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Cultural Influence as a Means of Social Change in Students' Learning In Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examines cultural influence as a means of social change in students' learning in Nigeria. Every given society has a distinct culture valued or cherished by the members of the society. Culture plays a significant role in individual's life and the society at large. There has been cultural influence on the part of Africans from time immemorial. As a matter of fact, Africans were doing things similarly like the Europeans; since then there has been cultural shock as well as social change in every African society. Different cultures from various parts of the society as a result of interaction with modern communication technology bring about social change in the society, which has cultural influence on students' learning in schools. Society is not static but dynamic. Hence, it is necessary to expect positive change in every aspect of social system such as education, culture, family, polity in order to improve the existing educational system. Social change and educational development in Nigeria can create awareness for the training of individuals for social innovations, imbibing good culture and progress in relation to education. It is recommended that inasmuch as it is good to know more of other people's

culture, such should not influence the learners negatively.

Key words: Cultural influence, Social change, Students' learning, Globalisation, Modern Communication Technology.

Introduction

Every society is endowed with a distinct culture; in other words, a culture which is peculiar to such a society. There is no society without culture – culture says much about a society. Every given society has a distinct culture valued or cherished by the members of the society. Culture has an aspect or component such as language, dressing, food, ways of life, occupation, and even religion. For instance, all these aspects of culture play significant role in individual's life and the society at large. For example, to study in Germany, India and some other countries, it is imperative for foreign students to be minimally acquainted with the language of such countries. Both sociologists and psychologists are also conscious of the culture of the society they are operating. The early writings of Auguste Comte (1798-1857), Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), Pitrin Sorokin (1889-1968), Herbert Spencer (1820 – 1903), Max Weber (1864-1920), Immanuel Wallerstein (1930 -) Talcott Parsons (1902-1979), Louis Althusser (1918-1990), Socrates (459-399 B.C), Plato (427-347, B.C) among others, are significant exponents who studied the society but take the culture of their society into cognisance (Ritzer, 2000).

Africa in Diaspora has enriched culture – practicing and educating the younger generation before colonisation. In other words, every African country before the advent of colonial masters had their own system of politics, religion, education as well as culture (Rodney, 2009). It suffices to say that shortly after the Europeans set foot on the shores of African continents, cultural influences began. Rodney (2009) avers that:

Africans conducting trade on behalf of Europeans were not merely commercial agents, but also cultural agents, since inevitably they were heavily influenced by European thoughts and values. The search for education began in Africa before the colonial period. Coastal rulers and traders recognized the necessity to penetrate more deeply into the way of life of the white man who came across the sea (p. 170).

The message above reveals that there had been cultural influences on the part of Africans from time immemorial. As a matter of fact, Africans were doing things similarly like the White man; since then, there had been cultural shock as well as social change in every African society.

Every mankind experiences a change in one way or the other. Take for instance, when a new born baby is born, changes take place at different stages. The change is not peculiar to human beings alone but also to the various institutions such as education, family, religion, polity as well as legal system. Thus, a change in a particular system, also affects other systems. The sociological question that may bother the minds of an individual is, "What exactly is social change"? To answer this, it is pertinent to note that society is not static but dynamic. This means that a telephone of 100 years ago has been reformed to a mobile phone; thereby introducing a change of telephone in the society. Thus, a social change means to improve by alterations, correction of error or removal of defects; put into a better form or condition or to change for a better (Pemedede, 2008).

In every society, change is inevitable, though Ritzer (2000) sees change as an orderly process, Parsons, in Ritzer (2000) explains how change affects the social system and its relationship with education. Change, when it comes, therefore could result in cohesion, consensus and order. Thus, social change is an alteration in the state of society resulting in modification of old

ways or in new social forms (Rose, 1975; Richard and Robert, 1986; Laut, 2002).

Conceptualisation of Culture

The concept of 'culture' has been defined by various researchers. Akinpelu (2005) intimates that there is need to discuss the concept since such related topic seems to put the average person off. The argument went further that, there are complaints about the decline in personal and public values especially the moral decadence of the learners or students as a result of civilization *cum* modernisation. Thus, the concept of culture as defined in the cultural policy cited in Federal Ministry of Information (1991) is "the totality of a way of life evolved by a people in their attempts to meet the challenges of living in their environment, which gives order and meaning to their social, political, economic, aesthetic and religious norms and models of organisation thus distinguishing a people from their neighbours". This definition, therefore, implies that culture helps to distinguish a particular set of tribe or people. In the same vein, Millers (1967) argues that culture consist of a set of patterned and functionally interrelated customs common to specifiable individual human being. In other words, since we have different societies, culture could be interrelated which could also be cherished by another society. That is, culture is not static but dynamic which also respond to external influences, by bringing about changes and curriculum development in schools. (Anho, 2011).

Globalisation and Culture

The world is being referred to as a small village. In this era of globalisation, extensive interactions, connections and connectivities have been taking place and this culturally has extensively influenced learners and students of different levels of education in Nigeria. In other words, the seeming threat of the phenomenon of globalisation which reveals different foreign culture in developing countries like Nigeria, for

instance, has called for the extent at which culture has affected their learning. Since culture cannot be devoid from some aspects like names, food, language, dressing which depicts the culture of a particular society, the study of Pemedede (2009) reveals that cultural influence has affected learners especially in the University system to an extent that adoption of foreign language and food had influenced students to a high extent. In view of this, Nzewi (1997) in Pemedede, (2009) reminded Africans especially Nigerians that:

Modern Africa has recklessly abandoned its human essence and cultural values while gobbling up the modern-publicity hoisted glamorous allures of western thoughts and life styles. Africa cannot afford to continue thinking and acting as the West thinks and acts...The people of the world need mental and material cooperation not relationship of subservience (p. 19).

The argument shows that learners have invariably accepted different cultures which also influence their studies. It is a common knowledge to know that learners at different levels of Nigeria educational system have interactions with electronic gadgets such as GSM, worldwide web, DSTV among others. In view of this, Akpan (2009) maintains that the interaction of learners from distant contrasting culture as a result of modern communication gadget is also part of global learning experience leading to the phenomenon of globalisation. However, it should be noted that the influence of modern gadget being used has also influenced Nigerian learners negatively in such a way that there is a significant difference in the amount spent on browsing on issues not related to their studies all in the name of social change or post modernisation.

Social Change Definition

Social change as a sociological term is defined as alterations in basic structures of a social group or society. Sociologists refer to fundamental alterations in the patterns of culture, structure and social behaviour over time as a social change. It is a process by which society becomes something different while remaining in some respect the same (Hughes, Kroehler, Vander-Zanden, 1999). An example of social change includes globalisation, increased voting rights for women and people of other ethnicity in the Third World. In addition, it also comprises that everyone is required to go to school for a certain amount of years, as opposed to being able to withdraw at young ages.

Cultural Influence Definition

Cultural influence is the technological influx to education in recent years such as e-mail, cell phone, Internet facilities, visual aid and online social networks. In the past, communicating with others either by mail or face-to-face interaction had certain constraints. However, the fast growing modern communication technology is an example of change with an increase in cultural influence in learners in different parts of the world especially in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework and Social Change

There are different theories which make one to understand the concept of social change. They include Evolutionary, Cyclical, Functionalism and Conflict Theories. The Evolutionary Theory of Social Change is the oldest attempt at offering basic explanation of social change. Charles Darwin's (1809 — 1882) pioneering work in biological evolution contributed to 19th Century theories of social change. To Darwin, social evolution resembles biological evolution and results in the world growing progressively better (Hughes, Kroehler, Vander-Zanden, 1996). In the same vein, Spencer contends that change has persistently moved the society, progressing to a higher state. Also, Auguste Comte, the modern father of sociology, has

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also been credited as an evolutionary theorist of change. Comte sees societies moving forward from mythology to the scientific method, while Durkheim (1858 — 1917) argues that society progressed from simple to more complex forms of social organisation. The writings of Comte and Durkheim bring about unilinear Evolutionary Theory. This theory contends that societies pass through the same successive stages of evolution and inevitably reach the same end. However, Gerhard Lenski (Jr.) views social change as multilinear than unilinear. To him, change can take place in various ways and that it does not inevitably lead to the same direction (Hughes et al., 1999; Schaefer, 2000).

From the above argument, it means that society is not static but dynamic. In view of this, it is necessary to expect positive change in every aspect of social system such as education, culture, family, polity in order to improve the existing educational system.

Cultural Influence in Learners

It is a known fact that African culture is highly rich in terms of respect for elders and teachers, coupled with total obedience to individuals and members of the society at large. Thus, the phenomenon of globalisation which revolutionised modern communication technology has speedily eroded African culture which invariably influences learners in different levels of learning. Typical examples of this are violence, provocative dressing among young ladies, hair braiding and the use of ear rings by young men in the Nigerian society.

The National Policy on Education (2013) spells out the philosophy and goals of education. Section 1, sub-section 6 stipulates thus:

1. Development of the individual into a morally sound, Patriotic and effective citizen;

2. total integration of the individual into the immediate community, the-Nigerian society and the world; and
3. inculcation of national consciousness, values and national unity.

It is the intent of educationists, policy makers as well stakeholders to develop learners of sound mind; with enriched cultural heritage and societal values but this has been drastically eroded by foreign culture, which significantly has been imbibed by Nigerian learners in different levels of the educational system. As a matter of fact, different cultures from various parts of the society as a result of globalisation with modern communication technology brings about social change in the society, which has cultural influence on students learning in schools.

Social Change and Teacher Education

Social change and education are the creation of awareness and the training of individual for social innovations and progress in relation to education. Social change and education can be viewed within the realm of teachers' education, curriculum, policies and programmes, students' attitude and new invention through new technology.

Teachers are regarded as the builder of the nation. They play significant roles in moulding the nation through impacting sound knowledge to students that would grow older and become future leaders of the next generation. Karl Mannheim agreed that 'no teaching is sound unless it trains a man to be aware of the whole situation in which he finds himself and to be able after careful deliberation, to make his choice and come to a decision' (Ajere, 2009). Social change and education in relation to teachers expect teachers to be trained to always map out improved strategies in the collection of teaching methods in various fields of social life, to develop new teaching techniques

In order to reposition the teachers so that they can face the recent social change challenges and promote the quality of education in the Third World, there is need for teachers to update themselves in use of computers and other improved technological equipment for instructional purposes. All these technological opportunities have not been put in better use in schools in Nigeria, for instance.

Curriculum

Curriculum is the planned course of study or instructions in man's institution such as primary schools, secondary schools or even tertiary institutions like polytechnics, colleges of education and university (Falodun 2006). The curriculum is planned in a way to facilitate and guide the selection of contents and all pedagogical activities of the school system. UNESCO (1979) cited in Bello (2008) maintained thus:

Information gives the possessor power and influence over and above the authority he may be legally vested with. In any organisation, power, that is, the ability to get things done, flows into the hands of those who have the most (as well as the most up-to-date) information. People are more likely to be guided by those who know more and better. Thus, the first principle in achieving managerial effectiveness is to have access to the most valuable and up-to-date information (p. 595)

The argument above reveals that the whole world has become a global village through modern communication technology. The growth of information technology in the last one decade has had a significant effect on people's culture, learning, and life, all over the world. Thus, curriculum comprises all the learning experience learners are expected to acquire to be able to function effectively in the global community. Fafunwa (1974), in Lasisi (2005), observed that we are living in a world where

science and technology have become an integral part of the world culture and any country that overlooks this significant development does so at its own peril. Therefore, the curriculum to be implemented is expected to reflect the indigenous culture for proper integration to the global world.

We live in an age when change has become a tradition. The learning and teaching activities in the era of globalisation has ensured change and innovation existentially occasioned by the multi-dimensional faces of the information technology facilities of the 3rd Millennium Age (Stan, 2004). Therefore, the curriculum to be implemented is expected to reflect the necessary ingredients for proper integration to the global world. The curriculum that has sound cultural justification, contemporary composition of Information and Communication Technology, need to be fashioned out in order to be in tune with what is obtainable internationally. For instance, Longe and Akindemowo (2008) posited thus:

In developed countries, digital technology in the form of e-learning systems, and other innovations, has greatly complemented the conventional methods of teaching in classrooms and lecture theatres that still prevail in Nigeria. The curricula of programs, and entire fields of academic learning have evolved, and even begun to mature (p. 609)

In view of the above, all experiences that are no longer in accordance with the present trend of social change need to be removed so that new experiences and values can interrelate. Curriculum contents ought to be capable of instilling ideas, values and norms that are relevant in the present global transformations.

Technology and Education

The whole world is now a global village with new discoveries and inventions to make life comfortable, and finding new ways of creating solutions to human problems. The new technologies that are changing the world are not solutions to every problem but are without doubt, enormously powerful tools for human development. However, the education system is not left out in this rapidly changing world. New inventions and technology are instrument of change in the Third World countries. In Africa for instance, education is now becoming information-intensive and information-based. Modern communication technology has emerged as an effective distributive approach to managing educational matters and learning processes during this era of globalisation. Swindler (1993) describes social change as when behaviour patterns change in large numbers and this change is visible and sustained, that is, once there is deviance from culturally inherited values, this results in a change in the social order. For instance, Bello-Imam and Ihebuzor argued thus:

The technological revolution of electronics is completely changing the conduits of information and communication. Information Technology (IT) is providing almost more information than people can cope with. Through the Internet, scholars can share information as members of the global village. The convergence of computers and TV is creating new media and altering the way our society learn, bringing "edutainment or "infotainment" to the majority of erudite scholars (pp. 561 — 562).

The argument above shows that teaching and learning have taken advantage of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in providing functional information to the education sector. Bates (1999) agreed that introduction of network education would mean thorough re-examination of

the core practices of the system, delivery of material and assessment of students.

Conclusion

Social change is an ever present phenomenon in social life, but has become especially great in this modern era. The origin of modern sociology can be traced to attempts to understand the dramatic changes that have suddenly metamorphosed into modern world, promoting new forms of social order as a result of globalisation, which can be viewed within the realm of teachers' education, curriculum, policies and programmes, students' attitude and new invention through new technology, as well as sustainable African culture. It is the opinion of the researchers that social change and educational development in Nigeria can create awareness for the training of individuals for social innovations, imbibing good culture and progress in relation to education.

Recommendations

This paper proffers the following recommendations:

1. It is good to know more of other people's culture but such should not influence us (learners) negatively.
2. Federal and State Governments should checkmate different movies and enact laws so as to avoid some unacceptable ways of life which is alien; perhaps not part of Nigerian culture.
3. Parents should endeavour to encourage their wards or children to exploit the academic part of modern communication technologies in the interest of the survival of Nigeria society.

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Entrepreneurialship Innovations in Nigeria: Issues, Prospects, Challenges, and Solution

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Abstract

This paper examined entrepreneurship innovations in Nigeria with focus on issues, prospects, challenges as well as probable solutions. The study which was carried out in three sampled Federal Universities in South-Eastern part of the country adopted the survey research design, and used a questionnaire titled: "Questionnaire for Appraising Prospects and Challenges to Entrepreneurship Innovations in Nigeria" (QAPCEIN) as the instrument for data collection. A sample size of 300 respondents was randomly selected and one null hypothesis was tested at 95% confidence interval using Chi-Square statistical analysis techniques. The results of data analysis showed that there is no significant difference in the perception of male and female respondents on the issues, prospects, and challenges to entrepreneurship innovations in Nigeria. It was recommended among other things that the Government as well as other stakeholders in the economy should regularly sponsor seminars, training workshops, and conference geared toward changing the mindset of the people towards embracing entrepreneurship innovations, and entrepreneurship curriculum should be implemented in all sectors so as to bridge the gap that exists in employment opportunities, as well as foster economic development.