

Promoting Leadership, Value Re-orientation and Sustainable Development through Functional Secondary School Education

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Abstract

The study investigated ways of promoting leadership, value re-orientation and sustainable development through functional Secondary School Education. Three research questions guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 308 teachers in all the 18 public secondary schools in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, Nigeria. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 100 respondents 10 each from the 10 secondary schools used for the study. Researchers-structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Mean scores were used for data analysis. Results revealed that functional secondary school education helps to equip students with necessary qualities, knowledge and skills for effective leadership, value re-orientation and promotion of sustainable national development. Based on the findings, it was recommended that government should make secondary school education more functional in order to live up to its mandate of developing future leaders who will contribute in societal values re-orientation and sustainable development.

Keywords: Functional Education; Secondary School Education; Leadership; Values re-orientation; Sustainable Development.

INTRODUCTION

Education has been adopted by many nations of the world including Nigeria as a dynamic instrument of change. Consequently, education is one of the fundamental human right as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and many other international human right instruments. The right to education is one of the key principles underpinning the education 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) as domesticated in Nigeria. Government of Nigeria is making concerted efforts towards the actualization of this goal especially with the introduction of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme as it is believed that education prepares one for the needed behavioural change and abilities for sustainable national development. This can only be possible if the type of education is relevant to the needs of the individuals and society especially at the secondary school level. Secondary school education as a form of education children receive after primary education and before the tertiary stage aim at preparing them for useful living within the society and for higher education Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2004). It's crucial role demand that it should be functional or relevant to the needs of such individuals availing it. That is why the National Policy on Education states that appropriate measures will be taken to see that training at secondary school level should be that which aims at inculcating in students values like public-spiritedness, voluntary service, sense of responsibility, loyalty, honesty and respect for opinions and views of others. Hence, this paper on promoting leadership, value re-orientation and sustainable national development through functional secondary school education.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Functional Education

The term education has been conceptualized in a number of ways. Ocho (2005) sees education as a process, a product and a discipline. As a product, it is the activity of preferring, developing and transmitting the culture of people from one generation to another. As a product, it is something valuable and being sought to bring about a desired change in one's behaviour that is why Ocho described an educated person as someone who shows evidence of a well integrated personality with morally acceptable behaviour. Finally, education as a discipline, it is a field of study where method and practice of teaching and learning is learned. Ukeje in Nnabuo & Asodike (2012) summed up the meaning of education when he opined that education is a process of developing the child's moral, physical, emotional and intellectual power for his contribution in the social reform, and also the art of utilization of knowledge for complete living. In other words, education is the means of training the young and inexperienced persons so that they may become useful to themselves and functional in their society. Idowu in Udoh & Akpan (2014) described functional education as a

total process of bringing up individuals to develop their potentials to the fullest and consequently be able to contribute maximally to the development of the society. Functional education is a form of education which is based on the needs of the child as it helps the individual to acquire skills and knowledge needed to be productive. It also strives to arouse in the child spiritual longing like love of good work that will not come by force, but rather in a conducive atmosphere. Similarly, Good in Asaju & Adagba (2014) defined functional education as education for which there is an anticipated application, which thus assumes that the learner has immediate meaning transferable into action of his learning activities. This implies that it is a kind of education that emphasizes practice more than theory since it aims at producing qualitative workforce. It is the believe of Park in Asaju & Adagba (2014) that when there are quality or functional education to produce fairly well developed human resources, lack of supply of other factors such as capital and technology does not pose any barrier to sustainable development. This is because it is human resources that manage capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organizations and participate in national development. Zeilberger, (1999) distinguishes between two earlier conceptions of functional education. Viz:

The American view “education that comes spontaneously from the influence of the environment, a kind of undirected, natural education that is different from deliberate, goal-oriented education”; and

The Western European view “education that comes from the child’s needs and that uses the child’s interests as a mechanism for activating him to work towards his desirable activities; its purpose is to develop the life of the mind that acts from the wholeness of organic life, with relation to practical life in the present and in the future. Obanya (2003) noted that these ideas of functional education are part and parcel of basic philosophical principles of education, captured in such well-known expressions, as ‘Education is not just a preparation for life, but life itself’ but observed that over the years, this paradigm has shifted from ‘functional’ to ‘functional context’, to ‘functional skills’ education. According to him, functional context education is a situation where the environment in which the child is growing and the one s/he is going to live in should determine the way education is carried out, including what is taught and how it is to be taught and learned. While functional skill education posits that the purpose of education is to acquire the skills of understanding life situations, adapting to it and acting to influence it and contributing to its development. Here, focus is on the learner, within the context of him or her becoming a full functioning member of society, and with a view to equipping him or her with the skills needed for living and contributing meaningfully in society. It is in this context that functional secondary school education is presented in this study for equipping students with leadership skills, re-awakening their value system and enhancing their attitude towards sustainable development.

Leadership

Leadership involves motivating others and designing an effective organizational environment that will enable others to work effectively and achieve set goal. It entails ability to create vision and get others along with the vision leadership is not necessarily a position, title or privilege but a responsibility and a process involving the use of set of skills available to people through education to influence the activities of others in the organization. It is in this regard that Okwori and Ede (2012) in Unachukwu (2015) argue that leadership is a relational attribute which emphasizes the behaviour of the person leading, in relation to the behaviour of the group being led. In the same vein, Egwu (2015) maintains that leadership is a reflection of characters, which include but not limited to knowledge, vision, courage, openness, accountability, determination, transparency, uprightness, motivation and patriotism put in place by the office holder to influence people and followers so as to achieve organizational goals. In the context of this paper, leadership is viewed as attributes in every person that could be enhanced through education to bring about desired change in the behaviour of others for sustainable development in any given society. It is in this regard that White (2000) in Magaji (2014) maintains that it is the recipients of functional education that are leader in enterprises as well as thinker and not mere reflectors of other people's thought.

Values Orientation

Value is something perceived as important, significance, worth or useful. It is a construct people places on a thing. Value in this context refers to the principles or standard of behaviour which a particular group of people hold dear. Values are what the society care about. They are what motivates people from within which may be wholly personal to the individual (subjective) and generally public in relation to the society (objective). Whether personal or public, values can be good or bad depending on the prevailing situation. Therefore, value orientation simply means the process of changing an individual's, group's or societies' negative behaviour to a positive one for the benefit of the society. Kaura in Asaju, Arome & Mukaila (2014) posit that value orientation is the process of providing awareness of one's temporal, practical or circumstantial condition of the societal values which at the end should result to behavioural modification. While value re-orientation on the other hand is an act of re-consideration of values that seem to have been eroded. Here education is expected to play a vital role. Every society is conscious of the critical role of education in value orientation among its members. The national policy on education is emphatic on this as it provides that the quality of instruction at all levels of education has to be oriented towards inculcating the following values.

1. Respect for the worth and dignity of the individual;

2. Faith in man's ability to make rational decisions;
3. Moral and spiritual values in interpersonal and human relations;
4. Shared responsibility for common good of society;
5. Respect for the dignity of labour; and
6. Promotion of the emotional, physical and psychological health of all children.

These are the general values the Nigeria education system strives to achieve in the entire citizenry. It's therefore the intention of this study to explore ways it could be achieved through the instrumentality of secondary education in order to guarantee sustainable national development in Nigeria.

Sustainable Development

Development has been conceptualized as a process of systematic transformation of the overall social, economic, political, scientific and technological life of a nation through effective, well co-ordinated management system, result-oriented social mobilization strategy in which the citizens actually participate and exhibit positive attitudinal commitment in the overall reconstruction process for the improved living condition of the people. Thom-Otuya & Inko-tariah (2016) described national development as the ability of a country to mobilize resources to improve the social welfare of the people by providing social amenities. According to the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) in Ilechukwu, Njoku & Ugwuozor (2014), development is sustainable if it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This implies that sustainable development enables people to develop knowledge, values and skills to participate in decisions about the ways they do things individually and collectively, locally or globally, that will improve their quality of life now without damaging the planet earth of the future. It is in this regard that the Food and Agricultural Organisation (1988) in Okwelle and Ayomike (2014) stated, that sustainable development is the management and conservation of the natural resources base and the orientation of technological and institutional change in such a manner as to ensure the attainment and continued satisfaction of human needs for present and future generation. It is the exploitation and improvements in all aspects of human existence for the continued satisfaction of mankind both today and tomorrow. This can always be tenable through functional secondary school education.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of the study is premised on the theory of functionalism as propounded by Herbert Spencer, Talcott Parson and Robert Merton in the late (1940s and early

1950. The theory envisioned society as an organism where each component plays a necessary role, but none can function alone; hence failure of one part elicits failure in the other parts. According to functionalism theory, an institution only exists because it serves a vital role in the functioning of society. The theory emphasises the consensus and order that exist in society, focusing on social stability and shared public values.

From this perspective, disorganization in the system for instance, education could lead to change because societal components will adjust to achieve stability. This means that when the education system is not working or dysfunctional, it affects all other parts and creates social problem which could invariably lead to underdevelopment. It is on the basis of this that this study sought to examine how functional secondary education could help to promote leadership, values, re-orientation and sustainable development in Nigeria.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How does functional secondary school education promote leadership in students?
2. How does functional secondary school education promote values re-orientation in students?
3. How does functional secondary school education promote students' participation in sustainable development?

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. Meredith, Joyce & Walter (2007) describe survey research as a research that involves the collection of data from a sample that has been selected to represent a population to which the findings of the data analysis can be generalized. That is why survey design was considered appropriate for the study.

Area of the Study

The area of the study is Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. It is bounded in the East by Cross River, West by Ebonyi L.G.A., North by Benue State and South by Abakaliki LGA. The rural populations are predominantly farmers with few public and civil servants, petty traders, artisans found in towns and major cities. Izzi LGA is one of the educationally advantaged local government areas in Ebonyi State. The area was

chosen for the study because of the monolithic nature of its economy which needs functional education to foster economic diversification.

Population of the Study

The population of the study is 308 teachers from the 18 public secondary schools in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample of the study is 100 teachers. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 10 teachers from each of the 10 secondary schools used for the study.

Instrument for the Data Collection

The instrument used for data collection is a researcher structured questionnaire. The instrument is composed of three sections each with five questionnaire items to address the research questions. The response patterns was presented in a four point rating scale thus: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points, Agree (A) = 3 points, Disagree (D) = 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point.

Validation of the Instrument

The instrument was vetted for face and content validity by three experts, two from educational administration and planning and one from educational measurement and evaluation all from Faculty of Education, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.

Reliability of the Instrument

To determine the reliability of the instrument, 30 copies were administered to 30 teachers in Ebonyi Local Government Area public secondary schools. Split half test method was used and scores were computed using Crombach alpha. The result gave a reliability co-efficient of 0.82 which was high enough to consider the instrument suitable for the study.

Method of Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered to the respondents by the researcher through the assistance of the school principals who were properly educated on the instrument.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analysed using the mean (\bar{x}) scores of each questionnaire item. Decision rule regarding disagreeing, agreeing an item was based on mean range of 0 – 2.49 as disagree and mean range of 2.5 – 4.0 as agree.

Data analysed in table two revealed mean score ranging from 2.55 to 3.15 with grand mean of 2.96 which is within the mean range of agree 2.5 – 4.0. This implies that the respondents agreed on the items as presented.

Research Question Three:

How does functional secondary school education promote students’ participation in sustainable development?

Table 3: Mean rating of respondents on how functional secondary school education promotes students participation in sustainable development.

S/N	Item Statement: Functional secondary school education helps to equip students with the following	SA	A	D	SD	N	Σx	X	DECISION
11	Right attitude towards ones duty and other social engagements	140	135	30	5	100	310	3.10	Agree
12	Skills and knowledge necessary for gainful employment	160	120	40	0	100	320	3.20	Agree
13	Ability to participate in political process	120	120	50	20	100	310	3.10	Agree
14	Healthy living through proper nutrition and medication	280	120	20	5	100	325	3.25	Agree
15	Information needed to protect the environment for sustainability	100	150	40	5	100	295	2.95	Agree
	Grand mean							3.12	

Result in table 3 indicates that the mean scores of all the 11 – 15 (3.10, 3.20, 3.10, 3.25 and 2.95) fall within the agreed mean range (2.5 – 4.0) with a grand mean of 3.12. This shows that the respondents agreed on all the items as ways through which functional secondary school education promotes.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

On promoting leadership in students through functional secondary school education, result shows that the respondents agreed on all the items. This implies that functional secondary school education help to inculcate in the students honesty, integrity, vision, creativity, selflessness, industry, ability, competence, communication and self

confidence which are stalling qualities of a good leader. This finding was corroborated by Ikonne (2012) in Magaji (2014) who states that competence, honesty, integrity, discipline, selflessness and co-operation are functions of functional education. Also that the recipients of functional education are leaders and great thinkers not mere reflector of other people's thought.

On promoting values re-orientation in students through functional secondary school education, the result shows that the respondent agreed on all the items. This indicates that functional secondary school education help to reawaken in students the respect for the worth and dignity of human life, respect for the rule of law and constituted authority, respect for the dignity of labour, respect for moral decency in interpersonal and other human relation and respect for shared responsibility for the common good of society. This is in line with the prescriptions of the national policy on education on the values instruction at all levels of education system should be oriented toward inculcating in students (FRN, 2004:7).

On promoting students' participation in sustainable development, the result of the findings reveals that functional secondary school education helps to equip in students the right attitude towards one's duty and other social engagements, skills and knowledge necessary for gainful employment, ability to participate in political process, healthy living through proper nutrition and medication and information needed to protect the environment for sustainability. This finding is in line with Agenda 21 of the 1992 UN conference (Earth Summit) held in Rio in Janeiro with the theme "what a plan of action for sustainable development through education". There it was generally agreed that for sustainability, education must be customized for individual learners in tandem with their needs which allied with the tenets of functional education under discussion. This was collaborated by Elechi (2014) when he asserts that just our educational system was a carrier of alien values that accounts for our failures in the national development so our salvation will come from a serious transformation through character (functional) education.

CONCLUSION

Functional secondary school education in its true meaning is a worthy activity that prepares an individual for a useful life now and for the future. It is the education that is of value to the learner, community and the society in general. It exposes the learner to knowledge that is of value and equips the individual with relevant skills needed by him/her to be functional or productive in a sustainable manner which could be transformed to sustainable development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Students are leaders of tomorrow therefore, instructional programme at secondary schools should be designed to inculcate the students leadership qualities and skills necessary for a good leader.
2. The prevailing crime wave in the society in recent time orchestrated by the youth as an indication of moral decadence in the institutions of learning demands for re-orientation of educational values in secondary schools by each institutional management framework.
3. Finally, secondary school education should be oriented by policy makers to include values related to sustainable development. The type of education that will guide and motivate people to pursue healthy living, participate in a democratic society and live in a sustainable manner.

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