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Development of Moral Didacticism in Children: A Cross-Cultural Study

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DEVELOPMENT OF MORAL DIDACTICISM ICHILDREN:

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Abstract

The use of folktales and fables in explaining the physical and spiritual worlds to children is cross-cultural, and precedes recorded history. Prior studies indicate a developmental process in children's understanding of fables and folktales (Jose, D'Anna, & Krieg, 2005; Narvaez, Gleason, Mitchell, & Bentley, 1999). However, no known study has examined whether this developmental process is cross-cultural or culture specific. No known study also, has examined whether children as young as 6 years of age are aware that fables and folktales are non-historical. The present study fills these observed gaps by examining moral didacticism in children aged 6-11 years. The children were drawn from two distinct nations and cultures (United States and Nigeria). The study tested the children's ability to: (a) recognize that fables/folktales are not historical, and (b) deduce the moral lessons in fables/folktales. They were asked to identify the correct answers from a list of answer options. The older participants performed better than the younger participants. Limitations and directions for future studies are identified.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In every culture, people tell their children stories, and these stories are often in the forms of folktales and fables. As noted by Rupiper and Zeece (2005), folktales and fables constitute a traditional literature that preceded recorded history. They are intended to capture and explain the physical and spiritual worlds that constitute questions to children. They answer the *whys*, *whats*, and *hows* that characterize childhood. They answer questions such as: why do people die? What happens to the human being after death? Why do people commit moral transgressions? Why should people behave well? The narration of fables and folktales presupposes the receiver's ability to extract a theme from the story. It presupposes the receiver's ability to understand the story's moral message. As rightly noted by Jose, D'Anna, and Krieg (2005), the receiver of folktales and fables derives the point of the stories by some inferential reasoning. Reasoning that is based on the outcome for the characters in the story: because "A" resulted in positive actions, then it is good to do "A", and because "B" resulted in a negative outcome, it is not good to do "B". The question becomes: are children able to do this kind of deductive reasoning? Do children understand fables and folktales?

The 18th century German philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau had argued that young children should not be taught fables because they do not understand them. He believed that the morals in them are so mixed and disproportionate to the age of children that they often end in the opposite of the intended result – vice, rather than virtue (Lewis, 2012)). What has changed? Fables and folktales are still told to children, either in oral or written forms. They are used for communication, construction of meaning, and for the transmission of cultural values (Tharinger et al., 2008). They are read to preschool children and constitute part of grade school basal reader series (Jose, et al., 2005). Fables and folktales are used as intervention technique in counseling and therapy with children (Tharinger et al., 2008; Costantino, Malgady & Rogler, 1994; Fischer, 1984/1994; Gardner, 1993; Becker, Yehia, Donatelli & Santiago, 2002). Folktales and fables are found in most cultures, and some cultures place more emphasis on them than others.

Do children understand fables and folktales? The fact that the genre of folktales and fables has existed for millennia indicates that it is not only the case that children understand them, but also that they fulfill some important function as text structure. Prior

studies observed a developmental process in children's understanding of fables and folktales (Jose et al., 2005; Narvaez, Gleason, Mitchell, & Bentley, 1999). The present study advances the studies by asking the following questions: are young children aware that fables and folktales are non-historical? If there is a developmental process in children's understanding of fables and folktales, is this developmental process cross-cultural? Does culture matter in children's development of moral didacticism. We hypothesize that, (a) age is a factor in children's moral didacticism, (b) the effect of age is cross-cultural, and (c) culture matters. This study will be a caution to users of fables and folktales in the education and treatment of children.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

Development of Moral Reasoning

Understanding the developmental course of moral reasoning will help us understand the use of folktales and fables in communicating lessons. Humans unlike other mammals, need an extended period of immaturity to prepare for adulthood. Other mammals are able to care for themselves right after weaning. Humans require 7-8 years to reach a marginal degree of independence (Periss, Blasi, & Bjorklund, 2012). For children to get to the adult level of adequacy in the understanding of mental states, they have to go through certain rudimentary stages such as joint attention, appreciation of intentionality, and the appreciation that people can differ in perspectives (Kaysili & Acarlar, 2011; Smetana, Jambon, Conry-Murray, & Sturge-Apple, 2012). Piaget posited four stages of human cognitive development: Sensorimotor stage, Preoperational stage, Concrete Operational stage, and the Formal Operational stage. These different stages are different modes of thinking, through which human beings transit from infancy to adulthood. Each stage is characterized by qualitatively different patterns of thinking (Cartwright, 2001). The implication of these differences is that the manner in which folkways and

moral lessons are convened to children should change developmentally.

In a commentary on Piaget's stages of cognitive development, Malerstein and Ahern (1979) noted that the sensorimotor stage (birth to 24 months) is the period when the child who has just evolved from an undifferentiated state with some natural biological characteristics such as reflexes, comes to recognize the outside world as different from himself, and begins the initial use of symbols. In the early sensorimotor stage, the infant is aware of only the things that are immediate to him: only what he sees exist. About the ages of 7-9 months, the infant develops object permanence; an object continues to exist though he can no longer see it. In the Preoperational stage (2-7 years), the child generally understands the essence of an object and no longer confuses one object with another or a part with the whole. He is able to think symbolically. In the Concrete Operational stage (8-11 years), the child develops a sense that the thoughts and feelings of an individual are unique to him and may not be shared by those around him. At this stage, the child is able to take the intentions of a transgressor into consideration in the judgment of the severity of transgressions. In the Formal Operational stage (adolescent to adulthood), the individual is able to do abstract thinking. For

Piaget (1932/1965), moral judgment develops along a stage-like developmental process, along the line of reasoning-based cognition. For him, children younger than 7 or 8 years have a "heteronomous thinking". They believe that rules originate from authorities, and rules are unchangeable. They also believe that the consequence of an action determines the goodness or badness of the action. According to Piaget, children develop an "autonomous morality" after the age of 11 years. In this stage, they understand that rules originate from social interactions and agreement, and they are changeable. Children also come to see intention as more important than consequence in actions.

Moran and O'Brien (1983) regarded as too simplistic, Piaget's conception that young children under the age of 7 or 8 years focus on consequence rather than intention in their judgment of others. They argued that under certain circumstances such as when the degree of property damage is held constant, children of about 5 years of age use intention as a basis for their moral judgment. According to them, consequence-based judgments are used by children prior to age 4.5 years in cases concerning damage to property, but in cases involving damage to another person, they use intention-based judgments. For Kaysili & Acarlar (2011), children might understand perceptions, desires, and emotions by

the age of 2 years. By the age of 3 years, they can distinguish between mental and physical worlds, and might be able to understand subjectivity of thoughts. By the age of 3 or 4 years, they are able to separate thinking from doing. Nunner-Winkler and Sodian (1988) believed that preschoolers are good at the attribution of simple general purpose emotions such as happiness and sadness to others, but are rarely able to refer to more complex emotions such as shame, guilt or remorse in their everyday speeches. According to them, children who are 4 years of age base their judgment of actions on their successful outcomes. They expect the wrongdoer to experience positive emotions. At the age of 8 years, they focus their judgment on the moral value of an action and thus attribute negative feelings to a wrongdoer. For Berk (2012), children's narratives increase in organization, detail, and expressiveness as a result of improved memory. Children who are 4-5 years of age are able to narrate what happened, 6-7 year olds can embellish their narratives with orienting information (such as time and place) and connectives. By age 8-9 years, they are able to make evaluative comments on narratives.

In sum, there is a consensus that cognition and moral judgments follow a developmental continuum, though there continues to be disagreement as to the nature of the developmental

changes in moral reasoning over time. In the present study, we expect that age would be a factor in children's moral didacticism. We expect that, for the younger children (compared to older ones), the emotional salience of a story (more than anything else) would inform what moral judgment they make about a story, and what moral message they take out of it.

Cultural Variation in the Use of Fables and Folktales

Every culture is endowed with rich literary resources. Such literary resources include folktales and fables. Cross-cultural characteristics of these tales include good overcoming evil, good behavior rewarded and bad behavior punished, and justice prevailing over evil. Today, folktales and fables in the framework of storytelling has for the most part given way for written forms (picture books), especially among the Western cultures. According to a contemporary children's book author Jennifer Armstrong (2010), fables and folktales are written to share with children, information about the natural world. They are intended to encourage a sense of stewardship in children, and elicit compassion, gentleness, wonder, and curiosity in them. They are also intended to encourage children to identify with, and share in the triumph of small, defenseless creatures. They provide children with interesting and enriching literary experiences, broadening

their worldview. They “connect past generations with the present and the present with future listeners and readers” (Rupiper & Zeece, 2005).

By way of assessment feedback, fables and folktales are used as treatment techniques in therapy and counseling with children. As observed by Tharinger et al. (2008), because direct feedback can be emotionally overwhelming for children, discussing the results of psychological assessments directly with them is a difficult and often unsuccessful task. Individualized fables and folktales are used as veritable instruments for providing indirect and successful assessment feedback to children. They can reduce in children, the shame associated with assessment results, thereby helping them to take-in the assessments without raising their defenses or overtaxing their mental and emotional capabilities. Fables and folktales can provide children with an experience of accurate mirroring, and can become a transitional object for the child to hold on to, and reread severally after the feedback session.

Fables and folktales are used by the Igbos of Nigeria to socialize their young ones. It is a veritable vehicle for imparting moral standards and navigating culture, and they are traditionally in the framework of storytelling. The “elders” who are the

custodians of the culture and are seen as the link between the ancestors and the living have the responsibility of ensuring the survival of the people's culture. They "elders" are also the moral guardians of the community. As one Igbo proverb puts it: "may death spare at least one elder, that children may learn that vultures are not edible". Through folktales and fables, the "elders" hand down the moral principles of the culture to the younger generations. They attend to the varied fears that children encounter in their troubled world through fables and folktales. Igbo folktales and fables feature both animals and human beings. They are humorous, making them entertaining and attractive to children. The weak overcoming the strong, the bewilderment of foolishness, and the trickery of cunning characters are featured in the fables and folktales. These features attract children's attention and arouse their emotions (Jirata, 2011). Above all, fables and folktales are moralistic. Major characteristics of Igbo fables and folktales include, evil never overcoming good, virtue is rewarding and vice is detrimental.

As noted by Ilias, Georgios, Marianthi, and Georgia (2010), folklore and school, especially in Europe and America, were for some time seen as opposed to each other, whereby folklore represented the unofficial traditional culture, and school

represented the bureaucratic structures of the state. The educational reforms that took place in Europe and America in the 19th and 20th centuries, however, changed the course of thinking. Folk expressions began to be seen as a veritable educational tool, giving fables and folktales a central position in folklorist and educationist studies as they offer reference points for didactic purposes. Fables and folktales form an important part of the cultural goods addressed to children.

The moral point of a fable or folktale is deduced by inferential reasoning. Therefore, moral judgment, moral emotions, and theory of mind are some factors that influence children's ability to deduce moral lessons from them. Though fables and folktales have nearly an age long history, writings on the topic are very scanty in the field of psychology despite their contributions in different fields of psychology (cognitive, developmental, counseling and clinical psychology).

According to Narvaez et al. (1999), there was the assumption that reading moral stories to children improves their moral literacy. They set out to test this claim. Specifically, they examined whether children can truly extract moral themes from a story. They also investigated the developmental differences in moral theme comprehension. To this end, they recruited 132

participants from “city elementary school”: 50 third graders averaging 8.5 years in age (28 girls and 22 boys), and 54 fifth graders averaging 10.75 years in age (34 girls and 20 boys). They tested the participants in two 50-minute sessions, one week apart. The stories were put on audio tape as well as on paper for the children. The older children received only the written version. The tests were conducted in three groups according to grade. After hearing and reading each story, the children were asked to think about the message of the story. After a period of thinking, participants answered 10 true or false questions about the story. This was to assess their reading comprehension. For a vignette rating, participants read four vignettes and were then asked to rate each story according to how it matches the participant’s own-target-message on a Likert-type scale. In their results, they observed that reading moral stories to children does not guarantee their grasp of the moral message or theme intended by the author. They observed that stories were understood differently even among grade school children. They also observed that there are developmental differences in the comprehension of moral themes – the younger children were less likely to choose the correct message or vignette. Though for all ages, the most attractive distracter-type for the vignettes was the one with the same actions as the target

story, this attraction decreased with age. Finally, they observed that moral theme comprehension requires something more than general reading comprehension. Even when standardized reading comprehension and vocabulary scores were used as covariates along with reading comprehension items, significant differences between the third- and fifth-grade students on moral theme comprehension tasks were still observed.

Jose et al. (2005) observed that fables occupy a prominent position in the basal reader series of grade school children. They therefore, set out to explore why children like fables and how they comprehend the moral messages that fables convey. They sought to identify whether the developmental patterns in fable moral production and belief in a just world are related to each other over the age range from children to young adults, and the developmental patterns of the two phenomena. They hypothesized that older children and adults would use the belief in a just world in their moral evaluations of story outcomes and tested their hypothesis with two experiments. For Study 1, they recruited 39 kindergartners, 37 first or second graders, 47 third or fourth graders, and 48 fifth to eighth graders from two public schools in the suburban Chicago area. The participants were predominantly White and middle class. Boys and girls were about evenly

distributed, and 54 college students were also tested. The child participants were given four stories in a random order: a human just-world story, an animal just-world story, a normal fable and a reversed-outcome fable. On the other hand, the adult participants were given eight stories in a random order. The stories were read by the experimenter to the kindergartners, the first and second graders. The results supported their hypothesis: participants showed just-world reasoning, and there were marked developmental trends in the comprehension and appreciation of the moral narratives. The older children saw canonical fables to have fairer outcomes, liked the outcomes more, and liked the stories more than the reversed-outcome fables. A developmental trend was also observed for ratings of outcome liking in just-world stories: the older children liked the outcomes in canonical just-world stories more than the outcomes in non-canonical just-world stories.

For Study 2, Jose et al. (2005) recruited 40 kindergartners, 40 second graders, 40 fourth graders, and 40 sixth graders from four Catholic schools in the Chicago area. The children were predominantly Euro-Americans from middle class background. The children were assessed individually in a quiet room. There were three components of each assessment: (a) participants were

read a series of three short moral stories and thereafter asked questions from them; (b) they were asked to interpret a set of four proverbs; and (c) they were asked the meaning of six metaphors. Three stories (a normal fable, a reversed-outcome fable, and a just-world story) were randomly presented to each child participant. A list of metaphors and proverbs were also read to the participants in a fixed order. The results replicated Study 1: canonical fables were judged to be fairer than outcomes of reversed-outcome fables, and the canonical fables were also liked more than the reversed-outcome fables. As in Study 1, the older children made clearer distinctions between the two types of story than the younger children.

Jose et al. (2005) noted that young children's understanding of fable as a figurative literary structure is poor, just as it is in their understanding of other types of metaphors. However, they evidenced by their results that there is a developmental trend in children's acquisition of the just-world belief.

Ilias et al. (2010) acknowledged that folktales have a central place in studies of folklorists and educationalists, and they offer multiple reference points for didactic purposes. For them, folktales are suitable for the learning process which regards pupils as active and creative subjects, and not just simple receivers. They

believed that children understand and explain folktales according to their age. They examined the complex relation of children with the world of folktales, as a means of reshaping the known world. To achieve their objective, Ilias et al. (2010) recruited 2283 pupils from the 4th, 5th and 6th classes of elementary schools. They also employed a diffusion of the research sample by combining urban and rural areas. Of the participants, 85% declared Greece as their place of birth, slightly more than 5% were born in Albania, and 2.5% were born in other countries, while about 7% did not declare their country of birth. Ilias et al. (2010) expected that the "diversion of the parent's origin among children born and/or studying in the same place" would make a difference regarding the child's view of folktales. Participants responded to questionnaires that focused on folktales as texts and "oral storytelling as a complex procedure". Most of the questions were "closed" with the possibility of a question having more than one answer. A five-point Likert-type scale was used (1 = very frequently and 5 = never). Some questions were open with space for respondents to write words, phrases, or sentences. In their results, they observed that about 40% of the participants discerned the imaginary/mythic element of folktales. On average, 7.5% of the participants stressed the entertainment aspect of the folktales, 5% stressed the

educational/moral aspect, and 1% mentioned oral and traditional character as the primary distinguishing aspect of folktales. According to the results, younger pupils showed more fondness for folktales, but as Ilias et al. (2010) noted, this "does not indicate that folktales are themselves suited better in mental terms to younger ages".

Impact of Culture on the Development of Moral Reasoning

Does culture matter? Experiences influence people's worldview. Individuals who have lived through a dictatorial government for example, are not likely to perceive or define government in the same way as individuals who have only experienced a healthy democratic system of government. Cultural psychologists argue that because individuals living in different cultural settings have different experiences, and because these cultural perspectives provide new insights into the individuals' psychological processes, culture matters (Oyserman and Lee, 2008; Piaget, 1972; & Cartwright, 2001). Individualism and collectivism are not mere nomenclatures distinguishing cultural groups; they articulate the basic differences in how cultural groups perceive the relationship between the individual and society. While the individual is the focus of action in an individualistic society, the group is the core unit in a collectivistic society. The differences

between individualism and collectivism have effects on the individuals involved: how they perceive the self, how they conceive relationships with others, what is made salient in their worldview, and how the individuals perceive themselves and the social world.

Studies have shown that there are cross-cultural differences in social knowledge and basic cognitive processes (Oyserman, Sorensen, Reber, & Chen, 2009; Nisbett, 2003; Shahaeian, Peterson, Slaughter, and Wellman, 2011). Oyserman et al., (2009) noted that Americans are more accurate and faster than Chinese in the recall of abstract and central information, whereas in matters of details and wholeness, Chinese are more accurate than Americans. Americans are more accurate in matters of absolute zero than Japanese, whereas Japanese are more accurate in matters of proportionality. Japanese are more accurate than Americans in line-drawing tasks that require recall of lines in relation to a provided background, whereas Americans are more accurate than Japanese in the same task when it is separate from the background (Oyserman, & Lee, 2008). These studies show that culture influences cognition. So, culture matters.

Shahaeian et al., (2011) observed that when children acquire theory of mind (ToM), they come to understand

individuals' behavior as the product of their internal, subjective mental state. They noted that, preschoolers with siblings in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia master ToM of false belief earlier than children without sibling. Siblings provide opportunities for interactions, family discussions, and pretend play.

In sum, cultural differences exist in cognition. The present study examines whether these differences extend to the development of moral didacticism in children.

Research Questions

Jose et al. (2005) were interested in the developmental trend in fable moral production and belief in a just world, seeking a connection between the two phenomena. Narvaez et al. (1999) examined whether children can deduce moral themes from stories and the developmental differences in moral theme comprehension. The present study furthers the discourse on children's understanding of fables and folktales by examining the following questions: (a) are children as young as 6 years of age aware that fables and folktales are non-historical? (b) If it is true that children's understanding of fables and folktales follows a developmental process, is the process cross-cultural or culture-specific? In other words, does culture matter?

It is hypothesized that: (a) age is a factor in children's moral didacticism, such that, of the three age groups (6-7yrs, 8-9yrs, and 10-11yrs), the third group will fare best in the test and the first group will be worst off, (b) the effect of age is cross-cultural, and (c) culture matters. It is predicted that the children from Nigeria (collectivistic society) will do better in the test of moral didacticism than the children from the United States (individualistic society).

CHAPTER 3

Method

Participants

This cross-cultural study was conducted in Nigeria and the United States. Participants were selected from one Catholic school in Owerri, Imo State of Nigeria, and one Catholic school in Houston Texas, United States. Permission was obtained from the school principals to visit the classrooms and make the activity part of the regular classroom lessons. Being a part of classroom lessons, parental consent was not required. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Marshall University Institutional Review Board (IRB).

From the United States (US) school, we recruited 20 children aged 6-7 years (Boys – 7, Girls – 13, M = 6.3, SD = 0.47), 20 children aged 8-9 years (Boys – 9, Girls – 11, M = 8.25, SD = 0.44), and 20 children aged 10-11 years (Boys – 7, Girls – 13, M = 10.15, SD = 0.37). All the students were African Americans and from middle class families. From the Nigerian school, we recruited 20 children aged 6-7 years (Boys – 9, Girls – 11, M = 6.45, SD = 0.51), 20 children aged 8-9 years (Boys – 7, Girls – 13, M = 8.35, SD = 0.49), and 20 children aged 10-11 years (Boys – 10, Girls – 10, M = 10.25, SD = 0.44). All the students were Nigerians and

from middle class families. The result is a 2 (Nigeria vs. US) X 3 (age groups) factorial design.

Procedure

The study was conducted in the children's schools and in their respective classrooms. To test the hypotheses, two stories were read to the participants; the Tortoise and the Hare (see Appendix A) and, the Tortoise and the Dog (see Appendix B). All the students heard both stories. The stories and questions were typed and duplicated. Each student got a copy of each of the stories, with questions that followed (see Appendix C). The stories were read to the students by their class teachers. At the end of each story, participants were required to answer the questions that followed. They were asked to circle the correct options.

CHAPTER 4

Results

In each of the two schools, the study was conducted in the students' respective classrooms. Every member of the class was allowed to take the test irrespective of age. At the end of the tests, the results were separated according to age. Those who were not within the age bracket of 6-11 years were rejected. Each participant received points for the total number of questions answered correctly. Only questions 8-11 were used in the test for didacticism. If the question was answered correctly, a point was awarded. Total number of questions answered correctly served as the dependent variable. Therefore, the total score for any one subject ranged from 0 to 4. A summary of the average scores are presented in the table below.

Table 1

Average Number of Questions Answered Correctly by Nationality and Age

Nationality	Ages 6 – 7yrs		Ages 8 – 9yrs		Ages 10 – 11yrs	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
United States	0.55	0.94	1.20	1.24	1.60	1.60
Nigeria	1.00	1.03	1.95	1.15	2.30	1.42

Results show that the youngest children (6-7yrs) overall, answered fewer items correctly than either of the two older groups (8-9yrs and 10-11yrs). To test the hypothesis that age affects moral didacticism, a one-way ANOVA was conducted on subjects' correct answer scores. Alpha level of .05 was used. True to our first hypothesis, results showed that age has a significant effect on children's moral didacticism, $F(5, 108) = 6.21$, $p < .0005$. For our second hypothesis, results indicated that nationality has a main effect on children's moral didacticism, $F(1, 108) = 7.06$, $p < .01$. No significant interaction between age and nationality was observed. *Post hoc* multiple comparisons were conducted using Tukey Honest Significant Difference (Tukey HSD). Results revealed that the youngest children (age 6yrs) were worst off in the test. They performed significantly worse than children aged: 11 years ($p < .0005$), 10 years ($p < .0005$), and 9 years ($p < .0005$), but not significantly different from children aged: 8 years ($p = .084$), and 7 years ($p = .114$). The older groups (ages 7-11) did not differ significantly from one another.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

The present study explores the developmental trend in children's ability to deduce the moral lessons of fables and folktales. Our results show an improvement in performance with increasing age. This supports our first hypothesis that age is a factor in moral didacticism. Children aged 6-7 years were the worst off, and the children aged 10-11 years performed best. The improvement in performance with increasing age is found among students in both countries. It therefore, supports our second hypothesis that the developmental process in children's moral didacticism is cross-cultural. Our third hypothesis – that culture matters – was also supported by the results.

The results of this study have some implications for society. We noted earlier that fables and folktales are used for various purposes, such as communication, transmission of cultural values, counseling and therapy with children. Our results indicate that children understand and explain folktales according to their age. This study therefore, brings caution to bear on the use of fables and folktales in the education and treatment of children. Though most of our subjects loved the stories, results show that they did not understand the intended moral message. We are not

saying that children cannot understand fables and folktales, and we are not of the position that fables and folktales should not be used with children. Our position is, caution should be applied when they are used with children because they do not understand moral stories like adults. There is a difference between liking a story and understanding the story. Children's differential interpretations of fables and folktales should always be kept in mind.

Our hypothesis that culture matters in the moral didacticism of children was supported by our results. However, the fact that about 60% of the Nigerian subjects indicated that they were hearing the story of the tortoise and the dog for the first time throws caution. Jirata (2011) described how the people of Southern Ethiopia (a collectivistic society) observed their night recreations. At night time, he noted, when all family members have returned from their daily workplaces, people from the same neighborhood gather in one home where adults share what happened during the day, and parents and grandparents tell folktales to children, while the children admire and learn. The traditional Igbo society shared this way of life some years ago, but that is hardly the case in most areas today. As the communities get urbanized, they shift from collectivism to individualism. Socio-demographic change has been identified as a propeller of changes in cultural values (Greenfield,

2009). Tönnies (1887/1957) introduced the concepts of Gemeinschaft (communal society) and Gesellschaft (associational society) to categorize social systems. The Gemeinschaft is typically the rural, educational and technologically poor environment, governed by traditional social norms. In contrast, the Gesellschaft is the urban and large scale society, with government bureaucracies. Greenfield (2009) identified the Gemeinschaft with collectivistic qualities, and associated the Gesellschaft with individualistic qualities. For him, when any of the variables of the two prototypical environments (Gemeinschaft and Gesellchaft) shifts either toward Gemeinschaft or Gesellschaft, developmental pathways, learning environments and social values also shift toward the same direction. In our study, results show a movement toward Gesellschaft. Such a movement involves both the environment and the individual. As a community becomes more urban and commerce driven, it is not only the environment that is transformed, the modes of socialization, learning and cultural values are also transformed.

In the Gemeinschaft, there are such collectivistic values as respect for parents and elders, and expectations that children will take care of their aged parents. One of the difficulties of the movement from Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft is intergenerational

conflict. Families having parents who grew up with Gemeinschaft socialization, and children of the Gesellschaft socialization. This intergenerational change often brings intergenerational conflict. The results of this study therefore, is a wakeup call for the Igbo society to prepare for this movement from Gemeinschaft to Gesellchaft. This movement calls for adaptations on the parts of both parents and children. Parents should prepare for an environment where the "we" is replaced by the "I", a society where the nuclear family is isolated from the extended family, and a society where the children might not be taking care of their parents in old age. On the part of the children, they have to adapt to the cross cutting socialization. They have to deal with socialization messages from both the Gemeischaft environment (home) and the Gesellschaft environment (school).

Limitations and Way Forward

Our subject were chosen from Catholic elementary schools (private schools). Private schools are often not affordable for the low socio-economic groups. Public elementary schools, however, may consist of predominantly children of the low socio-economic group. We suggest, future studies should take into consideration socio-economic status.

Pressed by the fact that 60% of our subjects in Nigeria indicated that they have never heard the story of the tortoise and the dog, we made further inquiries. Our inquiries revealed that a good number of the students in our pilot school live in the school hostel (did not live in their homes most of the times). The fact that our study was carried out in a city, and in a school with children who left home at a very early age, may have had an effect on our results. Again, cities being melting pots of cultures may have had an effect on our results. We recommend that future studies in Nigeria should be conducted in rural traditional settings.

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Appendix A

The Tortoise and the Hare

Once upon a time there was a hare who, boasting how he could run faster than anyone else, was forever teasing tortoise for its slowness. Then one day, the irate tortoise answered back: “Who do you think you are? There’s no denying you’re swift, but even you can be beaten!” The hare squealed with laughter. “Beaten in a race? By whom? Not you, surely! I bet there’s nobody in the world that can win against me, I’m so speedy. Now, why don’t you try?” Annoyed by such bragging, the tortoise accepted the challenge. A course was planned, and the next day at dawn they stood at the starting line. The hare yawned sleepily as the meek tortoise trudged slowly off. When the hare saw how painfully slow his rival was, he decided, half asleep on his feet, to have a quick nap. “Take your time!” he said. “I’ll have forty winks and catch up with you in a minute.”

The hare woke with a start from a fitful sleep and gazed round, looking for the tortoise. But the creature was only a short distance away, having barely covered a third of the course. Breathing a sigh of relief, the hare decided he might as well have breakfast too, and off he went to munch some cabbages he had noticed in a nearby field. But the heavy meal and the hot sun made

his eyelids droop. With a careless glance at the tortoise, now halfway along the course, he decided to have another snooze before flashing past the winning post. And smiling at the thought of the look on the tortoise's face when it saw the hare speed by, he fell fast asleep and was soon snoring happily. The sun started to sink, below the horizon, and the tortoise, who had been plodding towards the winning post since morning, was scarcely a yard from the finish. At that very point, the hare woke with a jolt. He could see the tortoise a speck in the distance and away he dashed. He leapt and bounded at a great rate, his tongue lolling, and gasping for breath. Just a little more and he'd be first at the finish. But the hare's last leap was just too late, for the tortoise had beaten him to the winning post. Poor hare! Tired and in disgrace, he slumped down beside the tortoise who was silently smiling at him. "Slowly does it every time!" he said ("childhoodreading.com," 1997).

Appendix B

The Tortoise and the Dog

After the creation of the world, God invited the dog and the tortoise to send them into the world to proclaim either mortality or immortality for humans. The dog carried the decree of immortality while the tortoise carried that of mortality. Whichever of the two animals that got into the world first was to promulgate its decree and its decree would be the order. The two animals set out running from heaven into the world, and the dog ran much faster than the tortoise. The dog, however, would branch off from time to time to scavenge for food, and each time it got distracted with scavenging for food, the tortoise would meet it and pass it. When the dog is done with scavenging, it would set out again, running fast and would pass the tortoise, but only to branch off again at some other point for food scavenging. Eventually, the tortoise got to the world before the dog and decreed that humans would die.

Appendix C

Thesis Questions

1. I am a (a) boy (b) girl
2. I am (a) 6 (b) 7 (c) 8 (d) 9 (e) 10 (f) 11 years old
3. I am in (a) 1st (b) 2nd (c) 3rd (d) 4th (e) 5th (f) 6th grade
4. Do you like the story? (Yes/No)
5. Does your family tell stories? (Yes/no)
6. Have you heard the story before? (Yes/No)
7. Was there a bird in the story? (Yes/No)
8. Where did the story take place? (A: I do not know, B: it never happened, C: Texas, D: China).
9. When did it happen? (A: I do not know, B: it never happened, C: 1900, D: before I was born)
10. What does the story teach us? (A: to run fast, B: not to eat while working, C: to stay on track, D: to be respectful)
11. What is the lesson of the story (A: hard-work, B: respect, C: sincerity, D: stay on track)

Questions 1-6 deal with personal information. Question 7 tests the readiness of the subjects for the test. Students who failed question 7 were judged not “ready for the test” and their entire results were rejected. Only two of the tested students had their

answers thrown out on the basis of question 7. The test of our thesis was based on questions 8 – 11.

Appendix D

IRB Letter of Approval

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY
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Office of Research Integrity
Institutional Review Board
401 11th St., Suite 1300
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FWA 00002704

IRB1 #00002205
IRB2 #00003206

May 29, 2013

Marianna Footo, Ph.D.
Psychology Department

RE: IRBNet ID# 404240-1
At: Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral)

Dear Dr. Footo:

Protocol Title:	[404240-1] Development of understanding fables in children	
Expiration Date:	May 29, 2014	
Site Location:	MU	
Submission Type:	New Project	APPROVED
Review Type:	Exempt Review	

In accordance with 45CFR46.101(b)(1), the above study was granted Exempted approval today by the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral) Designee for the period of 12 months. The approval will expire May 29, 2014. A continuing review request for this study must be submitted no later than 30 days prior to the expiration date.

This study is for student Sixtus Iwuji.

If you have any questions, please contact the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/ Behavioral) Coordinator Michelle Woomer, B.A., M.S at (304) 696-4308 or woomer3@marshall.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

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