

Curriculum Leadership and Teacher Education for Sustainable National Development

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Abstract

The paper titled curriculum leadership and teacher education for sustainable national development discusses the conceptual analysis which covers the concept of education, concept of curriculum, concept of teacher, concept of teacher education, concept of leadership, concept of curriculum leadership, objectives of teacher education, concept of national development concept of curriculum leadership and teacher education programme, curriculum leadership and teacher education for sustainable national development, challenges of teacher education programme in producing curriculum leader among which is the existence of gap between the curriculum taught to teacher trainees and the reality that exists in schools. Such realities include dilapidated school buildings, lack of instructional materials including textbooks and writing materials for the students, sometimes overcrowded classes, and so forth. It was recommended among others that there is need to provide adequate incentives to attract and retain capable teachers in teacher education programme. The paper is written with the view to benefit the bodies, policy makers and facilitators of teacher education institutions. It will also benefit curriculum designers, planners and developers. The paper is important to teacher trainee and the serving teachers by exploring what is conferred on teachers as curriculum leaders for sustainable national development, what is obtainable and prospect to the situation on ground.

Key words: Curriculum, Leadership, Teacher Education, Sustainable National Development

Introduction

Professionals in other disciplines are ignorant of how the task of the teachers should be, thereby limiting the roles of teacher to classroom teaching. In a real sense the task attach to classroom teacher is beyond classroom teaching, part of it is to perform a role as curriculum leader in curriculum development process as he is the key participant in curriculum implementation which is in turn yield in achieving sustainable national development. In this regard there is the need for the teacher education institutions to properly



train the pre-service and the in-service teachers on the issues related to curriculum development process. Considering the aforementioned statement, there is a great link

between the curriculum leadership and the teacher education, this is because unless the teachers are well trained through teacher education they cannot fully discharge their duties as curriculum leaders and contribute to national development. These points justified the need for the paper to discuss the issue of curriculum leadership and teacher education for sustainable national development in order to express what is expected from teacher education programme for the production of effective teachers that could discharge the role of curriculum leaders for national sustainability and development.

Conceptual Framework

It is ideal in a review paper like this to analyse the key concepts of the paper in order to guide and simplify the understanding of the readers. It is on the basis of this, the paper discusses the concepts education, curriculum, teacher, teacher education, leadership and curriculum leadership in a very simple language to aid the total understanding of the readers.

Concept of Education

Education is seen as the pivot of any meaningful development, be it social, economic, technological and political (Ezekwesili, 2006). It is the process of providing information to an inexperienced person to help him/her develop physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, politically and economically (Offorma 2009). It is also seen as the process through which individuals are made functional members of their society (Ocho, 2005). Babatunde (2002) asserted that education is concerned with the process of physical and mental culture whereby a man's personality is developed to fullest. According to Chidebelu (2009), education is a process of cognitive, affective and psychomotor development of an individual with a view to molding the individual for contribution to the development of the community and promotion of cultural heritage. This means that if one is educated, he tends to develop himself and become productive in the society, thereby promoting his cultural heritage. In view of the above, one can say that education is a process of imparting valuable knowledge, skills and attitude to shape human behaviour.

Concept of Curriculum

Curriculum is defined as the lessons and academic contents taught in a school or in a specific course or program (Sleeter, 2001). It is considered to be the complete atmosphere to transform peoples' life (Obanya, 2016). It is concerned with all activities in the school which lead to the development of the learner ranging from cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains (Tyack, 2007). Curriculum is defined by Indiana Department of Education (2010), as the planned interaction of pupils with instructional content, materials, resources and processes for evaluating the attainment of educational objectives. Coles cited in Yusuf (2012), sees a curriculum as a policy statement about a piece of education as a way to indicate the way in which policy is to be realized through a programmes of action. Denga



cited in Yusuf (2012), viewed curriculum as a planned and unplanned experience which is exposed to learners within and outside the school environment for their collective growth. To this end, curriculum can be seen as all the learning activities planned and unplanned, guided

and executed by school with the total aim of transforming the societal members and achieve its goals and objectives.

Concept of Teacher

A lot of definitions of a teacher have been given by different people especially to suit their discourse. However a teacher is one whose duty is to teach or facilitate the learning process. Teacher guide and nurture their pupils or students until a desirable outcome takes place. They impart knowledge and shape the mind of students. Professional teacher is the one possessing knowledge and methods that could bring about change and he/she must possess the willingness and ability to change human behaviour (Agwu, 2015). Bubb (2010), also sees teacher as a person having knowledge, skills and special training in teaching, explaining and educating. He is a channel through which behavioural changes are facilitated in the cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains. To the presenters a teacher is a person professionally trained to equip the learner with relevant and meaningful cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills for him (the learner) to compete with the present and future challenges.

Concepts of Teacher Education

Teacher education refers to professional education of teachers towards attainment of attitudes, skills and knowledge considered desirable so as to make them efficient and effective in their work in accordance with the need of the society at any point in time (Oyenike, 2015). It includes training occurring before commencement of service (pre-service) and training during service (in-service or on-the-job). As a matter of fact, teacher education should constitute a conspicuous element in the totality of organized education both formal and non-formal sub-systems (Abidoeye & Fatoki, 2014). Teacher education is an integral component of educational system. It is connected with society and is conditioned by culture and character of a nation. It is the view of this paper that teacher education is an educational programme responsible to develop the cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills of pre-service and in-service teachers through the use of teacher training institutions for them (pre-service and in-service teachers) to be able to deliver what is expected from them.

Objectives of Teacher Education

With more commitment from the government, and pursuant to implementation of Ashby report, the country witnessed a substantial improvement in training and focus on professionalism. According to National Policy on Education (2004), the goals of teacher education in Nigeria are to;



1. produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system;
2. encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers;
3. help teachers to fit into social life of the community and the society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals;
4. provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and make them adaptable to changing situations; and
5. enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession.

Training of teachers takes place in specialized training schools, where focus is on teacher training programme alone, and faculty of education in Nigerian universities.

Concept of Leadership

A leadership is an act of being taking responsibility for changing what is into what ought to be. Good leadership not only figures out what needs to be done to resolve some concern, but also how methods to go about resolving such concern (Duke, 2004). He went further to say that for instance we say we want to be leaders in the struggle for inclusion we must have a clear people who want to give leadership must be guided by two realities: first a believable, doable vision and to a commitment to their own development (willingness to take time to study).

Concept of Curriculum Leadership

Curriculum leadership can be either transactional or transformational leadership (Henderson & Hawthorne 2000). Leithwood (1992) suggests transactional curriculum leadership "...is based on an exchange of services...that the leader controls the curriculum..." while transformational curriculum leadership "...provides the incentive for people to attempt improvements in their practices regarding curriculum." Transformational curriculum leaders are seen to promote a collaborative culture, foster teacher development and promote group problem solving. It is this form of leadership that Leithwood (1992) suggests may help teachers to make changes to instructional behavior in something that is related to leadership in curriculum. It is Henderson and Hawthorne's (2000) description of transformative curriculum leadership however, that best encapsulates the main elements of leadership that other writers have commented on. Henderson at al (2000), further suggested that transformative curriculum leadership has a core commitment to developing and enacting educational programmes and instructional interactions in the best interests of students; conveys the idea of continuous growth through inquiry; and is grounded in self and social examination. Transformative curriculum leaders "...work to include multiple perspectives



encourages creative problem solving, and... nurture critical thinking" (Henderson & Hawthorne, 2000,).

A concept of curricular leadership is also discussed by Fidler (2001) as instructional leadership which, as he points out, is the title given to curricular leadership in the US. Fidler (2001) describes curricular leadership as a concept which implies "...that the head teacher has an impact on the professional work of the school, including the teaching and learning which goes on in the classrooms." Fidler (2001) went ahead to presents two points of view from which instructional leadership can be considered, one which takes a functional approach and one which takes a process approach. The functional approach involves leaders in defining the school mission, managing curriculum and instruction, supervising teaching, monitoring

student progress and promoting an instructional climate. The process approach looks at ways this might be accomplished. It is the process approach however, that Fidler considers important as he suggests leadership comes from the way the tasks in the functional approach are achieved rather than achievement of the individual tasks themselves.

While the authors cited have different perspectives on the issue of curriculum leadership, the paper presents the concept of curriculum leadership as process upon which a teacher or head teacher assign responsibility to lead a team organized to improve or alter the existing curriculum in order to meet with the present and future challenges.

Concept of National Development

National development according to Jhingan (2004), is a discontinuous and spontaneous change in the stationary state which forever alters and displaces the equilibrium state previously existing. This implies that national development is both more output and changes in the technical and institutional arrangement by which it is produced and distributed. Friedmann cited in Winifred (2010), sees national development as an innovative process leading to the structural transformation of the social system. It is taken to mean growth plus qualitative changes in economic wants, goods, incentives, institutions, productivity and knowledge. Also Seers cited in Winifred (2010), succinctly argued along the same line when he states that the questions to ask about country's development are:

- i. what has been happening to poverty?
- ii. what has been happening to unemployment?
- iii. what has been happening to inequality?

If all of these three questions declined from high levels, then beyond doubt this has been a period of development. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, it would be strange to call the result development even if per capital income doubled. It should be noted however that Goulet cited in Winifred (2010), has identified three basic core values of national development as: sustenance, self esteem, and freedom.



- a. Sustenance: all people have certain basic life sustaining needs which include food, shelter, health and protection. When there is a short supply of any one of these a condition of absolute underdevelopment exists.
- b. Self esteem: this is a sense of worth and self-respect of not being used as a tool by others for their own end. With the proliferation of the modernizing values of developed nations, many societies in developing countries that have had a profound sense of their own worth have suffered from contact with the economically and technologically advanced societies. National development is therefore a legitimized goal and an indispensable way of gaining esteem.
- c. Freedom: freedom in this context is a sense of emancipation from alienating material conditions of life and from social servitude to other people, nature, ignorance, misery, institutions and dogmatic belief. It involves an expanded range of choices for societies and their members together with a minimization of external constraints.

Curriculum Leadership and Teacher Education Programme

It is not only those in formal leadership positions that provide curriculum leadership, teachers do too, for their colleagues and their students. For example, Wiggins (2004) believes teachers should become instructional leaders to "...expand their own knowledge base and ... come to a better understanding of their own conceptualization of teaching." And that this leadership should not always come from a source outside of the teacher. Supporting and leading colleagues in a specific curriculum area is one way that teachers can demonstrate their curriculum leadership (Hargreaves, 2002). And that the role of teachers in curriculum leadership is crucial to its success (McGee, 1997). However, for teachers to be properly prepared to take up a curriculum leadership role, then professional development programme should be organized in such a way that will increase the knowledge and skills of teachers so they may become more effective at meeting the needs of all students (Fullan, 1995). Some of the ways Fullan proposes that this can happen to include teachers: taking some responsibility for developing collaborative cultures and changing the norms and practices of the school; leading the way in being continuous learners and being driven by the moral purpose of making a difference to the lives of all students, "...moral purpose...must be an integral part of the conceptualization of teacher leadership" (Fullan, 1995). While much of the discussion here has been about teachers as individual curriculum leaders Fiord and Poster, (1993) poised that curriculum teams can also provide leadership in curriculum development and implementation in schools

Although the role of the leader is not easily defined, there are however certain characteristics which people in leadership positions have that influence the practices and activities of others. In this article, a curriculum leadership is that practice and activities within an educational setting who will in turn make those in position to be considered as curriculum leaders. However, the characteristics these people display in their different roles as curriculum leaders have a sense of purpose and a clearly defined mission or direction that is



set by the group rather than the individual. The curriculum leadership involves people as much as possible in the change process and promote continual monitoring and review of programmes and practices. Curriculum leaders model this by continually reflecting on their own teaching and assessment practices and encouraging others to do the same.

Curriculum leaders also use effective interpersonal skills and establish climates that build consensus, empower others and promote open and clear communication patterns. Curriculum leaders motivate colleagues to attain goals and encourage discussion, collaboration, shared decision-making and problem solving and are also concerned with curriculum implementation. Curriculum leaders help teachers to better understand the philosophies and intent of curriculum document, and provide assistance in implementing curriculum and resource materials, and model appropriate behaviours and practices in curriculum delivery. As a part of this, curriculum leaders are also concerned with informing colleagues of professional opportunities and disseminating professional and curriculum material. These characteristics are by no means definitive. In the light of the stated features, for a teacher as curriculum leader to function well and carry out the expected roles, there is the need for teacher education institutions to make sure that they train the pre-service and in-

service teachers to acquire appropriate skills and knowledge that would enhance successful delivering of assigned task.

Curriculum Leadership and Teacher Education for Sustainable National Development

The fact that teacher education is regarded as a programme responsible to develop cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills of pre-service and in-service teachers through the use of teacher training institutions for them (pre-service and in-service teachers) to be able to deliver what is expected from them, to effectively contribute in achieving sustainable development. Part of it, is to produce responsible and punctual curriculum leaders. Curriculum leaders however, are the ones' to promote a collaborative culture, foster teacher development and promote group problem solving. They have core commitment to develop and enact educational programmes and instructional interactions in the best interests of students; conveys the idea of continuous growth through inquiry; and is grounded in self and social examination. Considering the relevance of teacher education programme in producing effective curriculum leaders in collaboration with the roles expected from curriculum leaders, a sustainable national development will surely be achieved

Challenges of Teacher Education Programme in Producing Curriculum Leader for Sustainable National Development

Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN) Input Visit Report, (2010) give a rundown of the following as key issues bedeviling the effort of teacher education programme to produce quality teachers that will give out what the society expected from them:

1. the teacher training curriculum in the country does not fully acknowledge the new age environment in schools and classrooms in terms of constructivist learning, learner-



- centred instructions and integrating technology into the processes of teaching and learning. There is not a sufficiently strong link between the schools' curriculum and the teacher education curriculum;
2. there is gap between the curriculum taught to teacher trainees and the reality that exists in schools. Such realities include dilapidated school buildings, lack of instructional materials including textbooks and writing materials for the students, sometimes overcrowded classes, etc. These sometimes overwhelm newly qualified teachers especially when they are required to play multifarious roles to deal with these issues. Essentially, teacher preparation programmes are deemed excessively academic and remote from the real challenges confronting classrooms;
 3. the emphasis on content delivery, examination and certification over real learning is also a serious threat to quality. The current system of teaching and evaluation does not allow creativity, innovation and research, which are important tools for lifelong learning. Also, education is construed as an academic exercise that is divorced from the daily-life world of learners and obtaining education qualifications at any level relies heavily, and primarily, on corruptive practices;
 4. there is also the quantity and quality of input for teacher training programmes. Most youths in Nigeria are not motivated to teach, and often opt for teaching as a last resort, that is, after failing to secure admission into lucrative courses- law, medicine, banking, etc. Since the admission quota for these courses is generally high, and for teacher education low, there is the perception that individuals who opt for teaching are not 'academically sound';
 5. learning materials are not consistently available (students depend on their own notes copied from the blackboard) and thus written materials do not play a coherent and pervasive role in the provision of a strong cognitive and structure-giving basis for the development of the required professional knowledge, skills and attitudes of an effective teacher;
 6. poor preparation and poor recruitment of lecturers, results in a lack of professional development opportunities for lecturers in the training institutions; and
 7. the teaching force in Nigeria is heterogeneous, particularly with respect to educational attainment and professional training. Teachers range from those with post-graduate qualifications to secondary school leavers with minimal levels of pre-service training. In most private basic schools, teachers with certificate level pre-service training are predominant. Consequently, as an occupational group, teachers do not have the equivalent level of education and training or the cohesiveness known of well established professions.



It is however commented by this paper that until when the right things are done in teacher education institutions, then the products will be able to carry out their responsibilities as classroom teachers and as curriculum leaders.

Conclusion

The paper in this respect concluded that, the role of a classroom teacher does not limit to the teaching of young people rather is embrace the role of being curriculum leader while developing new curriculum or altering the existing one to meet the present and future societal challenges for sustainable national development. It was also concluded that teacher education programme has significant relevance in producing skilful and potential teachers as curriculum leaders and implementers through the pre-service and in-service training that successfully aid in achieving sustainable national development.

Recommendations

In view of the challenges identified earlier, the paper recommended as follows:

1. there is need for the government, education board and school management to create room for adequate incentives to attract and retain capable teachers in teacher education programme;
2. there should be a rigorous admission and graduation requirements and apply them consistently, this should be done by the management of teacher education institutions and the appropriate bodies governing the conduct of teacher education programmes;
3. teacher education institutions should be well equipped by government, non-governmental organizations, Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), donours, philanthropies and the community upon which the institution belongs both in human and material resources;
4. there should be a structured, effective and supportive supervision of teaching practice by the lecturers of teacher education institutions;
5. the official of the Federal and State Ministry of Education in conjunction with the Teacher Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) should given induction as well as certification and license to teacher education graduate;
6. production of sufficiently trained teacher educators capable of imparting and modelling desired knowledge, skills and attitudes should be made;
7. there is the need to motivate teachers and provide opportunities for their continuing professional development, retention, advancement and improvement in their chosen career; and



8. teachers need to constantly upgrade their skills in order to remain competent and relevant.

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