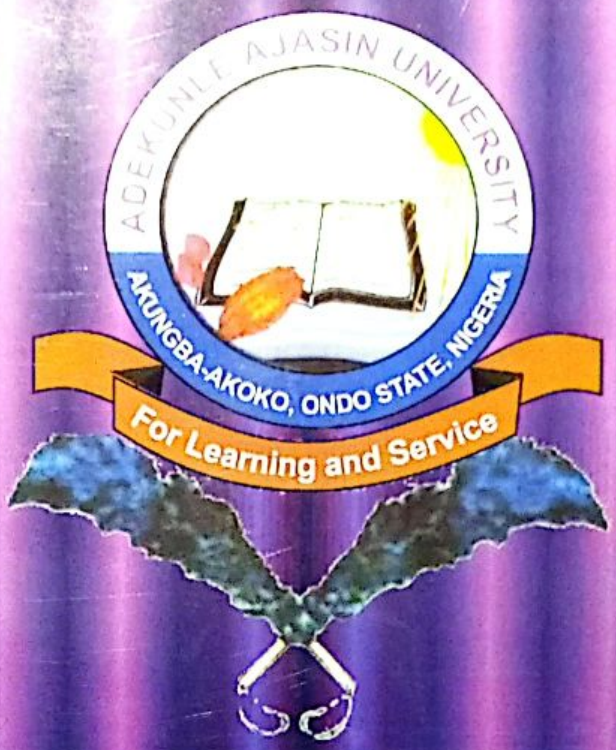


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Propagating Cultural Values of the Yorùbá People of South-western Nigeria: The Role of Stakeholders

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Abstract
Culture is every society's identity and there is no society without its own peculiar culture. Society's cultural values are propagated through the vehicle of language. Whenever the language is lost, the entire culture would be in a state of comma, and if culture is removed from a particular speech community (society), we can hardly differentiate between human beings in such a society and animals. The priced values of the Yorùbá people such as language, dressing, greetings, among others are gradually becoming endangered, partly because of the influence of Western culture, and partly because the cultural values are not properly propagated. Any society that fails to propagate its cultural values to its younger generation in specific and the world at large is at risk of losing its culture and values. By implication, therefore, preventing Yorùbá culture from extinction and promoting its values is a joint responsibility of all stakeholders, especially parents, teachers, artistes and traditional leaders. This study is thus anchored on the sociological theory of functionalism which argues that various sub-units of society such as parents, teachers, artistes and traditional leaders are interrelated and interconnected in the role they play in proper functioning of the society. The study concluded that when we speak about propagating Yorùbá cultural values, we cannot disregard the parents', teachers', artistes' and the traditional leaders' respective roles. This is because these four social groups are important stakeholders that cannot be easily divorced from the Yorùbá cultural values and their propagation to the younger generation.

Keywords: Propagating, culture, values, role, stakeholders

Introduction

What is considered value and worthwhile in certain societies could be regarded as being valueless and worthless in some other societies. Hence, a roadmap to any society's meaningful cultural development is the ability of its members to promote, sustain and most importantly, propagate such society's culture and values not only within their society, but also among other societies of the world. Propagating Yorùbá cultural values, like some other African cultural values could be done through efficient and appropriate use of language which is the main vehicle that transmit culture and its values, adorning of local dresses (attires), adopting local dishes, composing and rendering folksongs and performing some other forms of oral literature, engaging in various Yorùbá

traditional dances, encouraging and promoting traditional marriages, and above all, showing uncommon love to every individual irrespective of race or ethnic background.

Propagation of Yorùbá cultural values could be done in both micro and macro societies respectively, depending on the propagator. Yorùbá parents and teachers could propagate cultural values in their respective micro societies (i.e., home and school), while Yorùbá artistes and traditional leaders could propagate the Yorùbá rich culture and values in the macro society. Failure to promote and propagate Yorùbá cultural values by relevant stakeholders could force it into extinction. Therefore, propagation of Yorùbá cultural values is a collective and collaborative responsibilities of every individual, especially parents, teachers, artistes and traditional leaders.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

Sociological theory of functionalism is adopted in this study. The sociological theory of functionalism understood society as a system consisting of different sub-sections that have specific functions. To the functionalists, the various sub-sections that make up the society are interdependent; one cannot singularly function and function well without others. In the society, there are social institutions such as education, religion, traditional, media, family (home), economy and the political institutions. Each of these institutions has specific functions that contribute to the society (Ajere, 2006). If one becomes dysfunctional, this does not only affect the institution but also the very social system. This could be the reason why the functionalists equate the society with the human body. If any part of the body is in pain, it will definitely affect the functioning of the whole body.

The functionalists argue that all institutions in the society have significant roles to play in the smooth and functional running of the society. For instance, the parents have important roles in the society, in the lives their children and other individuals. Similarly, the teachers have a vital role in the lives of their pupils, the community and for themselves. Baudelot (2015) observes that families (i.e. parents) taught children social norms and values. However, he argues that they specifically taught the children the norms and values associated with the family and/or community, while other institutions such as schools, the media, religion and many others taught children the universal norms and values of the wider society. He also refers to the first process involving families as primary socialisation and the other which involves other institutions as secondary socialisation. The functionalists claim that a society (macro) is a body with different organs and the proper functioning of the body (i.e. society) depends largely on the proper conditions and effective functioning of its various organs. To the functionalists, society is seen as a social system (i.e. organised structure) comprising interrelated and interdependent parts. Social institutions such as family, work, and education are among this organised social structure. By implication therefore, if any of the stakeholders (i.e. parents, teachers, artistes and traditional leaders) fails to function as expected in respect of propagating Yorùbá cultural values, these cultural values may go extinct.

The parents, teachers, artistes and traditional leaders who are critical members of family, educational, media and traditional institutions respectively form a part of the society which is a whole, and they are mostly adults with experience about the cultural values and how they can be propagated at home, in school, in media and in wider society respectively. Through their propagation, they also interact with other members of the society for societal development. Relating this to the Yorùbá society, if the parents and teachers get affected in the micro society (home and school) respectively, and the artistes and traditional leaders in the macro society in respect of propagating Yorùbá cultural values, such an effect will influence the entire Yorùbá society negatively. The parents in the primary social system, teachers in the secondary social

system and, the artistes and traditional leaders in the supra-system need to function properly as expected in order to properly propagate Yorùbá cultural values to the youth in particular and the world at large.

The Concepts of Values, Culture and Yorùbá Cultural Values

Values are transmitted and cultivated through an intricate web of societal agents and interactions. Primary to this web are family members and social peers, formal schooling, leisure, work and religious activities, and such rites of passage as baptism, confirmation and marriage (Frey, 1994). Interwoven through this web are the oral or written words and stories of a people. The influence of this web is particularly important during childhood when the basic value parameters are established. The values held by the Yorùbá society and every other African society are not easily altered. The assemblage of an individual's or society's values strives for affiliation, compatibility and integration among those values. By the same token, values enshrine and impart a society's concepts of the morally desirable. Values set forth the societal criteria for, and cultural assumptions upon which good and bad, right and wrong, moral and immoral, noble and vile are established. Similarly, values provide a code and form the basis for all moral judgments, whether directed at others, nature or self. Fear, sympathy, hate, love, anger, passion and contempt, all are expressions that indicate dimensions of values. Goodman and Hooks (2016) opine that human conduct is guided by values which provide a road-map for an individual's action. Values influence our behaviours by preparing us to act in certain morally-oriented ways. When a certain behavioural response is called for in a given context of social interaction, what that behaviour may be is based in part upon the values held (Frey, 1994). There is a connection between home, school, media and community (society) regarding children's development and education.

Culture is a way of life of a group of people and this way of life encompasses the behaviours, symbols, values, beliefs that people accept and are passed mostly by communication and imitation from one generation to another (Amos, 2013). It could also be referred to as people's traditions, manners, customs, religious beliefs, values and social, political or economic organisation (Makinde, 2010). It is a cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, hierarchies, notions of time, roles, specific relation, concept of the universe, material objects and position acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving (Oti & Ayeni, 2013). Similarly, Olugbenga and Ayinla (2017) view culture as the sum total of the attainment of any specific period, race or people including their handicrafts, agriculture, economic, songs, arts, religious beliefs, traditions, language and story. It is therefore inferred from the above that culture does not refer to an individual but to a people as the individual writ-large. It is a shared understanding that people acquire to co-ordinate their activities.

The understanding of the Yorùbá culture begins with a core interest and understanding of the Yorùbá language. The richness or otherwise of the culture of a particular group of people lies in their language; this is because language is the way to people's hearts. Every society or culture must define its own values in its own terms not on the terms designed for it by other society or culture (Olayiwola, 2010). The Yorùbá traditional society is culturally endowed in all spheres of societal structures which are guided by social values that seem to be the bedrock of their culture. The Yorùbá cultural values, like every other African cultural values is humanistic, though, this is threatened by invasion of foreign values. The traditional Yorùbá society has a socio-cultural value system with shared principles and standard of living which account for the stability of social conduct such as fundamental rights, patriotisms, respect for human dignity, among several others (Olugbenga & Ayinla, 2017). By inference therefore, these values are the criteria the Yorùbá use in

assessing their daily lives, arranging their priorities and choosing among alternative courses of action.

However, Olayiwola (2010) asserts that Yorùbá cultural values have been bastardised in the name of European civilisation and Western education. Oti and Ayeni (2013) also note that Yorùbá cultural values are fast losing space in the society, especially among the elite. According to them, many of the Yorùbá cultural values are already abolished particularly among the educated homes. Dangana (2018) corroborates the assertions above by observing that some Yorùbá young men and women have abandoned their local attires such as *Àdìrẹ* and *Ànkárá* for alien ones. She stresses further that it is common to see young people (especially ladies) walking across the streets half-nude putting on micro or miniskirts, handless (armless) tops, trousers and other outfits that do not align with the Yorùbá cultural identity. In other words, they expose some sensitive parts of their bodies for public consumption. The neglect of these cultural values remains a thing of concern. Contrary to the opinions expressed above, Fatunde (2018) argues that Yorùbá culture is not dying and stresses that the culture is only being adapted to the new world. His argument does not hold water because the Yorùbá are a people that value decency in all ramifications. Man is essentially a product of his culture because his right lies in the confidence and personality which is greatly nurtured by his culture (Dangana, 2018). Culture makes one think, dance, speak and behave in a particular manner. It is the culture that makes one Hausá, Ìgbò, Yorùbá, Kánurí, Fúlàní, Ijaw, Tiv, American, Briton, Chinese or Japanese, as the case may be. The Yorùbá and indeed all ethnic nationalities have their given culture which is unique in their respect.

There is a dire need to restore, transmit and propagate Yorùbá cultural values in order to prevent them from going into extinction. This is important because if a man's culture is taken away from him, his entire being is rendered prostrate. The restoration, transmission and propagation of Yorùbá cultural values rest on the shoulders of some stakeholders (i.e. artistes, parents, teachers and traditional leaders) in the society. Fatunde (2018) has rightly advised that Yorùbá cultural values should be promoted in various homes, schools, and across nooks and crannies of Yorùbá land. It can be deduced from Fátúndé's advice that if the propagation of Yorùbá cultural values starts from every home, the children will come out of their homes into the society with a deep appreciation of the Yorùbá culture and propagate it in their own unique way, each with his or her own unique talents. Hence, propagating Yorùbá cultural values is the responsibility of everyone, especially parents, teachers, artistes and traditional leaders.

The Role of Stakeholders in the Propagation of Yorùbá Cultural Values

Stakeholders in the context of this study are those who have a stake in the propagation of Yorùbá culture and values, and preventing the cultural values from going unto extinction. Role is the behaviour exhibited by a person in line with his or her position in the social structure or social group in the society, implying that each person has his or her own role according to position held. Osokade and Ijimakinwa (2015) opine that role is an act of a person in a certain way in the effort to exercise his rights and obligations in accordance with his or her status. A person can be said to play a role if he has exercised his rights and obligations in accordance with his social status in the society. The role is a dynamic aspect of status when a person exercises rights and obligations according to his position. The role is a pattern of collective behaviour that others expect against a person as a form of status to carry out his duties in accordance with what other members of the society expect. If the parents, teachers, artistes and the traditional leaders, by virtue of their respective positions and social status propagate Yorùbá cultural values, they perform a role.

The Role of Parents: In the Yorùbá society, parenting is perceived to take a lot of forms which is able to lead the child to a responsible adult and appreciate the cultural values of the land. There are various parenting styles aimed at bringing up a child in a way that makes it possible for the child to imbibe the values of the Yorùbá culture and also be a useful adult. Some of these forms of parenting are through story telling (folktales), the extended family, traditional rites and mother's care, attention and love (Amos, 2013). Parenting is a process of raising and educating a child from birth or before until adulthood. It refers to carrying out the responsibilities of raising and relating to children in such a manner that the child is well prepared to realise his or her full potential as a human being.

Parents as the first teacher of the child and custodian of Yorùbá values system should play some significant roles in promoting, sharing and propagating Yorùbá cultural values to their children in specific and outside world in general. Among these roles is the need to converse with their children in the Yorùbá language and encourage them to speak the language both at home and outside the home; and see beauty in preparing and eating local foods such as pounded yam (*iyán*), porridge (*àsáró*), bean cake (*àkàrà*) and local soups such as *ẹ́fọ́* (vegetable soup), *ẹ̀gúsí* (melon soup) and *gbẹ̀gìrì* (a traditional soup prepared with beans). They should also encourage their children to do the same for future generations. Parents should tell traditional stories to their children in order to let them know the events of the past and learn from them (Badru, 2021). This will help to keep various traditional stories alive. In a similar vein, they should attend traditional festivals and cultural exhibitions and encourage their children to do the same. Similarly, they should wear and encourage their children to wear traditional attires.

The Role of Teachers: Another stakeholder whose role is similar to that of the parents in the propagation of Yorùbá cultural values is the professional teacher in formal school settings. Since language is the major vehicle that can be used to transmit Yorùbá cultural values to the students who are majorly youths, teachers should see pride in speaking and conversing in Yorùbá language among their colleagues and with their students. In the same vein, teachers can propagate Yorùba cultural values by serving as role models to their students through their dress and manners in and outside the school. They should also have an in-depth appreciation for the Yorùbá culture in order to arouse the interest their learners and encourage them to participate in traditional cultural activities and ceremonies of their community such as Yam Festival (*Ọdún Isu*) and Masquerade Festival (*Ọdún Egúngún*), among others.

Teachers can also propagate Yorùbá cultural values by introducing different activities such as African Board Game (*Ayo Ọlọ́pọ́n*), Hide and Seek (*Boju Boju*) in the school, especially during the end of the session programme. This would allow their students to bring out their hidden potentials and showcase their talents. In addition, teachers can propagate Yorùba cultural values by teaching the learners the nature and importance of Yorùbá oral literature such as myths, legends, folktales, proverbs and so on which are integral parts of the Yorùbá cultural heritage. They should encourage their students to speak the Yorùbá language (especially their dialect) in the school because language is the vehicle through which culture is transmitted. Teachers should also cultivate the habit of dressing in Yorùbá traditional attires since dress is a part of culture. Learners should also be taken on excursions to traditional places such as Museum, Ọ̀ṣun Ọ̀ṣogbo Groove and Kings' (*Ọbas'*) Palaces.

The Role of Artistes: Yorùbá film producers, singers, dancers, poets, chanters, actors, actresses, drummers among others play crucial roles in the propagation of Yorùbá cultural values. They do this through the vehicle of film production, singing, dancing, chanting, dramatic plays and drumming among others. For instance, the need to artistically explicate some adored Yorùbá cultural values is

well expressed by the producer in a Yorùbá film titled *Agogo Èèwọ̀* (The Forbidden Bell) so much that the scenes devoted to this purpose stand-out in the movie like a sore toe (Olayiwola, 2010). Similarly, in propagating Yorùbá cultural values, the producer of another Yorùbá home film, *Saworo Ide* (The Parable of the Drum) reveals its (the film) allegiance to the Yorùbá culture with strict bias for the role of the Yorùbá special drum called *Ìyá Ìlù* (Talking Drum) in maintaining social ethoes among the pre-literate Yorùbá people (Olayiwola, 2010). The film established that though no society or ethnic group is free from corrupt practices; the Yorùbás have social mechanisms to curb them. Hence, the building of the film around *Ìyá Ìlù* by the producer is to clamp down on despotic, corrupt rulers and ensure that whoever engages in such an act is punished.

To propagate Yorùbá cultural values, the producers of the two Yorùbá films (*Saworo Ide* and *Agogo Èèwọ̀*) in finding solutions to the economic corruption as well as problems in the society did not seek recourse in the law court or democratic order of the West, but in the people's culture (Olayiwola, 2010). It is deduced from the above that solutions to people's problems reside primarily in their culture. Similarly, producers, actors and actresses can propagate the values in the Yorùbá culture by re-enacting plays regularly to introduce Yorùbá heroes and heroines to the new generation of the Yorùbá and to the international audience (Makinde, 2010).

Another artiste whose role in the propagation of Yorùbá cultural values is indispensable is the drummer (*Àyàn*), whom Oladapo (1995) regards as a friend of God and an indispensible being in the society and describes him as a must at all Yorùbá social functions. Commenting on the significant role of *Àyàn* in the society, Oladapo (1995) submits that:

> *Bí kò bá sí Àyàn nínú ìlú, bóyá nii lú bée lée tòrò. Àyànnibioyè jíje.Àyàn nibi ikọmojade. Àyan nibi oku agba. Àyan nibi igbeyawo. Àyàn nibi isile. Àyàn nibi gbogbo odún ibílẹ. Àyàn nibi ayeye alarinrin... Kò sí nijọ, ijọ kò kún ni wọn. Onisẹ ọna pataki ni wọn, laarin awujọ (p.3)*
>
> *Gloss:*
> *If Àyàn (the drummer) is not present in a town, such a town may experience no peace. He is always at the chieftaincy ceremony. He features at the naming ceremony. He features at the funeral ceremony. He features at the marriage ceremony. He features at the house-warming ceremony. He features at all the traditional festivals' ceremonies. He is also at all the places of colourful ceremonies ... If Àyàn is not in a group, such a group is incomplete. They are great artistes in the society.*

It is inferred from Oladapo's description of *Àyàn Akéwi* that they are a significant unit in the Yorùbá society. Through their performance at various functions, they employ their instrument (drum) to teach morals, thereby propagating Yorùbá cultural values. Oladapo (1995) summarises that *Akéwi ti ó mọ̀ nipa Ìsẹ̀dá ni Àyàn* (The drummer is a poet of nature). Using the talking drum, the *Àyàn* as a social group could talk about every life situation as well as God's creatures such as animals, birds and human beings. In addition, they could use the drum to talk about the Supremacy of *Olódùmarè* (God). This and many other ways by which the *Àyàn* project their artistic creativity make them a

major factor to reckon with in the propagation of cultural values in specific and Yorùbá social life in general.

Furthermore, Yorùbá singers can propagate Yorùbá cultural values through their songs. They can do this by ensuring that some Yorùbá cultural values are being emphasised in the content of their various songs. Similarly, there are some dances such as *bàtá* and *dùndún* that are peculiar to the Yorùbá people which Yorùbá dancers need to maintain, sustain and propagate. The core of their performance should revolve around the Yorùbá dance since dance is a sub-set of culture. Both singers and dancers should ensure that they adorn local attires, such as *Àńkárá* (African Wax Prints). In the same vein, Yorùbá artistes such as broadcasters, newscasters and presenters should come up with programmes that feature Yorùbá culture and value system. Some culture-oriented programmes already on radio and or television include *Ta Ní Mọ̀ Ọ́n?* (Who Knows It?), and *Òwe Lẹ́sin Ọ̀rọ̀* (Proverb is an Echo of Word) aired on Broadcasting Corporation of Ọ̀yọ́ State, and *Tìwa Làṣà* (Culture is Ours) on Gravity FM, 88.1. They can also report live coverage of traditional festivals such as Ṣàngó and Ọ̀ràmíyán festivals in Ọ̀yọ́, Egúngún festival in Ìbàdán, Ọjúde-Ọba festival in Ìjèbú-Òde, Èyọ festival in Lagos, Ọ̀ṣun Ọ̀ṣogbo festival in Ọ̀ṣogbo and Ọlọ́jọ festival in Ilé-Ifẹ̀. These festivals provide a great avenue to propagate Yorùbá cultural values such as dressing, hairstyles, greetings, music, art and dying, and food and drinks among others.

The Role of Traditional Leaders: Traditional leaders control vital resources such as land and play a very important role in service delivery and development strategies to be implemented in their domain. These leaders are main part of the social order of the Yorùbá society, and they are to a certain extent, capable of governing the behaviour and expectation of individuals. Through them, individuals can function as active, informed and culturally noble persons of the Yorùbá society. Traditional leaders play a pivotal role in interpretation and documentation of Yorùbá cultural heritage, and in facilitating people's interaction and engagement with the heritage. They protect the cultural identity and propagate the cultural values (i. e. birth, death, marriage and dressing) of the society. They are very crucial in promoting and sustaining Yorùbá culture and value system.

Since the Yorùbá of South-western Nigeria value peaceful coexistence in the society, traditional leaders play useful roles in mediating between the people and the state, thereby enhancing national unity. And since Yorùbá tradition provides us with a source of identity, tells us where we come from and reminds us of what shaped our lives, Yorùbá traditional leaders ensure that all these are transmitted and propagated to their subjects. The *Ọba* (King) in Yorùbáland, in the discharge of his duties, is always assisted by *Baálẹ̀* (Town/Village Leader) who administered towns and villages. The traditional leaders usually converse with their subjects in Yorùbá language during town meetings and any other crucial meetings, the Kings wear beaded crowns, while the Chiefs and Village leaders wear beads that project their social and political positions to the immediate society and the outside world.

Conceptual Framework

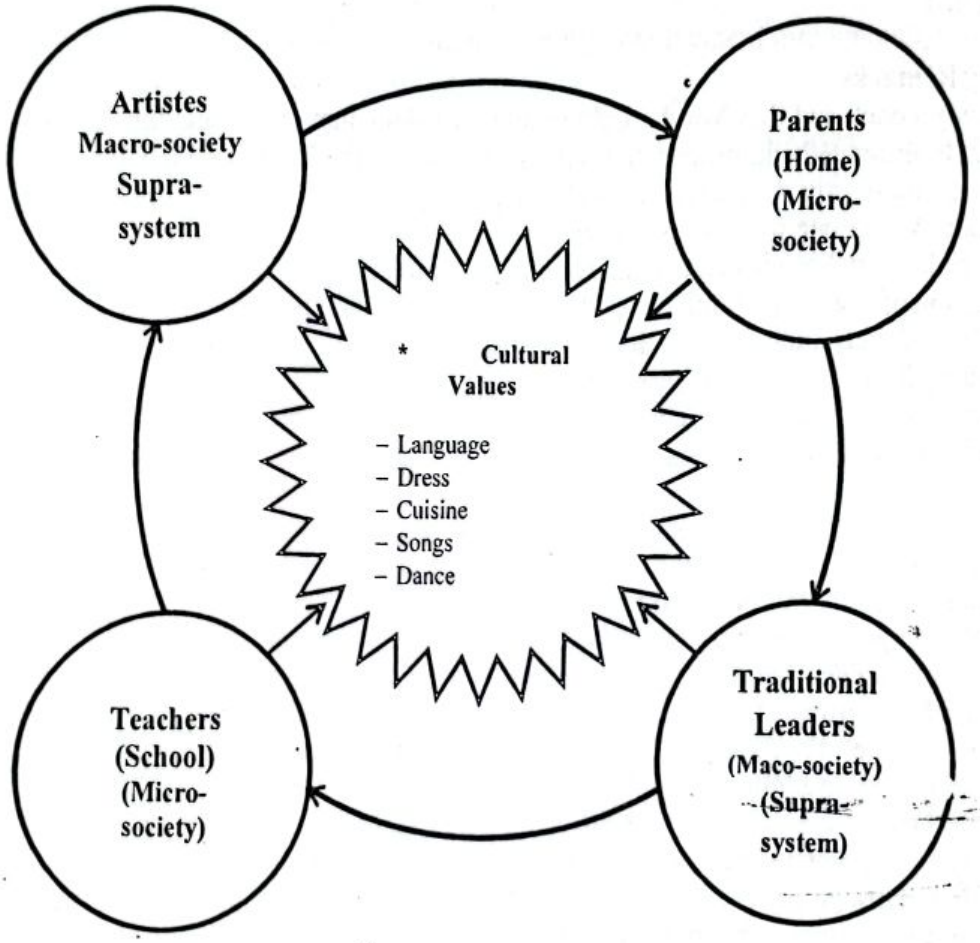


Figure 1: *A Researcher-designed Schematic Model of Interrelationship among Parents, Teachers, Artistes and Traditional Leaders in the Propagation of Yorùbá Cultural Values*

Figure 1 is a model of the interrelationship among parents, teachers, artistes and traditional leaders in the propagation of Yorùbá cultural values. The model has five circles; one at the centre and other four having equal distance from the central one. A wheel-like circle in the centre houses Yorùbá cultural values such as language, dress, songs, cuisine, dance, marriage system, love, among others. This wheel-like circle is equidistant from the other four circles. These four circles contain parents in a micro society (home), otherwise referred to as primary social system, teachers in another micro society (school, otherwise referred to as secondary social system), artistes in a macro society, otherwise referred to as supra-system and traditional leaders in another macro society (a supra-system) respectively.

The arrows linking the four outside circles together are cyclic and indicate that they (parents, teachers, artistes and traditional leaders) are interrelated and interconnected in respect of the roles they play in the propagation of the Yorùbá cultural values. The arrow linking each of the outside circles to the central one indicates that parents, teachers, artistes and traditional leaders can influence the propagation of Yorùbá cultural values at home, in school and in the larger society respectively. By implication therefore, if any of these stakeholders ceases to perform its functions as expected, it will affect the propagation of the Yorùbá cultural values. Hence, the four need to work

together and complement one another in order to ensure that Yorùbá cultural values are well-propagated.

Closing Remarks

This study concluded that Yorùbá culture and its values may go into extinction if they are not adequately promoted and propagated within and outside the Yorùbá society. The propagation of Yorùbá cultural values involves a circle of propagators: I propagate; you propagate; and we propagate. When one party ceases to propagate, the circle will be broken and leakages will be discovered. Every Yorùbá person, male or female, young or adult has significant roles to play in the propagation of Yorùbá cultural values. It is the joint responsibilities of all stakeholders such as the *Ọbas* (Kings) and Chiefs who are the custodians of the Yorùbá culture and tradition; the village and community heads; teachers in formal, semi-formal and informal settings; parents at home; artistes in supra-system; traditional religion leaders; and every individual member of the society to propagate Yorùbá cultural values.

For instance, the *Ọbas* (Kings) and Chiefs should always converse with their subjects in Yorùbá language and adorn native attires at every social and traditional function. They should also encourage performance of traditional festivals in their domains/territories such as *Ògún* (god of iron), *Ṣàngó* (god of thunder), *Ọbàtálá, Egúngún* (Egúngún masquerade), *Èyọ̀* (Èyọ̀ masquerade), *Ọ̀ṣun* (River goddess) and *Ifá* (god of divinity) festivals where values of Yorùbá culture can be showcased and propagated. Similarly, the parents should always converse with their children in Yorùbá language. They should also train them the Yorùbá style of cooking (cuisine) and train them

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