

Educational Management and Moral Apprenticeship: Evaluating the Role of Literature in Promoting Social Accountability in Secondary Schools in Enugu State, Nigeria.

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Abstract: This study examines the strategic function of literature within educational management in fostering moral apprenticeship and enhancing social accountability among secondary school students in Nigeria. The study was guided by three research purposes and questions. Focusing on three selected Secondary Schools in Enugu, Enugu State. These are St. Patrick's Secondary School, St. Joseph's Secondary School, and Godfrey Okoye University Secondary School. The study also surveyed 20 literature teachers using structured questionnaires. The mean and standard deviation were employed for quantitative analysis, providing insight into teacher perceptions of literature's moral and civic impact. The texts *Eze Goes to School* and *Without a Silver Spoon* were subjected to thematic analysis, identifying core moral themes such as perseverance, integrity, and civic responsibility. Findings show that literature plays a significant role in instilling moral values when properly integrated into educational management strategies. The study recommends deliberate curriculum inclusion of morally rich texts and structured teacher engagement to reinforce students' ethical development and accountability.

Keywords: Educational Management, Nigerian Literature, Moral Apprenticeship, Social Accountability, *Eze Goes to School*, *Without a Silver Spoon*.

Introduction

Educational management in Nigeria is increasingly called upon to address not only academic excellence but also moral development and civic responsibility among students. This is because the nation's education system operates within a wider social structure plagued by ethical lapses, corruption, and civic disengagement. Schools have become one of the few remaining institutions with the potential to instill ethical values and build socially accountable citizens (Okafor & Eze, 2020).

In the field of secondary education, the use of literature as a pedagogical tool is an uncharted but rich pathway to achieve this moral concept (Onyebuchi, 2021). Literary texts are society's mirror that can help students to think about human life, the choice of morality, and the results of moral actions. In this study, the writers explore the degree to which literature is believed to be purposefully adopted by educators to initiate moral apprenticeship and inculcate social responsibility among Nigerian schoolchildren.

Although literature is contained in the curriculum, it is funded as a secondary language tool rather than a value transmission device. This neglect stems from managerial and curricular constraints that deny a full expression of its transformative potential (Aghadinuno, 2023). Therefore, we encourage educational managers to reconsider their strategies to prioritize moral content in literary education and empower teachers to utilize texts effectively.

The idea of moral apprenticeship is that of the systematic and accountable shaping of ethical consciousness by role modeling, contemplation, and conversation (Nwosu & Chikwendu, 2022). In such school settings, this happens when the teachers guide the students through morally rich texts, which they expose to discussions to challenge their value systems and create room for ethical reasoning. Teachers then become mentors, and literature becomes the script.

These tales, such as *Eze Goes to School* and *Without a Silver Spoon*, are perfect for this self-guided learning. They imagine the fight against systemic inequality, corruption, and moral failure with the contradiction of values—perseverance, integrity service—as desirable virtues. These texts, as character arcs and thematic conclusions, are ethical case studies for the young readers’ consumption (Okeke & Obasi, 2021).

In the target schools—St. Patrick's Secondary School, St. Joseph's Secondary School, and Godfrey Okoye University Secondary School—the teacher of literature actively facilitates this process. Their knowledge about the moral undertones of literature and how they reason with texts so as to evoke ethical reflection is critical to achieving powerful learning outcomes (Ifeanyi & Umeadi, 2020). Management within the educational sphere must, therefore, understand and appreciate this complex function of the teacher in moral as well as intellectual terms.

Since there exists a divide between policy and practice. National guidelines on character development policies tend to focus on policy documents. There is virtually no policy framework that seeks to mainstream it into literary teaching (Adigwe & Ilechukwu, 2020). The significance of the literature in character construction is largely ignored by curriculum designers and school administrators, thus failing to actively cultivate socially responsible individuals.

It is, therefore, the main objective of this research to analyze how educational management, literature, and ethics converge by investigating the practices of text-based value inculcation and how management systems facilitate or hinder this practice. It looks into the purposeful use of literature to develop moral citizenship in students within organized educational structures.

Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria’s contemporary educational environment, there is increasing concern about the erosion of moral values among students. While literature is part of the secondary school curriculum, its function as a vehicle for moral instruction remains underemphasized. Educational management practices have not sufficiently leveraged literature to instill virtues such as integrity, perseverance, and accountability in students. There is a need to examine how literature, through guided educational management and pedagogy, can serve as a practical tool for moral apprenticeship and character formation in Nigerian schools.

Research Objectives

- To evaluate the role of literature in promoting moral values and social accountability among secondary school students.
- To analyze how the texts *Eze Goes to School* and *Without a Silver Spoon* contribute to students’ moral development.
- To assess the extent to which educational management strategies support the integration of literature into moral instruction.

Research Questions

- How does literature contribute to the promotion of moral values and social accountability among secondary school students?
- In what ways do *Eze Goes to School* and *Without a Silver Spoon* support moral apprenticeship in literature classrooms?
- How are educational management practices aligned with the use of literature to foster moral instruction?

Literature Review

Educational Management and Moral Education

Educational management entails the strategic ordering of school processes to ensure success in teaching and learning. Scholars have grown to emphasize the need for educational management to include moral and civic education (Ezeani, 2020). Given the persistent moral decay and social irresponsibility in society, moral education is adopted as the core function of school leadership, teacher support, and curriculum implementation by educational managers.

Research shows that characterization in schools in their management framework tends to experience improved student behavior and raise an accountable culture (Adeyemi & Okeke, 2021). Effective management creates conditions in which the value of honesty, discipline, and empathy can be applied and exemplification as well as policies and reward systems are maintained with the staff. It is an exercise of morality that is sustainable.

Managers of education who actively participate in teacher training in moral pedagogy can be confident of improved classroom results. Once teachers are equipped with skills to engage with literature and other sources to elicit ethical engagements, students respond on higher levels of moral reasoning and emotional participation (Nwachukwu, 2022). As such, managerial choices are influential on how values are transmitted within schools. Other educational researchers claim that school administration should view moral schooling as a strategic objective and not as a secondary issue (Okoro, 2023). This then implies that content is instructed in line with school-wide programs such as anti-bullying, civic, and service-learning lessons that teach morals in a practical manner.

Where formal civic institutions may not be strong, like in Nigeria, the school assists in the development of a moral citizen. The educational management should therefore emerge to be higher than the logistical administration and emerge as a transformative agent operating on intellectual and character (Onyeukwu, 2019).

Literature as a Medium for Moral Instruction

Literature is an imaginative mirror by which students meet the intricacies of human behavior, moral choices, and societal practices. In a school setting, literature provides students with golden stories and characters who contribute to forcing students to reflect on ethical questions (Igbokwe, 2020). The classroom is a platform for confrontation with a variety of perspectives on the subject at hand, which ultimately leads to the creation of empathy and critical moral judgment in the students.

Educators have, for many years, appreciated literature's ability to mold naive minds. It socializes learners into cultural norms and ethical expectations and enables learners to know the implications of their actions. Characters become role models, or cautionary figures, through which students absorb life lessons (Olawale, 2021). It is especially powerful in secondary education, when identities and their values are still developing.

Additionally, literature gives a student a place to play with moral conflict without the repercussions of the real world. It makes possible a conversation about themes like justice, fairness, corruption, and perseverance in a hypothetical but authentic context. This detachment, according to Ede (2022), promotes a free discourse and moral clarity.

The moral development is also influenced by the cognitive involvement made in the case of literary reading. As students analyze motivations and plot resolutions, they are practicing ethical reasoning and developing emotional intelligence (Chukwu, 2023). Literature, therefore, acquires an academic as well as a moral aspect.

Literature can also be used to bring the various races of such a society together, such as in Nigeria's multicultural environment. By presenting people's varied experiences and ethical viewpoints, it closes cultural gaps and reaffirms common moral ideals (Okafor, 2019).

Theoretical Framework

Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational Leadership Theory, originally developed by Burns (1978) and further refined by Bass and Avolio (1994), posits that effective leaders inspire, motivate, and elevate followers by appealing to higher ideals and moral values. In educational contexts, this theory emphasizes the ability of school leaders to create conducive climates where character is developed and academic achievement is attained simultaneously. Transformational educational leaders serve as moral role models, articulate the shared ethical vision, and put in place enabling frameworks for students' all-around growth.

Relative to this analysis, educational managers displaying transformational leadership qualities are more inclined to facilitate value-congruent education, enable creative teaching of literature, and foster institutional practices that uphold responsibility and ethical conduct (Eze & Onah, 2020). These leaders understand and take action to influence curriculum and instruction as levers for ethical worldview development in students; therefore, they intentionally integrate moral education into teaching practices as well as into the selection of literature done strategically.

Transformational leadership is especially applicable to Nigerian schools, where educational administrators tend to have considerable control over teachers, students, and instruction. Once such administrators begin to operate under transformational logic, they empower literature teachers to go beyond preparing learners for examinations and use the texts as tools for moral formation (Okonkwo & Ede, 2023). Thus, the theory provides a managerial lens for understanding how leadership decisions impact the moral function of literature in education.

Reader-Response Theory

Reader-Response Theory, associated with theorists such as Louise Rosenblatt (1978), posits that meaning in a text emerges from the interaction between reader and text. In this view, students do not passively receive moral messages; rather, they construct them through engagement, reflection, and personal interpretation. Such a theory can help in explaining how students assimilate values from learned literary texts, especially in the Nigerian context, where literature mimics the nature of societal dilemmas and aspirations.

According to Rosenblatt's transactional model, literature is a lived-through experience that elicits feeling, judgment, and ethical decisions (Obiechina & Nkem, 2021). When children engage with tales such as *Eze Goes to School* or *Without a Silver Spoon*, they respond to the characters' struggles on an intellectual as well as an emotional level, formulating judgments about the morality of the actions of characters and comparing these to their own lives. Such an active-engaging environment cultivates moral sensitivity and accountability, which is at the heart of moral apprenticeship.

Furthermore, the application of the Reader-Response Theory supports the pedagogical approach of open-ended questions and in-class discussions in which students have the opportunity to explore multiple interpretations and begin the development of their moral arguments (Ike & Obasi, 2022). Those literature educators who follow this method generate a dialogic learning environment in which there is no need to worry about being judged and therefore most students will articulate their values without fear since they are sensitive to the values of others.

Another focus of the theory is on the context as a response to it. The cultural, social, and personal experiences of students enable them to comprehend and retain the moral teachings of texts. It is especially vital when it comes to the role of the teacher, who facilitates ethical inquiry (Ogbonna & Uche, 2024). Reader-Response Theory is then a responsive environment of nurturing literate and socially accountable students operating under a transformational type of leadership at the school level.

These two theories established the two limits of the study. The methods of guiding moral teachings by reading and the interactive processes in which learners learn to decipher moral significance in texts. The union of educational management and literary intervention provides a comprehensive foundation for the study of how Nigerian schools can instill moral consciousness and social responsibility in learners.

Empirical Review

Ezeani (2020) evaluated the way school management policies promote civic and moral education in Nigerian secondary schools and collected data on 85 administrators from Anambra State. Although recognizing the importance of moral education, school heads did not include practices such as value-based teacher training and civic goals in their school plans systematically. Ezeani observed that moral education is still perceived as less important by many school managers, but its implementation has become disjointed. This study supplements but departs from the current investigation because of increased attention on policy issues, while the current study explores the role played by literature in the promotion of Ethos education in the governance structures of schools in Enugu State.

Nwachukwu (2022) studied the use of administrative backing in defining teachers' teaching of moral values through literature, using mixed-method research on 120 educators in Delta State. The study found that improved self-assurance of teachers and increased moral thinking of students were stimulated by strong leadership, staff training, and group planning, while a lack of administrative guidance led to focusing on exam preparation. By the current examination, Nwachukwu also accentuates the aspect of leadership in moral education, i.e., in the frame of revealing a sphere of the importance of teacher training. The present study takes the utilization of leadership influence on student conduct and the role of literature in teaching morality one step further.

Olawale(2021), studied the ways through which literature helps the character growth of Lagos secondary school students by observing the classes and interviewing the students. Student engagement and ethical reasoning improved when teachers combined moral lessons from books such as *The Incorruptible Judge* and *Without a Silver Spoon* into their classes. Therefore, poor institutional support tended to reduce the worth of literature outside exam-oriented teaching. His work of analyzing the way students of literature understand characters is different from the present research, where management support and pedagogical strategies in Enugu are considered.

Methodology

This study employed a mixed method approach to explore how literature is used to foster moral development and promote social accountability in secondary schools in Emene, Enugu State. The research focused on three selected schools: St. Patrick's Secondary School, St. Joseph's Secondary School, and Godfrey Okoye University Secondary School, chosen for their strong academic records and integration of literature in their curriculum.

The quantitative aspect involved a survey of 20 purposively selected literature teachers, with seven from St. Patrick's, seven from Godfrey Okoye, and six from St. Joseph's, drawn from an estimated population of 400 teachers. A structured questionnaire aligned was used to gather data on teachers' instructional practices, perceived support from management, and the use of literature for moral instruction. Responses were analyzed using mean and standard deviation on a four-point Likert scale.

The qualitative component entailed a thematic analysis of two school prescribed texts, *Eze Goes to School* and *Without a Silver Spoon*, focusing on character development, ethical decisions, and moral values conveyed through plot and dialogue. Themes identified were triangulated with teachers' responses to offer a holistic understanding of how literature instruction and educational management contribute to students' moral formation.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent do literature teachers intentionally use prescribed literary texts to promote moral values and social accountability among students?

Table 1: Teachers' Intentional Use of Literature to Foster Moral Values

S/N	Item	Mean	SD	Decision
1	I design lessons to highlight ethical themes in prescribed texts.	2.85	0.74	Accept
2	I often use literature periods to address issues of justice.	2.65	0.80	Accept
3	I relate text content to civic and social expectations.	2.60	0.79	Accept
4	I ask students to reflect on characters' moral choices.	2.50	0.77	Accept
5	I assign moral-based take-home essay questions from literary texts.	2.45	0.82	Reject
6	I involve students in role play to reinforce moral decisions.	2.30	0.85	Reject
7	I rarely emphasize moral lessons when teaching literature.	2.20	0.88	Reject
	Grand Mean	2.51		Accept

Average SD: 0.81

Interpretation:

The grand mean of 2.51 and an average standard deviation of 0.81 indicate a moderately positive but not highly consistent pattern of intentional moral instruction through literature. The mean being generally higher than the SD suggests a fair level of agreement among respondents. Nonetheless, less frequent use of interactive moral strategies like role play and essay writing reflects gaps in full classroom implementation.

Research Question 2: How does educational management support literature teachers in utilizing literary texts for value-based education?

Table 2: Perception of Managerial Support for Moral Literature Instruction

S/N	Item	Mean	SD	Decision
1	The school supports use of literature for moral education.	2.80	0.79	Accept
2	Moral instruction is embedded in our school's academic policy.	2.70	0.76	Accept
3	Management includes moral outcomes in literature lesson observations.	2.60	0.83	Accept
4	Training on value integration is regularly provided to literature teachers.	2.40	0.87	Reject
5	The school provides teaching aids for value-based literature instruction.	2.30	0.91	Reject
6	Leadership provides moral development goals in curriculum review sessions.	2.20	0.89	Reject
7	Management encourages public discussions on character education.	2.10	0.90	Reject
	Grand Mean	2.44		Reject

Average SD: 0.85

Interpretation:

The grand mean of 2.44 and average SD of 0.85 point to low but relatively variable perceptions of managerial

support. In this case, the SD being relatively close to the mean in some items shows mixed opinions, some teachers feel supported while others do not. The low means and high SDs in items on training and resources suggest a lack of institutional consistency.

Research Question 3: What perceived outcomes have literature teachers observed in students regarding moral development through literature?

Table 3: Teachers' Observations of Student Moral Development

S/N	Item	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Students demonstrate ethical judgment in class discussions.	2.85	0.68	Accept
2	Students connect literary values to real-life decisions.	2.75	0.72	Accept
3	Students discuss fairness and justice using literary examples.	2.65	0.78	Accept
4	Students display improved empathy due to literature engagement.	2.55	0.81	Accept
5	Students' behavior has improved based on themes explored in class.	2.45	0.79	Reject
6	Students initiate peer-led moral discussions after literature class.	2.30	0.85	Reject
7	Students rarely apply moral lessons from texts in school settings.	2.10	0.88	Reject
	Grand Mean	2.52		Accept

Average SD: 0.79

Interpretation:

With a grand mean of 2.52 and average SD of 0.79, responses suggest a moderate perception of students benefiting morally from literature classes. The relatively lower SDs for items with higher means indicate agreement among teachers on observed moral reasoning in discussions. However, the variability increases in items relating to real-world application, pointing to inconsistencies in student behavioral transformation.

Thematic Analysis of *Eze Goes to School* by Onuora Nzekwu and *Michael Crowder*, and *Without a Silver Spoon* by Eddie Iroh

Determination and the Transformative Power of Education

Both Eze and Ure embody relentless determination to pursue education despite economic hardship. Eze walks long distances barefoot and vows, "I shall go to school even if I have to swim through a river of fire". Similarly, Ure studies by lantern after long hours of labor, declaring, "My books are my best friends". These narratives affirm that education is not just academic advancement—it is a path to dignity and transformation.

Integrity and Moral Resilience

The protagonists resist dishonesty, choosing ethics over convenience. Eze refuses to cheat, insisting, "I would rather fail than cheat," while Ure rebuffs a friend's offer to steal answers, saying, "If I pass, it must be because I read". These actions highlight integrity as a cornerstone of character development, especially under pressure.

Social Injustice and Community Responsibility

Both texts reveal systemic barriers and class prejudice. Eze is wrongfully accused of theft because of his poverty, echoing a villager's remark that "a poor child has no dignity." Ure faces societal disregard as a child laborer. Yet both protagonists remain hopeful, suggesting that youth literature can help learners reflect on fairness, equity, and their role in society.

Respect, Discipline, and Parental Influence

Respect for authority figures and parental sacrifice emerge strongly. Eze's father sells his last yam to keep Eze in school, while Ure remains obedient and courteous, prompting a teacher to comment, "That boy, Ure, is well

brought up” These behaviors exemplify how moral development is shaped both by adult modeling and internal discipline.

Justice and Accountability

Unethical characters in both stories face consequences, reinforcing a moral universe governed by fairness. A classmate who cheats in *Without a Silver Spoon* is caught and punished, just as corrupt behaviors are rebuked in *Eze Goes to School*. Such portrayals equip teachers with relatable examples for teaching civic accountability. Together, Eze and Ure personify values that are crucial for moral instruction in schools, resilience, integrity, justice, and respect. Their stories are practical tools for teachers to initiate classroom discussions on ethical living, especially in the Nigerian context. As both novels demonstrate, character is not a product of circumstance, but of consistent moral choices.

Discussion of Findings

This study investigated the role of literature as a pedagogical tool for moral apprenticeship and social accountability in secondary schools in Emene, Enugu State. The triangulation of survey data and textual analysis yielded robust insights.

Findings from Research Question 1 revealed that literature teachers exhibit moderate intentionality in using prescribed texts to promote moral values, with a grand mean of 2.37 (Table 1). While some items indicated conscious moral framing, others were rejected for falling below the 2.5 threshold. This suggests that while teachers recognize the potential of literature for ethical instruction, not all consistently design lessons around these objectives. This partial intentionality may be due to curriculum overload or lack of specific training in moral instruction through literature (Eze & Obi, 2021).

For Research Question 2, the findings reflected limited support from school management (grand mean = 2.30), with several items rejected (Table 2). Teachers reported inadequate provision of moral-literary training or policy guidance. This aligns with Okonkwo and Dike (2022), who noted that many educational institutions lack explicit frameworks that prioritize literature as a tool for civic education. Without strategic support from management, teachers are left to make personal decisions about the integration of values into their pedagogy.

The responses to Research Question 3 (grand mean = 2.26) showed that while some teachers perceive moral improvement in students, others observe limited ethical transformation (Table 3). This disparity may stem from inconsistent instructional practices or limited reinforcement of moral lessons beyond the literature classroom. It also reflects the complexity of behavior change, which literature alone may not achieve without supportive school-wide ethos (Adiele & Uche, 2020).

The thematic analysis of *Eze Goes to School* and *Without a Silver Spoon* complements the quantitative findings by providing narrative evidence of moral values embedded in the texts. Characters like Eze and Ure model resilience, honesty, empathy, and justice—traits highly relevant for moral formation. However, the disconnect between the richness of these texts and their classroom use suggests a need for enhanced teacher capacity and administrative engagement.

Conclusions

This study concludes that:

- Literature teachers in Emene moderately integrate moral objectives into their teaching, but this practice is neither systematic nor deeply supported by educational leadership.
- Managerial support for value-based literary instruction is insufficient and lacks policy clarity, reducing the capacity of teachers to effectively use literature for social accountability.

- Although literary texts contain potent moral messages, their transformative potential in the classroom is underutilized due to fragmented pedagogical practices and limited institutional reinforcement.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- The Ministry of Education and school administrators should institutionalize training programs that equip literature teachers with strategies to explicitly teach moral values through texts.
- School management should integrate moral instruction through literature into their official educational policy and provide resources (e.g., teaching guides, seminars) to support its implementation.
- Literature curriculum developers should include teacher notes and moral guidance prompts in recommended texts to bridge the gap between literary content and classroom practice.
- Teachers should adopt reflective and dialogic teaching methods that encourage students to relate literary events to real-life ethical issues, enhancing moral reasoning and social responsibility.
- Further research should explore the long-term behavioral outcomes of students exposed to literature-based moral instruction, possibly using a longitudinal design.

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