



Assessing Teachers' use of oral tradition in teaching Igbo language in secondary schools in South east, Nigeria

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Oral Tradition, Igbo Language, Secondary Education, Teaching Practices, Student Learning Outcomes

Received : 20, July

Revised : 25, August

Accepted: 20, September

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ABSTRACT

Oral tradition has long been a cornerstone of Igbo cultural heritage, serving as a medium for transmitting language, values, and societal norms across generations. In the context of education, integrating oral tradition into classroom instruction offers opportunities to make learning more engaging, culturally relevant, and effective. Using purposive sampling, 500 teachers actively engaged in Igbo language instruction participated. Data were collected through structured questionnaires assessing teacher perceptions of oral tradition, including its impact on teaching competency, student engagement, cultural integration, and learning outcomes. Analysis involved descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (ANOVA) using SPSS version 26. Oral tradition positively impacted student learning, boosting confidence (Mean = 3.30; SD = 1.017) and lesson interest (Mean = 3.16; SD = .972), though vocabulary comprehension was lower (Mean = 2.00; SD = 1.234). Major challenges included lack of resources (Mean = 3.44; SD = .865) and student interest (Mean = 3.45; SD = 1.009). ANOVA showed gender significantly influenced integration ($F = 129.148, p = .000$), impact ($F = 20.852, p = .000$), and perceived effectiveness ($F = 4.886, p = .028$), but not challenge severity ($F = 3.833, p = .051$). The study concluded that oral tradition is a culturally significant and effective pedagogical tool, recommending enhanced support, resource provision, and teacher training to maximize its benefits in Igbo language education.

INTRODUCTION

The integration of oral tradition in education has been a subject of extensive research, particularly in regions where traditional practices hold significant sociocultural value. Among the Igbo people of Nigeria, oral tradition deeply influences various aspects of life, including education (Amadi, 2023). The Igbo people of Nigeria are one of the largest ethnic groups in the country, primarily residing in the southeastern region. Known for their rich cultural heritage, the Igbo are distinguished by their vibrant traditions, language, and customs. They have a strong sense of community and are renowned for their entrepreneurial spirit (Onyemechalu & Ugwuanyi, 2022). The Igbo society is traditionally organized into village groups with a system of governance that includes elders and age grades. Festivals, dance, music, and masquerades play a significant role in their cultural life. Christianity is the predominant religion, though traditional beliefs are still practiced by some (Kanu, 2022).

Oral tradition is the practice of passing knowledge, cultural values, stories, and history from one generation to another through spoken word rather than written texts. It plays a crucial role in societies with limited access to writing or where storytelling is deeply embedded in cultural practices. Oral tradition includes myths, legends, folktales, proverbs, songs, and historical accounts, and it serves as a means of preserving a community's identity, language, and worldview. (Nwashindu & Onu, 2024). In many indigenous cultures, oral tradition is central to education, religious practices, and social cohesion. It allows for flexibility and adaptation, as stories can evolve over time to reflect new circumstances or emphasize moral lessons relevant to current generations. However, this same flexibility can lead to variations and distortions over time (Kanu, 2019). The Igbo oral tradition is a rich and complex system of cultural expression, historical transmission, and communal identity that has been central to the Igbo people of southeastern Nigeria for centuries. Rooted in storytelling, music, dance, and ritual, this oral heritage has preserved the values, beliefs, histories, and social structures of the Igbo community long before the introduction of Western literacy and record-keeping systems (Valsiner, 2014). This method aims to ensure that cultural contexts are respected and accurately represented, enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of the research or educational outcomes.

At the heart of Igbo oral tradition is storytelling, often conducted by elders, griots, or specially trained individuals within the community. These stories—called “akukọ” in Igbo—serve multiple purposes: they entertain, educate, preserve history, and instill moral values. Myths and legends recount the origin of the Igbo people, the deeds of ancestral heroes, and the foundations of villages and clans. One well-known myth involves Eri, regarded as the ancestral father of the Igbo, who is said to have descended from the sky and settled in the Anambra region. Such narratives connect the present generation with their spiritual and ancestral past (Pishghadam et al, 2020). Teacher's use of oral tradition encompasses the traditional knowledge systems, pedagogical practices, and cultural values that are integral to the Igbo people. These methodologies are often characterized by communal learning, oral traditions,

apprenticeship systems, and the integration of folklore, proverbs, and idioms in teaching (Mihai & Novo-Corti, 2021). Such approaches foster a holistic learning environment where learners are not only educated in academic subjects but also imbued with moral and Teacher Effectiveness in oral tradition.

Folktales, fables, and parables are commonly told to children during evening gatherings, using characters like the cunning tortoise (Mbekwu) to teach wisdom, caution, humility, or perseverance. These stories often include songs, chants, and call-and-response patterns that engage listeners and help commit the tales to memory. Oral performance, therefore, is not passive but highly interactive, with community participation shaping how the story unfolds and is remembered (Dien et al, 2022). Effective teachers adapt their instructional methods to meet diverse student needs, foster a positive learning environment, and assess and support student progress. They build strong relationships with students, encouraging a love for learning and critical thinking. Teacher Effectiveness in oral tradition is often measured through student performance, classroom observations, and feedback from students and peers, ultimately contributing to improved educational outcomes and student success (Gyang, 2021). Research indicates that Teacher Effectiveness in oral tradition in Igbo communities can be significantly enhanced by integrating oral tradition into the educational process.

Udechukwu (2019) emphasizes that when teachers incorporate Igbo cultural elements, such as storytelling and communal activities, students demonstrate higher engagement and comprehension levels. This is attributed to the familiarity and relevance of the content, which resonates more deeply with the students' lived experiences and cultural backgrounds. Proverbs, or "ilu," are another crucial aspect of Igbo oral tradition. Chinua Achebe, the renowned Nigerian author, once described proverbs as "the palm oil with which words are eaten." They encapsulate wisdom, cultural norms, and social critique in metaphorical language, often drawn from the environment, agriculture, and human behavior. For example, the proverb "When the moon is shining, the cripple becomes hungry for a walk" suggests that opportunity can inspire action even in the most unlikely individuals. Proverbs are widely used in daily conversation, public speaking, legal disputes, and negotiations, giving depth and nuance to communication.

Moreover, Ude et al, (2020) found that teachers who utilize Igbo proverbs and idioms in their instruction are better able to convey complex concepts in a relatable manner. This not only aids in the retention of knowledge but also reinforces cultural identity among students. The cultural context thus serves as a bridge, facilitating better understanding and retention of academic material by connecting new knowledge to students' existing cultural experiences and familiar frameworks. When educational content is presented in a way that resonates with students' cultural backgrounds, it becomes more relevant and relatable (Amadi & Agena, 2015). This relevance increases students' engagement and interest, making it easier for them to grasping complex concepts. Additionally, using culturally familiar examples and references helps to reinforce memory retention, as students can anchor new information to known cultural

touchstones. Ultimately, this approach promotes deeper learning and a more meaningful educational experience which only a competent teacher can provide (Dei, 2013).

To effectively integrate Oral tradition, teachers must possess competencies in songs. Traditional songs often commemorate historical events, celebrate festivals, or accompany rites of passage such as births, marriages, and funerals. Music can also be used to satirize behavior or praise individuals, functioning as both entertainment and social commentary. The talking drum (ikoro) and other instruments are not just musical tools but also communicative devices used to announce important events or summon people to gatherings. According to Isidienu (2016), rituals and ceremonies—such as the New Yam Festival (Iri Ji), initiation rites, and masquerade performances (Mmanwu)—incorporate oral elements including chants, invocations, and dirges. These rituals reaffirm social bonds and maintain the spiritual well-being of the community. The masquerades, in particular, blend dance, costume, music, and oral performance to dramatize spiritual beliefs and social values.

Teachers were expected to foster inclusive classroom environments that promoted respect for cultural diversity while enhancing students' learning experiences. Professional development and training programs tailored to these needs were found to be essential in equipping teachers with the skills for culturally responsive pedagogy. Ohamobi et al. (2024) emphasized that continuous professional development improves teachers' job commitment and adaptability in addressing diverse learner needs. Lambeth and Smith (2016) highlight the importance of culturally responsive teacher education programs that equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge. In contrast, Osegbue et al. (2022) highlighted collaborative practices as a pathway to improving teacher performance and competitiveness in the global context. Similarly, Manafa et al. (2022) underscored the importance of utilizing innovative strategies and resources to strengthen instructional delivery. These studies agreed that cultural competence, integration of oral tradition, and continuous learning are critical for advancing teaching practices in secondary schools. Ultimately, aligning teacher education with cultural responsiveness enhances inclusivity, supports curriculum implementation, and promotes global competitiveness (Ohamobi, Manafa, & Osegbue, 2020).

Despite the benefits, several challenges impede the effective integration of Oral tradition in education. One major challenge is the dominance of Western educational paradigms, which often marginalize indigenous knowledge systems (Morrison et al, 2022). This can lead to a lack of resources and support for teachers attempting to incorporate Igbo cultural practices. Additionally, globalization and modernization have led to a gradual erosion of traditional knowledge and cultural practices. Young teachers, in particular, may lack the depth of cultural knowledge necessary to effectively utilize these methodologies (Gist, 2014). Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts from educational policymakers, institutions, and communities to prioritize and preserve indigenous knowledge systems.

The urgency for studying the teachers' use of oral tradition in teaching Igbo language in secondary schools stems from the need to enhance educational relevance and performance in culturally rich contexts. Integrating indigenous methodologies can improve engagement and academic outcomes by making content more relatable (Bergantz & Gale, 2020). However, the lack of culturally responsive training often limits teachers' ability to implement these methods effectively. Addressing this gap is important for developing effective teaching practices that resonate with students' cultural backgrounds and improving overall educational quality. Therefore, this study aims to provide awareness and recommendations for better teacher training and instructional strategies.

1.2. Statement of the Problem/Justification

The educational landscape in South east, Nigeria, is at a critical juncture where integrating oral tradition could significantly impact Teacher Effectiveness in oral tradition and competency needs. Despite the rich cultural heritage of the Igbo people, which includes diverse pedagogical practices rooted in their traditions, there is a noticeable gap in the incorporation of these methodologies into formal education. This research aims to address this gap by exploring the impact of teachers' use of oral tradition on secondary school education.

One of the primary problems is the inadequate integration of Oral tradition into the teaching practices of secondary school teachers. Traditional Igbo teaching methods, such as oral storytelling, proverbs, and communal learning, offer valuable insights and engagement strategies that align with students' cultural backgrounds. However, these methods are often underutilized or completely overlooked in the current educational framework, which predominantly follows Western pedagogical models. This disconnect between cultural practices and educational methods can result in diminished relevance and engagement, negatively affecting students' learning outcomes.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of teachers in South east, Nigeria is hampered by a lack of specific training in Oral tradition. Teachers are frequently unprepared to integrate these methodologies into their classrooms due to insufficient professional development and training programs. This shortfall in culturally responsive training means that teachers may struggle to connect academic content with students' cultural contexts, leading to less effective teaching and lower student engagement.

Another significant issue is the challenges teachers face in implementing Oral tradition. Teachers often encounter obstacles such as inadequate resources, resistance to change, and a lack of institutional support for incorporating traditional practices into the curriculum. These challenges can hinder the effective use of Oral tradition, thereby impacting Teacher Effectiveness in oral tradition and student learning. The perceptions of teachers and students regarding Oral tradition are also an area of concern. There is limited research on how these methodologies are perceived in terms of their effectiveness and relevance in contemporary secondary education. Understanding these perceptions is crucial for assessing the value and impact of integrating oral tradition into the educational system.

Justifying the need for this study, it is essential to recognize that educational practices that reflect students' cultural contexts can enhance learning experiences and outcomes. This research aims to provide actionable insights for improving educational practices in South east, Nigeria by exploring how Oral tradition impact Teacher Effectiveness in oral tradition and identifying the competencies needed for their integration. Addressing these issues can lead to more culturally relevant teaching strategies, better student engagement, and improved academic performance.

Research Objectives

General Objective

This study would investigate teachers' use of oral tradition in teaching Igbo language in secondary schools

Specific Objectives

Specific objectives of the study include:

1. Assess the integration of oral tradition in the teaching practices of secondary school teachers in South east, Nigeria.
2. Evaluate the impact of teachers' use of oral tradition on student learning outcomes in secondary schools.
3. Examine the challenges faced by secondary school teachers in implementing Oral tradition in their classrooms.
4. Analyze the perceptions of teachers regarding the effectiveness of Oral tradition in secondary education.

Research Questions

The following research questions would guide the study:

1. How are Oral tradition integrated into the teaching practices of secondary school teachers in South east, Nigeria?
2. What is the impact of teachers' use of oral tradition on student learning outcomes in secondary schools?
3. What challenges do secondary school teachers face in implementing Oral tradition in their classrooms?
4. What are the perceptions of teachers regarding the effectiveness of Oral tradition in secondary education?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the mean integration of oral tradition in teaching practices between male and female secondary school teachers in South-east Nigeria.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean impact of teachers' use of oral tradition on student learning outcomes between male and female teachers.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean challenge-severity scores faced in implementing oral tradition between male and female secondary school teachers.
4. There is no significant difference in the mean perception of the effectiveness of oral tradition in secondary education between male and female teachers.

Research Details/ Literature Review

Related literature to the key concepts in this study would be reviewed.

Igbo Educational Philosophy

Overview of Igbo Culture

The Igbo people, primarily located in southeastern Nigeria, represent one of the largest ethnic groups in Africa. Their culture is rich and diverse, deeply rooted in traditions, language, values, and social structures that have evolved over centuries (Karatat & Oral, 2019). Understanding Igbo culture is essential to grasp the educational philosophy that shapes their approach to learning and teaching. Igbo culture places a strong emphasis on communal living, respect for elders, and the importance of family and kinship ties (Johnson et al, 2019). The society is traditionally organized into villages and clans, each with a complex system of governance and social hierarchy. Decision-making processes often involve consensus, and respect for authority figures such as chiefs and elders are paramount (Ikegwu, 2018). These cultural norms influence the way education is perceived and delivered within the community.

Language plays a significant role in Igbo culture, as it is not only a means of communication but also a carrier of cultural values and history. The Igbo language is used in storytelling, proverbs, and oral traditions, all of which serve as educational tools that pass knowledge from one generation to the next (Asikaogu, 2018). This oral tradition underscores the importance of experiential learning and personal interaction in the Igbo educational framework. Religion and spirituality are also integral to Igbo culture. The belief system encompasses a pantheon of deities, with a focus on ancestral worship and the concept of 'Chi,' or personal god, which is believed to guide an individual's destiny (Isidienu, 2016). These religious beliefs influence the moral and ethical teachings embedded in Igbo education, emphasizing virtues such as honesty, hard work, and community service.

Igbo Educational Philosophy

The Igbo educational philosophy is deeply intertwined with the cultural values and social norms of the Igbo people. It emphasizes practical knowledge, character development, and the preparation of individuals to contribute effectively to society. The philosophy is holistic, addressing the intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions of the learner. Traditionally, Igbo education was informal and took place within the family and community (Ugwu, 2022). Children learned through observation, imitation, and participation in daily activities. This form of education was experiential, focusing on practical skills such as farming, trade, and craftsmanship, which were essential for survival and economic prosperity (Chidoka, 2021). Elders and skilled artisans served as teachers, imparting knowledge through storytelling, proverbs, and direct instruction.

A key aspect of Igbo educational philosophy is the emphasis on moral education and character development. The Igbo believe that education should produce not only knowledgeable individuals but also virtuous ones. Moral teachings are integrated into everyday life, with proverbs and folktales serving as vehicles for instilling values such as respect, integrity, and responsibility

(Onwuatuegwu, 2023). This moral dimension of education is reflected in the community's expectations for individuals to act in ways that uphold the common good and foster social harmony.

Cultural Influence on Teaching Methodologies

Culture plays a crucial role in shaping teaching methodologies, as it influences both teacher beliefs and student learning preferences. Theories such as Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) propose that acknowledging and incorporating students' cultural backgrounds into instruction can enhance student engagement and achievement (Olayemi, 2023). CRT emphasizes the need for teachers to be culturally competent, understanding the cultural dynamics within their classroom and using this knowledge to adapt their teaching methods accordingly. In diverse classrooms, the Funds of Knowledge approach encourages teachers to recognize and utilize the rich cultural and experiential knowledge that students bring to the classroom (Oladejo et al, 2022). By connecting academic content to students' real-life experiences and cultural practices, teachers can make learning more relevant and meaningful.

Globalization has also influenced teaching methodologies by necessitating a more global perspective in education. Teachers are now expected to incorporate global issues and cross-cultural understanding into their teaching to prepare students for a connected world (Akintayo et al, 2024). This requires teachers to be not only content experts but also culturally aware educators who can navigate and teach complex global topics.

Teachers' use of oral tradition in Education

Traditional Igbo Teaching Methods

Traditional Igbo teaching methods are deeply rooted in the community's cultural practices, values, and social structures. These methods emphasize oral transmission of knowledge, communal learning, and practical engagement. According to Adeola (2020), traditional Igbo education is informal and primarily focused on imparting skills necessary for survival and social integration, such as farming, trading, and crafts. Learning occurs through observation, imitation, and participation in community activities, underscoring the practical and experiential nature of Igbo pedagogy.

The role of elders and other knowledgeable community members is central in the traditional Igbo educational system. They serve as custodians of knowledge and moral exemplars for the younger generation (Odi et al, 2023). Storytelling, proverbs, and folklore are integral to teaching, providing moral lessons and cultural values. As Iwara (2020) notes, this oral tradition fosters critical thinking and moral reasoning, as learners are encouraged to draw lessons from stories and apply them to real-life situations.

In addition, traditional Igbo education is holistic, addressing not only intellectual development but also physical, emotional, and spiritual growth (Amadi, 2023). This approach aligns with the Igbo worldview that values harmony between individuals and their communities. Rituals, music, and dance are also used as educational tools to transmit cultural heritage and reinforce community bonds.

Integration of Igbo Culture in Modern Education

Integrating Igbo culture into modern education involves blending traditional pedagogical methods with contemporary educational practices to enhance learning outcomes. This integration aims to preserve cultural identity while equipping students with skills relevant to the modern world. According to Udeh & Onwanyi, (2024), culturally responsive teaching that incorporates Igbo cultural elements can improve student engagement and academic performance by making learning more relevant and relatable.

One approach to integration is the incorporation of Igbo language and literature into the curriculum. Yadav (2014) highlights the importance of teaching in the mother tongue to enhance comprehension and cognitive development. Including Igbo proverbs and folklore in language lessons not only improves linguistic skills but also deepens students' understanding of their cultural heritage. Additionally, Igbo cultural practices such as communal learning and peer mentoring can be adapted to modern educational settings. For instance, collaborative projects and group discussions can mirror traditional communal learning environments, fostering cooperation and teamwork (Paker & Karaağaç, 2015). This approach aligns with Vygotsky's social constructivist theory, which emphasizes the importance of social interactions in cognitive development.

Teachers play a crucial role in integrating Igbo culture into modern education. Adekola et al, (2018) argues that teacher training programs should include cultural competency training to equip educators with the skills needed to incorporate cultural elements into their teaching. Such training enables teachers to create inclusive classrooms that respect and value students' cultural backgrounds.

Adapting to Oral tradition

Adapting to oral tradition is essential for teachers to meet the diverse needs of their students. Culturally responsive teaching involves recognizing the cultural backgrounds of students and using this understanding to inform instructional practices (Gist, 2014). This approach not only enhances student engagement but also promotes academic achievement by making learning more relevant and meaningful. Morrison et al, (2022) argues that culturally responsive teaching requires teachers to adopt a sociocultural perspective, viewing students' cultural backgrounds as assets rather than deficits. This perspective encourages teachers to integrate students' cultural knowledge into the curriculum, thereby validating their identities and experiences.

Moreover, teachers must develop intercultural communication skills to effectively engage with students from diverse backgrounds (Amadi & Agena, 2015). These skills enable teachers to build strong relationships with students and their families, fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment. Professional development programs should, therefore, include training on cultural competence and intercultural communication to help teachers adapt to oral tradition effectively.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive survey research approach. Descriptive survey research involved collecting data to describe the characteristics of a population or phenomenon, focusing on identifying and quantifying variables of interest. It provided a snapshot of existing conditions, attitudes, or behaviors through structured questionnaires, aiming to summarize and present findings in a clear and concise manner. Through purposive sampling, 500 secondary school teachers who were actively involved in teaching Igbo language and related subjects were selected to participate. Quantitative data were collected through a structured questionnaire designed to assess teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of oral tradition in enhancing teaching competency. These surveys measured variables such as teacher satisfaction, student engagement, cultural integration in the curriculum, and perceived impacts on student learning outcomes. Data analysis involved statistical techniques to analyze survey data, including descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics such as ANOVA, to identify relationships between variables. Survey responses were analyzed statistically using SPSS software version 26. Ethical considerations, including informed consent and confidentiality, were strictly adhered to throughout the study, with approval sought from relevant institutional review boards prior to data collection. The research was conducted in three main phases: administering surveys, analyzing the collected data, and synthesizing findings into a comprehensive thesis.

RESULTS

Table 1: Distribution of Teachers by Teaching Experience

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1-5 years	115	23.0	23.0	23.0
6-10 years	258	51.6	51.6	74.6
11-15 years	127	25.4	25.4	100.0
Total	500	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 indicates that out of 500 teachers, the highest proportion (258; 51.6%) had between 6-10 years of teaching experience. Teachers with 11-15 years accounted for 127 (25.4%), while those with 1-5 years comprised 115 (23.0%). The cumulative percentage shows that 74.6% of respondents had 10 years or less teaching experience, suggesting that the workforce is dominated by teachers in the early and mid stages of their careers. This distribution highlights a profession that relies heavily on relatively younger teachers, with fewer highly experienced educators, which may influence teaching practices and professional growth in the region.

Table 2: Distribution of Teachers by Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	288	57.6	57.6	57.6
Female	212	42.4	42.4	100.0
Total	500	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 presents the gender distribution of the teachers surveyed. Out of 500 respondents, 288 (57.6%) were male, while 212 (42.4%) were female. The cumulative percentage indicates that males formed the majority group in the teaching workforce within the study area. This suggests a gender imbalance, with male teachers dominating the sample. The representation of females, although substantial, remains lower compared to their male counterparts. Such a distribution may have implications for classroom dynamics, teaching approaches, and the integration of oral tradition, as gender differences can influence pedagogical practices and teachers' perceptions of effective instructional strategies.

Table 3: Distribution of Teachers by Highest Educational Qualification

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Bachelor's Degree (B.A./B.Ed)	63	12.6	12.6	12.6
Master's Degree (M.A./M.Ed)	272	54.4	54.4	67.0
Doctorate (Ph.D)	165	33.0	33.0	100.0
Total	500	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 shows the distribution of teachers based on their highest educational qualification. Out of 500 respondents, the majority held a master's degree (272; 54.4%), followed by those with a doctorate (165; 33.0%). Teachers with a bachelor's degree were the least represented (63; 12.6%). The cumulative percentage indicates that 67.0% of teachers had qualifications not higher than a master's degree, while a significant proportion (33.0%) had attained doctoral education. This distribution reflects a highly educated teaching workforce, suggesting that secondary school teachers in the study area possess advanced academic qualifications that can positively influence teaching effectiveness and curriculum delivery.

Research Question 1: How are Oral tradition integrated into the teaching practices of secondary school teachers in South east, Nigeria?

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics on Teachers' Integration of Oral Tradition in Igbo Language Lessons

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
I frequently use proverbs while teaching Igbo language lessons.	2.22	1.304	1.701	.335	.109	-1.653	.218
I integrate folktales and storytelling to explain Igbo language concepts.	3.46	.722	.521	-1.104	.109	.369	.218
I use riddles and tongue twisters to engage students in Igbo language classes.	2.96	1.037	1.076	-.690	.109	-.692	.218
I apply Igbo traditional songs and chants as instructional tools.	2.85	1.005	1.011	-.381	.109	-.984	.218
I design lesson activities that encourage students to practice oral traditions in class.	2.34	1.221	1.490	.053	.109	-1.628	.218
Valid N (listwise)							

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics on teachers' integration of oral tradition in teaching Igbo language. The results show that teachers most frequently integrated folktales and storytelling (Mean = 3.46; SD = .722), indicating a strong tendency to use this method. The use of riddles and tongue twisters (Mean = 2.96; SD = 1.037) and traditional songs and chants (Mean = 2.85; SD = 1.005) were applied moderately. Conversely, the use of proverbs (Mean = 2.22; SD = 1.304) and lesson activities promoting oral traditions (Mean = 2.34; SD = 1.221) were less frequent. Overall, storytelling emerged as the most emphasized practice.

Research Question 2: What is the impact of teachers' use of oral tradition on student learning outcomes in secondary schools?

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics on the Impact of Oral Tradition on Student Learning Outcomes in Igbo Language

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Oral tradition makes Igbo language lessons more interesting for students.	3.16	.972	.944	-1.022	.109	.043	.218
Students' comprehension of Igbo vocabulary improves through oral tradition.	2.00	1.234	1.523	.641	.109	-1.302	.218
The use of oral tradition enhances students' retention of Igbo language concepts.	3.15	.897	.804	-1.061	.109	.528	.218
Students become more confident in speaking Igbo when oral tradition is used.	3.30	1.017	1.034	-1.226	.109	.166	.218
Oral tradition improves students' overall academic performance in Igbo language.	3.01	.860	.739	-.676	.109	-.073	.218
Valid N (listwise)							

Table 5 highlights teachers' views on the impact of oral tradition on student learning outcomes in Igbo language. Findings show that oral tradition was perceived to boost students' confidence in speaking Igbo (Mean = 3.30; SD = 1.017) and make lessons more interesting (Mean = 3.16; SD = .972). It was also seen to enhance retention of language concepts (Mean = 3.15; SD = .897) and improve overall performance (Mean = 3.01; SD = .860). However, teachers rated comprehension of vocabulary lower (Mean = 2.00; SD = 1.234). Overall, oral tradition was viewed as a valuable instructional approach.

Research Question 3: What challenges do secondary school teachers face in implementing Oral tradition in their classrooms?

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics on Challenges Faced by Teachers in Implementing Oral Tradition

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
I find it difficult to allocate enough time for oral tradition activities.	3.36	.892	.795	-1.379	.109	1.072	.218

The curriculum does not provide adequate support for using oral tradition.	3.36	.892	.797	-1.388	.109	1.086	.218
There are insufficient teaching resources for incorporating oral tradition.	3.44	.865	.748	-1.647	.109	1.991	.218
Students sometimes show lack of interest in oral tradition activities.	3.45	1.009	1.017	-1.610	.109	1.066	.218
I lack proper training on how to effectively use oral tradition in teaching.	2.05	1.244	1.547	.634	.109	-1.296	.218
Valid N (listwise)							

Table 6 presents the challenges teachers encounter in integrating oral tradition into Igbo language teaching. The greatest concerns were insufficient teaching resources (Mean = 3.44; SD = .865) and lack of student interest (Mean = 3.45; SD = 1.009). Time constraints (Mean = 3.36; SD = .892) and inadequate curriculum support (Mean = 3.36; SD = .892) were also strongly acknowledged. However, lack of proper training was rated lower (Mean = 2.05; SD = 1.244), suggesting that most teachers felt adequately prepared. Overall, the results indicate that structural and resource-related barriers posed greater challenges than teacher competence or training gaps.

Research Question 4: What are the perceptions of teachers and students regarding the effectiveness of Oral tradition in secondary education?

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics on Teachers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Oral Tradition

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Oral tradition is an effective method for teaching Igbo language.	3.10	.935	.874	-.831	.109	-.193	.218
Students perceive oral tradition as enjoyable and educational.	3.42	.775	.600	-1.185	.109	.696	.218
Teachers believe oral tradition is culturally relevant in Igbo language education.	3.19	.801	.642	-.646	.109	-.368	.218
Oral tradition helps in preserving Igbo cultural heritage among students.	3.04	.851	.724	-.312	.109	-1.014	.218

Oral tradition is more effective than conventional methods in sustaining students' interest in Igbo language. Valid N (listwise)	3.00	.958	.918	-.900	.109	-.022	.218
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Table 7 shows teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of oral tradition in Igbo language teaching. Respondents strongly agreed that students perceive oral tradition as enjoyable and educational (Mean = 3.42; SD = .775), and also acknowledged its cultural relevance (Mean = 3.19; SD = .801). They viewed oral tradition as effective in teaching the language (Mean = 3.10; SD = .935) and in preserving Igbo cultural heritage (Mean = 3.04; SD = .851). Its effectiveness compared to conventional methods in sustaining student interest received the lowest rating (Mean = 3.00; SD = .958). Overall, teachers considered oral tradition highly beneficial.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean integration of oral tradition in teaching practices between male and female secondary school teachers in South-east Nigeria.

Table 8: ANOVA Result on Integration of Oral Tradition in Teaching Practices by Gender

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1216.570	1	1216.570	129.148	.000
Within Groups	4691.132	498	9.420		
Total	5907.702	499			

Table 8 reveals the outcome of the ANOVA test conducted to determine whether gender influences the integration of oral tradition in teaching practices. The result shows a significant difference between male and female teachers (F = 129.148, p = .000). Since the p-value is less than .05, the null hypothesis is rejected, implying that gender plays a significant role in how oral tradition is applied in classroom instruction. This suggests that one gender is more likely to integrate oral tradition in teaching than the other. The finding highlights gender as an important variable in teaching practices.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean impact of teachers' use of oral tradition on student learning outcomes between male and female teachers.

Table 9: ANOVA Result on the Impact of Teachers' Use of Oral Tradition on Student Learning Outcomes by Gender

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	275.929	1	275.929	20.852	.000
Within Groups	6589.871	498	13.233		
Total	6865.800	499			

Table 9 presents the ANOVA result examining whether gender influences the impact of teachers' use of oral tradition on student learning outcomes. The

analysis shows a statistically significant difference ($F = 20.852, p = .000$). Since the significance value is less than .05, the null hypothesis of no difference is rejected. This indicates that gender significantly affects how oral tradition contributes to student learning outcomes. In other words, male and female teachers differ in the extent to which their use of oral tradition enhances students' learning. This highlights gender as a key factor shaping instructional effectiveness in Igbo language education.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the mean challenge-severity scores faced in implementing oral tradition between male and female secondary school teachers.

Table 10: ANOVA Result on Challenge-Severity Scores Faced in Implementing Oral Tradition by Gender

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	58.856	1	58.856	3.833	.051
Within Groups	7646.592	498	15.355		
Total	7705.448	499			

Table 10 shows the ANOVA result on gender differences in the challenges faced by teachers when implementing oral tradition. The analysis produced an F-value of 3.833 with a significance level of .051. Since the p-value is greater than the .05 threshold, the null hypothesis is retained. This indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female teachers in the severity of challenges they encounter while applying oral tradition in teaching. The result suggests that both genders face similar levels of difficulty, with structural and resource-related issues likely affecting teachers uniformly regardless of gender.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference in the mean perception of the effectiveness of oral tradition in secondary education between male and female teachers.

Table 11: ANOVA Result on Teachers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Oral Tradition in Secondary Education by Gender

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	61.166	1	61.166	4.886	.028
Within Groups	6234.082	498	12.518		
Total	6295.248	499			

Table 11 presents the ANOVA result on whether gender influences teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of oral tradition in secondary education. The analysis yielded an F-value of 4.886 with a significance level of .028. Since the p-value is less than .05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates a statistically significant difference between male and female teachers in their perceptions of oral tradition's effectiveness. In other words, one gender group rated oral tradition as more effective in enhancing teaching and learning than the other. This finding underscores gender as a relevant factor shaping teachers' perceptions of instructional approaches.

DISCUSSION

The findings from research question 1 on the integration of oral traditions in teaching Igbo language reveal varying degrees of emphasis among secondary school teachers in South-east Nigeria. Storytelling and folktales emerged as the most frequently applied method (Mean = 3.46), while proverbs and oral practice activities were less emphasized (Means = 2.22 and 2.34). This aligns with Chidoka (2021), who highlighted that folktales provide vivid contexts for transmitting cultural knowledge, making them effective instructional tools. In contrast, Isidienu (2016) argued that proverbs serve as repositories of ethical and logical reasoning, yet their underutilization in classrooms suggests teachers may prioritize more narrative-based approaches over abstract moral instruction. The moderate use of riddles, tongue twisters, and songs indicates an effort to sustain engagement, though less systematically.

This finding agreed with Okpala (2016), who emphasized that Igbo traditional music and chants foster communal participation and language retention. However, in a related study, Amadi (2023) stressed that folksongs not only preserve indigenous knowledge but also enhance cultural identity, suggesting that teachers who neglect this approach may miss an opportunity to deepen linguistic appreciation among learners. Gender differences also emerged as a significant factor in oral tradition integration ($F = 129.148, p < .05$). This contrasts with Dien et al. (2022), who reported that demographic factors such as gender did not strongly influence teacher effectiveness in other contexts. The result here implies that in Igbo language teaching, gender-related experiences or cultural dispositions may affect teachers' willingness to employ oral traditions. Similarly, Gyang (2021) linked leadership and teacher effectiveness in oral traditions to personal identity and social dynamics, reinforcing the idea that individual differences, including gender, shape classroom practices. Another important dimension is the tension between cultural preservation and modern pedagogy. While teachers rely on storytelling for its accessibility, Ude et al. (2020) contended that broader indigenous knowledge systems, including proverbs and symbolic expressions, must be systematically revitalized in curricula to avoid erosion of Igbo linguistic heritage. In contrast, Akintayo et al. (2024) proposed a cross-cultural instructional design that blends indigenous and modern strategies, showing that balanced integration enhances inclusivity.

The findings from research question 2 indicate that teachers perceived oral tradition as a valuable instructional approach that positively shapes student learning outcomes in Igbo language education. Students' confidence in speaking Igbo (Mean = 3.30) and the ability of oral tradition to make lessons more engaging (Mean = 3.16) were rated highly. This finding agreed with Amadi (2023), who emphasized that oral traditions such as folksongs foster cultural identity and linguistic fluency by encouraging students to actively participate in language use. In contrast, comprehension of vocabulary was rated much lower (Mean = 2.00), suggesting that oral traditions may be less effective in strengthening technical vocabulary acquisition. A similar concern was raised by Ude et al. (2020), who observed that while oral practices preserve indigenous knowledge, they must be supplemented with explicit vocabulary instruction to maximize

academic outcomes. Retention of Igbo language concepts (Mean = 3.15) and overall academic performance (Mean = 3.01) were also positively influenced by oral traditions. This finding agreed with Odii et al. (2023), who argued that integrating cultural practices into teaching reinforces long-term memory by connecting learning to students' lived experiences. In a related study, Onyemechal and Ugwuanyi (2022) highlighted that indigenous heritage practices provide continuity between classroom learning and community knowledge, a factor that enhances sustained comprehension and retention. The ANOVA result further revealed that gender significantly influenced the extent to which oral tradition impacted students' learning ($F = 20.852, p < .05$). This contrasts with Dien et al. (2022), who found that demographic variables had minimal effects on teacher effectiveness in other contexts. In this case, however, the gender effect suggests that male and female teachers employ oral traditions differently, leading to variations in student outcomes. Supporting this, Onyekwelu (2024) emphasized the role of professional development in equipping teachers—irrespective of gender—with strategies to implement culturally responsive practices effectively.

The results from research question 3 reveal that the main challenges secondary school teachers face in implementing oral tradition are insufficient teaching resources (Mean = 3.44) and lack of student interest (Mean = 3.45). This finding agreed with Odii et al. (2023), who argued that the decline of cultural practices in contemporary Igbo society is closely tied to a shortage of resources and waning youth engagement. In contrast, Onyemechal and Ugwuanyi (2022) emphasized that with proper heritage management and active community involvement, student participation in oral tradition can be revitalized, suggesting that lack of interest is not inherent but stems from poor integration strategies. Time constraints (Mean = 3.36) and inadequate curriculum support (Mean = 3.36) were also highlighted as significant barriers.

This finding is consistent with Nwashindu and Onu (2024), who noted that cultural heritage conservation in schools often suffers because mainstream curricula prioritize examination-driven subjects over indigenous practices. In contrast, Ekpo et al. (2024) demonstrated that when adult education programs embedded cultural content systematically, learners showed greater engagement, underscoring the role of curriculum design in overcoming such barriers. Interestingly, lack of proper training was rated lower (Mean = 2.05), suggesting that teachers feel relatively confident in their competence. This finding contrasts with Yusof et al. (2023), who identified skill gaps and the need for professional development as major barriers among polytechnic lecturers. The difference implies that secondary school teachers in this study may have acquired some informal or cultural familiarity with oral traditions, which cushions the demand for formal training. The ANOVA results in Table 10 further show that there is no significant gender difference in the severity of challenges ($F = 3.833, p = .051$). This finding supports Dien et al. (2022), who reported that demographic factors such as gender often exert minimal influence on teacher effectiveness, particularly when structural barriers dominate. In contrast, Onyekwelu (2024) argued that teacher professional development should still account for gender-

related nuances in practice, though in this case the evidence suggests that resource shortages and curriculum gaps outweigh gender-based variations.

The findings from research question 4 indicate that teachers perceive oral tradition as an effective and culturally relevant method for teaching Igbo language. Students were viewed as finding oral tradition enjoyable and educational (Mean = 3.42), while teachers acknowledged its role in preserving cultural heritage (Mean = 3.04) and in sustaining language learning (Mean = 3.10). This finding agreed with Amadi (2023), who emphasized that oral traditions such as folksongs and storytelling strengthen both language acquisition and cultural identity in students. In contrast, the relatively lower rating for sustaining student interest compared to conventional methods (Mean = 3.00) suggests that oral tradition alone may not fully compete with modern instructional strategies, a view supported by Akintayo et al. (2024), who advocated for integrating indigenous and contemporary methods for maximal engagement. The cultural relevance of oral tradition was strongly highlighted by teachers (Mean = 3.19), reinforcing the assertion of Onyemechalu and Ugwuanyi (2022) that embedding indigenous knowledge in education enhances students' appreciation of their heritage.

In a related study, Ude et al. (2020) noted that culturally responsive teaching, which incorporates local practices, fosters meaningful learning, particularly in language education. Conversely, Odi et al. (2023) observed that declining attention to oral traditions in formal curricula can reduce their perceived effectiveness, indicating the importance of institutional support for sustaining these practices. The ANOVA results in Table 11 further reveal a significant gender difference in perceptions of oral tradition's effectiveness ($F = 4.886, p = .028$). This implies that male and female teachers differ in how they rate the method's contribution to teaching and learning. This finding agreed with Dien et al. (2022), who reported that gender can influence teachers' engagement with culturally relevant pedagogies, though structural factors often moderate the effect. In contrast, Onyekwelu (2024) argued that professional development opportunities can mitigate gender disparities, ensuring that both male and female teachers equally appreciate and implement oral traditions.

CONCLUSION

The study on assessing teachers' use of oral tradition in teaching Igbo language in secondary schools in South-east Nigeria revealed that oral tradition remains a valuable and culturally relevant instructional approach. Storytelling and folktales were the most frequently integrated methods, while proverbs, songs, and lesson activities promoting oral practice were less commonly used. Teachers perceived oral tradition as enhancing student engagement, confidence, retention, and overall academic performance, although vocabulary comprehension benefited less. Challenges such as insufficient teaching resources, inadequate curriculum support, time constraints, and low student interest were identified as key barriers to effective implementation. Gender was found to significantly influence both the integration and perceived effectiveness of oral tradition, although it did not affect the severity of challenges faced.

FUNDING

This work was supported by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) through Institution Based Research (IBR) intervention.

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