source of boosting and promoting our economy as our markets are congested with many buyers and sellers during the festive period. Many foreigners and Nigerians abroad travel down to witness our festivals and also make individuals and the country have more sales in different businesses in every facet of our economy. This list enumerates the different strategies that can be used to establish the impact of teaching and learning about festival celebrations on school children. These strategies include journal writing and keeping, storytelling, and retelling stories. It also helps students learn about the festivals of their land and create interest, thereby helping to promote their culture not to go into extinct

### **Recommendations**

Right from the federal government to the state and local governments, there should be an allocation of funds to the kings, chiefs, and other rulers to fund festivals, bearing in mind that we are projecting our cultural values and heritage.

The indigenous day celebrated in primary and secondary schools should receive motivation from parents, teachers and the government.

Parents, teachers, and religious leaders should try as much as possible to stop speaking negative about festivals. This will debunk the erroneous idea that festivals are either occult or demonic.

Parents and teachers should allow children to attend festivals by giving them opportunities to utilize these festivals to develop their language and literary abilities. Finally, it was established that with festivals and different



celebrations, the efficacy and empowerment of learners can be resuscitated, guaranteed, and sustained in any society.

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