



Intergenerational Knowledge Transfer in Oral Tradition-Based Communities

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DESCRIPTION

In communities where written language is absent or plays a limited role, oral tradition serves as the main method for preserving and passing down knowledge. This practice depends heavily on the interaction between generations, where elders share stories, histories, values, skills and customs with younger members. Such transmission is not only a way to conserve information but also a process that shapes identity, social bonds and cultural continuity [1].

Oral knowledge transfer is often carried out through storytelling, songs, chants, proverbs, rituals and other forms of verbal expression [2]. These methods are flexible, allowing the community to adapt the content to new circumstances or audiences while keeping its essential meaning. The stories may contain lessons about behavior, explanations of natural phenomena, genealogies, or records of past events. Through repeated sharing, these narratives become ingrained in the collective memory and are experienced as part of everyday life [3].

The role of elders in this system is central. Their life experiences, wisdom and mastery of language give them authority and respect within the group. They serve as living libraries, responsible for maintaining the accuracy and depth of the knowledge. Their ability to recall and perform these traditions ensures that the culture remains connected to its roots [4]. Younger generations learn by listening, participating, asking questions and eventually taking on the role of storyteller or knowledge keeper themselves [5].

The transmission process is often interactive and communal. It involves more than simply reciting information; it includes teaching appropriate ways of speaking, interpreting meanings and understanding social contexts [6]. Young people learn to appreciate not only the content but also the way knowledge is conveyed, which includes tone, rhythm, timing and gestures. This performative aspect helps reinforce memory and engages listeners emotionally, making the lessons more memorable [7].

Learning through oral means also emphasizes relationships and social roles. Knowledge is not seen as a commodity but as a shared resource that binds the group. The act of passing down stories or songs strengthens ties between elders and youth, reinforcing

respect and responsibility [8]. It also defines membership within the community and helps newcomers understand their place in the social structure.

Communities respond in different ways to these challenges. Some create new forums for sharing oral traditions, such as community centers or cultural festivals, where stories and songs are performed publicly. Others use recordings or digital media to preserve and distribute their heritage. While these tools differ from traditional methods, they serve the same purpose: keeping knowledge alive and accessible. Oral traditions also allow for flexibility and creativity [9]. While certain core elements remain stable, storytellers adapt their performances to the occasion, audience and current events. This dynamic quality keeps the tradition relevant and responsive. It also encourages participation, as listeners may contribute, correct, or add their own experiences. In this way, oral knowledge is not static but continuously shaped by the community [10].

CONCLUSION

Intergenerational knowledge transfer in oral tradition-based communities is a complex and vital process. It ensures that culture, values and skills are passed on through relationships and shared experiences. Despite challenges, this form of transmission continues to adapt and thrive, supporting identity and cohesion across time. The living nature of oral traditions connects past, present and future in ways that enrich both the communities involved and the broader understanding of human culture. Languages may decline in use and elders may pass away without finding successors. These shifts can disrupt the continuity of cultural knowledge and threaten the survival of certain traditions.

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