

EXPLORING AFRICAN FOLKLORES AND ORAL TRADITION IN INDIGENOUS RELIGION

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Abstract

The work focuses on Exploring African Folklores and Oral Tradition in Indigenous Religion. Data for this study were collected from two major sources, my own personal experience as participant observer, in addition to my own personal experience, I made use of oral interviews and secondary sources. The methodology adopted in the analysis of data is phenomenological approach. The findings show that African folklores and oral tradition is established not only between the living and the dead but reveals that there is a synergy between the physical world and spiritual world. It further unveils that there is a system of narrative and communication of oral traditional in Africa. The study concludes that Oral transmission of religious teachings in African traditional societies relies on a combination of storytelling, ritual performances, proverbs, songs, and community participation. The study recommends that African Folklores and Oral Tradition should be incorporated into the educational curriculum in Nigerian schools, that African traditional stories, songs, and proverbs be documented and digitized, communities should be encouraged to organize storytelling workshops and festivals that celebrate African oral traditions. Traditional religious leaders, cultural organizations, and government agencies should collaborate to promote the significance of oral traditions in preserving African traditional religion and by sharing African stories and religious teachings with international audiences, the richness of African heritage can be showcased, and these traditions can be recognized as valuable assets in the global cultural landscape.

Keywords: Folklores, Oral Tradition, Songs, Chants and African Indigenous Religion.

Introduction

The term 'folklore' was first coined by British antiquarian William John Thoms (1803-1885). He first used the term in 1846 to describe the manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, proverbs, and other materials of older British societies. Thoms was inspired to construct this concept based on the ideas of Grimm Brothers (Jacob Karl Grimm (1785-1863) and Wilhelm Karl Grimm (1786-1859)) who used the German term 'volkskunde' (1806) that refers to the study of customs, beliefs, stories, traditions, etc. of peoples or speech communities. The term 'folklore', therefore, is a translation of the German term with adequate conceptual and theoretical equivalence.

The Athenaeum suggested the new word 'Folklore' in place of either Popular Antiquity or Popular Literature. He wrote,

“Your pages have so often given evidence of the interest which you take in what we in England designate as Popular Antiquities or Popular Literature (though by- the-by it is more a lore than a Literature, would be more aptly be described by a good Saxon compound ‘Folklore’- lore of the people). - that, I am not without hopes of enlisting your aid in garnering the few ears which are remaining, scattered over that field from which our forefathers might have gathered a/goodly crop.” (Dundes, 1965,4)

Thus the simple term folklore replaced various awkward phrases floating around at that time. The term gained immediate popularity and currency not only in English-speaking countries but also in other nations. According to Finnegan (1970), folklore includes myths, proverbs, songs, and traditional performances that express a community's history and way of life. Oral tradition refers to the spoken transfer of these elements, ensuring cultural preservation (Vansina, 1985). In the famous Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend (1984) More than twenty, definitions of folklore have been enlisted. Though all of them are diverse from each other, taking; those views and observations into consideration some general points on its nature and scope can be derived. A few definitions are cited below:

1. Folklore comprises traditional creations of peoples, primitive and, civilized. These are achieved by using sounds and words in metric form and prose and-include, also folk beliefs and, superstitions, customs and performances, dances and plays. (Balys, Jonas. SDFML, 1984, 397)
2. It is usual to define folklore either literally as the lore of the folk or, more descriptively, in terms of an oral literal tradition. (Smith, Marian W. SDFML, 19 84, 402)
3. Folklore is the generic term to designate the customs, beliefs, traditions, tales, magical practices, proverbs, songs, and so on; in short the accumulated knowledge of a homogeneous unsophisticated people tied together not only by common physical bonds but also by emotional ones which colour their every expression, giving it unity and individual distinction. (Leach, Mac Edward. SDFML, 1984,401-402)

Thus, most definitions have their focus of interest on the ‘lore’, not on the “folk” The ‘folklore’ of a people consists of two kinds of activity- What the folk traditionally ‘do’ and what they traditionally ‘say’. The issue of word of mouth or orality is thus embedded in the concept of folklore. ‘Folk’ are identified with the backward, illiterate, uncivilized peasant community who dwell on rural inhabitants. But this is a narrow conception of folk and quite unsatisfactory as well as misleading. If one were to accept this view, the life of the folk would be conceived of as static and untouched by urban sophistication and as bearers of archaic items in their most unchanged form. This notion of ‘folk’ has been challenged by modern-day folklorists and the most pronounced name in this connection is Alan Dundes who defined ‘folk’ in a new light. To quote Dundes:

The term ‘folk’ can refer to any group of people whatsoever who share at least one common factor. It does not matter what the linking factor is - it could be a common occupation, language or religion - but what is important is that a group formed for whatever reason will have some traditions, which it calls its own. In theory, a group consists of at least two persons but generally most groups consist of many individuals. A member of the group may not know all other members, but he will probably know the common core of traditions

belonging to the group, traditions which help the group have a sense of group identity.

(Dundes, 1965, 2)

This all-inclusive definition of 'folk' provides an important insight that 'folk' has a group identity and the group may be of any size 'as large as a nation or as small as a family'.

Oral tradition, as defined by scholars, is the transmission of cultural knowledge, history, and values through spoken word, rather than written text, serving as a vital cultural preservation tool. According to Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oral_tradition). Oral tradition, or oral lore, is a form of human communication in which knowledge, art, ideas, and culture are received, preserved, and transmitted orally from one generation to another. The transmission is through speech or song and may include folktales, ballads, chants, prose, or poetry. The information is mentally recorded by oral repositories, sometimes termed "walking libraries", who are usually also performers. Oral tradition is a medium of communication for a society to transmit oral history, oral literature, oral law, and other knowledge across generations without a writing system, or in parallel to a writing system. It is the most widespread medium of human communication. They often remain in use in the modern era throughout for cultural preservation. Oral tradition is memories, knowledge, and expression held in common by a group over many generations: it is the long preservation of immediate or contemporaneous testimony. It may be defined as the recall and transmission of specific, preserved textual and cultural knowledge through vocal utterance. Oral tradition is usually popular, and can be exoteric or esoteric. It speaks to people according to their understanding, unveiling itself in accordance with their aptitudes.

Theoretical Framework

Folklore and oral traditions are deeply embedded within human cultures, serving as reservoirs of collective memory, social norms, and identity formation. The study, of these cultural expressions requires a robust theoretical foundation that accounts for their structural composition, functional significance, and performance dynamism. This explores three core theoretical Perspective-**Structuralism, Functionalism and Performance theory**- each offering distinct yet complementary insights into the mechanism governing folklore and oral tradition. By engaging with these frameworks, this study aims to unravel the complex interplay between tradition, identity, and continuity in cultural narratives.

Structuralism and the Deep Structures of Folklores

Structuralism posits that human cultures operate through underlying cognitive structures that shape myths, folklores, and oral traditions. This theory rooted in linguistics and anthropology, views folklore not as an arbitrary collection of stories but as a system governed by universal patterns.

- **Claude Levi-Strauss:** In structural Anthropology (1958), Levi-Strauss argues that myths and folktales are structured around binary oppositions such as life/death, nature/culture, and hero/villain that reveal fundamental cognitive patterns. According to him, myths function as "language" through which societies mediate contradictions and make sense of the world.

Applying this to oral tradition, we see that recurring themes in folktales serve as cognitive templates that shape cultural worldviews.

- **Vladimir Propp:** In *Morphology of the Folktale* (1968), Propp identified a fixed set of narrative functions and character archetypes (e.g., the hero, the villain, the Denor) that structure folktales universally. His work provides a methodological tool for deconstructing folklore into its fundamental components, demonstrating that even vastly different narratives share a common skeletal framework.

The structuralism approach is invaluable in folklore studies as it highlights the predictability and universality of folk narratives, explaining why similar motifs persist across different cultures and historical periods. It also provides a blueprint for comparative folklore analysis, showing how different societies encode their experiences into structured myths and oral traditions.

Functionalism and the Social Utility of Folklore

Functionalism shifts the focus from structure to purpose, asserting that folklore exists not as an aesthetic or intellectual exercise but as a mechanism for fulfilling vital societal functions.

This perspective highlights folklore's role in preserving social cohesion, reinforcing norms, and addressing communal anxieties.

- **Bronislaw Malinowski:** A pioneer of functionalist anthropology, Malinowski (1922) emphasized that myths, legends, and oral traditions serve pragmatic social functions. According to him, folklore is not just a reflection of culture but an active force in shaping belief systems, maintaining social order, and resolving existential uncertainties. In traditional societies, myths serve as charters that validate customs, social hierarchies, and moral expectations.

- **Alan Dundes:** Expanding on Malinowski's ideas, Dundes (1965) argued that folklore plays a crucial role in defining group identity. He proposed that folklore evolves in response to social needs, adapting over time to reflect changing values and concerns. Dundes¹ approach broadens the definition of "folk" beyond rural, illiterate communities, suggesting that any group—regardless of its literacy or technological advancement possesses folklore that reinforces its collective identity.

Applying Functionalism to oral tradition reveals why folktales often encode moral lessons, why proverbs reinforce communal wisdom, and why myths explain natural and social phenomena. This perspective underscores the idea that folklore is not static but an adaptive social tool that evolves to meet the needs of the people who create and transmit it.

Performance Theory and the Dynamics of Oral Tradition

Unlike Structuralism and Functionalism, which often treat folklore as fixed content, Performance Theory views it as a fluid, interactive process that depends on context, audience, and performative elements. This theory, emerging in the latter half of the 20th century, redefines folklore as an event rather than a text.

- **Victor Turner:** Turner's research on ritual and performance (1982) introduced the idea that storytelling and folklore should be understood as cultural performances active events that create

and reinforce social bonds. He highlights how oral traditions are not merely recitations of static stories but ritualized enactments that engage the audience in a shared experience.

- **Richard Bauman:** Bauman (1986) further developed the concept of folklore as performance, arguing that storytelling is a socially negotiated practice in which both the storyteller and the audience shape the narrative. His work emphasizes elements such as gesture, intonation, improvisation, and audience participation, showing that oral traditions are inherently adaptive and responsive to real-time social dynamics.

Performance Theory is particularly valuable in analyzing how folklore is transmitted and transformed. Unlike written literature, oral tradition is not preserved in a fixed form but varies with each telling, adapting to the cultural, political, and social climate. This framework allows the system to work together thus creating social harmony and equilibrium

African Folklore –Its Perspectives

Folklore and Oral traditions are integral components of African cultural heritage, serving as vital conduits for transmission of values, beliefs, custom, and histories across generations. These elements play a significant role in preserving the identity and spiritual essence of communities. In the context of Ikwerre, a prominent locality in South-South Nigeria, folklore and oral traditions are deeply interwoven with the traditional religion and culture of its people. This interplay not only reflects the societal worldview but also sustains the collective consciousness of the community.

The Ikwerre people while sharing common ancestry and linguistic roots with Igbo communities, have developed specific cultural practices and religious expressions that distinguish them. This study examines the intricate relationship between folklore, oral tradition, and the sustainability of Ikwerre traditional religion and culture. These elements are conveyed through verbal storytelling, songs, dances, and rituals, acting as repositories of wisdom and tools for cultural education. The traditional religion, characterized by reverence for ancestors, deities, and nature spirits, derives much of its vitality and continuity from these oral narratives. In a rapidly globalizing world, where cultural homogenization poses a significant threat, these practices have proven to be resilient, offering a framework for cultural sustainability and identity preservation. The traditional religious system of Ikwerre, like many other Igbo groups, centered on a belief in a Supreme Being- God, *Chukwu* (or *Chineke*), the ultimate creator and source of all existence. Oral tradition, encompassing stories, proverbs, songs, and folktales, serve as primary means of transmitting cultural knowledge, historical narratives, and religious beliefs across generations. This oral heritage is crucial in maintaining cultural continuity and reinforcing social norms within Ikwerre society. Folklore, as a component of this oral tradition, provides a rich repository of cultural values, beliefs, and wisdom, often expressed through symbolic narratives and artistic performances.

The role of folklore and oral traditions in Ikwerre extends beyond mere storytelling; they serve as mechanisms for moral instruction, social cohesion, and conflict resolution. Myths and legends often carry embedded lessons that reinforce communal values, while rituals and festivals offer avenues for communal expression and spiritual renewal. However, the advent of modernization,

urbanization, and the influence of foreign religions has increasingly challenged the traditional structures that support these practices. The younger generation, in particular, faces a dichotomy between embracing modern lifestyles and upholding ancestral traditions.

Despite these challenges, folklore and oral traditions have demonstrated a remarkable capacity to adapt and integrate new realities without losing their core essence. This adaptability raises critical questions about the dynamics of cultural transmission and the mechanisms by which these traditions contribute to the sustainability of Ikwerre traditional religion and culture. Understanding these dynamics is essential for crafting strategies to ensure their preservation and relevance in contemporary society.

This study seeks to explore the effects of folklore and oral tradition on the sustainability of Ikwerre traditional religion and culture. It aims to examine the extent to which these cultural elements have shaped the community's spiritual and social identity, the challenges they face in the modern era, their potential for ensuring the resilience of indigenous practices, and so on. By investigating these themes, the study will contribute to broader discussions on cultural sustainability and the preservation of intangible heritage in a rapidly changing world.

Ikwerre known for its deep cultural roots and strong traditional beliefs now face threats from modern life, city growth worldwide connections, and the spread of Christianity. Though Ikwerre culture has stood strong, these outside forces have had a big impact on how people pass down and keep alive their old ways.

A key worry is that younger people are losing touch with their cultural roots as they more and more embrace Western ways of life and ideals. This change puts at risk the passing down of important cultural knowledge, including traditional religious beliefs, ceremonial practices, and the spoken stories that have long been the core of how culture is shared in Ikwerre. Stories and oral traditions, which play a key part in strengthening community identity and spiritual values, are at risk of being forgotten and lost in this changing cultural scene.

The possible loss of these intangible cultural treasures raises key questions about how Ikwerre can keep its traditional religion and culture alive. If no one looks at and strengthens the ways this heritage gets passed down, the community might lose an essential part of what makes it unique and connects it to its past. This study wants to explore how stories and spoken traditions help Ikwerre traditional religion and culture continue and thrive despite today's challenges. It aims to see how well these cultural elements can change and stay important in our fast-changing world. At the same time, it hopes to find ways to deal with the things that are making the culture fade away.

The primary purpose of this study is to examine the influence of folklore and oral tradition on the continuity and sustainability of Ikwerre traditional religion and culture. By exploring the African Traditional Religion (ATR) is one of the oldest and most enduring belief systems in the world, deeply embedded in the cultural, spiritual, and cosmological worldview of African societies.

It is a complex and dynamic system of beliefs, rituals, and practices that have been passed down through generations, primarily through oral traditions (Mbiti, 1990). African Traditional Religion. It is not merely a religion but a way of life that encompasses the spiritual, social, and cultural dimensions of African Communities. It provides a framework for understanding the

universe, the relationship between humans and the divine, and the interconnectedness of all living beings (Idowu, 1973). The cosmology of African Traditional Religion is particularly significant, as it offers insights into how African societies perceive the origin, structure, and functioning of the universe.

Ikwerre is a microcosm of the broader Niger Delta cultural and spiritual heritage. Like many other African Communities, the Ikwerre people have a rich tradition of oral narratives, myths, and rituals that explain their cosmological beliefs and creation stories. These narratives are not merely tales but are integral to the community's identity, values, and worldview. They provide a sense of continuity, linking the past, present, and future, and serve as a moral compass for the community (Uchendu, 1965). The cosmology and creation myths of the Ikwerre community are deeply rooted in their environment, history, and social structures, reflecting their understanding of the divine, the natural world, and humanity's place within it.

Contribution of Storytelling to the Preservation of Religious Knowledge

Storytelling plays a vital role in preserving religious knowledge within African traditional societies. The findings from the questionnaire reveal that a significant majority of respondents agree that storytelling serves as a crucial mechanism for transmitting sacred teachings, rituals, and moral values from one generation to the next.

Transmission of Religious Beliefs

Storytelling is used by elders and traditional priests to pass on core religious beliefs, myths, and cosmologies. These stories often explain the origins of the community, the creation of the world, and the roles of gods, ancestors, and spirits. In many African societies, religious knowledge is not recorded in written form but is embedded in oral narratives, which makes storytelling an essential medium for the preservation of these beliefs. This is particularly important in rural communities, where oral traditions remain a dominant form of communication. For example, stories related to the origin of the earth, the spirits of ancestors, and religious cosmology are often shared during communal gatherings or religious festivals. Elders use these opportunities to educate younger generations on their religious heritage, ensuring the continuity of the belief systems.

Moral and Ethical Teachings

Storytelling is instrumental in teaching moral and ethical lessons within African traditional religion. Many respondents noted that folktales, parables, and proverbs are woven into religious storytelling, allowing elders to impart lessons about right and wrong, justice, respect, and social harmony. These stories are often set in the context of divine intervention or spiritual consequences, reinforcing the moral teachings with religious authority. For instance, in some stories, individuals who act in defiance of religious or moral codes are punished by deities, while those who follow tradition are rewarded. This moral framework is fundamental to maintaining the ethical standards of the community, with storytelling acting as a tool for reinforcing these values.

Preservation of Rituals and Ceremonies

Stories are often told during significant rites of passage, such as initiations, marriages, and funerals, where they serve both an instructional and a ceremonial function. Storytelling during these events helps the participants and observers understand the religious significance of the rituals being performed. Additionally, the reenactment of myths or sacred stories is sometimes part of the ritual itself, ensuring that the meaning and importance of the ceremony are transmitted in a way that is engaging and memorable. These narratives help to frame the rituals within the broader context of the community's spiritual worldview, ensuring that the rituals retain their sacred value and continue to be practiced over time.

Communal Identity and Religious Continuity

Another critical finding is that storytelling fosters a sense of communal religious identity through shared stories, the community's history, beliefs, and values are reinforced, creating a collective memory that binds individuals together. This collective memory helps ensure the survival of religious practices and beliefs, even in the face of external pressures such as modernization or religious conversion. Storytelling not only preserves individual religious knowledge but also strengthens communal ties, ensuring that the transmission of religious teachings is a shared responsibility. This communal approach to knowledge preservation is particularly strong in rural settings, where storytelling is often a public, participatory event that engages a wide audience.

Intergenerational Knowledge Transfer

Storytelling is a primary method for transferring religious knowledge between generations. Elders serve as the custodians of religious knowledge, and through storytelling, they pass down wisdom, rituals, and beliefs to younger members of the community. This intergenerational transmission ensures that even as elders pass away, the knowledge they carry does not disappear, but is instead carried forward by the younger generation. The importance of maintaining this practice, as it helps younger generations develop a strong understanding of their religious heritage. Without storytelling, there would be a significant gap in religious knowledge transfer, particularly since written records are often absent in many African traditional religions.

Challenges to Storytelling in Knowledge Preservation

However, while storytelling is widely recognized for its role in preserving religious knowledge, its effectiveness is currently being challenged by modernization and the influence of foreign religions. Younger generations are becoming less interested in traditional storytelling, often opting for digital forms of entertainment and education. This shift poses a risk to the continuity of storytelling as a means of knowledge preservation, as the younger audience may not fully appreciate the cultural and religious significance of these oral narratives. Nevertheless, to revitalize storytelling through community efforts, education, and the incorporation of digital media, to ensure that this important cultural practice does not fade away.

Storytelling serves not only as a method for transmitting religious beliefs, rituals, and moral teachings but also as a tool for fostering communal identity and ensuring the continuity of religious practices across generations. However, the challenges posed by modernization and

changing cultural preferences highlight the need for strategic efforts to preserve and revitalize this practice in the contemporary era.

Methods and Mechanisms in Oral Transmission of Religious Teachings

The oral transmission of religious teachings in African traditional societies involves a range of methods and mechanisms. These techniques have evolved over time but continue to serve as crucial tools for passing down religious knowledge, rituals, and practices from one generation to the next. They include:

Use of Elders and Priests as Custodians of Knowledge

One of the primary mechanisms for the oral transmission of religious teachings is through elders and traditional priests, who act as the custodians of religious knowledge. The majority of respondents emphasized that these individuals are responsible for narrating religious stories, performing rituals, and explaining the meaning behind various spiritual practices. Elders are viewed as the most trusted sources of religious knowledge, often sharing stories that have been passed down through generations without being altered.

Traditional priests also play a significant role in this process, particularly when it comes to the performance of sacred rituals and the explanation of religious doctrines. Their authority within the community gives them the power to preserve and transmit the spiritual heritage of the people through oral narratives.

Proverbs, Idioms, and Folktales

Proverbs, idioms, and folktales are commonly used as vehicles for religious teachings. Proverbs often carry moral and spiritual lessons that are easily understood and remembered by members of the community. These short, impactful statements are used to communicate deeper religious truths in a way that is accessible to all, regardless of age or education level. Similarly, idioms and folktales play an essential role in transmitting religious teachings. Folktales, in particular, are used to illustrate complex religious concepts through simple, relatable stories. These tales often involve animals, gods, and mythical figures, which help to explain abstract religious ideas in a concrete and memorable manner. Respondents noted that these stories are typically told during communal gatherings, religious ceremonies, or family settings.

Ritual Performances and Symbolism

Another key mechanism identified in the responses is the use of rituals and symbolic actions to transmit religious teachings. Ritual performances, which often, include drumming, dancing, and chanting, are integral to the oral tradition in many African communities. These rituals are not only acts of worship but also serve as opportunities for teaching younger generations about the religious significance of specific actions and events. For example, during initiation rites, elders and priests explain the symbolism behind each part of the ceremony, ensuring that the participants understand the religious meaning of the rituals they are taking part in. Through repeated participation in these rituals, community members learn the stories and beliefs that underpin their religious practices.

Songs and Chants

Songs and chants are also important in the oral transmission of religious teachings. The use of music in religious ceremonies and storytelling is a deeply rooted tradition in many African societies. Specific songs are associated with particular deities, rituals, or festivals, and these songs help to reinforce religious teachings. The repetitive nature of songs and chants ensures that the message is remembered and passed down over time.

In some cases, songs are used to tell stories of the gods and ancestors, providing a melodic way to convey religious knowledge. Chants, which are often performed during rituals, serve a similar purpose, as they encapsulate the religious and spiritual essence of the community's beliefs in a few powerful words or phrases.

Community Gatherings and Festivals

Finally, community gatherings and religious festivals provide opportunities for the collective transmission of religious teachings. These events are key moments when the entire community comes together to celebrate their religious heritage. During such gatherings, storytelling plays a central role, as elders recount the stories of the ancestors, the gods, and the spirits. Festivals also include reenactments of sacred myths and rituals, which allow participants to engage with the stories and teachings in a dynamic way. These communal events help to reinforce the shared religious identity of the community and ensure that the younger generations are to the traditional religious exposed teachings.

Conclusion

Oral transmission of religious teachings in African traditional societies relies on a combination of storytelling, ritual performances, proverbs, songs, and community participation. These methods ensure that religious knowledge is preserved and passed down in a way that is both engaging and culturally relevant. While these practices face challenges in modern times, they remain integral to the survival and continuity of African traditional religions.

Key findings from the study indicated that storytelling, proverbs, songs, chants, and ritual performances are central to the preservation of religious heritage. The study also highlighted the impact of modernization and globalization, which pose challenges to the survival of these oral traditions. Younger generations, particularly those in urban areas, are increasingly turning away from traditional practices due to external influences such as Western education, Christianity, and digital entertainment. Despite these challenges, the research revealed a strong recognition of the importance of storytelling in maintaining communal identity, moral teachings, and religious continuity. In essence, this research underscores the critical role that storytelling and oral traditions play in sustaining African traditional religion, while also pointing out the need for revitalization strategies in the face of modern pressures.

Storytelling and oral traditions are indispensable to the transmission and preservation of African traditional religion. Through these oral methods, communities have been able to pass down religious knowledge, rituals, values, and beliefs for centuries. The findings of this study have reaffirmed the significance of these practices, while also highlighting the challenges they face in modern society.

As the world continues to evolve, it is important to implement strategies that ensure the survival and relevance of these traditions. The recommendations provided in this research-ranging from educational integration to digital preservation-serve as potential solutions for safeguarding African oral traditions.

Ultimately, preserving storytelling and oral traditions is not only important for religious continuity but also for maintaining the cultural identity of African communities. It is a shared responsibility that requires the involvement of traditional leaders, educators, policymakers, and the youth to ensure that these rich cultural practices continue to thrive for future generations.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, several recommendations are proposed to preserve and revitalize storytelling and oral traditions as integral parts of African traditional religion:

▪ **Integration of Storytelling in Formal Education:** To ensure the continuity of oral traditions, it is important to integrate aspects of African storytelling, proverbs, and oral histories into the formal educational curriculum. By introducing these cultural elements into schools, younger generations can develop an appreciation for their heritage while still benefiting from modern education.

▪ **Documentation and Digital Preservation:** With the advancement of technology, it is recommended that African traditional stories, songs, and proverbs be documented and digitized. This could include creating online platforms, mobile applications, or audio-visual recordings that can be shared with a global audience. Digital preservation can help to bridge the gap between tradition and modernity, ensuring that even young people who rely on technology can access and learn from these traditions.

▪ **Community Programs and Workshops:** Communities should be encouraged to organize storytelling workshops and festivals that celebrate African oral traditions. These programs should involve both elders and young people, fostering intergenerational learning and ensuring that storytelling remains a vibrant part of community life. Elders and traditional priests should be encouraged to hold regular storytelling sessions in public spaces to keep these traditions alive.

▪ **Collaboration with Religious and Cultural Institutions:** Traditional religious leaders, cultural organizations, and government agencies should collaborate to promote the significance of oral traditions in preserving African traditional religion. These collaborations can include funding initiatives aimed at recording and preserving oral traditions, establishing museums or cultural centers dedicated to African religious heritage, and organizing cultural festivals that focus on storytelling.

▪ **Cultural Exchange Programs:** Engaging in cultural exchange programs can promote African oral traditions on a global scale. By sharing African stories and religious teachings with international audiences, the richness of African heritage can be showcased, and these traditions can be recognized as valuable assets in the global cultural landscape. This will also help dispel misconceptions about African traditional religions.

▪ **Encouraging Active Participation of Youth:** It is crucial to engage younger generations by making storytelling and oral traditions more appealing to them. This could be achieved by

incorporating modern formats such as films, animations, and podcasts that tell traditional African stories in ways that resonate with contemporary youth culture.

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