RESEARCH ARTICLE

Modernity, Sigmáá Masquerading, and the Psychosocial Development of the Youth

Tigwe Salifu Jebuni and Joseph Abazaami

ABSTRACT

Modern trends, Islam and Christianity, have influenced the cultures of Tampúlma and resulted in dramatic changes in the youth's attitude towards Sigmáá masquerading. This has adversely affected psychosocial development and the general worldview of youth. The elders of this age-long tradition have bemoaned the recent upsurge of moral decadence among the youth, and the contemplation of its source appears to be laid at the doorsteps of modernity and religious pluralism. Through interviews and focus group discussions, the views of some key informants and youth groups were elicited from among the various Sigmáá masquerading communities among the Tampúlma people for concerted ideas on how to alter the declining trend from the high precipice of moral standards that were bequeathed to the present generation by generations. The study established that through Sigmáá masquerading, communication between people was achieved through spiritism, initiations, symbolism, appellations, and proverbial songs. These verbal and non-verbal communication media have psychological, spiritual, philosophical, and sociological influences on the youth's moral values, ethics, and livelihoods. It was recommended that Sigmáá masquerading should be encouraged and consciously promoted as the bedrock of moral education in which the youth's physical, spiritual, and psychological capabilities are harnessed and guided toward moral development.

Keywords: Islam and Christianity, Modern trends, psychosocial development, Sigmáá Masquerading.

1. Introduction

In the Tampúlma, about 30,000 people (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014) live in the North Gonja District of the Savannah Region of Ghana and the East and West Mampru Districts of the Northeast Region of Ghana. The Tampúlma are linguistically classified as “Gur-speaking people of the Gurishe ethnographic grouping, including the Mo, Sisaala, Vagla, and the Chakale (Awedoba, 2002, 2006; Naden, 1988; Salm & Falola, 2002). The indigenous people of the Tampúlma cannot underestimate the relevance of Sigmáá masquerading modes of communication to their socio-cultural well-being. Sigmáá is believed to be an age-long secret society practiced by the Tampúlma people in honour of their dead members. Sigmáá in the Tampúlma social structures, is an all-encompassing institution that regulates the people's social, cultural, and spiritual facets.

Sigmáá masquerading music and dance is the channel through which communication, the transmission of knowledge, and the spiritual and social development of the people are centered. Sigmáá masquerading music and dance is appreciated as an expression of being moved by the “transcendent power” of the Sigmáá deity (Stevenson, 2019, p. 5). The dancing masquerades highlight the interconnectedness between the living and the spiritual. This concept promotes cosmic harmony, embodied self-integration, and the transformation of lives in society (Akunna, 2015). People believe that the spirit is an entity that empowers people to adopt a certain intellectual or moral attitude that can influence individuals to behave morally and ethically in society (Wellington, 2001). The people also believe that Sigmáá masks human perception and directs
how people react to situations around them based on their internalized belief systems (Deputy et al., 2016). The Tampúlma conception of Sigmàà Masquerading supports the views of Umeagudosu (1992) that spirituality is relevant not only because it speaks to “the significance of the unseen” but because it reflects “the totality of human experiences in the world” (p. 23). Given this, the people believe that Sigmàà masquerades as a spiritual entity and has an influence on the minds of its adherents.

1.1. The Issue

The underlying principle for studying Sigmàà masquerading as communication for development is to build on the indigenous communication forms of the Tampúlma aimed at harmonising development challenges among the youth. This supports the argument of Asemah et al. (2013) that development alters social structure, changes attitudes, and generally accelerates economic growth through decreasing inequality and poverty. It is the power of people to solve problems with wisdom, experience, and resources (Adedokun, 2008). Efficient communication, as Anyanwu (1999) puts it, is essential for rural development because it fosters the exchange of thoughts and opinions, spreads useful information, and eliminates useless information. The Sigmàà masquerading of the Tampúlma is that effective communication medium through which the development needs of the people are centered. With the influence of a technologically advanced world coupled with Islam and Christianity, the activities of Sigmàà Masquerading are in transmutation. These changes have adverse effects on the psychological and social status of youth. This paper examines the changes these foreign influences have had on the Sigmàà masquerading modes of communication and the psychosocial development of the youth.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Concept of Communication

Communication gives social interaction meaning, and it arises from people’s desire to share their internal states of being through some overt expressions (Kamlongera, 1999). Aruma (2018) describes communication as a process whereby people exchange information and express their feelings, ideas, and views in discussion using verbal or nonverbal expressions, signs, and writing to convey messages among themselves in society. Similarly, Fasel (2000) sees communication as an interchange of thoughts, ideas, opinions, impressions, and information among people. Aruma (2018) further contends that communication is a transaction where the communicator and receiver are active, and information is exchanged. Information sharing is inevitable in communication for effective service delivery in community development. Beyond its role as an empowerment tool, communication promotes people’s participation in development activities (Odoom, 2020). The idea behind this concept is that knowledge and information must be effectively communicated to people (Odoom, 2020).

2.2. Sigmàà Masquerading as Communication

The concept of masquerading serves as a religious and historical context and a medium of communication. Among the Tampúlma, Sigmàà masquerading remains essential to the people’s communication channel and preservation of their aesthetic values, especially in a fast-globalizing world. The researchers’ argument is supported by Anyebe (2018), who writes that “continuous preservation of the cultures of the subjugated peoples of Africa in an increasingly customized world of globalization can be facilitated by the perpetuation of Africa’s numerous indigenous theatrical traditions” (p. 1).

Sigmàà masquerading as communication in this sense acts like a “theatre house” where the people dramatize their worldview through dance, rituals, and music. The Sigmàà masquerading tradition is thus a theatrical display of the Tampúlma indigenous religious act forms, which revolve around their ancestral celebrations. Through kùmoséi (the music and dance for Sigmàà masquerading), communication takes place between humans and the living spirits, between performers and audience members, and between performers themselves (Reed, 2003). This concept is likened to what Soyinka (1976) describes as “a multi-level experience of the mystical and the mundane” (p. 2). Nzewi (1983) further confirms this concept by interrogating how ancestors behave as “masquerades”, which function as social theatres to address societal aesthetics, social standards, and spiritual sensibilities. The concept is also appreciated by Amali (1992) when he observes that:

“At the spiritual and invisible level, the ancestors and the gods of the land play significant roles in uplifting and maintaining social ethics and morality. This belief in the unseen is strengthened by the physical enactment of the ancestors in masquerade forms, which are fundamental to the existence of rural institutions.” (Amali, 1992, p. 58).

In Sigmàà masquerading, communication is conducted in the dance context through spiritism, initiations, symbolism, proverbs, appellations, and incantations. These verbal and non-verbal communication mediums have psychological, philosophical, and sociological influences on the moral values.
and ethics of the youth's development. Igboin (2014) underscores this fact by saying that cultural discourse about spirits has aimed to explain the effect of physiological substances, fluids, or body chemistry on performance. According to Wellington (2001), a spirit is an element of humanity that might drive people to act in unexpected ways or adopt a certain intellectual or moral attitude that can influence an individual to behave in a certain manner. In Sigmáá masquerading, communication between incarnate and discarnate minds (Sigmáá mediumship) is mystical. This suggests why the mediums of the Sigmáá masquerades are deified as spirit mediumships. In this respect, communication occurs between humans and the deified spiritual mediums (masquerades) through divine music and dance. This belief in communication in Sigmáá masquerading is what Stevenson (2019, p. 9) refers to as “the balance of poles and duality.” Thus, the and-fro movements of spirits and mediums in human bipolar disorder create awareness of self and other realms of existence. In this concept of “transformative communication,” there is a holistic view of spirituality in Sigmáá masquerading, in which the soul and the body are interconnected.

2.3. Conceptual Framework

In the Tampúlma socio-cultural setting, Sigmáá Masquerading dance is the channel through which communication, the transmission of knowledge, and the spiritual and social development of the people is achieved. The dance in the context of Sigmáá Masquerading is appreciated as the expression of being moved by the “transcendent power” of the Sigmáá deity (Stevenson, 2019, p. 5). In Sigmáá Masquerading, communication is conducted in the context of the dance through Spiritism, Stimulation, and initiations. These communication mediums have a psychological, spiritual, philosophical, and sociological influence on the development of the youth’s moral values, ethics, and livelihoods.

2.3.1. The Concept of Spiritism in Sigmáá Masquerading

In the Tampúlma worldview, spirituality is very well rooted through their Sigmáá Masquerade dancing. The cultural discourse about Spiritism in Sigmáá Masquerading aims to explain the effect of physiological substances, fluids, or body chemistry in performance (Igboin, 2014). This supports Wellington’s (2001) views that a spirit is an element of humanity that drives people to act unexpectedly or adopt a certain intellectual or moral attitude that can influence an individual to behave in a certain manner. The concept frames people’s perceptions and suggests how they react to situations based on their internalized beliefs (Deputy et al., 2016). Adherence of Sigmáá Masquerading draws knowledge of moral development from the song text, drum text, proverbs, appellations, chants, and incantations. The adherence acquires a moral conscience of a consistent standard of values through learned behaviours. By acting according to the belief that they are morally upright, the youth can establish a feeling of idiosyncratic perception and avoid cognitive dissonance.

2.3.2. The Concept of Stimulation in Sigmáá Masquerading

Several belief systems about the universe that address nature and the mystique of human existence include feelings, ideas, and acts in dance (Hanna, 2004). Literature in historical and anthropological studies shows that humans dance to stimulate. Through internal or outward transformations, people use dance to bring about change (Hanna, 2004). The strength of dancing in religious practise is in its multimodal, affective, and symbolic ability to elicit emotions and a feeling of place in patterns that rivet attention. Through dance, inchoate concepts are translated into visible human form, and both social activity and inner experience are altered. This influences human behaviour and helps to develop worldviews.

Dancing has power through sensory perception and sensitivity, including the ability to see performers moving through space and time, to push oneself physically, to sense kinesthetic activity or empathy, and to feel in contact with other bodies or the dancer’s surroundings. Dance, according to Reason and Reynolds (2010), is a sensory and observable exercise that fosters “kinesthetic empathy” (p. 1). Reason and Reynolds (2010) defined kinesthetic empathy as a way of interacting with dancing that delights onlookers and has a powerful motivator for them. The researchers examined the variety of kinesthetic pleasures viewers feel when seeing Sigmáá masquerade dance performances. The authors’ application of kinesthetic empathy in this article is highly beneficial. This concept makes The possibility of mapping the variety of joys, motivations, and expectations through which viewers interact with the kinesthetic elements of the Sigmáá masquerades’ dance performances possible. The concept helps to explain “empathetic feelings and kinesthetic responses that are related with broader characteristics of emotion, admiration, escapism, and sensuality” (Reason & Reynolds, 2010, p. 50).

Applying the terms “kinesthesia” and “empathy” in this article is important. The term “kinesthesia,” which comes from the Greek words “kinein,” meaning to move, and “aisthesis,” meaning sensation, broadly refers to feelings of motion. Kinesthesia, which is defined as “knowledge of the position and movement of the parts of the body through sensory organs (proprioceptors) in the muscles and joints,”
can be thought of as crucial to feeling body position and muscular tension (Mario, 2017, p. 1). When the terms “proprioception” and “exteroception” are used, they respectively describe stimuli that an organism experiences from within and from without (Reynolds & Ceranic, 2007). Therefore, these two terms can be applied to Sigmáá masquerades dancers, musicians, and spectators/audiences. Thus, reacting to an action by a sense of stimuli is done through song or drum text.

Similarly, empathy is the sensation or outward manifestation of a psychic encounter that emotionally impacts a person (Foster, 2010). Martin (1939, p. 47, as cited in Reason & Reynolds, 2010) likened empathy to “the sense organs which report movement and postural shift are strongly connected with that part of the neurological system which belongs essentially to the inner man where emotions are created”. Because of this, the ideal audience member in Sigmáá masquerading dance performances responds kinesthetically, experiencing the dance through personal movement and postural alteration. Martin argued that the dancer or individual spectator experiences a matching emotional “inner imitation” in reaction to the kinesthetic stimulus. According to Martin, this “inner mimicry” gives the spectator or the dancer the sense to actively participate in the dance and experience its movements and their associated emotions directly.

2.3.3. The Concept of Initiation

In the African worldview, initiation rites are the rudimentary mechanisms responsible for the youth’s growth and development in society. They are a natural and necessary part of a community’s spiritual, social, and philosophical principles, ensuring the youth’s growth and development into responsible, community-oriented adults. The purpose of initiations is to symbolise the passage from childhood to maturity through a ceremony, ritual, or other events (Ekine, 2013; Maluleke, 2001; Van Rooyen & Hartell, 2010).

Initiation into the Sigmáá religion is a significant life event for the Tamplma people. The adolescents are affected by the initiation rites on a psychological, emotional, and philosophical level. These psychological, emotional, and social factors contribute to developing teenagers’ morals, ethics, and social success prospects (Kerpelman et al., 2016; van de Bongardt et al., 2016). If a person is not taught the customs of how to behave in society and is not initiated into the Sigmáá cult, then he or she is, in fact, a minor. According to Schroeder et al. (2022), teenage initiatory rites have a favourable social and emotional influence that helps young people develop their identities and get more respect in their communities.

3. Methodology

3.1. Study Area

The study was conducted in seven communities among the Tampúlma ethnic groupings. The study communities were purposefully selected because of their cultural affinity for Sigmáá masquerading. The study communities included Lingbensi, Tari, and Sààlá, as shown in Fig. 1.

3.2. Research Design

The qualitative research design was adopted for the study because it allowed the researchers to interact directly with the stakeholders of Sigmáá Masquerading (Creswell, 2014). This was possible because Sigmáá masquerading was research conducted in a “naturalistic” environment (White et al., 2012). The researchers interacted with the informants naturally to obtain their opinions on moral, social, and ethical issues in the performance of Sigmáá masquerading. The research philosophy of interpretivism was employed because events and situations in Sigmáá masquerading were understood through the mental processes of interpretation. Interpretivists believe that the meaning of reality is socially constructed through the experiences of social narrators, which might reduce the resonance of the occurrences that are situated socially (Whitley, 1984, as cited in Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022). Ethnography and phenomenological research designs were appropriate for the study. The non-probability sampling method was adopted for the study using purposive and homogenous sampling techniques. The data were collected from Tshá-nilhstáà (community elders), Sigmáá-kùnyàmà (curators of Sigmáá), Sigmáá-kunimà (Sigmáá women initiates), Sigmáá mòén-kpàgrìsà (Sigmáá masquerading gatekeepers), clan/family heads, Vugtima (earth priests), and the youth using interviews, focus groups and participants’ observation guides. The analysis involved thematic analysis (within-case and cross-case analysis) and the inductive analysis approach.
4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Discussing Sigmáá masquerading in the context of moral values and ethics, the researchers agreed with Arthur and Carr (2013) that societies are becoming increasingly secular, where religion and spirituality are losing their impact or are less valued. In the researchers’ view, this situation has an overarching effect on the youths’ morals, values, ethics, and virtues. The moral truths derived from societies supersede the moral idea of nurturing and awakening a spiritual self into a unity of being. In Sigmáá masquerading, moral education for youth development is spontaneous. The virtues of Sigmáá masquerading are to promote the good character of the youth in society. Character education is essential for building a moral society and is a conscious effort to cultivate virtue. The researchers also agreed with Lickona (1999) that the psychological components of character education encompass morality’s cognitive, affective, and behavioural aspects, such as moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action.

The core values for youth education and development in the worldview of the Tampúlma in their Sigmáá masquerading are centered on the youths’ morals, tolerance, and respect for elders and authority, which are examined alongside psychosocial development indicators such as good manners, honesty, respect, positive communication, nurturing and responsive relationships, friendship, competitive greatness, team spirit, industriousness and self-control, self-awareness, empathy, poise, and loyalty (Tani & Brentford, 2020).

With the influence of foreign religions (Islam and Christianity) and other social factors on the indigenous cultures of the Tampúlma, it was discovered that there had been dramatic changes in the trend of youth education and development. The effects of the changes have adverse effects on social ethics and the general worldview of the youth. Some empirical findings on the effects of changes in the youths’ psychosocial and moral development were identified as immorality, intolerance, dishonesty, insecurity, corruption, uncertainties, abuse of tradition, and disrespect for wisdom. These findings supported Kohlberg’s (1963, as cited in Deputy et al., 2016) moral development concept in the search for morality. According to Kohlberg, moral development refers to changes in a person’s form or structure of thought on morality and values.

In Sigmáá masquerading, adherence draws knowledge of moral development through initiation, spiritism, symbolism, proverbial song texts, and appellations. The adherents acquire a moral conscience of a consistent standard of values through these learned behaviours. By acting in accordance with the belief that they are morally upright, the youth, in this sense, were able to establish a feeling of idiosyncratic perception and avoid cognitive dissonance.

The initiation rites in the Tampúlma worldviews are the rudimentary mechanisms responsible for the youths’ growth and development in society. They are a natural and necessary part of a community’s spiritual, social, and philosophical principles, ensuring the youth’s growth and development into responsible and community-oriented adults. It was discovered that initiation into the Sigmáá cult was an important life event for the people. The initiation rites positively impact the youth’s morals, ethics,
and key livelihoods in society (Kerpelman et al., 2016; van de Bongardt et al., 2016). This observation justified why, in the Tampúlma social structure, one forever remains a minor if she or he is not initiated into the Sigmáá cult and taught its traditions. This notion also supported the view of Schroeder et al. (2022) that adolescent initiating rites’ positive social and emotional influence contributes to young people’s identities and a more respected social standing in their communities.

Relevant in Sigmáá masquerading were the initiation rites of Nyccsì that were conducted to check the sanctity of women in society. The Nyccsì initiation rites have a spiritual and psychological influence on checking youth morality in society. This concept helps to shape youths’ moral standards in society. The initiation provided structures for instructions in traditional knowledge; more importantly, it re-integrated the initiates into the community’s cherished moral values. The positive social and emotional influence of adolescent initiating rites, according to Schroeder et al. (2022), contributed to young people’s identities and a more respected social standing in their communities. The Nyccsì initiation was a natural and necessary part of the people’s spiritual, social, and philosophical principles, ensuring the youths’ growth and development into responsible, community-oriented adults. Fig. 2 illustrates a Sigmáá masquerade performing the Nyccsì initiation rites on women initiates to ascertain their chastity.

Spirituality in Tampúlma cosmology is very well rooted in their Sigmáá masquerades, which dance to gain and transmit information across time and space (Daniel, 2006). The cultural discourse about spirits has aimed to explain the effect of physiological substances, fluids, or body chemistry on performance (Igboin, 2014). A spirit in people’s worldview is an element of humanity that drives people to act in unexpected ways or adopt a certain intellectual or moral attitude that influences an individual to behave in a certain manner (Igboin, 2014). Umeagudosu (1992) underscores that spirituality is relevant not only because it speaks to “the significance of the unseen” but because it reflects “the totality of human experiences in the world” (p. 23). Sigmáá mediumship involves mystical communion between incarnate and discarnate minds. This supports the idea that Sigmáá masquerade bearers are deified spirit mediums. Celestial music and dance serve as a means of communication between people and the deified spiritual intermediaries (masquerades). This mystical communication in Sigmáá mediumship is exemplified in the movement expressions of She-nàási and Ten-nìm as elucidated.

She-nàási movement expression, literally translated as “the root of wisdom is patience and endurance,” is meant to psychologically shape the youth’s morale in society. It is a movement genre denoting that tolerance is the root of wisdom. The movement concept is meant to teach the youth moral knowledge, denoting that it requires a conscious effort for an individual in society to acquire knowledge and wisdom, as elucidated in Fig. 3.

The black colour of the masquerade symbolises that knowledge and wisdom are in the “dark,” and the only way one can understand them is through wisdom. The spiraling of the Sigmáá-mùùn1 is interpreted to mean that it takes conscious effort to acquire wisdom from a copious number of people in the community.

She-nàási movement expression validates Battiste’s (2013) submission that “Indigenous Knowledge [is] systemic and holistic” (p. 8). Battiste has identified two ways in which indigenous knowledge of a people could be acquired that are relevant to this study. First, Battiste (2013) noted that indigenous knowledge must be placed at the center of discussions of epistemologies, practices, and policies that enable indigenous lifelong learning. Secondly, the ethical and respectful application of traditional

Fig. 2. A Sigmáá masquerade performing the Nyccsì initiation rites on women initiates to ascertain their chastity
(Source: Author’s archive).

1 The heap of fiber worn around the waist of the Sigma masquerader.
knowledge in families must be examined, and knowledge exchange and sharing are accomplished through apprenticeship, ceremonies, and practices. Similar findings were made by Emeagwali (2003) and Ngara (2008), who noted that Indigenous knowledge is people-centered and can be acquired through community ceremonies and rituals, such as story-telling, proverbs, folktales, recitation, demonstration, epic, poetry, reasoning, riddles, praise, songs, word games, puzzles, dance, and other education-focused activities. 

*Şe*-nààsi movement expression is performed to advise the youth to be tolerant in acquiring moral wisdom in society. Another Sigmàà masquerading movement genre, *Tę-nim*, is a movement philosophy that has a philosophical and psychological influence on the lives of the youth. The movement philosophy is literally translated as “*the ground is hot*”. Fig. 4 illustrates the *Tę-nim* movement expression.

The dancing masquerade escaping itself from the burning grounds, as illustrated in Fig. 4, epitomizes the punishment that will bequeath any youth who disregards the norms and values of society. The philosophy behind this movement’s expression is to advise the youth against mischief in society. The concept of the *Tę-nim* movement philosophy supports the views of Haverkort and Reijntjes (2010) that people come to understand the world through experiencing it. The concept of the *Tę-nim* movement genre is associated with the phenomenological theories of Merleau-Ponty (2005), which denote that human beings come to understand the world through direct experience, thus the perception of a phenomenon (Merleau-Ponty, 2005). As a philosophy, phenomenology provides a theoretical guideline for researchers to understand phenomena at the level of subjective reality (Sadruddin, 2018).
As Palmer (1969) puts it, “Phenomenology means letting things become manifest as what they are” (p. 128, as cited in Littlejohn & Foss, 2011, p. 47). The researchers agreed with the traditional Husserlian phenomenology that only specific concepts, thoughts, ideas, and images can orient our experiences toward things. According to phenomenological theories, humans actively interpret their surroundings and gain an understanding of the world through their interactions with them (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011). According to the theory, one learns something by intentionally contemplating it and putting his or her thoughts, feelings, and perceptions to the test. The idea that “all my knowledge of the world, even my scientific knowledge, is derived from my specific point of view, or some experience of the world,” as expressed by Merleau-Ponty (2005, p. 132), supports this concept of the Ten-nin movement philosophy.

The paper also outlines the relevance of proverbs in Sigmàá masquerading music and dance performances as sensitive cultural elements relevant to youth education and the transmission of knowledge. Borrowing the words of Aristotle, the Tampúlma describes proverbs as “the kernel that contains the wisdom of the people” (Ehondor, 2017, p. 5). Their notion of proverbs is congruent with Chinua Achebe’s description of proverbs as “the palm oil with which words are eaten” (Ehondor, 2017, p. 6; Omoera & Inegbeboh, 2013, p. 20). Proverbs in the context of Sigmàá masquerading serve as theoretical frameworks against which various moral, social, and religious issues are measured (Aboluwodi, 2014). Proverbs are the crucial oral traditions people employ to store and retrieve any component of their cultural worldview. The basic premise of the people’s communication structure in their Sigmàá masquerading is to transport ideas, opinions, attitudes, feelings, sentiments, beliefs, customs, or impressions to others (Agyemang et al., 2015). In Sigmàá masquerading, proverbs are categorized into thematic structures consisting of provocative or insinuation proverbs, joking proverbs, and proverbs meant for enforcing moral values. The researchers were concerned with applying the latter in the song and drum texts of Sigmàá masquerading. This is because the composition and social implications of proverbs meant for enforcing moral values are taught in the song and drum texts to provide a ‘window’ into society’s true values and operating principles. It was discovered in the study that proverbs meant for enforcing moral values had an intrinsic dialogical quality and reflected a deep sense of moral values to inform, educate, and reshape the social behaviour of the youth in society. The paper examines some proverbs that ought to transform youth behaviour in society.

The song lyrics in Table I examine the importance of morals, values, and ethics and how these contribute to building harmony and development in societies. The text conceptualizes and articulates a solid theoretical framework for morals, ethics, and character training and admonishes the youth not to live in ethical isolation but to grow up within particular moral codes. Althof and Berkowitz (2006) validate these moral values and contend that liberal democracy can only flourish if its citizens hold certain moral and civic values and manifest certain virtues.

Campbell (2008) elucidates that the objective of moral education is to make one committed to his or her responsibilities and actions. Campbell noted that moral education promotes youths’ moral development and character formation. The texts further support Rennie’s (2007) statement that values are linked to beliefs and attitudes and guide human behaviour. The theoretical framework of moral education is supported by moral philosophy, moral psychology, and moral educational practices (Han,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song lyrics in Tampúlma</th>
<th>English translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dau sei aa nyini ba</strong></td>
<td>Be calm and watch them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dau sei aa nyini ba</td>
<td>Be calm and watch them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma nge ya dau sei aa nyini ba.</td>
<td>Just let us be calm and watch them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zinan bei ba ba shem a wuwa.</td>
<td>Because of wealth, children often fail to say good morning to their mothers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zinan bei kpug a di dahaa wu ba shem a wuwa.</td>
<td>Children these days often fail to take advice from their elders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zinan bei kpug a di dahaa wabra zaami u-baba ansuuna.</td>
<td>Because of wealth, children do not respect the views of their elders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zinan bei kpug a di dahaa wabra zaami u-maa ansuuna.</td>
<td>Because of wealth, children often fail to say good morning to their fathers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zinan bei kpug a di dahaa koksaa nyu hiire kaa.</td>
<td>The fact that the child has lots of wealth does not mean that she or he has wisdom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimee wu uzaa li maga te-ni lau di hun ya.</td>
<td>No matter how far a bird can fly, the ground is its final place of rest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wusi wara di chin kaa laa bor chin.</strong></td>
<td>In His wisdom, God rewards those with good morals in society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hi du ni-mdàna hi kum ni-mdàna wa.</strong></td>
<td>Those who grow maize will surely harvest maize, and those who grow millet will harvest millet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hi waa kise du ni-mdàna kaa waa kum pokoe</strong></td>
<td>One does not grow maize to harvest back guinea corn. It is the same maize he or she will harvest.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Beyond the scope of promoting rational prosocial skills or virtues, the moral education of real human value cultivates meaningful and personally formative knowledge that significantly transcends or avoids natural and social scientific understanding and explanation (Carr, 2014).

Character training, as outlined in the texts, is indispensable for building a moral society, and it is the conscious effort to cultivate good virtues in the Tampulma society. According to Lickona (1999), the psychological components of character training encompass the cognitive, affective, and behavioural aspects of morality, such as moral knowing, feeling, and action. In the song text, opinions and suggestions were found surrounding character education; these emphasized strong cultural and professional character education. The text also supported Anderson’s (2000) statement that character is a code of moral excellence. Anderson contended that good character consisted of the virtues of objectively good human qualities such as wisdom, honesty, kindness, and self-discipline. Althof and Berkowitz (2006) also believe that character training focuses on moral concepts, manners, and civility and shapes youths’ personalities, values, attitudes, and habits in their communities.

Also relevant for discussion in this paper were some advisory proverbial messages drawn from the drum text of Sigmaa masquerading music relevant for youth education, growth, and development.

“For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.” (Peter 1:5–8).

Modern trends, Islam, and Christianity were part of the Tampulma peoples’ colonial experiences. The teachings of these two religions have had tremendous influence on the cultures and traditions of their people. This sense of colonialization is likened to what Peel (2003) describes about Yoruba people:

“But as people became Christians and Muslims, traditional values were in various ways transmuted by new understandings or blended with new values related, above all, to progressive concepts of time and new ideas of personal and social development. The world religions have been the principal vehicle for this negotiation between past and present in the lives of the Yoruba.” (Peel, 2003, p. 283).

These concepts of colonialism, globalization, and cultural imperialism gradually assimilated the indigenous cultures of the Tampulma in three waves over the past years. The researchers conceptualised these waves as the incubation stage, the revolution stage, and the saturation stage. The 1970s to 1980s seasons were conceptualised as the incubation period, the 1980s-2000 seasons were termed the revolution period, and 2000 to date was described as the saturation period. Each of these periods was crucial to the development of the people. A key informant had this to say:

“Western education coupled with Western religion has influenced our traditional practices; the traditions of Daaba-Tolgu have been greatly influenced. One can say the changes have a toll on the youths’ morals, ethics, social values, and livelihood.” (James Jobadi Posaambu, October 20, 2021).

The key informant narrated that most of the youth, who were Christian and Muslim converts and distinguished themselves as “born again” faithful, disregarded the doctrines of the indigenous practices, including the Sigmaa masquerading. Posaambu’s views were supported by Kipo, another key informant in the study communities, who noted that, hitherto, before the mass propagation of the new religions, the Tampulma practiced, at best, their indigenous cultures, including the Sigmaa masquerading tradition. The influence of Islam and Christianity over the indigenous cultures brought about dramatic changes in the practice of the indigenous tradition. Given the dramatic changes in cultural practices, Alex Kipo lamented:

“Hmm! My brother, these changes in Sigmaa masquerading have led to a loss of glory. I am 64 years old now, and what I see and experience now is very worrying. I wonder how the faith of my grandchild, who is 10 years old now, will be when he turns 64 years old?” (Alex Kipo, October 23, 2021).

The youth in the Tampulma study communities expressed their dismay at the effects of changes in Sigmaa masquerading modes of communication. The youth noted that due to the impact of globalisation coupled with the influence of Islam and Christianity on indigenous cultures, their involvement in the activities of Sigmaa Masquerading was very minimal. This attitude has had an
adverse effect on the youths’ well-being. The youth lamented that due to the influence of Western music and dance performances at weddings, funerals, and naming ceremonies, they could hardly listen to and understand the messages that are rewarding in Sigmáá masquerading drum and song texts. A youth member had this to say:

“We just listen to the noise produced by the drums. As to what messages the drummers have for us, it is no longer rewarding.” (Abdul-Rahaman Basig, October 17, 2021).

The youth are worried they are losing their traditions, which could hurt their growth and development. The philosophy behind every movement expression in Sigmáá masquerading dance is no longer rewarding. They noted that every movement philosophy has meaning relevant to youth education and the transmission of knowledge. The youth regret that they are losing important messages that are embedded in the dance context.

The youth expressed their concerns that the rule of law had broken down in their communities simply because there are no longer taboos that guide society against social mischief. The youth noted that the indigenous knowledge forms embedded in the drum and song texts of Sigmáá masquerading relevant for youth education were lost. The youth also expressed their regret that they were losing important elements of their lives and thus wished that something be done to resuscitate this lost tradition.

5. Conclusion

The indigenous people of the Tampúlma have contended that Sigmáá masquerading music and dance were the channels through which communication, transmission of knowledge, and spiritual and social development of the people were achieved. The paper underscored that the core values for youth education and development were centered on the youths’ moral development, such as good manners, honesty, respect for law and order, team spirit, self-control, self-awareness, empathy, and loyalty.

6. Recommendations

Based on this study’s findings, it was recommended that Sigmáá masquerading be rejuvenated for youth education and transmission of knowledge. Some of the communicative resources of Sigmáá masquerading that contexts violate human rights be modernized. It was also recommended that stakeholders of Sigmáá masquerading appreciate the changes that have affected the growth and development of the indigenous tradition in the various Sigmáá masquerading communities and see how it co-existed with Islam and Christianity for youth education and transmission of knowledge. Sigmáá masquerading should not only be treated as an occasion for celebrating death rituals but be seen as an opportunity for youth education and development in the face of globalization.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they do not have any conflict of interest.

References


