
**PERSPECTIVES ON DEVELOPMENT OF A SUSTAINABLE
FRAMEWORK FOR CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY**

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Abstract

The paper discussed the perspectives of development of a sustainable framework for culture and environmental education for the 21st century. The paper dealt with theoretical underpinnings, conceptual analysis, the relationship between culture and environmental possibilism, the role of social science teachers in the implementation of culture in curriculum was also examined. The qualities and challenges that teachers encounter in the implementation of culture in the curriculum were highlighted.

Keywords: Perspective, Development, Sustainable framework, Culture and Environmental Education.

Introduction

The quest for education is all about seeking positive social change in society. Nigeria has a colonial history or legacy that many schools have called into question its validity and reliability. The introduction of western education by the missionaries with the support of the

colonial administrators destroyed the foundation of Nigerian culture and traditions in education. The Nigerian socio-economic, political and cultural backgrounds were brought under siege with the introduction of western education which enshrined western culture in its curriculum.

It should be noted in the views of Bujo (1998) that right from the on-set in traditional African societies, there were no classes in the western sense; class relations were closely linked to professional expertise, that is, whether one was a blacksmith, a warrior, a bricklayer, and so on. These classes, however, were not related to wealth but respected the egalitarian character of the society which was, and is still collective, based on common ownership of property. The understanding of property, still influential today, consists of a communitarian type of administration that can be regarded as an expression of solidarity. Possessions go back to group solidarity which articulates itself through joint work towards the acquisition of material good. The use of the community to acquire property, however, it is restricted either to individuals or group who have to give hospitality that extends to all the people.

The social behaviour of the individual states when one is born at that moment, according to the National Teachers' Institute (2000), the child is dependent on other beings for survival and social development. By interacting with others, the child gets his supplies and develops those special kinds of behaviour that make man different from other animals, especially, the use of language, marriage practices, arts and crafts, religion, and other aspects of culture. In addition, it was also noted that Nigerian traditional societies survived because the people cultivated the right attitude to life as provided in the culture of different social groups. Some of these elements include loyalty, honesty, dedication to duty, obedience to constituted authority, and respect for elders and senior members of the society, reciprocity and redistribution, integrity and skills acquisition for cultural aspects in curriculum implementation in the classroom.

In this presentation, therefore, the authors discussed the theoretical underpinnings of the and paper, the concepts of curriculum perspectives, and curriculum implementation, in

addition, the concepts of teacher quantity and quality were examined; and the challenges that teachers encounter in the implementation of cultural aspects of the culture in the curriculum were highlighted and the way formulated advanced.

Theoretical Underpinnings

This paper's theoretical underpinnings hinges on the cultural perspectives of under development advanced by Abutudu in Thomas (2010), which says that, the cultural explanation of the contemporary African economic condition is based on certain African customs, practices and attitudes which hold back and prevent the continued marching forward to modernity. Some of the cultural legacies identified include, the search for consensus, inability to assume responsibility for one's destiny, subordination to the requirement of ethnic, religious or primordial principles, against which a person cannot assert his/her identity. In other words, the cultural values, world views and norms of Africa are not conducive to economic development because the structures and processes of development along global lines have been planted in Africa, the cultural attributes of the African which makes it impossible for them to manage the structures and processes. As a result of this failure, the institution breaks down and crises are entrenched in the society. It is as a result of this exposition, and the desire to effect relevant change that this paper has been motivated.

Conceptual Clarifications

Culture is the total life and living patterns of a particular group of people, it includes their ideas, objects they make or create, and all the activities which go on among them. It involves religion, art, language, literature, music, dances, dresses, food and others. Culture has its nontechnical components which see a cultured man as an educated man, and sees things in a civilized way. It focuses on how man adapts to situations or environments as well as moulding nature to conform to man's desires or goals (Okobiah, 2007).

Environment, on the other hand, is seen as all physical, human elements of the planet, earth, which consist of the atmosphere,

climate, water, etc.; the lithosphere (land, mountains, and valleys etc.) and biosphere (flora) human population and numbers, fishes and crops. Environment is man structured and is divided into physical and social environments. They both interact to form what is called the ecosystem. Both environments determine the patterns of man's activities e.g. food selection, clothing and occupation etc. This means that your environment determines what you are.

Ozigi and Ocho in Nakpodia (2010) observed that culture is a complex whole which includes “knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, customs and other capabilities acquired by man as a member of a given society or community under prevailing circumstances and environment”, Azubuike and Oguzor (2013) agree that curriculum embraces all the activities experienced by an individual learner in a given environment under guidance and supervision. They pointed out that what constitutes the curriculum is selected from the culture of the society, the dynamics of members of the society that deserve to be propagated. The cultural elements from which the curriculum may be drawn include the values, norms, beliefs, taboos, traditions, language, music, customs, occupations, skills, arts, aesthetics and other related attributes which the society transmits into its members/citizens. This is because continuous insight into the life of the people in any given society will bring about improvement.

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People's way of life both in their physical and social environments is determined by culture. One's belief, religion and even the pattern of feeding are related to cultural determinism. Since culture is a way of life, individuals learn and acquire such mechanism of survival that are transmitted to them as the ages go on. People's houses they live and occupations are determined by the culture and the forces of the environment where they are placed.

Culture and Environmental Possibilism

Technological advancement has brought about environmental changes which is called culture-environmental possibilism. Man now domesticates animals and crops, medicines developed to prolong life and age, boats and ships now use on water instead of the combustions engines of old. Aeroplanes have now conquered skies and air space. This makes transportation easy since you can go around the world in a few days. Man has gone to the moon. Crops are now produced in deserts. Crops are now cultivated on water surfaces. Man has learned to tame the environment.

Western culture spread after the Industrial Revolution has brought about environmental probabilism. Environment still limits man's conquering his physical and social environment. Such limitations as hurricanes, floods, volcanoes, earthquakes, tsunamis, have brought a lot of hardship to many areas of the world. Man seemed to have conquered some elements of the environment but there is a concern for the deterioration of the world ecosystem. This is due to man's interference in the ecological process. This is also due to development, which is becoming detrimental to the environment. That is why we are challenging global warming and climate change. What need to be done is to exploit the natural resources of the environment in a way that will guarantee sustainability in man's development efforts. This will help to stop the distortion of the environment.

Social Science Teachers' Implementation of Culture in Curriculum

The social sciences comprised of a variety of disciplines and subject

areas meant to educate individuals on various areas of society-related studies, and can include curriculums devoted to Sociology, Economics, History, Political Science, Anthropology and Geography. The social sciences sees educators and researchers use both quantitative and qualitative research methods and studies to explore and introduce questions and issues about people, culture and politics. Most social science teachers are experts in a more narrowly defined field, but there are some exceptions, such as those who teach wide ranging material in what is known as Social Studies in Lower and Upper Basic Schools and Economics in secondary and tertiary classrooms amongst others.

Social sciences focused on man as a human being and the way he interacts with society both socially, culturally, politically, economically, historically, etc. It focuses on the survival of man and its problems and how this environment affects man. Since the world is so complex now, so social sciences, because it is a study that has an interdisciplinary nature or structure can bring about unifying knowledge from the various social science disciplines and beyond can create awareness on the evolving physical and social environment by maintaining a sustainable environment that improves life, solves cultural and environmental problems Akinleye (1996) and Okobiah (2007).

It is, therefore, expected that the social sciences teacher would implement the cultural provisions in the curriculum in the following ways; Material culture: Teachers' dressing patterns and cultural affiliations, the use of beads, ear-rings, made in Nigeria goods, etc., help in inculcating this aspect of the culture; non-material culture: This calls for the teaching of African languages in schools and use of local languages where possible. The teacher also could help learners practice the values of greeting, generosity, reciprocity and redistribution in and out of school environment; ideal culture: Teachers emphasize respect for elders and constituted authority irrespective of cultural affiliations: real culture: Teachers employ teaching strategies like field-trip, role play for specific cultural aspects to inculcate duty and responsibility; high culture: Teachers are expected to expose learners to certain aspects of life that are subtended and valued mostly by the elite section of society. The

process of education may include teachers' exposure of learners to certain cultural games that could teach them certain cultural values like cooperation, patience, commitment, hard work, etc and; popular culture: This has to do with those aspects of culture that are shared and modified by the majority of the citizens in the society. these cultural aspects are abstract and common. The teacher may employ songs, sports, video clips, television shows, etc., to communicate them in the classroom.

Teacher Quality and Quantity as Remedy

Teacher quality and quantity as a remedy for effective implementation of culture in the curriculum cannot be overstated. It is, therefore, not surprising that the National Policy on Education (2004) captures that the Nigeria Certification in Education (NCE) should be the benchmark for entry into the teaching profession. It is expected that having acquired this minimum qualification, the teacher would be able to bring about a positive change in the behaviour of the learner. The expectation implies that the teacher is one of those involved in the act of changing human behaviour and transformation of the society for the better through actions that render him/her perceptibly significant, respectable and recognisable to others because of the consequences he/she accomplishes, and the unique manner he/she does them. In this light, the teacher is viewed as a father, a lawyer, a doctor and a leader who possesses the knowledge and methods of imparting learning experiences that could bring about a positive change of the learner's mental, social and physical behaviour in the society.

The qualities of a good teacher are quite obvious because of the role he/she is expected to play, both in and out of the formal school setting. Besides, the NTI (2001) has observed that education is the hope for developing a nation, thus, it should not be left in the hands of the mediocre. This is because, as the National Policy on Education states about teacher education, no nation can rise above the quality of its teachers NPE (2004).

Teacher Challenges

UNESCO and AFTRA (2013) have identified the context of teacher training in Africa as the problem to be addressed, if the products of the school are to deliver the fruits of education. For instance, the two organisations have observed that the issues of teacher training relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability are at stake to meet quality education requirements for 2015 EFA goals. In line with the above indictment, UNESCO's (2010) Institute for Statistics had emphasized that, in the existing decay in education acknowledged in Africa, reported that 30% of primary school pupils dropout before reaching the final grade. Statistics also show that 30% of those who proceed with education complete the fifth grade without the required skills in numeracy and literacy. It is noted that if there are many reasons for such failure from the learners, it must stem from the teacher's under-qualification and under-delivery of quality education.

While it is accepted that teacher quality and quantity constitute a vital component for effective implementation of culture in curriculum, certain challenges often confront them such as: lack of professional recognition, poor remuneration, inadequate professional development, inadequate essential teaching skills, absence of visible role models in the society, inadequate infrastructural facilities in schools, ineffective managerial knowledge and skills to handle the available resources, large class size, etc. Under this kind of educational environment, it is very challenging for the teacher to be able to implement effectively, the cultural aspects of the school curriculum.

Proposed Framework for the Way Forward

Education constitutes the core of human development. It is a vital tool for transformation and the key to the sustainable development of a nation. Mohammed (2011) posited that besides the achievement of Universal Primary Education as a principal goal among the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), now education accounts significantly for the totality of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Thus, attaining the goals of eradicating poverty and

hunger, promoting gender equality and empowerment of women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS and assuring environmental sustainability are predicated on sound education. The acquisition and dissemination of the requisite knowledge and skills as well as effective application of such knowledge and skills to address developmental challenges and the sustenance of progress are dependent on the strength of the education system and the quality of teachers. The Nigerian education system is fashioned to provide functional education for the nation. The functionality of education implies that its products are employable or are capable of being self-reliant in line with traditional African education practices where education was for life and relevant to the stability of the society.

The prospects of teacher education cannot be overstated. This is because the world, as it is today, has become a global village with the breakthrough in various fields of human endeavours. In this regard; Nigeria needs to re-strategize and restructure its teacher education institutions and equip them with the necessary tools to train teachers whose products will be self-reliant and will serve as agents of wealth creation; the level of funding needed for re-empowering teachers with the appropriate skills and tools for their job performance should be increased, and more attention is given to on-the-job capacity development; teachers should be given their rightful place in the society to motivate them for optimum performance; and proper orientation and participation, especially in the area of implementing culture in the curriculum should be emphasized through regular training in workshops, seminars and conferences. It should be noted that implementing curriculum without culture amounts to a waste of time and resources that are vital for development

Conclusion

The quality of culture and environmental education for sustainable development largely depends on both qualitative and quantitative research methods and studies to explore and introduce questions and issues about people, culture, politics and the environment.

Therefore, social science teachers should create awareness on the evolving physical and social environment by maintaining a sustainable environment that improves life, solves cultural and environmental problem.

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