

## **PROVERB AS DETERMINANT OF CULTURAL IDENTITY: THE IMPERATIVE OF THE THREE REGIONAL LANGUAGES IN NIGERIA**

**USMAN, JOSHUA<sup>1</sup>, MUSTAFA, LYNDA JUMMAI<sup>2</sup> & AGU, MARGARET NONYEREM<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Department of English, IBB University, Lapai, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>Department of English, SPS, IBB University, Lapai, Nigeria

<sup>3</sup>Research Scholar, Department of English, IBB University, Lapai, Nigeria

### **ABSTRACT**

This paper examines cultural identity through proverbs especially, by comparing and contrasting proverbs in Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo. Cultural background of the three regional languages in Nigeria will be explored by analysing verbal expressions in their respective native languages. Elements such as word choice, imagery and tone will be revealing factors of traditions, values, and cultural traits. The significance of this study lies in the fact that national identities can be better understood by the comparison and contrast of these popular expressions. It was discovered that proverbs bring out the uniqueness of a people and also teach tolerance, honesty, hard work and sense of self-worth among Nigerian people. It is recommended that the study of proverbs should be given prominence in the curriculum of studies for schools and universities in Nigeria because Proverbs can unite the country and make Nigeria a peaceful nation.

**KEYWORDS:** Culture, Cultural Identity, Identity, Proverbs, Language