

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

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Abstract

The study investigated promoting leadership, value re-orientation and sustainable development through functional Secondary School Education. Three research questions guided the study. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 380 teachers in all 18 public secondary schools in Odeda Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 100 respondents, 10 each from the 10 secondary schools selected for the study. The 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 the necessary qualities, knowledge and skills for effective leadership, value re-orientation and promotion of sustainable national development. Based on the findings, it was recommended, among others, that government should make secondary school education more functional to live up to its mandate of developing future leaders who will contribute to 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, including Nigeria, as a dynamic instrument of change. Consequently, education is one of the fundamental human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and many other international human rights instruments. The right to education is one of the fundamental principles underpinning the Education 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) as domesticated in Nigeria. The 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 is a form of education children receive after primary education and before the tertiary stage. It aims to prepare them for functional living within the society and higher education (Federal Republic of Nigeria FRN, 2013). It is crucial that the role demand that it should be functional or relevant to the needs of such individuals. That is why the National Policy on Education states that appropriate measures will be taken to see that training at the secondary school level should be that which aims at inculcating in

students values like public-spiritedness, voluntary service, a sense of responsibility, loyalty, honesty and respect for opinions and views of others. Hence, this paper examined promoting leadership, value reorientation and sustainable national development through functional secondary school education.

Functional Education

The term education has been conceptualized in several ways. Ocho (2019) 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, is a field of study where methods and practices of teaching and learning are learned.

Ukeje in Nnabuo and Asodike (2020) 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 to social reform and also the art of utilization of knowledge for complete living. In other words, education is training young and inexperienced persons to become practical and functional in their society.

Idowu in Udoh and Akpan (2018) described functional education as an incremental process of bringing up individuals to develop their potential to the fullest and consequently be able to contribute maximally to the development of society. Functional education is based on the child's needs as it helps the individual acquire the skills and knowledge needed to be productive. It also strives to arouse in the child spiritual longing like the love of good work that will not come by force but rather in a conducive atmosphere.

Similarly, Good in Asaju and Adagba (2018) defined functional education as education for which there is an anticipated application, which thus assumes that the learner has immediate meaning transferable into the 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 a qualitative workforce. Park in Asaju and Adagba (2018) believe that when there is quality or functional education to produce relatively well-developed human resources, lack of supply of other factors such as capital and technology does not hinder sustainable development. This is because human resources 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 is "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 is "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 future.

Albania (2020) 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. In contrast, functional skill education posits that education aims to acquire the skills of understanding life situations, adapting and acting to influence them and contribute to their development.

Here, the focus is on the learner, within the context of becoming a full-functioning member of society and equipping him or her with the skills needed for living and contributing meaningfully to society. In this context, 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 to enable others to work effectively and achieve set goals. It entails the ability to create a vision and get others along with the visionary leadership is not necessarily a position, title or privilege but a responsibility and a process involving the use of a set of skills available to people through education to influence the activities of others in the organization. In this regard, Okwori and Ede (2017) in Unachukwu (2019) 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 (2019) maintains that leadership is a reflection of characters, which include but is 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 to achieve organizational goals. In the context of this paper, leadership is viewed as an attribute in every person that could be

enhanced through education to bring about the desired change in the behaviour of others for sustainable development in any given society. In this regard, White (2000) in Magaji (2020) maintains that the recipients of functional education are leaders in enterprises as well as thinkers and not mere reflectors of other people's thoughts.

Values Orientation

Value is something perceived as important, significant, worthy or valuable. It is a construct people place on a thing. Value in this context refers to the principles or standards of behaviour that a particular group holds dear. Values are what society cares about. They motivate people from within, which may be wholly personal to the individual (subjective) and the general public in relation to society (objective). Whether personal or public, values can be good or bad depending on the prevailing situation. Therefore, value orientation means changing an individual's, group's or society's negative behaviour to a positive one for the benefit of society. Kaura in Asaju, Arome and Mukaila (2019) posit that value orientation is the process of providing awareness of one's temporal, practical or circumstantial condition of the societal values, which, in the end, should result in behavioural modification.

On the other hand, value reorientation is an act of reconsidering values that 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 the common good of society;
5. Respect for the dignity of labour; and
6. Promotion of all children's emotional, physical and psychological health.

These are the general values the Nigerian education system strives to achieve in the entire citizenry. This study explores ways it could be achieved through the instrumentality of secondary education 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 a practical, well-coordinated management system, result-oriented social mobilization strategy

in which the citizens participate and exhibit positive attitudinal commitment in the overall reconstruction process for the improved living condition of the people. Thom-Otuya and Inko-Mariah (2020) 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 and Ugwuozor (2018), 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 the present and future generation. It is the exploitation and improvements in all aspects of human existence for the continued satisfaction of humanity 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 emphasizes 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 is dysfunctional, it affects all other parts and creates social problems, which could invariably lead to underdevelopment. It is based on this that this study sought to examine how functional secondary education could help to promote leadership, values, reorientation and sustainable development in

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to investigate promoting leadership, value reorientation and sustainable development through functional secondary school education. The specific objectives are to:

- i) to examine functional secondary school education and promotion of leadership in students
- ii) to examine the influence of functional secondary education and the promotion of value reorientation in students
- iii) to examine the level of functional secondary education and the promotion of students' participation in sustainable development

Research Question

The following research questions were raised to guide the study;

- i) How does functional secondary school education promote leadership in students?
- ii) How does functional secondary school education promote values reorientation in students?
- iii) How does functional secondary school education promote students' participation in sustainable development?

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study, and the population consists of 380 teachers from 18 public secondary schools in the Odeda Local Government area of Ogun State. The study sample consists of 100 teachers randomly selected from all the secondary school teachers in the selected local government, simple random sampling techniques were used to select 10 teachers from each selected school for the study. In the data collection process, a researcher-structured questionnaire was used to elicit responses from the respondents; it comprises three sections and each with questionnaire items to address the research question. The response pattern was presented in a four-rating scale; thus: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points, Agree (A) = 3 points, Disagree (D) = 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point. To determine the instrument's reliability, 30 copies were administered to 30 teachers in Odeda Local Government Area public secondary schools.

The split half-test method was used, and scores were computed using Cronbach's alpha. The result gave a reliability coefficient of 0.82 which was high enough to consider the instrument suitable for the study. The questionnaire for the study was administered to the respondents by the researcher through the assistance of the school principals, who were adequately educated on the instrument. The data collected were analyzed using each questionnaire item's mean (\bar{x}) scores. The decision rule regarding disagreeing and agreeing on an item was based on a mean range of 0 – 2.49 as disagree and a mean range of 2.5 – 4.0 as agree.

Presentation of Result

Research question one

How does functional secondary school education promote leadership in students?

Table 1: Mean rating of respondents on how functional secondary school education promotes leadership in students.

S/N	Item Statement: Functional secondary school education helps to inculcate the following leadership qualities in students	SA	A	D	SD	N	Σx	X	DECISION
1	Honesty/integrity	120	120	40	10	100	290	2.90	Agree
2	Vision/Creativity	140	120	30	10	100	300	3.00	Agree
3	Selflessness/industry	100	90	50	20	100	260	2.60	Agree
4	Ability/competence	160	120	30	5	100	315	3.15	Agree
5	Co-operation/self-confidence	120	150	40	0	100	310	3.10	Agree
	Grand mean							2.95	

The result in table one shows mean scores ranging from 2.6 to 3.15 for items 1 – 5 with grand mean of 2.95. This indicates that the respondents agreed in all the items.

Research Question Two:

How does functional secondary school education promote values re-orientation in students?

Table 2: Mean rating of respondents on how functional secondary school education promotes values re-orientation in students.

S/N	Item Statement: Functional secondary school education helps to re-awaken in students the following values	SA	A	D	SD	N	Σx	X	DECISION
6	Respect for the worth and dignity of human life	160	120	30	5	100	315	3.15	Agree
7	Respect for the rule of law and constituted authority	100	90	40	25	100	255	2.55	Agree
8	Respect for the dignity of labour	140	120	40	5	100	305	3.05	Agree
9	Respect for moral decency in interpersonal and other human relations	120	135	40	5	100	300	3.00	Agree
10	Respect for shared responsibility for the common good of society	120	150	30	5	100	305	3.05	Agree
	Grand mean							2.96	

Data analysed in table 2 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	Statement:	Functional	SA	A	D	SD	N	$\sum x$	X	DECISION
	secondary school education helps to equip students with the following									
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

The result of promoting leadership in students through functional secondary school education shows that the respondents agreed on all the items. This implies that functional secondary school education help to inculcate in the student 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 (2018) in Magaji

(2020), who state that competence, honesty, integrity, discipline, selflessness and cooperation are functions of functional education also that the recipients of functional education are leaders and great thinkers, not mere reflectors of other people's thoughts.

The result of promoting values re-orientation in students through functional secondary school education 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 the education system should be oriented toward inculcating in students (FRN, 2013).

On promoting students' participation in sustainable development, the result of the findings reveals that functional secondary school education helps to equip students with the right attitude towards one's duty and other social engagements, skills and knowledge necessary for gainful employment, ability to participate in the political process, healthy living through proper nutrition and medication and information needed to protect the environment for sustainability. This finding aligns with Agenda 21 of the 1992 UN conference (Earth Summit) held in Rio 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. Elechi (2019) collaborated with the finding when he asserts that just our educational system was a carrier of alien values that accounts for our failures in national development, so our salvation will come from a severe 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 society in general. It exposes the learner to valuable knowledge and equips the individual with relevant skills needed by him/her to be functional or productive in a sustainable manner which could be transformed into sustainable development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made;

Students are leaders of tomorrow; therefore, instructional programmes at secondary schools should be designed to inculcate the student's leadership qualities and skills necessary for a good leader.

The prevailing crime wave in society in recent times 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.

Finally, secondary school education should be oriented by policymakers to include values related to sustainable development. The type of education that will guide and motivate people to pursue a healthy lifestyle, participate in a democratic society and live sustainably.

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