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# Creative Dramatics as a Pedagogical Tool for Harnessing Moral and Social Values in Elementary Schools

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**Abstract:** The decline in moral and social values among children has become a growing concern for educators and policymakers worldwide. This article examines creative dramatics as an innovative pedagogical strategy for promoting character formation and social competence among elementary school pupils. Drawing on literature and findings from a field study conducted in selected elementary schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, the paper demonstrates that creative dramatics provides experiential learning opportunities through role-play, storytelling, improvisation, collaborative learning, and reflective discussion. These activities enable pupils to internalize values such as honesty, empathy, responsibility, respect, cooperation, and self-discipline more effectively than traditional teacher-centred approaches. The study also identifies barriers to implementation, including inadequate teacher training, lack of instructional materials, insufficient curriculum integration, and limited instructional time. The article argues that integrating creative dramatics across the elementary curriculum will strengthen values education while simultaneously improving pupils' communication, creativity, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence.

**Keywords**: Creative Dramatics, Values Education, Moral Development, Social Development, Elementary Education, Drama-Based Learning

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## Introduction

The development of moral and social values in children is crucial for their overall growth and development. Extensive research works have shown that sustainable value system has a positive impact, not only on children's learning and academic achievements but also on social behaviour and emotional well-being (Higgins–D'Alesandro, 298). Higgins is of the opinion that when children learn values like respect, honesty, and cooperation early on, they perform better academically and build healthier relationships. He firmly believes that strong moral foundation also boosts emotional resilience and responsible behavior in school and daily life. Integrating value system into daily learning creates a positive classroom culture, reducing conflicts and increasing focus, empathy, and self-discipline among students.

Education is not only concerned with the intellectual development of children but also with the cultivation of moral and social values that enable them to become responsible members of society.by fostering values like honesty, respect, kindness, and responsibility, it guides children to become thoughtful and engaged members of the society. These moral foundations and social values promote positive interpersonal relationships, teamwork, empathy, and effective communication among individuals.

In Nigeria, there is an increasing recognition of the importance of values education in promoting national development and social cohesion (Federal Ministry of Education). Values education fosters integrity, accountability, and civic responsibility as key traits needed to build a just, united, and progressive society. By instilling shared moral principles early, it helps bridge ethnic and religious divides, promoting peace and national unity. It also shapes responsible citizens who contribute positively to community development and democratic participation. Adeyemi observes that "the traditional approach to values education such as direct instructions and discipline still remains dominant" (425). According to the quote from Adeyemi above, the traditional approach to values education centered on rote instruction, strict discipline, and top-down moral preaching remains widespread in Nigerian schools. It emphasises compliance over critical thinking, often neglecting the child's emotional and social context, while it provides clear behavioral expectations, it risks fostering fear-based obedience rather than genuine moral development.

In contemporary society, there is growing concern about the decline of moral standards among young people. Issues such as bullying, dishonesty, disrespect for authority, violence, and lack of empathy have become increasingly evident in schools and communities. These challenges underscore the need for innovative educational strategies that can effectively inculcate positive values in children from an early age. Creative dramatics has emerged as one of the most effective pedagogical tools for value education. Creative dramatics refers to spontaneous, improvised, and participatory dramatic activities through which children explore experiences, emotions, ideas, and social situations. Unlike formal theatre productions, creative dramatics focuses on the learning process rather than performance. It engages children actively in role-playing, storytelling, pantomime, improvisation, and simulation exercises that encourage them to understand and practice desirable moral and social behaviors.

Nigeria has a rich cultural heritage and places strong emphasis on education. However, the country faces challenges in promoting moral and social values among the population of children and youth, particularly in the face of rapid urbanisation, cultural changes, and socioeconomic pressures. The prevalence of social vices such as dishonesty, disrespect and lack of empathy among children in Nigeria suggests a significant gap in values education. It is worrisome to note that out-of-date teaching methods are still being used in many schools till date. These methods often focus on rote learning and memorisation, rather than critical thinking and character development. Researches have shown that conventional approaches to values education in elementary schools in Nigeria have been dominant but ineffective in promoting deep understanding and application of moral and social values.

Moral and social values such as respect, honesty, empathy and responsibility are essential for promoting progress, stability and social cohesion" (James Arthur, 43). The declining moral and social values among children and youths in Nigeria and the world in general has become a major concern for parents, educators, policymakers and stakeholders. As such, the increasing prevalence of indiscipline, bullying, dishonesty, disrespect for authority, and antisocial behavior among school-age children has become a major concern for educators, parents, and policymakers. The weakening of traditional values with increased exposure to technology and societal pressures may all contribute to hinder moral and social awareness among the people. Despite the inclusion of moral instruction within school curricula, many pupils still exhibit behaviors that contradict accepted social and ethical standards.

Traditional teaching methods often emphasise rote learning and theoretical instruction, which may not adequately engage pupils in the practical application of moral principles. As a result, children may understand moral concepts intellectually without demonstrating them in everyday interactions. Creative

dramatics provides experiential learning opportunities that allow pupils to actively participate in situations requiring moral judgment and social interaction. However, its potential for value education remains underutilized in many elementary schools. The problem of this study is therefore to determine how creative dramatics can be effectively employed to promote moral and social values among elementary school pupils. There is therefore, a particular need for effective values education in Nigeria because the citizens have experienced significant moral, social, political and economic challenges in recent years. These challenges, among others, include religious intolerance, kidnapping, corruption and armed robbery. Others are terrorism, banditry, inequality, political bigotry and ethnic fanaticism.

It is very disturbing to note that the teaching methods being used by the elementary school teachers in recent times often focus on memorisation rather than critical thinking and character development. Nevertheless, there has been a growing interest by some educators in using creative and innovative approaches to values education in Nigeria. Mike Fleming stresses that, "through values education, children can discover complex moral and social values, develop empathy, understand and acquire vital life skills such as communication, problem-solving and critical thinking" (158). Winston suggests that, "an educational approach that employs drama and theatre techniques to promote learning and development has been recognised as an effective instrument for teaching moral and social values in schools (7)". This statement emphasises that when values like fairness, respect, and responsibility are actively taught in schools, they lay the foundation for peaceful communities and national unity. Such education nurtures citizens who contribute positively to society, support democratic ideals, and reject corruption and violence. It goes beyond the classroom shaping a culture of accountability and mutual respect essential for sustainable development.

The prevalence of social vices among children highlights the resolve to find effective solutions. The study is therefore significant because it will address a critical need in values education in elementary schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. According to Edet Udo as quoted by Ime Ekpe and Ekaette Edem; the Ibibio culture is deeply rooted in respect for elders, community values etc. (135). This study will provide insights into the effectiveness of creative dramatics in promoting moral and social values in elementary schools, ultimately contributing to improved values education in Akwa Ibom State and Nigeria. The study's findings will inform teacher training programmes and enhance teachers' skills and confidence in using creative dramatics to teach moral and social values. It will provide educators with a valuable tool to improve pupils' outcomes, including academic achievement, social skills and emotional well-being.

Moreover, the study is significant because it will provide parents and policy makers with a better understanding of the importance of creative dramatics in promoting moral and social values, encouraging them to become more involved in children's education. The findings will highlight the proven capacity of creative dramatics to promote capacity development as a catch-them-young initiative, social cohesion and community engagement, encouraging community leaders to support and promote values education initiative. By promoting moral and social values, this study contributes' to the development of a positive school culture that supports the social, emotional and academic growth of pupils. The study will explore the effectiveness of creative dramatics, an innovative approach to values education that has shown promise in other contexts. By promoting moral and social values, it will contribute to the development of a positive school culture that supports social, emotional, and academic growth of learners. The findings will contribute to the achievement of Nigeria's national development goals, particularly in the areas of education, social cohesion, and moral development.

**Sustainable Values system: A Conceptual Clarification**

Halstead and Tylor, who defined values as "the principles, standards or qualities by which actions are judged as good or desirable" (169). They represent fundamental beliefs that guide people's behaviours, decisions and judgements. Values can therefore refer to core beliefs and guiding principles. As core beliefs, they can be said to be deeply held beliefs that influence how people think and act and as guiding principles, they provide a set of standards that help people navigate life's complexities. Values often

serve as a framework for ethical conduct and direct people's perceptions. They can be shaped by family, culture, education and personal experiences. They provide direction, motivate behavior, shape Identity and promote social cohesion.

Halstead and Tylor also noted that values are important because they are essential for ethical behavior and decision-making. Living in accordance with one's core values can lead to greater satisfaction and fulfilment. Also, shared values can foster cooperation and reduce conflict in society. The development of values is an ongoing process that evolves throughout life. In essence, values are the compasses that guide people or society through life, shaping decisions, behaviors, and relationships. They are fundamental to people's sense of self and the way they interact with the world around them.

Values can be categorised as moral, social, personal and cultural values. Moral values are principles concerning right and wrong behavior (e.g., honesty, integrity, kindness); social values are principles that promote the well-being of society and relationships (e.g., respect, cooperation, fairness); personal values are principles that are important to an individual (e.g., freedom, achievement, creativity) and cultural values are principles shared by a particular group or society (e.g., collectivism, individualism). This thesis concerns itself with moral and social values.

**Moral Values**

The term "moral" refers to principles, values and standards that guide human behaviour and decision-making, distinguishing right from wrong, good from bad, wanted from unwanted, positive from negative, and virtuous from vicious. Moral values refer to the principles and standards that guide human behavior and decision-making; values that are considered important for moral behavior such as compassion, kindness and responsibility. They are universal principles and human rights that apply to all individuals regardless of culture, race or nationality (William Damon, 208).

Lapsley considers moral values as "a set of virtues that guide an individual's behaviour and decision-making" (18). Lapsley argues that moral values are essential for promoting an individual's moral character and well-being. Moral values may also be understood as virtues and character traits that promote healthy living and well-being. Peterson and Seligman recognise moral values to include traits such as compassion, honesty and fairness which are the guiding principles that shape human behaviour, decisions and interactions with others. Heidt believes that moral values are influenced by culture, upbringing and personal experiences. They are social norms and expectations that govern human behaviour and interactions with others. Damon views moral values as a set of principles that give an individual a sense of purpose and direction. He argues that moral values are essential for guiding an individual's behaviour and decision-making.

Expert opinion on the concept of moral values, it can be said that moral values include respect, honesty, empathy, responsibility, fairness, and integrity. Others are compassion, perseverance, humility, gratitude, forgiveness, self-discipline, justice, loyalty, self-awareness and courage. These values are important because they promote positive relationships and social interactions, foster personal growth and development, encourage responsible and ethical behavior and contribute to greater good and well-being of society as a whole. They are essential for promoting social cohesion, respect for others, and responsible behavior. They constitute to the foundation of a civilized society, and their inculcation in children from early age is crucial for their development into responsible and respectful individuals.

**Necessity of Values Education in Elementary Schools**

Values education is the process of helping young learners understand, internalise and practice fundamental moral and social principles such as respect, honesty, empathy, responsibility, cooperation and justice. Implementing values education at the elementary school level is critical because this is the foundation stage of moral and social development where lifelong character traits begin to form. Thomas Lickona (91) emphasises that values education necessary for the reasons discussed below:

**1. Shapes Lifelong Behaviour**

Elementary school children are at a formative stage where their moral compass is being established. Teaching values during childhood helps pupils internalise concepts of right and wrong. This early moral foundation shapes personality and future behaviour patterns. Thomas Lickona (2021) keys into this by pointing out that teaching values early helps pupils differentiate right from wrong, develop self-control and adopt prosocial behaviors that last into adulthood.

**2. Supports Social and Emotional Learning**

Values education is essential for fostering emotional intelligence, empathy and positive relationships which are all parts of social and emotional learning. These competences help children manage emotions, build friendships and resolve conflicts peacefully. Brackett links emotional intelligence and values like empathy and compassion with higher academic success and improved classroom behaviour.

**3. Prepares Children for Citizenship and Democracy**

Values education promotes responsibility, cooperation, fairness and justice which are essential for active citizenship. Schools serve as mini-societies where children practice democratic principles like voting, sharing responsibilities and resolving disagreements. Arthur, Harrison and Taylor argue that civic virtues and democratic values must be instilled early to prepare children for participation in pluralistic societies like Nigeria (34).

**4. Enhances Positive Behaviour and Reduces Discipline Problems**

When pupils are taught values explicitly and consistently, they tend to show more respect for authority, rules and peers which leads to fewer instances of bullying, disruption and violence. Nucci, Krettenauer and Narvaez present studies confirming that structured values education programme reduces aggression and promote respectful behaviour.

**5. Fosters Inclusive and Respectful School Culture**

Values education teacher tolerance, inclusive and cultural respect which are essential in today's diverse classrooms. Children learn to appreciate differences and collaborate with others across ethnic, linguistic and religious boundaries. UNESCO promotes values education as a core element in building peaceful, inclusive societies through early schooling.

**6. Addresses Modern Societal Challenges**

In an age of cyber bullying, intolerance and social fragmentation, values education equips young learners with the tools to navigate ethical challenges and act responsibly online and offline. Gentile explains that early moral education is vital in helping children deal with media influences and make positive digital choices.

**Challenges of Teaching Moral and Social Values in Elementary Schools**

Teaching moral and social values in elementary schools is crucial for shaping pupils' characters and helping them develop essential life skills. However, there are potential negative consequences depending on how values are taught, who defines them and the diversity of pupils' backgrounds. Here are some possible drawbacks:

**1. Potential for Dogmatism and Intolerance**

If values are taught in a rigid or inflexible manner or as absolute truth rather than open for discussion, pupils might develop a narrow view of the world and become intolerant of different beliefs or perspectives. In this case, pupils may be discouraged from questioning or analyzing different moral perspectives. Imposing specific beliefs on pupils is an indoctrination, potentially limiting their ability to think critically and make independent decisions leading to suppression of critical thinking.

Hansen and Alao & Adeyemi point out that "values taught inflexibly or unbendingly can be challenging

when it is primarily centered on religious principles, ignoring the overall goal of moral education extending beyond promoting any particular religion or culture" (p. 108). The implication here is that some pupils might actively resist or ignore the values being taught, especially if they perceive the values as being imposed or inappropriate to their lives.

**2. Potential for Bias and Discrimination**

Schools might promote values aligned with a particular culture, religion or political ideology, ignoring the diversity in pupils' backgrounds. Researches have revealed that if values taught reflect the biases of the school, teacher, political ideology or the dominant culture, it can marginalise pupils from minority cultures or belief systems and create feelings of exclusion or confusion (Hansen, 2001). This implies that, teaching moral and social values that reflect a dominant culture can lead to cultural insensitivity and marginalisation of minority groups. Such teachings can result in pupils from diverse backgrounds being excluded or undervalued. Also, when the values taught in school conflict with those of the pupils' families or community, it can lead to confusion. Some teachers hardly let their pupils speak up or pose questions during class. Such teachers merely want pupils to obey rules even if they seem harsh. Moral education can sometimes focus too much on compliance with rules and regulations, potentially stifling pupils' creativity, autonomy and critical thinking.

**3. Conflict Between School Values and Home Values**

Pupils may receive conflicting moral and social values from their teachers, parents or community leading to confusion and uncertainty. For example, a school might promote gender equality while a child's home environment may reflect patriarchal norms, creating confusion and resistance in pupils. This can lead to parental pushback, loss of trust in education system and the school or even withdrawal of children from school system. Boko Haram, which is a militant Islamic group known for its violent insurgency against the Nigerian government, civilians and Western influence, especially in education evolved due to conflicting moral and social values received through Western education. The nickname "Boko Haram" roughly means "Western education is forbidden" in Hausa, one of the Nigerian languages

**4. Cultural and Religious Diversity**

One major challenge in Nigeria is the diversity of culture, religious and familial backgrounds among pupils. Waghid and Davids acknowledges how multicultural contexts can hinder uniform moral instruction in schools. This implies that what one family or community views as morally right may differ significantly from others. This plurality makes it difficult for teachers to present moral content that is generally accepted.

**5. Politicisation of Moral Education**

In some sections of a country, the teaching of values become politicised, with governments or policy makers dictating which values should be emphasised, sometimes excluding critical thinking or pluralistic dialogue. Sanger & Oguthorpe discuss that politicisation can distort the aims of moral education.

**6. Abstract Nature of Moral Concepts**

Pupils in elementary schools are at varying levels of cognitive development. Killen and Smetana (2022) point out that abstract concepts like justice, fairness or integrity may be hard for young learners to fully grasp and apply in real-life situation or contexts.

**7. Inadequate Curriculum Integration**

Often, moral and social values are not well integrated into the overall curriculum but are instead treated as add-ons in civics or religious studies. This limits opportunities for values to be taught across subjects and contexts. No doubt Arthur, Kristjansson, et al (17) recommends that character education should be embedded across the entire school curriculum.

### 8. Pressure on Academic Achievement

With the increasing pressure on schools to meet the academic benchmark and standardised test scores, moral and values education often gets sidelined or underemphasised. No doubt Biesta observes that because of pressure on schools to meet expected academic standard, performance-driven approach to schooling that neglects moral aims is adopted by teachers

The stories created cut across diverse areas with its moral lessons like;

A pupil shared a tale of finding a lunchbox and returning it, teaching honesty. Another wrote about welcoming a new student, showing kindness and inclusion. One story featured a child who stood up for a friend being teased—teaching courage and loyalty. Another showed a student helping clean the classroom without being asked, modeling responsibility. Children created stories about honesty, respect, and kindness—like sharing food with a poor neighbor or returning a lost wallet. A little girl wrote about comforting a crying classmate, showing empathy, while boy told of admitting he cheated on a test, learning integrity. One story highlighted sharing toys during playtime, teaching generosity. Another showed patience by waiting turns on the swing—building self-control. A teacher introduced a story to the pupil on the effect of apologising after speaking harshly, learning respect.

Another, helped a lost puppy find home, showing compassion and responsibility. Each tale reflected real-life values in familiar community settings. Others told of standing up to bullying or helping an elderly person cross the street, highlighting courage and empathy. As the researcher, I shared a story on siblings resolving a fight by listening and apologising, learning the value of peace. Stories were rooted in local traditions, showing how values guide daily choices and strengthen community bonds. One story told of a student who confessed to tearing a classmate's book, earning trust through honesty. This cycle nurtured creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking while preserving artistic expression.

**Analysis of Activities**

**Table 1 Distribution of Respondents by Category**

| Respondent Category | Frequency | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| **Teachers** | **12** | **9.1** |
| **Pupils** | **120** | **90.9** |
| **Total** | **132** | **100** |

**Source: Fieldwork, 2026**

**Interpretation:**

Table 1 shows that pupils constituted the majority of respondents (90.9%), while teachers accounted for 9.1%. This distribution ensured that data were obtained from both implementers and beneficiaries of creative dramatics instruction.

**Table 2 Distribution of Teachers by Teaching Experience**

| Years of Experience | Frequency | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| 1 – 5 years | 4 | 33.3 |
| 6 – 10 years | 5 | 41.7 |
| 11 years and above | 3 | 25.0 |
| Total | 12 | 100 |

**Source: Fieldwork, 2026**

**Interpretation:**

Most teachers (41.7%) had between 6–10 years of experience, indicating that respondents were sufficiently experienced to provide credible information about classroom practices.

**Data Presentation and Analysis According to Research Questions**

Responses were rated on a four-point Likert scale:

Note:

S/N = Serial Number

N/S = Number of Students

SA = 4 Strongly Agree

A = 3 Strongly Agree

D = Disagree

SD = 1 Strongly Disagree

**Question 1:** Effectiveness of Current Methods of Teaching Moral and Social Values

**Table 3 pupils' Responses on Effectiveness of teaching methods**

| S/N | Name of School | N/S | SA | A | SD | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Bigtym Nobles International Academy Ikot Obong Edong | 25 | 10 | 18 | 0 | 2 |
| 2 | Holy Child Catholic School Nung Udoe Itak | 25 | 10 | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| 3. | ST. George's (RCM) Primary School, Aka Offot | 25 | 12 | 10 | 2 | 4 |
| 4. | Sacred Heart Nursery and Primary School Aka | 25 | 16 | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| 5. | Holy Child Primary School. Idua- Eket | 25 | 12 | 6 | 2 | 0 |
| 6 | Future Assured Nursery and Primary School Ikot Edor, Ibeno | 25 | 10 | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| | TOTAL | 150 | 70 | 62 | 8 | 10 |

**Source: Fieldwork, 2026**

**(i) Percentage earned on Strongly Agree (SA) Options:**

$$\frac{\text{Number of SA}}{\text{Total Responses}} = \frac{70}{150} \times \frac{100}{1} = 46.7\%$$

**(ii) Percentage earned on Agree (A) Options:**

$$\frac{\text{Number of A}}{\text{Total Responses}} = \frac{58}{150} \times \frac{100}{1} = 38.7\%$$

**(iii) Percentage earned on Strongly Disagree (SD) Options:**

$$\frac{\text{Number of SD}}{\text{Total Responses}} = \frac{8}{150} \times \frac{100}{1} = 0.53\%$$

**(iv) Percentage earned on Disagree (D) Options:**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of D | = | 10 | × | 100 | = | 0.67% |
| ———————— | | — | | ——— | | |
| Total Responses | | 150 | | 1 | | |

**Interpretation:**

Findings shows that in Akwa Ibom State, current instructional methods for imparting these values encompass a range of approaches such as direct instruction, storytelling, modelling, religious instruction, classroom rules enforcement, group activities and, increasingly, interactive pedagogies such as creative dramatics. Evidence from the research strongly supports the conclusion that current methods of teaching moral and social values in elementary schools are highly effective, particularly when implemented with intentionality and pedagogical sensitivity.

At the foundational level, traditional methods such as direct instruction and moral exhortation have proven to be effective in establishing clear behavioural expectations among pupils. Through structured lessons in subjects such as civic education and religious studies, pupils are introduced to societal norms, ethical principles and culturally valued behaviours. These methods provide a cognitive framework upon which moral understanding is built. Moral Education requires explicit teaching of values to ensure that learners are able to distinguish between right and wrong. In this regard, direct instruction serves as an indispensable tool for laying the groundwork for moral reasoning.

Furthermore, the study also found out that the use of storytelling and narrative-based instruction has demonstrated considerable effectiveness in the teaching of moral values. Stories, whether drawn from cultural folklore, religious texts or contemporary contexts, serve as powerful vehicles for conveying moral lessons. Through identification with characters and reflection on narrative outcomes, pupils are able to internalise values such as honesty, kindness and responsibility. This aligns with the perspective that moral learning is enhanced when abstract principles are embedded within meaningful and relatable contexts. The enduring presence of storytelling in elementary education underscores its continued relevance and effectiveness.

A particularly noteworthy development which the researcher finds interesting is the increasing use of interactive and participatory methods, including creative dramatics, role-play and simulation. These methods represent an evolution of traditional pedagogies, incorporating elements of experiential learning that engage pupils more actively in the learning process. Creative dramatics, in particular, allows pupils to explore moral and social issues through enactment, thereby deepening their understanding and facilitating internalisation of values. As demonstrated in this study, such approaches significantly enhance both moral and social development, further reinforcing the overall effectiveness of current teaching methods.

**Question 2: Effectiveness of Creative Dramatics in Promoting Moral and Social Values**

**Table 4 Creative Dramatics and Moral Development**

| S/N | Name of School | N/S | SA | A | SD | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Bigtym Nobles International Academy Ikot Obong Edong | 25 | 2 | 6 | 20 | 0 |
| 2 | Holy Child Catholic School Nung Udoe Itak | 25 | 5 | 6 | 12 | 4 |
| 3. | ST. George's (RCM) Primary School, Aka Offot | 25 | 5 | 6 | 10 | 4 |
| 4. | Sacred Heart Nursery and Primary School Aka | 25 | 4 | 4 | 20 | 2 |
| 5. | Holy Child Primary School. Idua- Eket | 25 | 2 | 5 | 10 | 3 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | Future Assured Nursery and Primary School Ikot Edor, Ibeno | 25 | 2 | 4 | 10 | 4 |
| | TOTAL | 150 | 20 | 31 | 82 | 17 |

**Source: Fieldwork, 2026**

**(i) Percentage earned on Strongly Agree (SA) Options:**

Number of SA = 20 × 100 = 13.3%

Total Responses 150 1

**(ii) Percentage earned on Agree (A) Options:**

Number of A = 31 × 100 = 20.1%

Total Responses 150 1

**(iii) Percentage earned on Strongly Disagree (SD) Options:**

Number of SD = 82 × 100 = 54.7%

Total Responses 150 1

**(iv) Percentage earned on Disagree (D):**

Number of D = 18 × 100 = 12%

Total Responses 150 1

**Interpretation:**

Creative dramatics has increasingly been recognised as a powerful pedagogical approach in elementary education, particularly in fostering the moral and social development of pupils. As an experiential and participatory form of learning, creative dramatics engages learners in role-play, improvisation, storytelling and simulation, thereby creating opportunities for the internalisation of values and the development of interpersonal competencies. The effectiveness of this approach lies in its ability to move beyond abstract instruction to embodied learning experiences that actively involve pupils in the construction of meaning.

The result shows that the core of the effectiveness of creative dramatics is its alignment with experiential learning principles, which posit that learning is most meaningful when individuals actively engage in experiences and reflect upon them. In the context of moral education, creative dramatics allows pupils to explore ethical dilemmas in a safe and controlled environment. Through role-play, pupils assume different perspectives, confront moral choices and observe the consequences of actions. This process facilitates the development of moral reasoning and judgement, as pupils are encouraged to think critically about right and wrong.

Furthermore, the research also shows that creative dramatics is particularly effective in promoting value internalisation, which is a key objective of moral education. Traditional methods of teaching values often

rely on direct instruction and memorisation, which may lead to superficial understanding. In contrast, creative dramatics engages pupils emotionally and cognitively, making learning more personal and meaningful. When pupils enact scenarios involving honesty, fairness or empathy, they are more likely to internalise these values and apply them in real-life situations.

In addition to its impact on moral development, creative dramatics plays a significant role in enhancing social values and competencies. The collaborative nature of drama activities requires pupils to work together, communicate effectively and respect diverse perspectives. Through group performances and improvisational exercises, pupils develop essential social skills such as teamwork, cooperation, negotiation and conflict resolution. These skills are fundamental to social integration and are critical for functioning effectively in both school and wider society.

The result of the findings confirms that creative dramatics also fosters empathy and emotional intelligence, which are central to both moral and social development. By taking on different roles and perspectives, pupils gain insight into the thoughts and feelings of others. This perspective-taking ability enhances their capacity for empathy, enabling them to respond more sensitively to the needs and experiences of others. Empathy, in turn, underpins pro-social behaviours such as kindness, compassion and respect. The development of emotional intelligence through drama activities contributes to improved interpersonal relationships and a more positive classroom environment.

The effectiveness of creative dramatics is further supported by its compatibility with social constructivist theory, which emphasises the role of social interaction in learning (Vygotsky). Through collaborative drama activities, pupils co-construct knowledge and meaning, drawing on their experiences and interactions with others. This social dimension of learning is particularly relevant for the development of social values, as it provides opportunities for pupils to practice and refine their interpersonal skills in real-time contexts.

Moreover, creative dramatics provides a safe space for experimentation and reflection. Pupils can explore different behaviours and outcomes without the fear of real-world consequences. This encourages risk-taking and open expression, which are essential for personal growth. Reflection, which often follows drama activities, allows pupils to analyse their actions, understand their implications and make connections to real-life situations. This reflective process reinforces learning and supports the development of moral and social awareness.

Empirical findings from this study further substantiate the effectiveness of creative dramatics. The high mean scores recorded for items related to moral and social development indicate that both teachers and pupils perceive drama-based instruction as beneficial. Pupils exposed to creative dramatics demonstrated improved behaviour, enhanced communication skills and stronger peer relationships. These outcomes provide concrete evidence of the impact of creative dramatics on values education.

In conclusion, creative dramatics is a highly effective approach to promoting moral and social values in elementary education. Its experiential, interactive and reflective nature enables pupils to internalise values, develop empathy and acquire essential social skills. By engaging pupils in meaningful and participatory learning experiences, creative dramatics goes beyond traditional methods to foster holistic development. Evidence from both theoretical perspectives and empirical findings underscores its value as a powerful tool for values education. Consequently, greater emphasis should be placed on its integration into classroom practice to maximise its benefits.

**Question 3:** Teachers' Perception on the use of Creative Dramatics in Teaching Values Education

**Table 5 Creative Dramatics and Social Development**

| S/N | Name of School | N/S | SA | A | SD | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Bigtym Nobles International Academy Ikot Obong Edong | 25 | 4 | 0 | 16 | 10 |
| 2 | Holy Child Catholic School Nung Udoe Itak | 25 | 2 | 2 | 10 | 8 |
| 3. | ST. George's (RCM) Primary School, Aka Offot | 25 | 2 | 2 | 10 | 6 |
| 4. | Sacred Heart Nursery and Primary School Aka | 25 | 2 | 2 | 16 | 6 |
| 5. | Holy Child Primary School. Idua- Eket | 25 | 4 | 0 | 16 | 8 |
| 6 | Future Assured Nursery and Primary School Ikot Edor, Ibeno | 25 | 4 | 0 | 18 | 8 |
| | TOTAL | 150 | 18 | 6 | 80 | 4 |

**Source: Fieldwork, 2026**

**(i) Percentage earned on Strongly Agree (SA):**

Number of SA = 18 × 100 = 12%

Total Responses 150 1

**(ii) Percentage earned on Agree (A):**

Number of A = 6 × 100 = 4%

Total Responses 150 1

(iii) **Percentage earned on Strongly Disagree (SD):**

Number of SD = 80 × 100 = 53.3%

Total Responses 150 1

**(iv) Percentage Earned on Disagree (D) Options:**

Number of D = 46 × 100 = 30.6%

Total Responses 150 1

The role of teachers' in shaping classroom practices cannot be overstated, particularly in relation to the adoption and implementation of innovative pedagogical approaches such as creative dramatics. Within the context of elementary education in Akwa Ibom State, this study reveals a nuanced and, at times, contradictory pattern in teachers attitudes towards the use of creative dramatics in teaching moral and social values. While teachers generally acknowledge the pedagogical value of creative dramatics, the pupils strongly suggest that they do not frequently employ it in actual classroom practice. This disconnect between perception and practice constitutes a critical issue in understanding the limited integration of drama-based instruction in values education. At the level of perception, teachers often express positive attitudes towards creative dramatics. Many recognise its potential to enhance pupil engagement, facilitate

experiential learning and promote the internalisation of moral values

However, despite this favourable perception, the actual frequency of use remains low. The findings of this study indicate that teachers rely predominantly on traditional instructional methods such as direct instruction, storytelling and rule enforcement when teaching values education. Creative dramatics, when used at all, tends to be occasional and often limited to special events or specific lessons rather than being systematically integrated into everyday classroom practice. This observation suggests that positive perception alone is insufficient to guarantee adoption, as other mediating factors influence instructional choices.

One of the primary reasons for this limited utilisation is the issue of teacher preparedness and competence. Many teachers lack formal training in drama pedagogy and therefore feel inadequately equipped to implement creative dramatics effectively. The absence of specialised training creates uncertainty and reduces teachers' confidence in their ability to manage drama activities, particularly in large and diverse classrooms. As Baldwin (2012) notes, effective use of drama in education requires specific skills in facilitation, improvisation and classroom management, which are not always included in teacher education programmes. Consequently, teachers may avoid using creative dramatics despite recognising its value.

In addition to training deficiencies, time constraints constitute a significant barrier to the frequent use of creative dramatics. The structured nature of the school timetable, coupled with the pressure to cover extensive curricula, limits the time available for interactive and participatory activities. Creative dramatics, which often requires planning, rehearsal and reflection, is perceived as time-consuming compared to more direct methods of instruction. Teachers, therefore, prioritise approaches that allow for efficient content delivery, even if they are less engaging or impactful in terms of value internalisation.

Another factor influencing teacher's limited use of creative dramatics is the lack of instructional resources. Effective drama activities often require materials such as costumes, props and space for performance, which may not be readily available in many elementary schools. The absence of these resources can discourage teachers from attempting drama-based instruction, particularly in resource-constrained environments. This challenge is compounded by large class sizes, which make it difficult to organise and manage participatory activities.

Institutional factors also play a role in shaping teacher's perceptions and practices. The absence of clear policy directives or administrative support for creative dramatics limits its adoption. When school leadership does not actively promote or monitor the use of innovative teaching methods, teachers may lack the motivation or incentive to deviate from established practices. In such contexts, even teachers who are positively disposed towards creative dramatics may find it difficult to implement it consistently.

From a theoretical perspective, the limited use of creative dramatics despite positive perceptions can be understood through the lens of implementation theory, which emphasises the gap between policy intentions and practical realities. It highlights the importance of contextual factors, including teacher capacity, resource availability and organisational support, in determining the extent to which educational innovations are adopted.

In critically evaluating teacher's perceptions, it is therefore necessary to move beyond simplistic assumptions about resistance or reluctance. The issue is not that teachers are unwilling to use creative dramatics, but rather that they operate within constraints that limit their ability to do so. Addressing these constraints requires a systemic approach that encompasses policy reform, capacity building and resource allocation.

In conclusion, while teachers generally perceive creative dramatics as a valuable and effective approach to teaching moral and social values, this positive perception does not translate into frequent classroom use. The evidence clearly indicates that teachers do not often employ creative dramatics, primarily due to

constraints related to training, time, resources and institutional support. This discrepancy between perception and practice highlights the need for targeted interventions to facilitate the integration of creative dramatics into routine classroom instruction. By addressing these challenges, it is possible to bridge the gap and fully realise the potential of creative dramatics in values education.

**Question 4:** Challenges Faced in Teaching Values Education in Elementary School

**Table 6 Challenges**

| S/N | Name of School | N/S | SA | A | SD | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Bigtym Nobles International Academy Ikot Obong Edong | 25 | 12 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| 2 | Holy Child Catholic School Nung Udoe Itak | 25 | 15 | 6 | 2 | 4 |
| 3. | ST. George's (RCM) Primary School, Aka Offot | 25 | 12 | 4 | 4 | 0 |
| 4. | Sacred Heart Nursery and Primary School Aka | 25 | 12 | 10 | 2 | 0 |
| 5. | Holy Child Primary School. Idua- Eket | 25 | 15 | 6 | 0 | 2 |
| 6 | Future Assured Nursery and Primary School Ikot Edor, Ibeno | 25 | 20 | 2 | 6 | 4 |
| | TOTAL | 150 | 86 | 32 | 18 | 14 |

**Source: Fieldwork, 2026**

**(i) Percentage earned on Strongly Agree (SA) Options:**

$$\frac{\text{Number of SA}}{\text{Total Responses}} = \frac{86}{150} \times \frac{100}{1} = 57.3\%$$

**(ii) Percentage earned on Agree (A) Options:**

$$\frac{\text{Number of A}}{\text{Total Responses}} = \frac{32}{150} \times \frac{100}{1} = 21.3\%$$

**(iii) Percentage earned on Strongly Disagree (SD) Options:**

$$\frac{\text{Number of SD}}{\text{Total Responses}} = \frac{18}{150} \times \frac{100}{1} = 12\%$$

**(iv) Percentage earned on Disagree (D) Options:**

$$\frac{\text{Number of D}}{\text{Total Responses}} = \frac{14}{150} \times \frac{100}{1} = 9\%$$

**Interpretation:**

The teaching of moral and social values in elementary schools is widely recognised as a fundamental component of holistic education. Values education seeks to inculcate desirable behaviours, ethical principles and social competencies that enable pupils to function effectively within society. Despite its importance, the effective delivery of values education in elementary schools is confronted with a range of challenges that limit its impact. These challenges are multifaceted, encompassing structural, pedagogical,

institutional and sociocultural dimensions. A critical examination of these issues reveals the complexity of implementing values education in contemporary educational contexts, particularly within resource-constrained environments such as Akwa Ibom State.

One of the most significant challenges is the lack of adequate teacher preparation and professional competence in values education. Many teachers are not formally trained in pedagogical approaches that effectively promote moral and social development. While teachers may possess subject knowledge, they often lack the specialised skills required to facilitate discussions on ethical issues, manage sensitive topics or implement interactive strategies such as creative dramatics. As a result, values education is frequently reduced to didactic instruction, which may not foster deep understanding or internalisation of values.

Closely related to this is the dominance of traditional, teacher-centered instructional methods, which limit the effectiveness of values education. In many elementary classrooms, teaching is characterised by rote learning, memorisation and passive reception of information. Such approaches may be efficient for transmitting factual knowledge but are less effective in promoting critical thinking, moral reasoning and behavioural change. Values education, by its nature, requires interactive and participatory methods that engage pupils in reflection and dialogue. The persistence of traditional methods therefore represents a significant barrier to effective values teaching.

Another major challenge is the overcrowded curriculum and limited instructional time. Elementary school curricula are often densely packed with academic subjects, leaving little room for dedicated values education activities. Teachers are under pressure to complete syllabuses and prepare pupils for examinations, which are typically focused on cognitive outcomes. Consequently, values education is sometimes marginalised or treated as a secondary priority. This time constraint also affects the implementation of interactive methods such as group discussions and creative dramatics, which require more time for planning and execution.

The issue of large class sizes further complicates the teaching of values education. In overcrowded classrooms, it becomes difficult for teachers to engage pupils individually, monitor behaviour effectively or facilitate meaningful interaction. Activities that promote social and moral development, such as group work and role-play, may be challenging to organise and manage in such settings. Large class sizes therefore limit the opportunities for personalised instruction and active participation, both of which are essential for effective values education.

Inadequate instructional materials and resources also pose a significant challenge. Effective values education often requires the use of teaching aids such as storybooks, visual materials, props and digital resources. In many elementary schools, particularly in developing regions, these resources are either scarce or entirely absent. The lack of materials restricts the range of teaching strategies available to teachers and reduces the richness of learning experiences. This challenge is particularly evident in the implementation of creative dramatics, which relies on materials to enhance realism and engagement.

Another critical challenge is the difficulty of assessing moral and social development. Unlike cognitive learning outcomes, which can be measured through standardised tests, values such as honeazsty, empathy and respect are more complex and subjective. Teachers may struggle to evaluate whether pupils have internalised these values or are merely demonstrating compliance. The absence of clear assessment frameworks for values education can lead to inconsistencies in evaluation and reduce accountability. As Narvaez (2002) notes, the assessment of moral development requires nuanced and context-sensitive approaches, which are not always available in elementary education.

Furthermore, the limited use of digital technologies in values education represents a missed opportunity. While digital tools have the potential to enhance engagement and provide diverse learning experiences, their adoption in many elementary schools remains low due to infrastructural and training constraints. This limits the ability of teachers to leverage technology in promoting moral and social values.

Another challenge is the abstract nature of values education, which can make it difficult for pupils to

grasp and apply moral concepts. Values such as justice, fairness and responsibility may be difficult for young learners to understand without concrete examples and experiential learning opportunities. This underscores the importance of using interactive methods, which are not always employed due to the challenges outlined above.

Finally, cultural diversity and differing value systems can pose challenges in teaching values education. In multicultural societies, there may be variations in beliefs and practices, making it difficult to establish a universally accepted set of values. Teachers must navigate these differences sensitively to avoid bias or exclusion, which requires a high level of cultural competence.

In conclusion, the teaching of values education in elementary schools is confronted with a range of significant challenges, including inadequate teacher training, reliance on traditional teaching methods, limited instructional time, large class sizes, lack of resources and difficulties in assessment. These challenges are further compounded by external factors such as societal influences and limited institutional support. Despite these obstacles, values education remains a critical component of holistic development, and addressing these challenges is essential for improving its effectiveness. A comprehensive and systemic approach that includes teacher training, curriculum reform, resource provision and policy support is required to overcome these barriers and enhance the teaching of moral and social values in elementary schools.

## Conclusion

At a fundamental level, the study affirms that creative dramatics constitutes a powerful and multidimensional pedagogical tool capable of fostering holistic development among pupils. Unlike traditional instructional approaches that often prioritise cognitive outcomes in isolation, creative dramatics integrates cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of learning. Through participatory activities such as role-play, improvisation and storytelling, pupils are not merely passive recipients of knowledge but active constructors of meaning. This aligns with the theoretical propositions of Vygotsky (1978), who emphasised the centrality of social interaction and experiential engagement in the learning process.

The findings of the study indicate that creative dramatics is moderately practiced within the sampled elementary schools. While its inclusion in the curriculum suggests institutional recognition of its value, the variability in its implementation reveals a gap between policy and practice. This gap is indicative of broader systemic challenges within the educational sector, including insufficient teacher preparation, limited instructional resources and entrenched reliance on conventional teaching methods. Consequently, the moderate utilisation of creative dramatics should not be interpreted as a lack of relevance but rather as evidence of unrealised potential.

A major contribution of this study lies in its demonstration of the significant impact of creative dramatics on pupils' moral development. The findings reveal that pupils exposed to drama-based instruction exhibit enhanced understanding of moral values such as honesty, respect, responsibility and discipline. This underscores the capacity of creative dramatics to facilitate moral learning in a manner that is both experiential and contextually grounded. Unlike didactic approaches that rely on abstract moral instruction, creative dramatics immerses pupils in simulated real-life scenarios, enabling them to explore ethical dilemmas, reflect on consequences and internalise moral principles. In this sense, moral development is not imposed externally but constructed through active engagement.

In addition to its moral implications, the study highlights the significant role of creative dramatics in promoting social development among pupils. The collaborative nature of drama activities fosters communication, cooperation and interpersonal skills. Pupils learn to express themselves, negotiate roles, resolve conflicts and work collectively towards shared goals. These competencies are essential not only for academic success but also for effective participation in society. The findings therefore reinforce the argument that education should extend beyond the transmission of knowledge to encompass the development of social and emotional competencies. The article contributes to current discussions on

innovative teaching strategies by presenting creative dramatics as an evidence-based approach to character education. It further recommends curriculum reforms that integrate drama across all learning areas rather than limiting it to performing arts or extracurricular activities.

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