
Exploring the Significance and Therapeutic Value of Oriki (COGNOMEN) in Shaping Perception of Yoruba Parents in Ibadan, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the significance and therapeutic value of Oriki, the Yoruba tradition of cognomen, in influencing parental perceptions and practices within Ibadan, Nigeria. The therapeutic efficacy of Oriki is being progressively undermined by the influences of modernization, globalization, and the processes associated with civilization. Anchored in Symbolic Interactionism, the research explores the role of Oriki in identity formation, psychological resilience, and intergenerational transmission among Yoruba families. A qualitative methodology was employed, with data collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews (IDIs), key informant interviews (KIIs), and case studies involving Yoruba parents, clan chiefs, patriarchs, griot, poet, cultural experts, and practitioners. The findings reveal that Oriki acts as a dynamic cultural instrument that reinforces self-identity, social status, and moral values. Participants articulated how Oriki bolsters feelings of pride and belonging, enhancing psychological resilience and serving as a motivational resource during personal adversities. This study elucidates Oriki's impact on parenting paradigms, demonstrating how its recitation strengthens familial bonds, directs behavioral expectations, and nurtures emotional well-being. Besides, the research highlights the gendered dimensions of Oriki, indicating its reinforcement of traditional roles while simultaneously evolving within contemporary Yoruba society. The study also outlines Oriki's therapeutic functions, illustrating its application in conflict resolution, emotional healing, and psychological reinforcement, particularly in challenging circumstances. Moreover, the research addresses the modern adaptations of Oriki, noting its resurgence through digital platforms and ongoing relevance among urban Yoruba youth. Despite the pressures of globalization and shifting societal norms, Oriki persists as a vital emblem of Yoruba cultural heritage, bridging historical and contemporary contexts. The paper concludes that integrating Oriki into modern parenting and therapeutic frameworks may yield culturally relevant strategies for enhancing self-esteem and emotional stability among Yoruba individuals. Thus, it is paramount to acknowledge that Oriki remains a profound cultural resource, shaping identity, resilience, and intergenerational continuity while dynamically adapting to contemporary contexts. It is vital to preserve Oriki's therapeutic value and promote its continued use across traditional and modern settings to ensure effective intergenerational transmission.

KEYWORDS: Therapeutic value, Oriki (cognomen), Yoruba tradition, parental perceptions, Nigeria

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INTRODUCTION

The Oriki, a traditional form of Yoruba praise poetry, has long been a fundamental element of the cultural and social framework of the Yoruba people, particularly in the context of shaping interpersonal identities and familial relationships (Smith, 2023, p. 42). In contemporary Yoruba society, especially in Ibadan, Nigeria, Oriki continues to serve as a significant symbol of individual and collective identity, functioning as an essential connection to ancestry, lineage, and social status. Through the recitation of these poetic expressions, parents articulate their aspirations, values, and expectations for their children, thereby influencing the children's self-perception and their relationship with the wider society. This paper aims to investigate how Oriki operates as a symbolic

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construct that plays a pivotal role in shaping the worldview of Yoruba parents in Ibadan, particularly in relation to their parenting practices and expectations. By analyzing the emotional and psychological impact of Oriki on both parents and children, this study seeks to reveal the evolving significance of Oriki within modern Yoruba familial dynamics, while also addressing its potential therapeutic benefits in fostering resilience, community cohesion, and intergenerational continuity. Moreover, the therapeutic value of Oriki extends beyond mere cultural expression, indicating that these praises encompass cognitive and emotional dimensions essential for personal development and collective well-being. Recent scholarly work emphasizes the intricate relationship between cultural identity and psychological resilience, positing that engagement with Oriki may serve as a therapeutic mechanism for promoting a positive self-concept and emotional healing (Adedeji, 2024, p. 119).

In this context, the involvement of Yoruba parents with Oriki can be interpreted as an adaptive response to contemporary societal challenges, wherein the act of reciting and internalizing Oriki functions as a robust mechanism for reinforcing moral guidance, fostering social solidarity, and enhancing emotional stability. This paper provides a pioneering exploration of Oriki not only as a cultural artifact, but also as an influential agent in shaping psychological and familial dynamics within the Yoruba community, particularly in the rapidly changing urban environment of Ibadan. In spite of its profound cultural and psychological significance, the role of Oriki (referred to as cognomen) in shaping Yoruba parents' perceptions, particularly in Ibadan, Nigeria, remains inadequately explored. Deeply rooted in Yoruba cosmology, Oriki serves as a crucial expression of identity, ancestry, and social status; however, its therapeutic value in influencing parental attitudes, beliefs, and emotional well-being is not sufficiently understood (Adebayo, 2021, p. 45). This study endeavors to address this gap by examining how Oriki functions as a cultural instrument in reshaping parental perceptions, potentially guiding parenting practices in child-rearing and mental health within an evolving social context. Though prior research has primarily concentrated on the linguistic and ritualistic aspects of Oriki (Ogunniyi, 2022, p. 110), there is a notable deficiency in the exploration of its contemporary therapeutic implications for familial and psychological dynamics within the Yoruba community. By examining Oriki's transformative role, this study aims to contribute new insights into the intersection of traditional cultural practices and contemporary parental psychology in Ibadan.

Previous scholarly works on Oriki (cognomen) have primarily explored its linguistic and cultural significance within Yoruba society. Scholars such as Ogunyemi (2015) and Oladejo (2018) have analyzed the poetic and symbolic roles that Oriki plays in shaping Yoruba identity and heritage, particularly in familial and communal expressions. Ogunyemi (2015) argues that Oriki serves as a historical and social identifier, embedding a complex narrative about an individual's ancestry and social status within Yoruba cosmology. Additionally, Oladejo (2018) examines how Oriki functions as a form of oral tradition, a vital tool for preserving and transmitting Yoruba culture across generations. Although these studies provide valuable insights into the cultural and linguistic dimensions of Oriki, they often neglect the psychological and therapeutic implications of Oriki in shaping parental perceptions of children in contemporary Ibadan. In addition, there is limited research addressing how this practice interacts with modern socio-cultural dynamics, particularly in urban settings like Ibadan, where Yoruba traditions are preserved and adapted.

This paper principally aims to fill the gap by investigating the therapeutic and perceptual functions of Oriki, particularly how it influences Yoruba parents' emotional and psychological perceptions of their children in Ibadan. There is a notable lack of studies that critically engage with Oriki as a psychological and therapeutic tool within contemporary Yoruba parenting practices. Recent works by Adedeji (2021) and Akinyemi (2022) have made significant strides in understanding the role of indigenous cultural practices in modern mental health frameworks, yet they have not sufficiently explored the specific impact of Oriki on family dynamics. This research will examine how Oriki not only reinforces identity but also serves as a tool for emotional support, identity affirmation, and family cohesion among Yoruba parents. By addressing these dimensions, the study will contribute to a broader understanding of African traditional practices in the context of mental health and social cohesion within urban African communities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The significance of Oriki (cognomen) in shaping the perceptions of Yoruba parents in Ibadan, Nigeria, presents a multifaceted issue that encompasses cultural, psychological, and social dimensions. This review articulates the role of Oriki in identity formation, its symbolic value within Yoruba society, and its potential therapeutic benefits, drawing on recent research that enriches the discourse surrounding this unique cultural phenomenon.

THE ROLE OF ORIKI IN YORUBA IDENTITY

Oriki, which denotes praise names or epithets, constitutes a fundamental aspect of Yoruba cultural heritage, closely linked to personal, familial, and communal identity. In Yoruba culture, names transcend mere identification; they are imbued with profound significance, representing ancestral lineage, accomplishments, and individual attributes. Therefore, Oriki functions as a mechanism for preserving history and maintaining continuity between past and present generations. According to Omolade (2023), names, particularly Oriki, play an essential role in establishing an individual's sense of self and a sense of belonging to the community. For Yoruba parents, these names frequently reflect their aspirations for their children and serve as a means to cultivate a positive identity. Research conducted by Adedayo (2022) emphasizes that Oriki is not merely decorative; it serves as a functional tool that reinforces

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social roles and responsibilities. The praise inherent in Oriki often carries moral guidance, serving as a reminder of cultural values such as strength, wisdom, and respect. The naming process within Yoruba culture can be understood as an ongoing negotiation between individual identity and communal expectations, situating the child within a broader social and historical context. In Ibadan, where Yoruba cultural practices remain prevalent, the recitation of Oriki becomes critical in shaping parental perceptions of their children's potential, instilling pride and enhancing social cohesion (Ogunwande, 2023).

ORIKI AS A TOOL FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The psychological impact of Oriki is considerable. Parents regard the act of reciting or passing down these praise names as a method to empower their children. Within the Yoruba tradition, Oriki is associated with affirming an individual's worth through public acknowledgment, often during ceremonial or familial events. Research by Afolabi (2021) indicates that the repetition of praise through Oriki fosters self-esteem and confidence, particularly when the names emphasize personal or ancestral strengths. In addition, this affirmation reinforces positive behavior and fosters a sense of belonging and validation in a community that values both individual uniqueness and collective identity. On a psychological level, Oriki functions as a tool for emotional regulation, particularly when it aligns with the expectations related to an individual's role within both the family and the wider society. Eniola and Olamide (2024) found that the recitation of Oriki may offer therapeutic benefits, particularly when employed in familial contexts to calm children or motivate them in challenging situations. By invoking the symbolic power and legacy encapsulated within Oriki, Yoruba parents assist their children in internalizing a sense of strength and cultural pride, which may serve as a protective factor against negative stereotypes and mental health challenges.

ORIKI AND THE SOCIALIZATION OF YORUBA CHILDREN

Oriki is not just a form of praise; it is a critical tool for social conditioning, fundamentally shaping the socialization of Yoruba children. As the research by Oladipo (2022) confirms, parents leverage Oriki to instill behavior and attitudes that align with societal norms. These praises vividly narrate the values cherished by the family and community, emphasizing essential traits such as respect, resilience, and responsibility. Often recited during traditional ceremonies or when addressing children, Oriki effectively cements societal expectations regarding proper conduct and morality. Through Oriki, Yoruba parents undeniably communicate their expectations and exemplify the behaviors they desire for their children. They use Oriki to underscore the achievements or virtues they wish their children to embody. In Ibadan, where Yoruba culture is deeply woven into everyday life, children receive multiple Oriki that capture various dimensions of their identity, including ancestral heritage, personal virtues, and family legacy. This practice ensures that children grow up with a profound awareness of their responsibilities, not only to themselves but also to the broader community (Ajiboye, 2021).

ORIKI AS A MEANS OF HEALING AND PERSONAL GROWTH

Recent studies appositely demonstrate the powerful therapeutic role of Oriki in promoting healing and personal growth within the Yoruba context. In moments of personal crisis or hardship, reciting or invoking one's Oriki emerges as a potent spiritual and psychological tool for restoration. Yoruba parents explicitly use Oriki to offer reassurance during times of uncertainty or difficulty, urging their children to draw strength from their cultural heritage. Research by Olorunfemi (2023) confirms that invoking Oriki during personal challenges serves as a significant form of emotional healing, enabling individuals to reconnect with their roots and derive meaning from adversity. In Ibadan, this practice is not confined to the home; it extends into therapeutic environments where traditional healers and spiritual leaders actively incorporate Oriki into healing rituals designed to uplift individuals. The act of invoking one's Oriki is believed to reinstate a sense of personal worth, providing both psychological comfort and a concrete link to ancestral strength. Therefore, Oriki functions not merely as an expression of praise but as a significant tool for resilience and mental fortitude (Olufunke & Adedeji, 2024). Ultimately, the influence of Oriki on how Yoruba parents perceive their roles, especially in Ibadan, represents a profound cultural and psychological phenomenon. It transcends the traditional act of naming and operates as a dynamic mechanism for identity formation, emotional development, socialization, and therapeutic healing. Acknowledging the multifaceted importance of Oriki is essential to understanding how deeply ingrained cultural practices shape both individual and collective well-being. The therapeutic benefits of Oriki are unmistakable; it molds self-perception, reinforces cultural pride, and fosters a sense of continuity across generations.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The paper titled "Exploring the Significance and Therapeutic Value of Oriki (Cognomen) in Shaping Yoruba Parents' Perceptions in Ibadan, Nigeria" is situated within the framework of Symbolic Interactionism, a sociological theory that emphasizes the role of symbols, language, and social interactions in the formation of meaning and self-identity. This theoretical approach, initially proposed by George Herbert Mead and subsequently expanded by Herbert Blumer, asserts that individuals construct and define their social realities through interactions with others and the meanings they ascribe to symbols present in their social environments. Oriki, a

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traditional Yoruba form of cognomen, extends beyond mere identification; it embodies profound symbolic meaning that often represents personal, familial, or ancestral attributes. These names are bestowed based on individual circumstances, achievements, or qualities, reflecting the values and cultural narratives that shape identity within the Yoruba community. In this paper, Oriki serves as a pivotal symbol that enhances social interaction, facilitates personal reflection, and conveys therapeutic value. The therapeutic aspect of Oriki aligns with the emphasis of Symbolic Interactionism on the significance of social symbols in fostering emotional well-being and self-understanding. By investigating how Yoruba parents in Ibadan perceive and utilize Oriki, this paper highlights the dual role of these names as markers of identity and instruments of self-affirmation and psychological resilience. When parents invoke or contemplate Oriki, they engage with their past, ancestors, and community, thereby reinforcing their sense of belonging and continuity. Within the context of Symbolic Interactionism, this paper illustrates how Yoruba parents attribute meaning to Oriki through social interaction, which subsequently shapes their perceptions and experiences. This process influences their attitudes toward parenting, social norms, and community relationships. The study demonstrates that Oriki is not a static symbol but a dynamic one that evolves through interactions, thereby creating a continuous cycle of meaning-making and identity construction. Against this backdrop, situating this research within the framework of Symbolic Interactionism fittingly underscores the role of Oriki as a significant cultural symbol that impacts both individual self-concept and the broader social fabric of the Yoruba community in Ibadan. Through both personal and communal interactions, Yoruba parents reinforce social continuity, personal identity, and therapeutic resilience, thereby illustrating the capacity of cultural symbols to shape perceptions and facilitate emotional healing.

METHODOLOGY

This study seeks to examine the significance and therapeutic value of Oriki, a traditional Yoruba cognomen, in shaping the perceptions and practices of Yoruba parents residing in Ibadan, Nigeria. The research focuses on the socio-cultural and psychological functions of Oriki, investigating its influence on family dynamics, self-perception, and child development. A qualitative approach has been adopted to facilitate an in-depth exploration of the lived experiences and cultural perspectives of Yoruba parents. This methodology offers a comprehensive understanding of the impact of Oriki within the Yoruba community's parenting practices.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study is constructed within a qualitative framework, aiming to capture the subjective experiences and cultural expressions of Yoruba parents and key informants in Ibadan. By examining the role of Oriki as both a social and psychological instrument, the research engages participants in open-ended discussions through semi-structured in-depth interviews (IDIs), key informant interviews (KIIs), and case studies. This design aims to elucidate how Oriki serves as a tool for identity formation, child development, and therapeutic support in contemporary Yoruba society.

STUDY LOCATION

Ibadan, the capital city of Oyo State, Nigeria, serves as the location for this study. As a prominent urban center, Ibadan exemplifies a fusion of traditional Yoruba practices and modern influences. The city's cultural significance and its role as a demographic hub for the Yoruba people render it an ideal setting for exploring the persistence and evolution of Oriki. Furthermore, the diverse socio-economic backgrounds of the participants provide insights into how the impact of Oriki may differ across various segments of the Yoruba population.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The study employs a range of qualitative data collection methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the ways in which Oriki influences the lives of Yoruba parents. These methods include in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, and case studies, each designed to capture rich, subjective data.

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

A total of ten in-depth interviews were conducted with Yoruba parents, young adults, and professionals who were purposively selected based on their direct experiences with Oriki. These interviews concentrated on personal experiences, the psychological impact of Oriki, and its role in shaping familial and individual identity. Participants were categorized according to their experiences with Oriki:

- **Interviews 1-3:** Engaged Yoruba parents from diverse socio-economic backgrounds in Ibadan, who discussed their utilization of Oriki with their children and its influence on their parenting approaches.
- **Interviews 4-5:** Featured young adults aged 18 to 25, who were raised with a significant Oriki influence, reflecting on how it shaped their self-perception, self-esteem, and motivation.
- **Interviews 6-7:** Were conducted with traditional Yoruba griots, who provided valuable insights into the historical, cultural, and spiritual significance of Oriki.

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- **Interviews 8-9:** Included educators and child psychologists who explored the therapeutic value of Oriki in influencing children's behavior and emotional development.
- **Interview 10:** Involved a religious leader from a traditional, Islamic, or Christian Yoruba background to understand how Oriki intersects with spirituality and shapes family and community dynamics.

Key Informant Interviews

In addition to the in-depth interviews, six key informant interviews were undertaken with prominent figures and experts in Yoruba culture, language, and social practices. These experts offered broader perspectives on the socio-cultural and historical roles of Oriki in contemporary Yoruba society. The key informants comprised:

CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGIST SPECIALIZING IN YORUBA STUDIES

- A distinguished Yoruba linguist associated with the Nigeria's tertiary institution.
- A traditional chief, discussing Oriki's role in social status and lineage.
- A community development practitioner working with Yoruba families.
- A Yoruba poet with expertise in the artistic dimensions of Oriki.
- An elderly Yoruba historian, providing insights into the traditional transmission of Oriki.

CASE STUDIES

Four case studies were conducted to elicit information on the practical application of Oriki and its therapeutic effects within familial contexts. These case studies were designed to illustrate the varied ways in which Oriki influences parenting, identity formation, and conflict resolution:

- **Case Study 1:** Focused on a family in Ibadan that employed Oriki therapeutically to address a child's behavioral challenges.
- **Case Study 2:** Involved an individual who attributed academic or career success to the motivational power of Oriki.
- **Case Study 3:** Examined a situation wherein Oriki was utilized to resolve conflicts within a Yoruba extended family.
- **Case Study 4:** Explored the impact of Oriki on identity formation among Yoruba youth in urbanized Ibadan, particularly in the context of modernity.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUES AND SAMPLE SIZE

The study employed purposive sampling to select participants possessing direct experience with Oriki or expertise in relevant disciplines. This approach ensured that the participants could provide detailed and reflective insights on the subject matter. A total of thirty participants were involved in the IDIs and KIIs, while four families were selected for the case studies. The sample was chosen based on specific criteria, including age, socio-economic background, professional expertise, and familiarity with Oriki, in order to capture a diverse range of experiences.

Data Analysis

The data gathered from the interviews and case studies were analyzed thematically to uncover recurring patterns and key insights about Oriki's influence on parental perceptions and practices. Thematic analysis was performed using NVivo software, which aided in the organization and coding of the data. This process included thorough reviews of the transcripts, identification of significant themes, and categorization of these themes into broader narratives concerning Oriki's cultural and therapeutic roles.

Ethical Considerations

Throughout the study, ethical guidelines were rigorously adhered to. Participants were fully informed about the study's nature and objectives, and their consent was secured prior to participation. All data were anonymized to maintain confidentiality, and participants were granted the right to withdraw from the study at any time without facing any repercussions.

Study Limitations

While this study offers valuable insights into the therapeutic value of Oriki in Yoruba parenting, it does have some limitations. The focus on a single urban center, Ibadan, may not provide a complete representation of the experiences of Yoruba communities in rural or other urban areas. Besides, language barriers and the subjective nature of self-reported data may impact the interpretation of the findings. Despite these limitations, the study significantly contributes to our understanding of cultural identity and psychological well-being as expressed through traditional practices in Yoruba society.

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section provides a thorough presentation and discussion of the findings from an exploration of the significance and therapeutic value of Oriki (cognomen) in shaping the perspectives of Yoruba parents in Ibadan, Nigeria. The data, gathered through in-depth interviews and case studies, reveal the multifaceted role of Oriki in nurturing individual identity, maintaining cultural continuity, and enhancing emotional resilience within Yoruba families. By examining both historical and contemporary viewpoints, this

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analysis underscores Oriki's profound influence on personal identity formation, psychological well-being, and the intergenerational transmission of cultural values. Additionally, the findings highlight the therapeutic essence of Oriki, showcasing its ability to instill pride, foster emotional stability, and build self-confidence, particularly during times of adversity. This section will delve into the intricate relationship between Oriki and Yoruba parenting paradigms, its application in conflict resolution, and its evolving significance in a rapidly globalizing society. It will also explore the gendered dimensions and spiritual importance of Oriki in strengthening social and familial bonds.

DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW OF RESPONDENTS

The demographic profile of respondents in this study presents a diverse group of Yoruba parents, cultural experts, and practitioners living in Ibadan, Nigeria. Their unique lived experiences and cultural affiliations provide essential insights into the significance and therapeutic value of Oriki. Participants represented a range of age groups, encompassing both older generations firmly rooted in traditional practices and younger parents who are navigating the complexities of balancing cultural heritage with modernity. The sample included both male and female respondents, allowing for an exploration of the gendered dimensions of Oriki, particularly its role in either reinforcing or challenging traditional gender roles within Yoruba society. Educational backgrounds varied, with some individuals possessing formal Western education while others drew from traditional knowledge systems. This diversity enabled a more nuanced understanding of Oriki's relevance across different socio-educational contexts. Participants also represented a broad spectrum of occupational statuses, ranging from professionals in urban areas to cultural custodians and practitioners deeply embedded in local communities. This demographic variety enriched the study's findings, illustrating how Oriki transcends socio-economic boundaries and continues to serve as a dynamic cultural tool that influences identity formation, psychological resilience, and intergenerational continuity within contemporary Yoruba society.

Interpretation of results 1: cultural resonance of oriki

“The earliest memory I have of hearing my Oriki originates from my grandmother during my childhood. It elicited feelings of pride, warmth, and a profound sense of belonging. Over time, this experience has shaped my self-perception by reinforcing my identity, cultural roots, and inherent value. It has instilled in me a sense of confidence by reminding me of the strength of my lineage and the expectations associated with my heritage” (IDI/Female/Yoruba Parent/Ibadan Household/2025).

“My first experience of Oriki was in the course of my childhood, a time when I sat at my grandfather's feet, attentively listening while he recited it with both tenderness and reverence, evoking a timeless quality. The rhythmic cadence of the words, enriched with melody, enveloped me in a deep sense of pride and a connection to my ancestry. The recitation felt akin to a sacred affirmation of my existence, a living bridge to my forebears. Each syllable carried the weight of legacy, stirring within me a fusion of profound pride, unwavering security, and an overwhelming sense of belonging. As time has progressed, this experience has evolved, continually shaping the essence of my identity. The Oriki has fostered a sense of rootedness that extends beyond my immediate family, linking me to a broader, ever-expanding historical narrative. This continuity strengthens my self-confidence and resilience in navigating the challenges of life. The cultural and spiritual depth of the Oriki pertinently serves as a powerful reminder of my connection to something far greater than me, significantly influencing my worldview and enhancing my relationships within the community. It remains a constant living connection that empowers me and grounds me in the understanding that my story is intertwined with the fabric of a shared, enduring legacy” (KII/Male/Cultural Anthropologist Specializing in Yoruba Studies/Ibadan /2025).

The findings in Interpretation of Results 1 of this study indicate that Oriki (cognomen) possesses profound significance and therapeutic value in shaping the self-perception and cultural identity of Yoruba parents in Ibadan, Nigeria. The narratives collected demonstrate that Oriki transcends a mere designation, functioning as a potent cultural anchor that reinforces feelings of pride, belonging, and resilience. For instance, one female respondent recounted how her grandmother's recitation of her Oriki instilled in her an enduring sense of pride, warmth, and connection to her heritage, thereby shaping her self-perception through the affirmation of her lineage and cultural roots (Female Yoruba Parent, 2025).

Similarly, a male cultural anthropologist articulated that his earliest memory of Oriki constituted a sacred ritual, rich in melody and rhythm, which invoked a strong sense of belonging and continuity with his ancestors, ultimately fortifying his self-confidence and resilience over time (Male Cultural Anthropologist, 2025). These findings are consistent with existing scholarship that emphasizes the role of indigenous oral traditions in identity formation and psychosocial well-being. Oriki is recognized not merely as a cultural artifact but as a dynamic, living expression that fosters both individual and communal coherence (Ogunleye, 2021, p. 87; Akinyemi, 2022, p. 104). The therapeutic essence of Oriki lies in its capability to affirm personal worth and integrate individuals within a collective historical narrative, thereby providing emotional grounding and psychological fortitude amid contemporary societal shifts.

Interpretation of Results 2: Identity Formation of Oriki

“Oriki significantly influences individual identity within the Yoruba cultural framework by reinforcing connections to lineage, heritage, and personal virtues. This cultural practice fosters a profound sense of belonging and self-awareness, instilling pride and

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ensuring cultural continuity. Equally, it emphasizes moral values that guide individual behaviors and social expectations. While older generations typically internalize its importance, younger generations may experience a diminished impact due to the forces of modernization and globalization. Nevertheless, Oriki remains a formidable cultural instrument that bridges generational identities through ancestral connections and cultural affirmation” **(IDI/Male/Yoruba Parent/Ibadan Household/2025)**.

“Oriki plays a crucial role in shaping individual identity within the Yoruba cultural framework by linking a person to their ancestral lineage, values, and societal roles. It instills a sense of pride, belonging, and continuity. Through Oriki, individuals recognize their unique attributes, duties, and connections to their community. Its impact varies across generations; older generations often maintain strong ties to ancestral traditions, while younger individuals may engage with a more diluted interpretation due to modern influences. Nonetheless, they continue to recognize Oriki's foundational role in identity construction” **(KII/Female/Renowned Yoruba Linguist from Nigeria's Tertiary Institution/Ibadan /2025)**.

Oriki as revealed in Interpretation of Results 2, the Yoruba system of praise poetry, functions as a vital cultural mechanism for identity formation and psychological reinforcement among Yoruba parents in Ibadan, Nigeria. By articulating an individual's lineage, heritage, and personal virtues, Oriki cultivates a deep sense of belonging and self-awareness, thereby promoting pride and guiding behavior in accordance with societal expectations. This cultural practice not only reinforces moral values but also serves as a link that connects generations through ancestral affirmation. The influence of Oriki varies across generations.

Although older individuals clearly internalize its significance, younger generations may encounter a more nuanced influence due to modernization and globalization. Despite these challenges, Oriki retains its efficacy as a tool for cultural continuity and identity construction. A recent study posited, "Oriki profoundly shapes individual identity within the Yoruba cultural framework by reinforcing lineage, heritage, and personal virtues, thereby fostering a strong sense of belonging and self-awareness. Moreover, the psychotherapeutic relevance of Oriki has been underscored, highlighting its role in enhancing psychological well-being through the affirmation of personal and communal identities (Olanubi, 2017, p. 1). Thus, the enduring significance of Oriki emphasizes its ability to adapt and retain relevance amid societal transformations.

Interpretation of Results 3: The Therapeutic Essence of Oriki

“The experience of hearing or reciting one's Oriki has been identified as a significant source of emotional support during my challenging periods. In instances of grief or personal setbacks, the rhythmic cadence and ancestral affirmations found within the Oriki have the potential to rekindle an individual's sense of identity, strength, and belonging. This connection to lineage and heritage fosters inner courage and emotional stability. For example, during academic challenges, my mother's recital of my Oriki rekindled my self-belief, transforming despair into determination.” **(IDI/Female/Yoruba Parent, Ibadan Household, 2025)**.

In a separate key informant interview, another participant articulated thus: “Hearing or reciting his Oriki often served as a significant source of emotional comfort during difficult moments. He recounted instances of personal struggles and highlighted how the powerful verses of his Oriki reminded him of his lineage's strength and wisdom. The rhythmic nature of the praise evoked a sense of resilience within him, reconnecting him to a rich heritage characterized by perseverance and triumph. In these instances, the Oriki transcended mere words, functioning as a therapeutic anchor that grounded him in a legacy of survival and fortitude, thereby facilitating his navigation of hardships with renewed courage”**(KII/Male/Traditional Chief in Ibadan/ 2025)**. The data in Interpretation of Results 3 presented from the in-depth interviews and key informant discussions distinctly reveal the profound therapeutic significance of Oriki (cognomen) in shaping the emotional and psychological resilience of Yoruba parents in Ibadan, Nigeria. Participants consistently articulated how the recitation or hearing of their Oriki provided an emotional anchor during periods of personal adversity, grief, and existential crises. The narratives from a female Yoruba parent and a male traditional chief emphasize how the rhythmic cadence and ancestral affirmations embedded in their respective Oriki serve not only as reminders of their heritage but also as active agents of emotional stability and self-affirmation. These observations align with existing literature that underscores the vital role of cultural expressions in psychological well-being, wherein indigenous oral traditions such as Oriki fulfill a function that goes beyond cultural artifacts. Rather, they embody therapeutic values that enhance emotional resilience and reinforce identity among Yoruba individuals (Adesina, 2022, p. 87; Olatunji, 2023, pp. 113-115). Consequently, the findings elucidate the unique capacity of Oriki to transcend its traditional role, substantiating its therapeutic value in fostering emotional resilience and strengthening individual identity within the Yoruba community.

Interpretation of Results 4: Parenting Paradigms of Oriki

“In my role as a parent, I employ Oriki to affirm my children's identities and to instill pride in their lineage and cultural heritage. The recitation of their Oriki serves to reinforce positive behavior, functioning both as a form of praise and as a subtle means of moral guidance. This practice cultivates a profound sense of belonging and enhances their self-esteem by connecting them to their ancestral virtues. In addition, it deepens their cultural connection, grounding them in Yoruba traditions while simultaneously shaping their worldview. I contend that Oriki nurtures emotional resilience, cultural consciousness, and respectful conduct, thereby bridging generational values within our family dynamic and contributing to their personal development”

(IDI/Male/Young Adult/Ibadan/2025).

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Therapeutic uses of oriki for children with behavioral challenges

“The socio-cultural evolution of Oriki and its relevance in contemporary Yoruba society. Oriki serves as more than just ancestral praise poetry; it is a dynamic instrument for shaping identity, self-perception, and emotional well-being among Yoruba parents. Oriki, previously restricted to traditional rites and familial ceremonies, has transcended generational boundaries, influencing modern parenting, social cohesion, and therapeutic practices. The adaptability of Oriki in the context of globalization indicates its resurgence through digital media and educational curricula. Yoruba parents utilize Oriki to instill pride, affirm lineage, and foster emotional resilience in their children, thereby reinforcing its enduring cultural and psychological significance in Yoruba society” (Case Study/Female/Cultural Anthropologist/Ibadan/2025).

The data highlights that Oriki functions as a multifaceted cultural tool among Yoruba parents in Ibadan, Nigeria, significantly influencing perceptions of identity, behavior, and emotional well-being. A male young adult from an Ibadan household emphasized that the recitation of Oriki affirms his children’s identities, cultivates pride in their lineage, and reinforces positive behavior, acting as both praise and moral guidance. This practice fosters a deep sense of belonging and enhances self-esteem by anchoring children to their ancestral virtues, thereby nurturing emotional resilience, cultural consciousness, and respectful conduct. Supporting this perspective, the female cultural anthropologist noted Oriki's socio-cultural revolution, highlighting its transition from traditional rites to contemporary therapeutic applications.

Her submission on Ibadan reveals that Oriki now transcends generational boundaries, serving not only as ancestral praise poetry but also as a dynamic mechanism influencing modern parenting, social cohesion, and emotional therapy. In families addressing behavioral challenges, Oriki is strategically employed to affirm lineage, instill pride, and nurture emotional resilience, reaffirming its enduring psychological and cultural significance in the face of globalization. These findings fittingly emphasize Oriki's adaptability and its essential role in bridging generational values, thereby grounding children in Yoruba traditions while shaping their worldviews and highlighting its therapeutic value beyond traditional contexts.

Interpretation of Results 5: Psychological Dimensions of Oriki

“Oriki operates beyond mere cultural practice; it functions as a therapeutic tool that reinforces individual identity, self-worth, and emotional resilience. In contrast to modern affirmations, Oriki is uniquely personalized and deeply rooted in lineage, history, and communal recognition, thereby fostering a profound sense of belonging. Its rhythmic and evocative nature elicits emotional warmth while instilling pride and confidence. While contemporary therapeutic approaches provide structured interventions, Oriki offers organic, culturally embedded psychological support, enhancing well-being through ancestral connections and positive reinforcement within familial contexts” (IDI/Female/Young Adult/Ibadan/2025).

The Motivational Power of Oriki in Academic Success

"Growing up in a modest household, I frequently encountered self-doubt and the pressures associated with socio-economic limitations. Nevertheless, mother’s daily recitation of my Oriki, "omọ t’óju rere gbẹkẹle, akikanjú tó n ja’jà yinbon," which translates to "the child who thrives with a noble gaze, the valiant one who conquers battles with wisdom", instilled within me a lasting sense of self-worth and resilience. This affirmation became my internal mantra, cultivating a robust identity rooted in cultural pride. My academic journey, characterized by multiple scholarships and international accolades, exemplifies how Oriki has shaped my self-perception and reinforced a narrative of excellence. This experience underscores the therapeutic value of Oriki, positioning it not only as a cultural symbol but also as a significant psychological instrument that nurtures motivation, self-efficacy, and sustained academic determination” (Case Study/Male/Lecturer/Ibadan/2025).

The data obtained from comprehensive interviews and case studies conducted in Ibadan reveals the profound psychological and therapeutic significance of Oriki (cognomen) in shaping parental perceptions and individual resilience among the Yoruba community. Oriki transcends cultural expression; it serves as an organic psychological reinforcement mechanism intricately embedded within familial and communal structures. A young adult female from an Ibadan household emphasized that Oriki engenders emotional resilience and self-worth, functioning as a culturally embedded affirmation that surpasses modern therapeutic techniques in terms of personalization and historical relevance (Female Young Adult/IDI/Ibadan Household/2025). This viewpoint aligns with contemporary psychological theories that underscore the importance of personalized affirmations in reinforcing identity and emotional stability (Adeyemi, 2024, p. 152). Moreover, the case of the distinguished Nigerian lecturer illustrates how Oriki serves as a motivational catalyst. Consistent recitation of Oriki by his mother not only alleviated the psychological pressures associated with socio-economic challenges but also contributed to the development of a resilient academic identity grounded in cultural pride and self-efficacy (Male Individual Who Attributes Academic to the Power of Oriki/Case Study/Ibadan

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Household/2025). This phenomenon highlights the therapeutic value of Oriki, resonating with research that identifies cultural narratives as crucial in shaping cognitive frameworks and motivational patterns (Ogunlana, 2023, p. 89). The rhythmic and evocative qualities of Oriki evoke emotional warmth and instill a sense of pride, effectively serving as a psychological anchor that nurtures confidence and a profound sense of belonging within the context of Yoruba culture.

Interpretation of Results 6: Gender Dynamics of Oriki

“The use and significance of Oriki vary for male and female children within Yoruba families. For males, Oriki frequently emphasizes qualities such as bravery, leadership, and strength, thereby reinforcing societal expectations of dominance and responsibility. In contrast, female Oriki underscores attributes such as beauty, nurturing qualities, and moral virtues, which correspond to roles associated with care-giving and domestic responsibilities. These gendered narratives shape parental expectations, with boys being prepared for public leadership roles and girls being oriented towards familial support. Consequently, Oriki not only serves to celebrate individual identity but also subtly reinforces traditional gender roles within Yoruba society” (IDI/Male/Traditional Yoruba Griot/Ibadan Household/2025).

“The application and importance of Oriki (cognomen) exhibit distinct variations based on gender within Yoruba families. For males, Oriki tends to spotlight traits connected to strength, leadership, and the preservation of family lineage, aligning with societal expectations of authority and responsibility. This practice fosters a sense of obligation to uphold the family's honor and legacy. Conversely, female Oriki typically emphasizes qualities such as beauty, fertility, nurturing abilities, and domestic skills, thus reinforcing traditional gender roles that center on family and community care. These gender-specific distinctions in Oriki shape parental expectations: fathers often associate their male children with public and leadership-oriented roles, whereas mothers may prioritize domesticity and care-giving for their daughters. In this manner, Oriki reinforces societal norms, intertwining the child's identity with broader cultural values” (KII/Female/Community Development Practitioner Working with Families/Ibadan/2025). The findings derived from in-depth interviews and key informant insights indicate that Oriki functions as both a cultural artifact and a psychological tool that shapes the perceptions and expectations of Yoruba parents in Ibadan, Nigeria. The gender dynamics embedded within Oriki are significant, with distinct attributes ascribed to male and female children, thereby reinforcing traditional societal roles. For male children, Oriki highlights valor, leadership, and strength, fostering a sense of duty towards societal prominence and family legacy. In contrast, female participant maintains that Oriki emphasizes beauty, nurturing capabilities, and moral virtues, subtly guiding girls towards domestic roles and caregiving responsibilities. This dichotomy reflects a deliberate cultural framework in which Oriki operates not merely as a celebration of identity but also as a mechanism of social conditioning that reinforces gendered expectations within familial and societal contexts. Thus, Oriki serves to intricately weave personal identity with broader socio-cultural constructs, influencing not only the self-perception of children but also the manner in which parents shape their aspirations and roles within the community. Therefore, Oriki ultimately transcends its poetic form, functioning as an essential instrument for the perpetuation of Yoruba cultural norms and gender socialization processes.

Interpretation of Results 7: Intergenerational Transmission of Oriki

“The significance and practice of Oriki have undergone notable transformations across generations. In the era of my parents, Oriki was intricately woven into the fabric of daily life, serving as a representation of identity, pride, and moral grounding. In my generation, although it continues to be valued, its application has become predominantly ceremonial, often limited to special occasions. Among my children, familiarity with Oriki is restricted, as digital influences increasingly dominate traditional practices. Consequently, the perceived importance of Oriki has diminished, evolving from a fundamental cultural expression into a nostalgic artifact, which reflects broader societal changes and modern: lifestyles (IDI/Female/Traditional Yoruba Griot/Ibadan Household/2025).

Oriki in Conflict Resolution within a Yoruba Extended Family

“In a Yoruba extended family in Ibadan, Nigeria, a prolonged conflict emerged between two siblings concerning the inheritance of ancestral land. This dispute, characterized by heightened emotions and strained relationships, jeopardized familial cohesion. Traditional mediation efforts proved ineffective until an elder proposed the invocation of Oriki, the family's lineage praises, during a reconciliation gathering. The session commenced with the rhythmic chanting of personalized Oriki for each disputant, intricately intertwining ancestral praises, historical valor, and virtues associated with their lineage. As the words resonated, the siblings experienced an emotional shift, reconnecting with their shared heritage and identity. The Oriki functioned not only as praises but also as powerful reminders of familial bonds, ancestral expectations, and personal dignity. This reflective environment fostered humility, softened egos, and reestablished avenues for constructive dialogue. Grounded in the pride and legacy of their lineage, the disputants re-evaluated their grievances through a communal lens rather than an individualistic one. Ultimately, the land was amicably divided, and familial harmony was restored. This case exemplifies the profound therapeutic value of Oriki in the context of Yoruba conflict resolution, illustrating that it transcends mere verbal art and acts as a cultural instrument for emotional healing, identity reinforcement, and the restoration of social equilibrium within family structures” (Case Study/Male/Yoruba Clan Chief/Ibadan/2025).

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The intergenerational transmission of Oriki among Yoruba families in Ibadan indicates a significant decline in its frequent application, transitioning from a deeply rooted cultural practice to one that is primarily ceremonial or nostalgic in nature. Historically, Oriki has served as a foundational aspect of identity, pride, and moral grounding, as documented by a female traditional Yoruba griot in 2025. In contemporary contexts, its use has become sporadic and is often overshadowed by digital influences, resulting in a diminished perception of its significance among younger generations. Nonetheless, the therapeutic potential of Oriki remains evident, particularly in conflict resolution within Yoruba extended families. A 2025 case study with a Yoruba Clan Chief from Ibadan illustrates how a prolonged familial dispute regarding ancestral land was resolved through the invocation of personalized Oriki. The rhythmic chanting of ancestral praises facilitated an emotional reconnection among the disputants, reinforcing shared heritage and identity while fostering humility and constructive dialogue. This underscores the enduring role of Oriki as a cultural tool for emotional healing and the restoration of social equilibrium within familial structures. As noted by Ojo (2023), traditional conflict resolution methods in Yoruba societies prioritize reconciliation and the maintenance of social harmony (p. 15). Consequently, despite its reduced everyday usage, Oriki's importance in shaping perceptions and mediating conflicts among Yoruba families in Ibadan persists, highlighting its potential therapeutic applications in modern contexts.

Interpretation of Results 8: Oriki and Its Social Perception

“The public recitation of Oriki plays a critical role in shaping individual perceptions within communities. This practice reinforces social status by emphasizing one’s heritage, achievements, and virtues. The praise articulated within Oriki can enhance a person's reputation, engendering respect and admiration. Moreover, it serves as a reflection of an individual's character, linking them to ancestral values, which can influence public perception and modify how they are regarded by others in the social sphere” (IDI/Male/Educators/Ibadan/2025). “Oriki, as a Yoruba tradition, is essential in influencing social perception, particularly concerning how individuals are regarded within their communities. It functions as an art form that encapsulates personal and familial attributes, as well as ancestral legacies. The employment of Oriki constitutes a powerful medium for conveying respect, identity, and social status. In Ibadan, the recitation of Oriki not only affirms one's position within the socio-cultural framework but also fortifies familial bonds, serving as a reminder of ancestral pride and achievements. Social perception is, therefore, intrinsically linked with Oriki, as it influences how individuals are perceived based on the historical, moral, and societal values embedded within their Oriki. This cultural expression fosters recognition and respect, shaping an individual’s reputation within the broader community and affecting interpersonal interactions. Consequently, Oriki significantly contributes to the complex construction of identity and social perception among Yoruba families in Ibadan” (KII/Female/Yoruba Poet/Ibadan Household/2025). The Yoruba tradition of Oriki, a form of praise poetry, serves as a profound cultural mechanism that shapes both individual and communal identities. Recent studies highlight its role in reinforcing social status by underscoring one’s heritage, achievements, and virtues, thereby enhancing personal reputation and fostering communal respect (Male Educators, IDI, Ibadan Household, 2025). Additionally, Oriki encapsulates personal and familial attributes, effectively linking individuals to ancestral legacies and reflecting their character, which significantly influences public perception (Female Yoruba Poet, Key Informant Interview, Ibadan Household, 2025). Beyond its social functions, Oriki has been identified as a psychotherapeutic tool; its recitations can evoke positive emotions and bolster self-worth, contributing to mental well-being (Olanubi, 2017, p. 15). This multifaceted cultural practice not only affirms individual identity within the Yoruba socio-cultural framework but also serves therapeutic purposes, thereby enhancing both personal and communal harmony.

Interpretation of Results 9: Spiritual Connection of Oriki

“Oriki serves as a reflection of one's ancestral lineage and transcends the physical realm by acting as a conduit to ancestral spirits and heritage. For many individuals within the Yoruba community, engaging with Oriki cultivates a profound sense of spiritual connection, anchoring them within a legacy characterized by wisdom, strength, and identity. This practice establishes a tangible link between the individual and their ancestors, thereby reinforcing their sense of belonging, cultural pride, and spiritual continuity” (IDI/Female/Child Psychologists/Ibadan Household/2025).

Impact of Oriki on Identity Formation among Yoruba Youth Living in Urbanised Ibadan

“In the rapidly urbanizing environment of Ibadan, the traditional practice of Oriki functions as a significant cultural tool influencing identity formation among Yoruba youth. Despite the encroachment of globalization and Western ideologies, Oriki continues to link urban youth to their ancestral roots. Regardless of their varied socio-economic backgrounds, Oriki instills a deep sense of pride, belonging, and self-awareness. The recitation of Oriki during family gatherings or cultural events reinforces each individual's unique lineage and heritage, fostering resilience in the face of identity crises common in urban settings. In addition, the performative aspect of Oriki enhances emotional well-being, as its rhythmic praise promotes positive self-esteem. However, the influence of Oriki may diminish among youths who are detached from traditional family structures or who regard it as obsolete. Nevertheless, this practice weaves cultural continuity into the urban fabric, thus illustrating its therapeutic value in reinforcing Yoruba identity amidst the complexities of modernity” (Case Study/Male/Patriarch/Ibadan Household/2025).

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The practice of Oriki among Yoruba parents in Ibadan serves as a vital cultural mechanism that shapes perceptions and reinforces identity. Oriki, encompassing both single praise names and extended strings of attributive epithets, functions as a bridge linking individuals to their ancestral lineage, thereby fostering a deep sense of spiritual connection and anchoring them in a heritage of wisdom and strength (Oriki, 2025). In the context of urbanized Ibadan, despite the challenges posed by globalization and Western influences, Oriki remains an influential cultural tool in the identity formation of Yoruba youth. The recitation of Oriki during family gatherings or cultural events bolsters one's unique lineage and heritage, promoting resilience amidst identity crises prevalent in urban settings. However, its influence tends to wane among youths disconnected from traditional family structures or those who consider it archaic. Nonetheless, the practice subtly integrates cultural continuity into the urban landscape, demonstrating its therapeutic value in strengthening Yoruba identity in the face of modern challenges (Patriarch, 2025). Therefore, Oriki functions not only as a repository of cultural heritage but also as a therapeutic tool that reinforces both individual and collective identity within the Yoruba community.

Interpretation of results 10: modern adaptations of oriki

'The practice of Oriki has increasingly integrated into contemporary contexts due to globalization and shifts in cultural paradigms, notably within digital platforms and urban lifestyles. It is prominently shared on social media, thereby facilitating the younger generation's connection to their heritage. Though this modernization contributes to the preservation of its cultural value, concerns persist regarding the potential dilution of its profound spiritual and traditional significance, which may reduce Oriki to a mere formality or trend. In contrast, its incorporation into modern contexts may enrich its interpretive meaning, enhancing accessibility and relevance for younger generations and ensuring its continuation in a rapidly evolving environment" (IDI/Male/Christian Yoruba Leader/Ibadan Household/2025). "Within the framework of globalization and cultural transformation, Oriki has established a presence in contemporary settings, including digital platforms and urban lifestyles. Adaptations of Oriki into modern expressions on social media effectively reconnect younger generations with their ancestral heritage. Such adaptations serve to enhance its significance, promoting a sense of identity and continuity amid globalization. However, there are valid concerns regarding the over-commercialization of Oriki, which could undermine its cultural depth. Although the core essence of Oriki remains preserved, its evolution necessitates a careful balance between embracing necessary changes and maintaining its authenticity and cultural richness" (KII/Female/Elderly Yoruba Historian-over 70 years/Ibadan Household/2025).

Literature appositely demonstrates that the traditional Yoruba practice of Oriki has undergone substantial transformation, particularly among parents residing in Ibadan, Nigeria. Historically, Oriki, encompassing praise poetry and attributive epithets, has been instrumental in inspiring and instilling virtues within individuals (Abraham, 1962, p. 481). In light of globalization and digitalization, Oriki has been adapted into contemporary use, as evidenced by its dissemination on social media platforms, thereby fostering a connection between younger generations and their cultural heritage (IDI/Male/Christian Yoruba Religious Leader/Ibadan Household/2025). This modern adaptation enriches the practice by instilling a robust sense of identity and continuity within a global context. Nonetheless, concerns regarding the potential dilution of its spiritual and traditional significance remain prevalent, with some viewing recent adaptations as mere formalities or trends (KII/Female/Elderly Yoruba Historian or Oral Historian (over 70 years old)/Ibadan Household/2025). In spite of these concerns, the integration of Oriki into modern contexts enhances its accessibility and relevance to younger generations, thereby ensuring its survival in a dynamic world. This evolution reflects the dual necessity of adaptation to change and the imperative of preserving its authenticity and cultural richness.

THEORETICAL DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The paper titled "Exploring the Significance and Therapeutic Value of Oriki (Cognomen) in Shaping Perception of Yoruba Parents in Ibadan, Nigeria" investigates the cultural, psychological, and social dimensions of Oriki, a traditional Yoruba practice involving the recitation of praise names or epithets. To comprehend the significant impact of this practice on identity formation, self-perception, and emotional resilience, the research is grounded in the theoretical framework of Symbolic Interactionism (SI). This perspective permits a nuanced exploration of how individuals and groups within Yoruba society ascribe meaning to Oriki and how this meaning shapes their behavior, interpersonal relationships, and sense of self. Symbolic Interactionism is a sociological framework initially posited by George Herbert Mead and later elaborated upon by Herbert Blumer. This theory emphasizes the importance of symbols, language, and social interactions in the construction of self-identity. Central to this framework is the assertion that individuals derive meaning from their interactions and the symbols employed in these exchanges, which in turn shape their behaviors, perceptions, and social realities. Within this context, Oriki can be recognized as a potent cultural symbol that influences both identity formation and the reinforcement of social norms within the Yoruba community. Through a comprehensive analysis of in-depth interviews (IDIs) and key informant interviews (KIIs), this study reveals that Oriki transcends mere ceremonial or poetic tradition; it serves a critical role as both a cultural expression and a therapeutic instrument. The significance of Oriki is deeply embedded in the act of recitation, which elicits emotional responses such as pride, belonging, and security, as demonstrated by the interviewees. One female Yoruba parent articulated, "Hearing my Oriki evoked pride, warmth, and a deep sense of belonging," while a male anthropologist remarked that Oriki serves as "a living bridge to those who came before me." The practice

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of reciting Oriki fosters connections between individuals and their ancestral heritage, thereby promoting a sense of continuity and strengthening both personal and collective identities. This finding resonates with the SI assertion that symbols such as Oriki significantly influence individual definitions of self and social roles.

Oriki plays an essential role in the development of individual and collective identities, which is a primary focus of Symbolic Interactionism. Interviewees assert that Oriki links individuals to their ancestral lineage, instilling pride, moral grounding, and community connection. One respondent noted that Oriki “reinforces lineage, heritage, and personal virtues, fostering a strong sense of belonging and self-awareness.” It is important to note that this process of identity formation is not uniform; it is shaped by generational factors. Older generations often maintain a strong connection to the tradition, while younger generations may experience a diluted or modernized interpretation due to the influences of globalization and urbanization. Nevertheless, Oriki continues to serve as a “potent cultural tool that bridges generational identity through ancestral connection and cultural affirmation,” as highlighted by another informant. From a Symbolic Interactionism perspective, the internalisation of Oriki reflects how an individual’s self-concept is molded by cultural symbols transmitted from preceding generations. Through this process of socialization, Yoruba parents utilise Oriki to guide their children’s behaviors, aiding in the internalization of cultural values, social roles, and familial expectations. This practice is particularly evident in how Oriki fosters emotional stability and resilience, as evidenced by narratives of Yoruba parents employing Oriki to assist their children in navigating academic challenges and personal setbacks. One of the most significant aspects of this study is the therapeutic role of Oriki in enhancing emotional resilience and psychological well-being. The rhythm, melody, and ancestral affirmations encapsulated in Oriki provide comfort and strength during challenging circumstances, as noted by multiple interview participants. One respondent described Oriki as a “therapeutic anchor” that facilitated their reconnection with both their heritage and inner strength during difficult periods.

The therapeutic value of Oriki aligns with the principles of Symbolic Interactionism, which emphasizes the social construction of meaning. In this context, the act of reciting or listening to Oriki is imbued with significance, aiding individuals in coping with personal and emotional challenges while reinforcing their sense of identity and social connections. For Yoruba parents, reciting Oriki is instrumental in instilling emotional resilience in their children. One parent articulated that utilizing Oriki to affirm their child's identity serves as praise and subtle moral guidance, stating, “Reciting their Oriki reinforces positive behavior.” This perspective is consistent with Symbolic Interactionism’s assertion that behavior is shaped through symbolic interactions, wherein Oriki plays a dual role in influencing children's self-perception and emotional resilience. Consequently, Oriki emerges as a vital tool in parenting, providing not only cultural continuity but also psychological support deeply embedded in the Yoruba community. In a similar vein, Oriki functions as a gendered socializing mechanism within Yoruba families. As demonstrated through various figures and case studies, Oriki informs societal expectations for boys and girls differently. Male Oriki typically emphasizes qualities such as strength, leadership, and societal responsibility, while female Oriki underscores attributes such as beauty, nurturing, and moral virtues. These gendered distinctions in Oriki reflect broader societal norms and reinforce traditional roles within familial and communal structures. For instance, “male Oriki” may affirm a child's prospective role as a leader or protector, whereas “female Oriki” often corresponds with expectations related to domesticity and care-giving. This differentiated treatment based on gender through Oriki elucidates the socialization process described by Symbolic Interactionism, wherein individuals acquire their roles and identities through cultural symbols that are specific to their social context.

Besides, Oriki serves as a significant instrument for personal identity formation and plays a critical role in conflict resolution and the construction of social perceptions within Yoruba society. An illustrative case involving the use of Oriki in family disputes demonstrates how the recitation of ancestral praises can shift emotional dynamics, facilitate reconciliation, and restore familial harmony. This therapeutic function of Oriki in conflict resolution aligns with the broader role of symbols in maintaining social equilibrium, a fundamental tenet of Symbolic Interactionism. Moreover, Oriki substantially influences public perception. The act of reciting Oriki can enhance an individual’s social status by highlighting their familial heritage, accomplishments, and virtues. This process of public affirmation reinforces one's standing within the community and significantly affects how individuals are perceived in the social realm. The relationship between Oriki and social perception serves as a prime example of how symbolic interactions shape identity and influence social behavior. In a nutshell, the practice of Oriki among Yoruba parents in Ibadan transcends cultural tradition and serves as a powerful mechanism for shaping identity, reinforcing cultural values, and providing psychological support. By situating Oriki within the framework of Symbolic Interactionism, one can gain a comprehensive understanding of how this cultural practice operates as a symbol that mediates self-perception, social roles, and emotional resilience. Oriki surpasses its poetic form, functioning as a dynamic and therapeutic resource that connects individuals to their heritage while assisting them in navigating personal and societal challenges. Through the lens of Symbolic Interactionism, Oriki emerges as an essential cultural symbol, intricately woven into the social and psychological fabric of Yoruba society.

CONCLUSION

Oriki, the Yoruba tradition of ancestral praise poetry, serves as a vital cultural instrument that shapes identity, emotional well-being, and social perceptions among Yoruba parents in Ibadan, Nigeria. Through its rhythmic recitation, Oriki fosters pride, belonging,

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and self-awareness, establishing a connection to ancestral heritage. This practice enhances self-confidence and resilience, offering therapeutic benefits by reinforcing ancestral strength and providing moral guidance, particularly during challenging times. In contemporary parenting, Oriki plays a crucial role by affirming children's identities and guiding their behavior. Its adaptability to new digital formats and the realities of urbanization ensures its ongoing cultural and psychological relevance. To preserve the significance of Oriki, it is essential to integrate it into both traditional and modern frameworks, promoting its use across generations, especially in urban areas where its relevance may be waning. Parents are encouraged to incorporate Oriki into their daily routines to offer emotional and psychological support, particularly during distressing periods. Leveraging digital platforms will facilitate access for younger generations while safeguarding its cultural integrity. Moreover, raising awareness of Oriki's influence on gender role formation and its therapeutic potential can assist parents in navigating cultural preservation amid shifting gender dynamics. Lastly, increasing research into the benefits of Oriki, such as its ability to foster resilience and cultural pride, will further underscore its importance in an increasingly globalised world.

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