Strengthening Early Childhood Education for Value Re-Orientation in Lagos States, Nigeria

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Abstract
The study sought to examine the early childhood education for value re-orientation in Lagos state, Nigeria. The study employed descriptive survey research design which involves the use of questionnaire to acquire necessary data for the research work. Simple random sampling technique was used to select ten (10) lower basic teachers in Ibeju Lekki Local Government, Lagos State. Twenty (20) teachers were randomly selected from each of the chosen school to make a total of two hundred (200) as sample for study. Two research questions were raised for the study. The data collected were analyzed with the use of simple percentage, mean and standard deviation statistical tools. The result revealed that, it is important to re-emphasize value re-orientation in education at early stage of children in order to stem the immoral attitude in them. Also the study revealed that, it is imperative to recognize early childhood programme as instrument to serve as an impetus for instilling in children moral consciousness and individual development. It was therefore recommended that government at all level need to take values more seriously and push the acceptance of same to the children. Teachers should frequently be trained along-side recent global development and the re-introduction of the worth of the Nigeria educational system at the primary level, the mentality of individuals, communities and entire society should be re-oriented with the right values.

Keywords: Early Childhood Education, Value re-orientation, Strengthening, Instilling, Imperative

Introduction

Education policy in Nigeria serves as an instrument of change, it is a product of evolution through series of historical development of achieving the national goals and objectives. Education, both formal and non-formal, is humanity's best hope and most effective means in the quest to achieve sustainable development in any society. Education for value sustainable development should be seen as a learning process and not a product. For our society to be value oriented, it is a necessity in changing our perspectives and thoughts to the background of early childhood education if our societies were to become value oriented.

Early childhood education (also **early childhood learning** and **early education**) refers to the formal teaching of young children by people outside the family or in settings outside the home. "Early childhood" is usually defined as before the age of normal schooling – six years as in the case of Nigeria. Early childhood education focuses on children's learning through play, based on the research and philosophy of Jean Piaget (Piaget, 2007). This belief is centered on the "power of play". It has been thought that children learn more efficiently and gain more knowledge through play-based activities such as dramatic play, art, and social games. This theory plays stems children's natural curiosity and tendencies to "make believe", mixing in educational lessons (Winner, 2009). This kind of education is conceived for a number of reasons. First, our societies urgently require early childhood education that can help prevent further degradation of our planet and that foster caring and responsible citizens genuinely concerned with and capable of contributing to a just and peaceful world. Secondly, early childhood education must be available to all – not only a handful of people - and take place in various settings, including families and communities. Third, the world citizens and leaders of tomorrow must be educated, well informed and uphold democratic values (Ajayi, 2006). They must begin in early childhood, as the values, attitudes, behaviours and skills acquired in this period may have a long-lasting impact in later life. Thus, early childhood education clearly has an important place in the effort to bring about sustainable development.

Values are key aspects of culture. Values are broad principles that strongly influence people's belief, attitudes, lifestyles and convictions (Okorafor & Njoku, 2012). Values influence how individuals behave and how society and nations are shaped. Values can be said to be positive when they conduce to societal wellbeing and they are said to be negative when they are inimical to social wellbeing.

When one talk of value reorientation, it means the principles of right or wrong that are accepted by individual or social groups (Word Net, 2012).Value orientation can also be seen as high moral intelligence and entrenchment of strong values for the development and prosperity of the Nigerian society. It is a transformation on a fundamental shift in the deep orientation of a person, an organization, or a society such that the world is seen in new ways, new actions and results which become possible that were impossible prior to the transformation (Asobie, 2012). It also means the change of the moral character for better through the renewal of the innermost nature.

Reorientation is the act of changing, adjusting, aligning or realigning something in a new or different reaction. Value reorientation is therefore conceptualized as the act "of deliberately attempting to change the direction which attitudes and beliefs in Nigeria are currently orientated or the act of adjusting or aligning behavior, attitudes and beliefs of Nigerians in a new or different direction within the public discourse of contemporary Nigerian politics" (Osisioma, 2012). This is articulated as a move away from corruption, embezzlement, dishonesty and general indiscipline to the direction of virtues of honesty, patriotism, hardwork, and general abhorrence of social vices (Okafor, 2014).

Njoku (2011) sees value reorientation as inculcating good values that can help Nigeria out of her numerous predicaments and can refocus the nation through greatness. A closer look at the above definition, would make one agree that Nigeria would be rapidly transformed if she embraces good moral values, which have the potentials to re-orientate the attitude and behaviours of Nigerians and to bring significant reduction in corruption, indiscipline, immorality, terrorism, kidnapping and other social vices.

It is obvious that no society is strong or more creative unless the society has a set of strong and common values that gives meaning to individual life (Kluchohn, 2005). Living Values News (2000) maintain that this common set of values can be used as a standard for making decisions, and to help settle differences of opinion among individuals. The reorientation process in early childhood educationis a focus for salvaging the national image. Its recognition at the early childhood education is a worthy platform for the restoration of our cherished values and at the same time agent of reorientation. In view of this, Bolarin (2005) asserts that a critical look at the early childhood educationcurricular indicate that the Nigerian society cherished the inculcation of social norms, teaching cooperation and team spirit, teaching good habits, character and moral training and the development of sound attitudes among individuals. Thus, the need for education involves the transmission of the core values of the society from generation to generation.

Accordingly, teachers have the responsibility of examining carefully what values are needed in the society and use that to change the orientation of the youths under its care, shape the lives of the young ones and equip them with the right values (Enu &Esu 2011). It is no doubt that in Nigeria society, the satisfaction of some desires and interest informed the values we placed on things. Thus, the society is characterized with pecuniary motives that structured the society to be concerned with individual needs rather than the public goods and purposes. The order in our society is lack of respect for parents, elders, there is inordinate pursuit of material acquisition and the worship of money at all levels. Hence, it becomes worrisome that education that is supposed to be an agent of change does no longer equip her members with needed knowledge of their environment. Rather, Nigeria seems to be losing her truthfulness, honesty, respect for labour and productivity among others, in addition to all forms of mis-behaviour in all ramifications such as tribal and religious sentiments, e-mail scammer, human trafficking, lawlessness are unapproved practices in the society, while the core values of educational system in Nigeria are been neglected. Thus, values are no longer regarded as standard of behaviour in the society (Ivowi, 2009).

Take for instance when most of the schools were still run by the missionaries, religious teachings, sanctions and admonitions were the guides to children moral conducts. When the government took over schools from the private owners, long time ago, it seems vices took over the value of morality and virtue which has in turn influenced every individual with consequential degradation of the value system in our society (lkpe, 2002). That is, the past glory we enjoyed after independence in 1960 now became history and the cherished values that ranked Nigeria high in Africa and the world in general is now a thing of the past. So there is need to reclaim and regain the glory of our Nigerian society starting from the basic educational programme. Marah (2006) contends that "before the advent of the Europeans, African indigenous education was quite adequate in so far it met the requirements of the society at the time.

Value re-orientation in early childhood education is a call for re-assessment of the worth of the society. To re-position and bring back that which has gone off-course in the educational system and the society as a whole, therefore, a periodic evaluation of our educational system is needed to keep the system on track. It's adoption in Nigerian schools beginning at the early childhood education is to place a check on what value of education is been practiced to meet the worth of the learner and society. This is as a result of the shift in individual thoughts that values that were initially constituted are not the same with those that are being experienced today (Omoegun, 2004). Thus, there is need for a re-orientation of the value system in order to check-mate the worth of educational system for personal and national development

Hence, the basic institutions (family, education and religion) are established to lead children, adolescents and youths towards the things the society values. As such, values are often times passed on to the younger generations through the process of socialization. Value re-orientation in basic education is a call for re-assessment of the worth of the society. To re-position and bring back that which has gone off-course in the educational system and the society as a whole, therefore, a periodic evaluation of our educational system is needed to keep the system on track. It's adoption in Nigerian schools beginning at the basic level of education is to place a check on what value of education is been practiced to meet the worth of the learner and society. This is as a result of the shift in individual thoughts that values that were initially constituted are not the same with those that are being experienced today. Thus, there is need for a re-orientation of the value system in order to check-mate the worth of educational system for personal and national development.

Similarly, every school curriculum contains set values expected to be transmitted to the younger generation. Values taught in school need to reflect the larger values of the society that surrounds the school. Where appropriate, the opinions of community members can be solicited. It is the educational system that does the transmission of which the basic education becomes the basis. A re-orientation of values occurs when teachers at the education at this level acquire intellectual competence, emotional stability, unquestionable moral standard as well as their commitment to the need of national development in their pupils, making national character reorientation an integral part of the early childhood education and basic education curriculum in order to help the teacher to internalize values they will develop in the children, build enduring foundation for personal, enduring human value resources for character transformation, entrepreneurship with job creation.

The FRN (2004) emphasizes the need for the inculcation of the right values for national development in the child. It is a policy statement that cannot be realized if not well incorporated in the school curricular. It aims at promoting broader capabilities, attitudes and skills that matter not just at the basic level of education but a life beyond schools, making the world a better place not just for the children but also for their family, friends, colleagues and the entire society. From the foregoing, it is no doubt that early childhood education that is value based could turn out graduates and successfully build the character, competence and skills, produce children who are trust worthy, dependable, loyal and patriotic rather than dwelling in the past glory, in other words, loss of value.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the strengthening early childhood education for value re-orientation in Lagos state, Nigeria. Specifically the objectives of the study are to:

1. Examine the extent do strengthening early childhood education helps in value re-orientation in Lagos, Nigeria
2. Examine the need for value reorientation in Lagos state, Nigeria

Research Questions

1. To what extent do strengthening early childhood education helps in value re-orientation in Lagos, Nigeria?
2. Why the need for value reorientation in Lagos state, Nigeria?

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Population comprises of all primary school in Ibeju Lekki Local Government, Lagos State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select ten (10) lower basic teachers in Ibeju Lekki Local Government, Lagos State. Twenty (20) teachers were randomly selected from each of the chosen school to make a total of two hundred (200) as sample for study. A self-developed questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The questionnaire contained items on the main title of study. The instrument was given to experts in primary education for construct and content validation. Reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentage, mean and standard deviation statistical tools.

Presentation of Data Analysis and Results

Research question one: To what extent do strengthening early childhood education helps in value re-orientation in Lagos state, Nigeria?

S/N	ITEMS	YES		NO		Mean (?)	S.D
		Freq (N)	Percent %	Freq (N)	Percent %		
1.	Early childhood education is a focus for salvaging the national image in children	182	91	18	9	3.85	.79
2.	Early childhood education is a worthy platform for the restoration of our cherished values	176	88	24	12	3.79	.78
3.	Early childhood education curricular indicate that the Nigerian society cherished the inculcation of social norms	168	84	32	16	3.74	.78
Overall Total		**Mean (?) = 3.77 and STD = 0.78**					

Findings from table 1 above show the extent do teacher use action oriented techniques and strategies while teaching Social Studies. This reveals that the mean and standard deviation of the items listed above is very high (? = 3.77, SD = 0.78). The result shows the extent the strengthen of early childhood education helps in value re-orientation in Nigeria. The result is in line with the findings of Kluchohn (2005) who said that the reorientation process in early childhood education is a focus for salvaging the national image. Its recognition at the early childhood education is a worthy platform for the restoration of our cherished values and at the same time agent of reorientation. In view of this, Bolarin (2005) asserts that a critical look at the early childhood education curricular indicate that the Nigerian society cherished the inculcation of social norms, teaching cooperation and team spirit, teaching good habits, character and moral training and the development of sound attitudes among individuals. Thus, the need for education involves the transmission of the core values of the society from generation to generation.

Research question two: Why the need for value re-orientation in Lagos, Nigeria?

S/N	ITEMS	AVAILABLE		NOT AVAILABLE		Mean (?)	S.D
		Freq (N)	Percent %	Freq (N)	Percent %		
1.	Value re-orientation in early childhood education is a call for re-assessment of the worth of the society	101	67.3	49	32.7	3.7	.77
2.	Is to re-position and bring back that which has gone off-course in the educational system and the society as a whole	107	71.3	43	28.7	3.9	.78
3.	Re-orientation of the value system in order to check-mate the worth of educational system for personal and national development.	99	58.5	51	32.3	3.4	7.3
Overall Total		**Mean (?) = 3.56 and STD = 0.76**					

Table 2 above show the influence of the use of action oriented approach when teaching Social Studies. The table reveals that the mean and standard deviation of the items listed above is very high (?= 3.56, SD = 0.76). This indicates that reasons of the need for value reorientation in Nigeria. This findings agree with the finding of Omoegun (2004) that value re-orientation in early childhood education is a call for re-assessment of the worth of the society. To re-position and bring back that which has gone off-course in the educational system and the society as a whole. Therefore, a periodic evaluation of our educational system is needed to keep the system on track. Its adoption in Nigerian schools beginning at the early childhood education is to place a check on what value of education is been practiced to meet the worth of the learner and society. This is as a result of the shift in individual thoughts that values that were initially constituted are not the same with those that are being experienced today. Thus, there is need for a re-orientation of the value system in order to check-mate the worth of educational system for personal and national development

Conclusions

It is important to re-emphasize that, value re-orientation in education suggests there is a drastic fall in values of educational system in Nigeria. Hence, the value of early childhood and basic education that was known and recognised in the country is not what it is today. It is imperative to find solutions to the fallen standards and societal values in Nigeria. The proper time to fix back our education at all levels in Nigeria is now and it begins with the early childhood programme, which could serve as an impetus for poverty eradication among the citizens and instill in them moral consciousness and individual development. Further, the observed increase in the standard of education development does not just happen to any nation, it requires carefully and conscious efforts that are planned and implemented through a deliberate concert of the people and the government as a whole.

Recommendations

1. Government needs to take values more seriously and push the acceptance of same to the children.
2. Teachers should frequently be trained along-side recent global development and the re-introduction of the worth of the Nigeria educational system at the primary level, the mentality of individuals, communities and entire society should be re-oriented with the right values.
3. Reorientation of the youths should form part of the school curriculum in order to instill discipline in the youths. Students should be taught not to give and receive bribe no matter what.
4. Hence, value reorientation should be taught at home, worship places, schools and cultural/social gatherings.
5. The government should fast track the implementation of the national early childhood development policy framework and the early childhood development service standard guidelines for Nigeria, in order to improve quality education and care for sustainable development.

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