Contributions of the School in Teaching and Learning of Norms and Values in Nigeria

Anyanwu, Jerome (Ph.D)
Department of Curriculum Studies and Educational Technology
University of Port Harcourt

Iderima, E. Christian
Department of Curriculum Studies and Educational Technology
University of Port Harcourt

ABSTRACT: *The paper examined the contributions of the school as an agent of socialization in the teaching and learning of norms and values which are two essential ingredients that can make a society secure and safe. It is revealed in the paper that, the current status of high crime waves as witnessed in society (i.e youth restiveness, examination malpractice, bribery and corruption, human trafficking drug abuse, banditry, kidnappings) among others, could be minimised if not eradicated when the school effectively and efficiently contributes its role. Teaching democratic principles such as: rule of laws, due process, liberty, peaceful coexistence, tolerance, teaching the need to appreciate the virtue of hard work as against the get rich quick syndrome among others, are some of the ways the school contributes to the teaching and learning of norms and values in Nigerian.*

KEYWORDS: school, teaching, learning, norms, values.

INTRODUCTION

The book of 2nd Corinthian 9 vs 6, states that ''As a man sows, so shall he reap'', and so, the quality and quantity of our educational harvest (quantified in what goes on in the school as a social system), depends largely on the type of seed sowed, and how much care, stakeholders in the education industry devote to it.

The teacher, no doubt, is the interpreter of the curriculum and the closest to the intentions of the students who have their own ideas about the curriculum. The teacher as a person, is the representative of the society's interest in the education of its youths via the interpretation and implementation of the societal dreams and aspirations into practical realities, realizing that, the dreams and aspirations of the society are usually derived from the norms and values of the society. And it is this norms and values that gave birth and direction to what is referred to as the Five National Goals as stated in the Second National Development Plan, and thus, endorsed

as the necessary foundation for the National Policy on Education, which included the followings:

-        To build a free and democratic society
-        To build a just and egalitarian society
-        To build a united, strong and self-reliant Nation
-        To build a great and dynamic economy and
-        To build a land of bright and full opportunity for all citizens.

In order to see the realization of these goals, the school, which is the mirror of the society in terms of its educational dreams and aspirations is charged with the sole responsibility of inculcating in the learners (clienteles) the followings:

1.   National consciousness and national unity;
2.   The right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society;
3.   The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around and;
4.   The acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competence both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society (National Policy on Education, 2004 p. 7)

All this, no doubt, are lofty and laudable aim and objectives, which when achieved via the school will take the nation to the desired promise land of National Unity and Integration. This is true because, it will bring about the full realization of the self, better human relationship, individual and national efficiency, effective citizenship, national consciousness national unity as well as towards social cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological progress.As stated in vision 2010 in the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS, 2004), ''Nigeria is a multi-ethnic society with a value system that derives from the diversity of its people, religion and cultures. The element of this value system include – respect for elders, honesty and accountability, cooperation, industry, disciplines, self-confidence and moral courage''.

Today, a thorough look at the happenings in the society reveals or points to the fact that Nigeria is on the verge of losing grip of the societal ideals that informed her philosophy and objectives as reflected in her National Plan via the National Policy on Education (2004), for instance, the current status quo of high crime waves in terms of incessant religious crises resulting in killings, youth restiveness, high rate of unemployment, examination malpractice, cultism, bribery and corruption, nepotism, tribalism, election malpractice, robbery, rape, assassinations, kidnapping, drug abuse, human trafficking, banditry and other forms of mal-adaptive behaviours as is witnessed, puts one in doubt, about the relevance of the school in the teaching and learning of norms and values which are the societal expectations of what is normal and cherished. It is a truism that Nigerian, our beloveth country is experiencing a high level of moral decadence. This however, could be attributed to the share negligence of the proper teaching and learning of norms and values in our schools which are two essential ingredients

that make society secured and safe. Therefore,its neglect has the potential to plunged a society into high level of moral decadence. This indeed, is the sad tale of the Nigerian society.

However, there is the thrust, that modernity, in which ever guise has altered the way and manner we do things (Norms and Values) as Nigerians, there is the need therefore, to examine the role of the school as an agent of socialization in ensuring that things are done rightly.

Clarification of Concepts: Norms and Values
In the first place, they are, a very essential ingredient of our social, economic and political systems. Thus, they are attributes of our cultural system. According to Adeilokum (1990), in Okobia, Okoafor and Osajie (2016), they are part and parcel of the non-material culture of the society. To them, values are more abstract and general in nature than norms, but arecomplementary. They assert further that, where there are values, there must be norms (rules and regulations) to guide or aid its realization. Put differently, norms helps man achieve or realize cherished societal valuesfor the overall benefits of the society. Thus with norms, conformity to acceptable societal values is assured, since it came with it sanctions for non-conformity.

Norms: Grobler (1998), defined norm as an unwritten informal ''rule'' that governs individual behaviour in an organization. To him, it is seen as criteria, prescriptions or rules concerning what is proper within a certain cultural community. They help to give meaning to values and at the same time convert values into actions.

To Sanderson (1980), in Ifenachor (1998), norms are socially shared rules defining forms of behaviour that are prohibited and forms that are desirable or essential. They are the do's and don'ts that societies attempt to instil in their members. They are usually extracted from the values of the society and hence, are justified by values. For example, the norm against quick money is justified by the cultural value of hard work. They provide us with an expected idea of how to behave and function in the society in order to ensure orderliness. In all, they represent the standard which governs behaviour in roles and expectations of what is normal in societies.

To Ademilokum (1990), norms are divided into two namely; mores and folkways. This division, according to him is usually based on the strength of the sanctions they carry. The mores, which usually carry harsh sanctions for their violations are the ''must do'' of the society. Mores represents what – All members of the society must conform to or face disapproval and sanctions.They are essentially good for individual, groups and the overall survival of the society.

On the other hand, folkways are practices generally accepted and seen as appropriate but in which violations or deviations are not sanctioned or punished. Put differently, they do not carry harsh or strong sanctions for their violations, unlike mores.

Values: Mkpa (1993), in Mezeobi (2013), view values as conceptions of the desirable, influencing selective behaviour. To Osakwe and Itedjere (1993) also in Mezieobi (2013),

values represent the quality of worth or merit which people place on various aspects of their experience. Murphy (1998), defined values as ''that which tells us what we ought not to do''. Halstead and Taylor (1996) in Pieterse (2000), asserts that, values are standard and principles for judging worth.ToPieterse (2000), value is a broad tendency to prefer a certain state of affairs over others. It represents a clear and uncompromising statement of what is critically important. In all, values connotes those things which are considered important and upon which weight are placed upon.

Okobia, et al (2016), identified the followings as some Nigerian values which are held in high esteem and must be uphold by all and sundrysacredness of the human life; communal living; hardwork; good human relations; respect for the elderly; honesty amongst others. To Sogolo (1993), these values and others not mentioned represents a set of institutionalized ideals which guide and direct the patterns of life of Nigerians, and therefore, must be propagated by the family, schools, religious organizations and societies, institutions of government for the common good of all.

The Contributions of the School in the Teaching and Learning of Norms and Values
The school no doubt, is one among the many formal and social institutions set up by the society to help reform it through the activities of teaching and learning. It is through the school via the process of teachings and learning that the cultural heritages of a society (Norms and Values), are transmitted from one generation to another. This paper therefore, x-rayed the contributions of the school as agent of socialization in the teaching and learning of Norms and Values.

- The school through the process of teaching and learning helps to transmit a peoples' cultural heritages (Norms and Values) from one generation to another. This singular contribution no doubt, brings about a sufficient level or degree of homogeneity in society. This is true because, the school through the teaching and learning of norms and values fixes in the learners from the beginning the essential similarities which collective life demands in the society.
- With the teaching and learning of Norms and Values, the school helps to prepare learners for cooperate existence in the larger society. Norms and values, it should be noted gives directions to our objectives and goals. And the clear knowledge of this, will go a long way towards enhancing a peoples' cooperate existence.
- Also, the conformity and sanctions which norms and values carries with them are made known to the learners via the teaching and learning process which the school offers.
- The school as part of its contribution in the teaching and learning of norms and values acts as a bridge, linking the family and the larger society. That is, with its teaching and learning, learners are made to know that different standards and principles are used in judging people in society, for instance, while social relationship in the family are judged and guided by particularistic principles, that in the larger society are done by unrealistic standards, meaning that, rules in the larger society, irrespective of sex, age applies to all unlike in the family. The implication of this, no doubt, is that, status in the larger society is achieved and not ascribed as is the case in the family structure and so, the school through the teaching and learning of norms and values help the learner to understand this.

- The school with the teaching and learning of norms and values helps to minimize the cultural shock inherent in an uninterrupted transition from the family to the larger society. This, it does, by socializing the young (learners) into the basics of the society.
- The school through the teaching and learning of norms and values contributes in building up a people's attitudes towards things that are positive and at the same time develops in the attitudes that can help them fight prejudices, superstitions, bribery and corruption and other traditional beliefs that are inimical to the survival and growth of their society.
- Also, with teaching and learning of norms and values, the school helps in stabilizing democratic principles such as liberty, justice, tolerance, fraternity, mutual respect, peaceful coexistence among others to its beneficiaries (learners).
- With the teaching and learning of norms and values, the school contributes in building in the learners the need to appreciate the virtue of hard work as against the get rich quick syndrome which is rampaging the entire society.
- The deterioration of norms and values in our society is so pervading that nobody wants to be honest anymore. To many, honest does not pay and has no cash value. This has made Ewelu (1999), to opine that ''in Nigeria, a blind man can be given a driving license if he is able to put on the table the required amount''. Collaborating this, Igboin (2011), assert that, the devaluation of our value is so much that new values have been adopted and canonized. To him, dishonesty and cheating, Fraud and getting away with it have now replaced ancestral moral uprightness and probity. All this no doubt, can be minimised if not eradicated when the school contributes effectively and efficiently to the teaching and learning of norms and values.
- Also the appropriate teaching and learning of Norms and Values by the school as a socializing agent can prevent a society from descending into ethical anarchy. This is true because the basic beliefs (norms and Values), that forms part of the individual conscience are mostly formed at school, hence its contribution.
- The teaching and learning of Norms and Values via the school puts the learner in a better position to appreciate the increased value placed on the individual and individual rights, the rise of democratic systems of government the world over, and the changing roles of government and its capacity to solve problems among others.
- The school through the teaching and learning of Norms and Values helps the learner appreciate dignity of labour as a cherished societal value as against the quick success syndrome that is eating deep into the fabrics of the society.
- Through the teaching and learning of norms and values democratic principles such as rule of laws, due process, equal rights under the law and the idea of government by representation and consent are inculcated to the learners for a better society, through full participation in the democratic process.
- Also, the school through its role helps learners internalize a nations core values which are belief in the worth and dignity of every human being, personal freedom, equity and justice for, discipline, integrity, dignity of labour, social justice, religious tolerance, patriotism, self-reliance and a sense of responsibility for and brotherhood with one's follows among others.

CONCLUSION

The contributions of the school in the teaching and learning of norms and values in today's contemporary society cannot be overemphasised. This is true because, it plays a major role in influencing the molding of a learner's consciousness, their conception of reality and their perception of, and reaction to things within and outside their environment. This fact, no doubt, will be more appreciated when we realise that the child or a young learner is not a full participant in several institutions of the society, it is the school, via the activities of the teachers that help him or her develop and give interpretations to societal norms and values.

The paper concludes that, the current status quo of high crimes waves as witnessed in the society could be minimised if the school effectively and efficiently contributes its quota as a socializing agent in the teaching and learning of norms and values which are a very essential ingredient that make a society secure and safe.

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