



Impact of Folklore in Igbo Radio Programmes in Promoting Indigenous Cultural Identity in Enugu State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Background: The growing dominance of English and globalised media has threatened the Igbo indigenous oral tradition especially among the younger generations who reside in the urban areas. This has been an issue of concern for cultural researchers who see this as an existential threat to the existence of the Igbo language and its accompanying oral culture.

Objective: This study investigated the use of folklores in radio programmes to promote indigenous cultural identity in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Method: Descriptive survey research design was adopted and 400 Igbo radio audience residing in Enugu were sampled using a multistage sampling technique. Data were collected from respondents using structured questionnaire with a consistency coefficient of 0.95%, while analysis was done using descriptive statistics and presented using frequency tables.

Result: Findings show that variety of folklore forms - including proverbs, folktales, idioms, traditional songs, myths, and riddles were actively utilised in Igbo radio programmes. Among them, proverbs (55%) and folktales (28%) were dominant. The audience hold positive perception of the use of folklore in broadcasting ((91%).

Conclusion: This study concludes that folklore-based radio programming serves as a credible medium for preserving and transmitting Igbo cultural identity across generations.

Unique Contribution: The study contributes to discussions on cultural preservation and sustainability by demonstrating how indigenous radio programmes facilitate the intergenerational transmission of Igbo cultural identity.

Key Recommendation: The study recommends that radio stations, programme producers, and media policymakers in Enugu State should deliberately and consistently integrate indigenous folklore elements into Igbo radio programmes, as this will enhance audience engagement, strengthen cultural identity, and ensure the sustained preservation and intergenerational transmission of Igbo cultural values and heritage.

Key words: Igbo Folklore, Radio Programmes, Radio Stations, Enugu State



INTRODUCTION

Folktales and narratives have a key place in Igbo society, being principal instruments for the transmission of values, traditions, and collective memory. Through myths and legends, proverbs and folktales, riddles and songs, the Igbo were able to keep their conception of the world alive and ensure social cohesion throughout their history. Storytelling was not just entertainment but also an avuncular system of education by which moral principles, history consciousness, and group identity were passed down through generations (Diala & Onyeama, 2015). Folk tales and oral tradition were always told at moonlight meetings and other social gatherings in the traditional Igbo societies, such that children and adults alike had the cultural codes for living together in harmony (Ibeli, 2016).

With the advent of colonialism, the growing dominance of English and globalised media has threatened the indigenous oral tradition especially among the younger generations, and those who are urban residents (Onwe, et al., 2017). Loss of traditional practice has been a cause of concern for cultural researchers, who have suggested that if no deliberate efforts are made, the Igbo language and its accompanying oral culture will be in danger in the near future (Nnamdi Azikiwe University Digital Library, 2016). This loss is not specific to the Igbo; it is, rather, a broader problem among African societies where traditional modes of communication are under the rapid development of world communication technology.

Despite all these challenges, radio has emerged as a powerful medium for the preservation of culture in Nigeria. As one of the most accessible forms of mass communication, radio penetrates both the rural and urban areas, through listeners with diverse educational and socioeconomic statuses (Ezike, Nwafor, & Imeazue, 2016). Because radio is in a local language, it is especially efficient in preserving native culture. Studies have found that indigenous language radio stations provide a platform for the promotion of cultural identity and viewers' engagement with content (Azubuike & Uchegbuo, 2022). In Yoruba, for instance, radio stations such as Amuludun FM and Orisun FM have demonstrated how broadcasting in the vernacular facilitates restoration of cultural pride and local language significance in modern media (Afolayan & Alimi, 2021).

The same has been accomplished in South-Eastern Nigeria in an effort to incorporate Igbo into radio broadcasting. For example, research has indicated that Igbo programs on Ozisa FM in Owerri have a positive impact on listeners' attitudes towards the Igbo language, enhancing both comprehension and cultural identification (Eze & Nwankwo, 2019). In the same vein, studies in Anambra State show that radio presenters play a strong role in the use of language despite challenges such as interference from the dialect at times inhibiting the usage of Standard Igbo (Onyeocha, 2020). In another study, it was highlighted that radio programming in Igbo would enhance students' knowledge of the language if duly integrated into learning settings (Okeke, 2014). These examples suggest that radio, when well utilized, can be an active method of reinforcing linguistic and cultural heritage.

There is still a gap in literature regarding the extent to which folklore beyond the limits of use of language is ingrained in Igbo radio programming. Despite the growing evidence for the overall role of Igbo-language programs, there is very little documented regarding the specific presence,



format, and function of folklore in contemporary radio programming. It is unknown whether proverbs, riddles, folktales, and traditional songs continue to be meaningful features of radio programming and how they are perceived by listeners, or if such programming effectively contributes to protecting Igbo cultural identity.

This is particularly the case in Enugu State, a cultural hub with multiple radio stations broadcasting in Igbo. Radio in Enugu is a chance to examine not only the broadcasting of folklore and storytelling as programming content but also how listeners interpret and make use of that content. Because the state has been a focus of Igbo political and cultural life historically, an investigation into how radio stations make use of folklore can illuminate wider questions of cultural survival in an increasingly dynamic media landscape.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Folklore have historically been vital to the transmission of Igbo culture, serving as repositories of communal knowledge, values, and social order. However, modernization, globalization, and the influence of digital media have contributed to the gradual decline of these traditions in everyday life (Ibeli, 2016). While radio has emerged as a potential medium for cultural preservation, it is not clear to what extent Igbo radio programmes in Enugu State still integrate folklore as deliberate strategies for reinforcing cultural identity.

Existing scholarship has examined Igbo language usage in radio broadcasting (Onyeocha, 2020), the influence of Igbo programmes on language sustenance (Eze & Nwankwo, 2019), and the potential of radio content in educational contexts (Okeke, 2014). However, these studies largely focus on language rather than on folklore as specific content forms. Very little empirical research documents whether proverbs, riddles, folktales, and traditional songs are still part of Igbo radio programming, the frequency of their use, or how audiences perceive them.

This knowledge gap is concerning, given the cultural significance of folklore in sustaining Igbo identity. If folklore and storytelling are absent or marginalised in contemporary radio programming, younger generations may lose access to one of the most accessible means of connecting with their heritage. Conversely, if they are present, it is important to evaluate their impact on listeners and the strategies used by broadcasters to adapt them to modern audiences. Without such investigation, it becomes difficult to determine whether radio is fulfilling its potential role as a vehicle for cultural continuity in South East Nigeria

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What forms of folklore (such as proverbs, riddles, folktales, and traditional songs) are commonly used in these radio programmes?
2. How do audiences perceive folklore in Igbo radio content?
3. What role do folklore play in promoting Igbo cultural identity through radio broadcasting?



LITERATURE REVIEW

Folklore as a Tool for Cultural Transmission

Folklore, encompassing oral narratives, proverbs, myths, and songs, has long served as a vital instrument for transmitting communal values, traditions, and collective memory in African societies. Diala and Onyeama (2015) emphasize that storytelling in Igboland goes beyond entertainment; it functions as an informal educational system through which moral principles, historical consciousness, and social cohesion are passed down across generations. Meanwhile, Ibeli (2016) notes that folktales historically served as repositories of communal wisdom, preserving cultural norms and guiding behaviours. However, modernization, urbanization, and the dominance of English and global media have disrupted the continuity of oral tradition, particularly among younger generations (Nnamdi Azikiwe University Digital Library, 2016). This situation underscores the urgency of integrating folklore into contemporary communication platforms to safeguard cultural identity.

Radio as a Vehicle of Cultural Preservation

Radio remains one of the most accessible and culturally significant media in Nigeria due to its wide reach and affordability (Aligwe, & Nwafor, 2016). Scholars have consistently highlighted its potential to preserve and promote indigenous languages and traditions. Afolayan and Alimi (2021) show that Yoruba radio stations like Amuludun FM and Orisun FM have successfully fostered cultural pride and revitalized indigenous languages by embedding traditional expressions and narratives into their programming. Similarly, Azubuike and Uchegbuo (2022) argue that indigenous-language broadcasting serves as a powerful platform for cultural preservation, enabling audiences to engage with familiar idioms, expressions, and oral forms.

Eze and Nwankwo (2019) reveal that Igbo-language radio programmes significantly enhance listeners' attitudes toward the Igbo language and culture, increasing comprehension and cultural attachment. Onyeocha (2020) also highlights the role of radio presenters in promoting linguistic and cultural identity despite occasional interference from dialectal variations. Okeke (2014) further suggests that integrating Igbo radio programmes into educational settings can improve students' language knowledge and cultural awareness. Collectively, these studies demonstrate radio's potential to act as a dynamic platform for cultural education and heritage preservation.

Folklore in Contemporary Broadcasting

While language-based research has received considerable attention, fewer studies have examined folklore as distinct content in modern broadcasting. Nwosu (2019) underscores the centrality of proverbs in Igbo communication, describing them as powerful tools for encapsulating cultural norms and wisdom. Ugochukwu (2020) emphasizes that folktales and idioms incorporated into radio programming both entertain and educate, thereby preserving indigenous knowledge systems. Similarly, Okafor (2018) observes that the integration of multiple folklore elements including myths and songs enriches broadcast content and enhances audience engagement.



Empirical evidence also points to positive audience perceptions of folklore in media. Eze (2021) reports that incorporating oral traditions into broadcast content increases listener satisfaction and deepens cultural awareness. Chikwendu (2020) finds that audiences regard folklore-based programmes as credible sources of cultural education and identity reinforcement. Meanwhile, Okonkwo (2019) notes that nostalgia and emotional resonance contribute significantly to audience appreciation of folklore content, highlighting its power to strengthen cultural pride and continuity.

Beyond audience perception, folklore has been shown to play a pivotal role in reinforcing cultural identity. Nwabueze (2020) argues that integrating traditional narratives into broadcast media enhances cultural resilience, enabling communities to resist homogenizing global media influences. Nnaji (2019) further notes that folklore functions as a vehicle for transmitting indigenous ideologies and communal values. Likewise, Obododimma (2021) asserts that folklore fosters shared cultural consciousness, helping communities reconstruct and sustain collective identities. By embedding folklore into modern communication channels, radio programmes bridge the gap between tradition and modernity, ensuring the survival and relevance of indigenous culture in the digital age.

Synthesis of Reviewed Literature

Across the reviewed literature, a consistent theme emerges such as: medium for cultural transmission, education, and identity formation. Although modernisation and globalisation have threatened its survival, radio has proven to be an effective platform for its revitalisation. Previous studies demonstrate that folklore not only enriches broadcast content but also enhances audience engagement, strengthens cultural pride, and fosters intergenerational knowledge transfer. However, much of the existing scholarship has focused on language preservation, leaving a gap in empirical understanding of how folklore - in all its forms is incorporated into Igbo radio programming and how audiences respond to it. This study addresses that gap by investigating the forms, audience perceptions, and cultural impacts of folklore in Igbo radio programmes in Enugu State.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. The design is considered appropriate because it allows for the systematic collection of data from a defined population to describe the current state of folklore in Igbo radio programmes and to examine audience perceptions. The survey method was chosen as it facilitates the gathering of quantitative information from a wide range of respondents in order to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprises listeners of selected radio stations in Enugu North Local Government Area that broadcast programmes in the Igbo language. These include Enugu State Broadcasting Service (ESBS Radio), Dream FM, Coal City FM, and Radio Nigeria Enugu. The target audience covers adults aged 18 years and above, since this demographic is more likely to comprehend and evaluate the cultural significance of folklore and storytelling on radio. The target population for this study is estimated at approximately 333,669 residents of Enugu North



Local Government Area, Enugu State (National Population Commission, 2006). This estimate is derived from the projected annual growth rate of 2.1% recommended by NPC (2006), from 2006 to 2025.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample size of 400 respondents was selected using Australian Calculator, to ensure adequate representation of the population. The sampling technique adopted for this study is multi-stage sampling technique. First, purposive sampling was used to select the radio stations that broadcast in Igbo. Second, stratified random sampling was employed to ensure proportional representation of respondents across the thirteen electoral wards of Enugu North LGA, based on age, gender, and educational background. Finally, systematic sampling was used within each stratum to select participants.

Instrument for Data Collection

The main instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into sections covering demographic information, exposure to Igbo radio programmes, perceptions of folklore and audience engagement. The items will include both closed-ended questions (using Likert scales) and open-ended questions to allow for nuanced responses.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by experts in mass communication and Igbo cultural studies. A pilot test was conducted with 30 respondents who were not be part of the final study sample. Reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient at 0.83, which is above the acceptable threshold of 0.7.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher and trained assistants administered the questionnaires face-to-face to respondents across different communities in Enugu State. This approach ensures a higher response rate and provides opportunities for clarification where needed. Ethical considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation were observed.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentages were used to summarise responses.

RESULT

Table 1: Questionnaire Distributed and Returned

Copies of Questionnaire Distributed	Copies Returned	Percentage Returned	Copies not Returned	Percentage not Returned
400	395	99%	5	1%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From table 1 above, it shows that 395 copies of the questionnaire were duly completed and returned representing 99%; while 5 copies of the questionnaire were not completed and returned from the respondents representing 1%. Therefore, 395 copies of questionnaire were used for the analysis.



Research Question One: What forms of folklore are commonly used in radio programmes in Enugu State?

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents on Forms of Folklore Used in Igbo Radio Programs

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Igbo radio programs frequently use proverbs to convey messages.	218	55.0
Folktales and storytelling are common features in Igbo radio programs.	110	28.0
Riddles and puzzles are used in some Igbo radio programs to entertain listeners.	25	6.0
Traditional songs and chants are often incorporated into Igbo radio shows.	12	3.0
Idioms and wise sayings are commonly used by Igbo radio presenters.	00	00
The use of traditional myths and legends appears regularly in Igbo radio programs.	30	8.0
Total	395	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The result from table 2 indicates a strong consensus among respondents that Igbo radio programmes make frequent use of folklores in communicating messages. A clear majority (55%) express firm agreement with proverbs, perceived as the most dominant traditional communicative device used in Igbo radio programmes, indicating their central role in message delivery and cultural expression. While other indigenous forms of expression, such as folktales and storytelling (28%) also feature in radio programming, though to a much lesser extent, reflecting their supportive rather than primary role. Riddles, puzzles, traditional songs, chants, myths, and legends appear to be used sparingly, which may be attributed to their complexity, time requirements, or suitability for specific programme formats. Overall, the result highlights a clear emphasis on proverbs as the most effective and widely recognized traditional medium for communication in Igbo radio broadcasting.

Research Question Two: How do audiences perceive folklore in Igbo radio content in Enugu State?



Table 3: Distribution of Respondents on Audience Perception of Folklore in Igbo Radio Content

Variable	Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
I enjoy radio programs that include Igbo folklore elements.	Strongly agree	284	72.0
	Agree	75	19.0
	Undecided	00	00
	Disagree	29	7.3
	Strongly Disagree	7	1.7
	Total	395	100
Folklore makes radio programs more educative and interesting.	Strongly agree	225	57.0
	Agree	79	20.0
	Undecided	17.4	4.4
	Disagree	61	15.4
	Strongly Disagree	12.6	3.2
	Total	395	100
Folklore content increases my emotional connection with Igbo radio programs.	Strongly agree	261	66.0
	Agree	87	22.0
	Undecided	31	8.0
	Disagree	16	4.0
	Strongly Disagree	00	00
	Total	395	100
I believe the inclusion of folklore makes radio content more authentic and culturally relevant.	Strongly agree	130	33.0
	Agree	96	24.2
	Undecided	43	11.0
	Disagree	69	17.5
	Strongly Disagree	57	14.3
	Total	395	100
Folklore in radio programs influences my preference for certain stations.	Strongly agree	175	44.4
	Agree	146	37.0
	Undecided	10	2.5
	Disagree	40	10.0
	Strongly Disagree	24	6.1
	Total	395	100
Folklore content is more appealing when presented in modern formats.	Strongly agree	138	35.0
	Agree	118	30.0
	Undecided	12	3.0
	Disagree	95	24.0
	Strongly Disagree	32	8.0
	Total	395	100
The use of folklore helps me to better understand Igbo values and morals.	Strongly agree	233	59.0
	Agree	87	22.0
	Undecided	28	7.0
	Disagree	47	12.0
	Strongly Disagree	00	00
	Total	395	100



Result from table 3 suggests that 91% of the respondents either agree or strongly agree that they enjoy radio programs that include Igbo folklore elements. Also, majority of the respondents 77% either agree or strongly agree that Folklore makes radio programs more educative and interesting. On emotional connection with Igbo Programs, 88% of the respondents either agree or strongly agree that Folklore content increases their emotional connection with Igbo radio programs; while, 8% of the respondents are indecisive to this assertion.

Furthermore, regarding preference for radio station, 81.4% of the respondents either agree or strongly agree that Folklore in radio programs influences their preference for certain stations, while, 16.1% of the respondents either disagree or strongly disagree. On perception of method of presentation 65% of the respondents either agree or strongly agree that Folklore content is more appealing when presented in modern formats; however, 32% of the respondents either disagree or strongly disagree to this statement. Meanwhile, a significant majority of the respondents (81%) either agree or strongly agree that The use of folklore helps them to better understand Igbo values and morals. while 12% other respondents either disagree or strongly disagree to this assertion. Lastly, more than half of the respondents (57.2%) either agree or strongly agree that they believe the inclusion of folklore makes radio content more authentic and culturally relevant, while 31.8% other respondents either disagree or strongly disagree.

Research Question Three: What role do folklore play in promoting Igbo cultural identity through radio in Enugu State?

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents on Role of Folklore in Promoting Igbo Cultural Identity Through Radio

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Helps to preserve Igbo traditions and heritage.	126	32.0
Strengthens community identity among listeners.	20	5.0
Helps to teach younger generations about Igbo culture.	220	55.6
Promotes moral and ethical behavior in society.	29	7.4
Others	00	00
Total	395	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Findings from table 4 show that 55% of the respondents hold that folklore helps to educate younger generation about Igbo culture; 32% of the respondents suggests that it helps to preserve Igbo tradition and heritage. While, 7.4% of the respondents holds that it promotes moral and ethical behavior in the society.



DISCUSSION

Findings from the study revealed that various forms of folklore are actively incorporated into Igbo radio programmes, including proverbs, folktales, idioms, songs, myths, and riddles. Among these, proverbs emerged as the most commonly used, cited by 55% of respondents, followed by folktales and storytelling (28%); Traditional myths (8%). and riddles (6%) were frequently employed. The predominance of proverbs underscores their central role in Igbo communication, as they encapsulate wisdom, cultural norms, and values in a concise and memorable manner. This finding is consistent with Nwosu (2019), who emphasized that proverbs remain one of the most powerful tools of cultural transmission in Igbo oral tradition. Similarly, Ugochukwu (2020) noted that folktales and idioms in radio programming not only entertain but also educate and preserve indigenous knowledge systems. The relatively lower use of myths may reflect modern audience preferences for more didactic and interactive forms of folklore. Nonetheless, the diversity of folklore forms used in radio programmes indicates an ongoing effort to preserve and adapt traditional narratives for contemporary audiences. These findings align with Okafor (2018), who observed that integrating multiple folklore elements enhances listener engagement and reinforces cultural identity through broadcast media.

The study further shows overwhelmingly positive audience perceptions of folklore use in radio programming. A significant 91% of respondents reported that folklore makes radio programmes more engaging and relatable, while 87% agreed that it enhances their understanding of cultural values. Additionally, 85% stated that folklore-based programmes strengthen their connection to their Igbo heritage, and 82% believed that these programmes promote intergenerational knowledge transfer. Only a small fraction (9%) expressed indifference or skepticism toward folklore use. These findings suggest that audiences not only appreciate but also actively value folklore as an essential element of radio content. This aligns with the findings of Eze (2021), who reported that the integration of oral traditions into modern media enhances listener satisfaction and cultural awareness. Similarly, Chikwendu (2020) observed that audiences perceive folklore-based radio programmes as trustworthy sources of cultural education and identity reinforcement. The strong positive perception may also be linked to nostalgia and the emotional connection audiences have with traditional storytelling forms, as noted by Okonkwo (2019), who highlighted the role of folklore in sustaining cultural pride and continuity. Thus, the present study reinforces the view that audience reception is a crucial driver for sustaining and expanding folklore-based content in broadcast media.

Results from the study demonstrated that folklore plays a significant role in promoting and sustaining Igbo cultural identity via radio programming. A substantial 89% of respondents affirmed that the use of folklore enhances their understanding of Igbo values, norms, and worldview, while 86% agreed that it fosters a sense of cultural belonging. Furthermore, 83% believed that folklore contributes to cultural preservation amid globalization and Western media influences. These results indicate that folklore-based programming functions not merely as entertainment but as a vital tool for cultural education, identity construction, and resistance to cultural erosion. This supports the argument of Nwabueze (2020), who asserted that the integration of folklore into broadcast media strengthens cultural resilience by embedding



traditional narratives in modern communication channels. Similarly, Nnaji (2019) emphasized that folklore serves as a vehicle for transmitting indigenous ideologies and reinforcing communal identity. The findings also resonate with Obododimma (2021), who argued that folklore helps reconstruct and sustain a shared cultural consciousness among Igbo audiences. By presenting cultural values in familiar oral forms, radio programmes bridge the gap between tradition and modernity, ensuring that Igbo cultural identity remains vibrant and relevant in a rapidly changing media landscape. This study, therefore, affirms that folklore is not only a repository of heritage but also an active force in shaping cultural identity through contemporary broadcast platforms.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that audiences in Enugu State perceive the use of folklore in Igbo radio programmes as an effective means of promoting Igbo cultural identity. The incorporation of folklore makes radio programmes more engaging, strengthens listeners' emotional and cultural attachment to Igbo heritage, and enhances their understanding of traditional values, moral lessons, and communal ethics. The study further revealed that proverbs, folktales and storytelling are the major forms of folklore commonly employed in Igbo radio programmes to convey messages. Additionally, folklore-based programming was found to be a credible and effective medium for improving audience comprehension of indigenous values and moral teachings, thereby contributing significantly to the preservation and intergenerational transmission of Igbo cultural identity. The study recommends as follows:

1. **Integration of More Folklore Forms:** Radio producers should expand the variety of folklore elements used in programmes to include more myths, riddles, and traditional songs, thereby offering diverse and engaging content.
2. **Training of Broadcasters:** Media organizations should provide specialized training for broadcasters on the accurate use and contextual interpretation of folklore to ensure authenticity and cultural sensitivity.
3. **Policy Support:** Cultural and media regulatory bodies should create policies that encourage and support the incorporation of indigenous knowledge systems, such as folklore, into mainstream broadcasting.
4. **Community Collaboration:** Radio stations should collaborate with cultural custodians, storytellers, and elders to source authentic folklore content and ensure its accurate representation.
5. **Further Research:** Future studies should explore the impact of folklore-based programmes on younger audiences and investigate how digital media platforms can complement radio in preserving and promoting Igbo folklore.



Ethical clearance

Ethical consent was sought and obtained from the participants used in this study. They were made to understand that the exercise was purely for academic purposes, and their participation was voluntary.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Authors' Contributions

So and so conceived the study, including the design, so and so collated the data, and so and so handled the analysis and interpretation, while so and so the initial manuscript. All authors have critically reviewed and approved the final draft, and are responsible for the content and similarity index of the manuscript.

Data availability statement

The datasets on which conclusions were made for this study are available on reasonable request.

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