

CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, IMPERATIVE FOR ACHIEVING A SECURED SOCIETY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated childhood education as imperative for achieving a secured society in Nigeria. The survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consists of two thousand nine hundred and thirty-four (2934) primary six pupils found in public primary schools in the study area. A sample of three hundred and forty-two (342) pupils was selected through stratified sampling technique. Two research questions were developed to guide the study. Ten items questionnaire and structured interview were the instruments used for data collection. Mean and standard deviation were used to determine the level at which security related content of civic education was implemented in the study area. The findings revealed that the level of implementation of security related content of the curriculum was low with mean and standard deviation of 2.03, 0.77 and of 2.46, 0.84 for rural and urban schools respectively. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that; school administrators in the study area and other parts of the nation school emphasis the implementation of security related content of civic education and other subject, the school administrators should always alert staff and pupils/students of the security challenges around the school community, the curriculum developers should increase security content of the curriculum content of civic education or introduce security education as a subject in all schools.

In any civilized society, one of the primary responsibilities of government is the safeguarding of the welfare and security of its people. This is so, as the state possesses military capacity and threat of force which other sections of the society are often incapable of. In the society, preventing violent conflict and building sustainable peace requires complex strategies which include implementation of security related

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curriculum in the school system, cooperation with other stakeholders such as the civil society and staying true to good governance. But it is not the case in Nigeria faced with increasing conflicts and security challenges (Barnes, 2016). Nigeria, the most populated country in Africa has been a theater of various conflicts recently and one of the most unstable environments in terms of insecurity to human lives and properties. The federating units making up the country are yet to truly recognize each unit as constituents of one nation and owing to other factors such as religious, economic, political, social, among others has made the Nigerian environment unnecessarily prone to conflict such that, government interventions and international support is proving inadequate in addressing these malaise (Adedeji, 2019).

Security is an essential requirement for the development of human beings and society and it is considered the most basic need of human beings and societies. Security embodies the mechanism put in place to avoid, prevent, reduce, or resolve violent conflicts and threats that originate from other states, non-state actors, or structural sociopolitical and economic conditions. Security according to Nwagboso, (2012) is the act of being safe from harm or danger, the defense, protection and preservation of values and the absence of threats to acquired values. Security is about survival and the good condition of human existence. Insecurity therefore slows the pace of educational development and economic growth of any nation undergoing security challenges like Nigeria (Eme & Anthony, 2011).

The present security challenges in Nigeria have increased ranging from insurgency, robberies, kidnapping, especially of school children, petty stealing, ethnic and religious conflicts, fraudulent schemes and political crises. The attendant effects of the insecurity are felt virtually in every part of the country. According to Adetula (2015) the level of insecurity has degenerated so badly that every day in Nigeria, the news seems to get from bad to worse, as the security situation deteriorates further and further with Nigeria school system being the worst hit. Abubakar (2011) and Adebakin (2012) asserted that Nigeria has witnessed unprecedented level of insecurity ranging from intra-communal, inter-communal and inter-ethnic clashes; religious violence; armed robbery; assassination, kidnapping of school children and “boko Haram” insurgency which is against Western education. Insecurity in Nigeria is causing developmental challenges such as endemic penury, high rate of out of school children, unemployment, inured corruption, low industrial output, unstable and deteriorating exchange rate, high inflation rate, inadequate physical and social infrastructure in schools, large domestic debt, and rising external debt profile (Ewetan, 2013). At the political level, desperate, intolerant and ruthless contests among politicians and their followers have often resulted in violence, security breaches, killings and destruction, all of which threaten the existence of the Nigerian State. There are violent and desperate politicking among political parties, electoral fraud and money politics (Ewetan&Urhie, 2014).

In Nigeria, insecurity which is the breach of peace and security either historical, religions, ethno-regional, social, economic and political that have contributed to recurring conflicts, is a trauma incapacitating government to execute good governance and quality education (Bernard 2015). Governance is a central feature in the internal or societally based threats Nigeria faces. From ethno-religious faultiness to rising extremism among marginalized communities to weak military professionalism, a common theme for virtually all of Nigeria’s security challenges is poor governance. In many instances these security concerns are symptoms of weak,

exclusionary or exploitative government processes. Without good governance, a country makes itself vulnerable to drivers of insecurity (Nandi, 2013). Building trust in government depends not just on the physical outputs but also on the process by which the government engages communities. This will entail acting with transparency and accountability in the selection and implementation of development projects. This engagement, in turn, can diminish perceptions of inequality and partisanship. Building trust will require active communication through schooling so that citizens in marginalized areas understand what the government is doing on citizens' behalf (Akpan, 2010). The creation of a transparent and participatory political system will require more direct input from civil society reflecting diverse local actors, particularly women and young people. This will also at the outset require more time for citizens to articulate the injustices they have endured so that tensions do not fester (Siegle, Gilpin & Bekoe, 2015).

Good governance which is a system of government based on good leadership, respect for the rule of law and due process, the accountability of the political leadership to the electorate as well as transparency in the operations of government seems to be lacking in the political system of Nigeria (Genyi, 2013). In this context, good governance is the ability of the government to provide basic necessities to the electorates to make them happy and have a sense of belonging. Good governance by implication is when the government can carry out the activities mentioned above for the good of all the citizens. Good governance is integral to economic growth, the eradication of poverty and hunger, quality education and sustainable development (Orim & Esu, 2019). The issue of bad governance is a problem that has crippled the growth of Nigeria educational system.

The true test of good governance is the degree to which it delivers on the promise of human rights. Good governance is all about effective and transparent leadership that produces results which together transform the socio-economic conditions of a nation (Ibrahim, 2013). The objective of good governance is human development with equity and social justice and development of capacities that are needed to realize development that gives priority to the poor, advances women, sustains the environment and creates needed opportunities for employment and other livelihoods, (UNDP, 1999 in Omodia & Aliu, 2013). If good governance through good leadership is so important for sustained educational and economic development, secured society and prosperity, then Nigerians have no choice but to make good governance the cornerstone of development. Good governance places great emphasis on pragmatic strategies for achieving positive and cost effective results in public administration. Good governance also ensures the rule of law, promotes due process, improves efficiency, facilitates accountability, tackles corruption, salute excellence, insist on productivity and delivers high quality services to the people, (Omodia & Aliu, 2013).

The failure of governance is core to the socio-economic and political development challenges confronting Nigeria and the spate of violence that threatens national security (Omodia, 2012). With the lingering security challenges and the inability of the security apparatus of the government to guarantee safety and security in the school system, it is obvious that the attainment of national security involves several institutional and organizational processes and activities as well as individual efforts that are governed by norms and compliance with them. One of such

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institutions is education sector that stood as an identified effort geared towards promotion of national development and unity.

It is obvious that education inculcates much to learners beyond the recommended academic curriculum and also encourages the development of social behaviors that are beneficial to the society. Education also promotes the culture of productivity by enabling individuals to discover the creative potentials in them and apply same to the improvement of the existing skills and techniques of performing specific tasks, thereby increasing the efficiency of their personal societal efforts (Obasanjo 2012).

According to Amaele (2011) education teaches or trains people to be useful to themselves and the society they live. Education also develops in individuals' societal values which make for good citizenship, such as honesty, selflessness, tolerance, dedication, hard work and personal integrity, all of which provide the rich soil from which good leadership potential and secured society is groomed. Indeed, whether it is non-formal, formal or informal, education plays very important roles on how individuals and society are developed and secured. Just as education is critical to the development of individuals, so it is to the development of their respective families, local communities and national communities and the world at large (Anyanwu, O2019). Education through curriculum implementation mostly at the childhood and primary education level is considered to be the best starting point to ameliorate the security issues facing Nigeria. Curriculum is the hard core of education that provides the basic contents and means of relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes for sustainable societal development.

Atanda (2013) reiterated that the aspiration of society through education to achieve political, social and economic security can be achieved through the implementation of various curricula at school or institutional level. This places much responsibility on schools. The roles of the first two levels of education (i.e. nursery, primary and secondary) are crucial in determining the achievement of overall objectives of education because they build the foundation and are mostly accessed by the public unlike the tertiary education. The effectiveness of primary and secondary schools, therefore, is very important because the subsequent level (higher education) depends on the products from these levels.

Education is considered as an important and a major weapon of social change and development of any human society. Hence, Mordi (2013) opined that quality education demands that all levels and aspects of the educational system, including security, political, social, vocational, practical and theoretical education must be effectively implemented to produce results that are of much benefit to the society and nation at large. It involves the effective articulation of national goals through a well-planned curriculum, assessment procedure and quality of students upbringing. UNESCO (2015), opined that quality education is expected to encourage the learners' creative and emotional development; support objective of peace, citizenship and security; promote quality; seek for past global and local cultural values and transfer them to future generations. Seji, Omoroje, Onyekachukwu and Emuebie (2020) observed that quality education addresses major domains which reflect diverse goals and audience including the promotion and improvements of basic education, re-orientation of existing educational policies and programmes at all levels to address national security and sustainable development, development of public awareness as well as provision of training and retraining.

Therefore, education, through relevant curriculum implementation, availability of adequate human and non-human resources, assessment of educational programmes and processes through proper supervision and evaluation of educational outcomes to ensure quality assurance, control may ensure national security (Osakwe, 2013). Through education, the moral personality of man is built as it equips learner with the skills of moral judgment that in turn guides his actions and behaviors. To this end, the inculcation of the right type of values such as honesty, respect for elders, integrity among others into the young ones may help to ameliorate the security challenges Nigeria is facing. Quality education through effective implementation of security content in social studies and civic education curriculum can promote the spirit of nationalism and patriotism among youths. Therefore, this study investigates the extent to which security related content of civic education and social studies curriculum are implemented at the childhood and primary level of education in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria in recent times has witnessed an unprecedented level of insecurity. This has made national security threat to be a major issue for the government and has attracted huge allocation of the national budget. In order to ameliorate the incidence of insecurity and crime, the federal government of Nigeria has embarked on criminalization of terrorism by passing the Anti-Terrorism Act in 2011, fundamental surveillance as well as investigation of criminal related offences, heightening of physical security measures around the country aimed at deterring or disrupting potential attacks, strengthening of security agencies through the provision of security facilities and the development and broadcast of security tips in mass media, inculcation of security and peaceful tips in childhood education curriculum. Despite these efforts by the government, the security situation is growing worst as days goes by.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine childhood education as imperative for achieving a secured society in Nigeria. Specifically, this study seeks to;

1. Examine the extent to which security related content of civic education and social studies curriculum is implemented at the primary school level to curb the security challenges in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.
2. Compare the extent to which security related content of civic education and social studies curriculum is implemented at the primary school between rural and urban communities in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What is the extent to which security related content of civic education and social studies curriculum is implementation at the primary school in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria?
2. What is the difference between rural and urban community primary schools in the implementation of security related content of civic education and social studies curriculum in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria?

Method

The Survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consists of two thousand nine hundred and thirty-four (2934) primary six pupils in the study area. A sample of three hundred and forty-two (342) pupils was selected through stratified sampling technique. Two research questions were developed to guide the study. Ten items researcher made questionnaire titled; Childhood Education and Security Curriculum Implementation in the Primary Schools (CESCIPS) and structured interview were the instruments used for data collection. Mean and standard deviation were used to determine the level at which security related content of civic education are implemented in the study area.

Results

Research question one: What is the extent to which security related content of civic education and social studies curriculum is implementation at the primary school in Ikom education zone of Cross River State, Nigeria?

Table 1: (N=342).

S/N	ITEMS STATEMENT	\bar{x}	STD	REMARKS
1.	Awareness of security tips	2.33	0.84	Rejected
2.	Teaching of security in school	2.66	0.90	Accepted
3.	Being security conscious	2.16	0.68	Rejected
4.	Teaching of safety measures	1.90	0.63	Rejected
5.	Awareness of kidnapping in schools	2.41	0.95	Rejected
6.	Textbooks that contain security information	2.33	0.84	Rejected
7.	Observation of crime scene	2.40	0.94	Rejected
8.	Teaching of crime in school	2.25	0.80	Rejected
9.	Presence of perimeter fence in school	1.81	0.38	Rejected
10.	Presence of security men in school	2.75	0.72	Accepted
	Total	23.00	7.68	
	\bar{x}	2.03	0.77	

Research question two: What is the difference between rural and urban communities in the implementation of security related content of civic education and social studies curriculum in Ikom education zone of Cross River State?

Table 2 (N=342).

S/N	ITEMS STATEMENT	URBAN		REMARKS	RURAL		REMARKS
		\bar{x}	STD		\bar{x}	STD	
1.	Awareness of security tips	2.60	0.80	Accepted	2.33	0.84	Rejected
2.	Teaching of security in school	2.60	0.87	Accepted	2.66	0.90	Accepted
3.	Being security conscious	2.20	0.57	Rejected	2.16	0.68	Rejected
4.	Teaching of	2.40	0.94	Rejected	1.90	0.63	Rejected

Item	Urban	Rural	Decision	Mean	Std	Decision	
5.	Awareness of kidnapping in schools	2.75	0.98	Accepted	2.41	0.95	Rejected
6.	Textbooks that contain security information	2.66	0.90	Accepted	2.33	0.84	Rejected
7.	Observation of crime scene	2.33	0.84	Rejected	2.40	0.94	Rejected
8.	Teaching of crime in school	2.00	0.57	Rejected	2.25	0.80	Rejected
9.	Presence of perimeter fence in school	2.25	0.80	Rejected	1.81	0.38	Rejected
10.	Presence of security men in school	2.58	0.86	Accepted	2.75	0.73	Accepted
	Total	24.07	8.2		23.00	7.68	
	\bar{x}	2.46	0.82		2.03	0.77	

Discussion

The results of the two tables indicated that, a greater number of pupils in the primary school in the study area both in urban and rural locations do not have adequate security awareness education as a result of low level of implementation of security related content of the civic education curriculum. With the mean and standard deviation(\bar{X} & Std) of 2.03 and 0.77 in table one and 2.46 and 0.84 in table two, it means that the pupils that do not have security awareness are more than the pupils that have the awareness. Furthermore, the result of table two showed that pupils in the urban communities have security awareness than their rural counterparts. The researchers observed that most schools in the study area do not have security measures, guide, fence around the school and doors; as a result, anyone can walk into the school compound and harass any teacher or pupils at wish. It was also gathered that, most pupils do not have civic education textbook, as a result, they do not have a means of even reading such concept on their own. This result is in agreement with Atanda (2013),nm m, who assert that most rural and urban schools lack basic facilities like perimeter fence and many other security facilities there by rendering the learners, teachers other personnel and school equipment insecure.

The realization of a safe society is dependent on the creation of security awareness among citizens especially the youth through effective implementation of security education curriculum at the primary school level to catch them young. This early security awareness can enhance a positive and effective learning environment which guarantees effective leaning. Security and safety is an extremely important issue for effective schooling, as such, it is important for the school to emphasis on creating security awareness among pupils at the early stage. To this end, comprehensive school curriculum that reflect creative interests, new ideas, viable aspirations, vibrant cultural heritage, technological advancement, innovative industrial experiences, entrepreneurial as well as security needs of the contemporary society can ensure general safety. Atanda (2013) opined that in order maintain safety

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in the school environment, pupils and staff must be well-informed about security issues in the immediate community and society at large and the administrator have to brief staff and address pupils/students on the assembly ground on daily basis, the subject matter should not base on academic issue alone. It is necessary to provide them with current news on security.

Conclusion

This study is conducted on childhood education as imperative for achieving a secured society in Nigeria. The school is considered the most important component or platform where security awareness can be created among members of the society. Education through effective curriculum implementation especially at the foundation level (childhood and primary) can go a long way to provide learners with the knowledge and skills to be security conscious. This can be achieved through the emphasis on the implementation of security related content of civic education at the basic education level.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made;

1. School administrators in the study area and other parts of the nation school emphasis the implementation of security related content of civic education and other subject.
2. The school administrators should always alert staff and pupils/students of the security challenges around the school community.
3. Curriculum developers should increase security content of the curriculum content of civic education or introduce security education as a subject in all schools.
4. The political leaders should ensure good governance which can reduce the rate of grievance from different groups of people in the nation.
5. Favoritism, godfatherism, tribalism, sectionalism, among others should be avoided.
6. Merit should be considered in the selection of leaders and people in places of authority.

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