

Management of Secondary Education in Nigeria for National Cohesion and Global Competitiveness

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Abstract. The aim of educational reforms and restructuring including modernization is successful integration into the global environment with the expectations that schools will produce the required manpower, proactive leadership and enlightened citizenry who is flexible enough to adapt to variations of religion, language and ethnicity. This paper aimed at examining the management of secondary education in Nigeria for national cohesion. A country cannot be ascribed globally competitive when it is fraught with constant recurrence of violence, rivalry and hostility; the paper thus presents the key challenges plaguing the secondary's school strategic development with a focus of secondary educational management of civic education. The paper adopted the use of content analysis, evaluations of experts and government archives, it also highlights the imperatives of national cohesion and global competitiveness with the belief that fixing the country's educational system for national cohesion requires pragmatic approaches targeted at the tapping the huge untapped potentials of the Nigerian secondary educational system.

Keywords: National cohesion, competitiveness, management, education.

INTRODUCTION

In this fast-paced globalizing world, having a competitive edge has become not only paramount but critical for national sustainability and survival especially in pluralistic societies where ethnic diversity and differences have proven to be a serious challenge to national unity and socio-economic and political development. Nigeria is a case in point as despite her fifty-eight (58) years of political independence, the country is still plagued with a plethora of citizenship issues; from the inability to grasp the reality that nationhood presents and not the perception of the country as a mere geographical constituent, or that relating to a gathering of different tribes or a nation forced to stay together because of its natural resources (Osundare, 2011).

These challenges have proven to be a deterrent to Nigerian efforts at pure democracy. Nigeria I one of the

world's largest archipelago whose thirty states are inhabited by more than 180 million people from 100-plus distinct ethnic groups speaking over 120 languages and practicing one of three officially sanctioned religions (Christianity, Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism and Traditionalism). All these cultural, religious, social and demographic challenges are not only a threat to the overall economic development of the nation but threatens the fabric of national unity as well. The quest to main culture, religion and language of each sub-societal unit is often at variance with efforts by the government to maintain national cohesion, integration and social harmony (Hashim, 2009). It is as a result of these ethnic and religious strife that the country faces one of its prolonged and long-drawn battle with terrorists – The Boko Haram (Onuoha, 2013, Cook, 2013, Medugu, 2017).

Citing how most pluralistic societies of the world such as the United States of America, Indonesia etc. have been able to harness her national resources of both material and people and become developed, advanced today can be traced to their ability to instill the spirit of cohesion making their citizens intellectual and socially efficient and a lack of this has been cited as a major reason why Nigerian has not been able to attain meaning socioeconomic development despite her abundant human and natural resources (Falade and Adeyemi, 2015). This is what Okam and Lawal (2011) referred to as 'negative citizenship'. Over the years countries have made use of the tool of education to instill the spirit of cohesion. Education provides a medium through which not only skills but principles and values for social, personal and national development are developed (Kangethe, 2010) and secondary education especially is listed among the twelve key success factors listed by the World Economic Forum as making up the pillars for country's competitive advantage.

Thus, if Nigeria as a nation is to make headway and come out of the multiplicity of her current dilemma there is need for value-reorientation through commitment and ideals which is rooted in this form of education which has come to be known as 'civic education'. Civic education is an "altruistic and moralistic term which initiates discussions of citizenship (socio-political) issues within the public (polis) domains of the state". This paper offers a study on how effective management of secondary education in Nigeria can aid the processes of national cohesion and give the nation an edge in its efforts to attain global competitiveness. The paper explains the way secondary education is currently managed in Nigeria and discusses attempts to promote national identity and cohesion through secondary education curriculum and the challenges that accrue from these efforts.

Research objective

The core aim of this paper is to determine the implications of effective management of civic education in Nigerian secondary schools for national cohesion.

Research Questions

The paper therefore seeks answers to the following questions:

1. How is the Nigerian secondary education system managed for national cohesion and global competitiveness
2. What impact do curriculum management has on national cohesion?
3. What impact do teacher management has on national cohesion?

The paper is structured as follows: section two presents empirical literature on civic educational management and its effects on national cohesion as well as the challenges of effective management of civic education. Section three looks at fostering national cohesion and global competitiveness through the Nigerian secondary educational system. Section four dwells on management of secondary school system for national cohesion and global competitiveness. The final section describes the possible implications and recommendations for policy. It is believed that the findings of this study would be useful to the Nigerian government in assessing the effectiveness of its civic education programs in secondary schools on national cohesion and global competitiveness. Thus the Nigerian government might glean one or two ways of improving her civic curriculum to further enhance national cohesion. Also, this research will further promote further research in the field of global competitiveness and national cohesion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

National cohesion is a term that has a wide range of definitions and simultaneously no international accepted one. Meru University Cohesion and Values committee (2015) stated that national cohesion goes beyond management of conflict and ability to keep peace to "It is a process and an outcome of instilling and enabling all citizens in the country to have a sense as well as a feeling that they are members of the same country, engaged in a common enterprise and facing shared challenges." According to Meru University Cohesion and Values committee (2015) also evidence that measure the impacts of civic education programs are particularly few as impacts of this form of education can vary significantly bordering on areas such as increases in individual knowledge and behavioral changes to making a difference in political decisions (i.e. who gets to be elected). In cases where the aim is to education a nation's youth and thus change the attitude and belief system of a generation the results become particularly more difficult to measure.

Drawing from sources such as electronic databases such as Google Scholar, Abstracts of Education, The World Bank and UNESCO this section presents the empirical literature relating to the issues of national cohesion and education. Beginning with the works undertaken by Finkel *et al.* (2011) based a surveys undertaken in the past 1½ decade for a group of developing economies in different context came out with a general consensus that that the efficacy of civic education programs is tied to the type of pedagogy used and this corroborates an earlier work done by Finkel (2011) where he stated that the conditions under which civic education are most effective in building national

cohesion are repetition (attending a civic education more than once), using an interactive teaching method and training provided by respectable sources and individuals.

M'Cormack (2011) undertook a post-civic education evaluation on Kenya's post-election violence in 2007 to determine the long term effects of the National Civic Education Programme Phase II (NCEP-II URAIA) 2005-2010 programme to inoculate against political violence. The goal of the program was to consolidate a vibrant democratic political culture where all Kenyans where citizens are fully made to be aware of the rights and their responsibilities. The results of the 2011 post evaluation showed that civic education has a long term effects on political violence. the effects of the NCEP II was able to blot out the negative impacts that the violence from hat election had on the control group in terms of ethnic relations, tolerance to conflict, support for the rule of law, forgiveness to perpetrators o violence, oppositions to political violence in contracts to non-participants.

In relation to the subject matter of teacher qualification of teachers in civics and government a survey undertaken by National Assessment Governing Board (1996) to highlight teacher's disinterest and inadequate participation in civic education shows that 65% of the teachers' surveys could not explain 55 key concepts in their field of civic education. In 1996, the national center for educational statistics filed a report indicating that 65 percent of students in civic education classes are bee taught by teachers who are not major in the field of either history, political sciences or governance. Another study by the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (1997) established that 71 percent of teachers who take social studies in schools have a major in general education.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted by this research include content analysis, the use of concepts and construct evaluations related to management of secondary education curriculum and teachers associated with civic education as deemed by expert, comparative evaluations of the school management systems.

Results and DISCUSSION

Social Integration Theory

This work is anchored on the theory of social integration attributed to sociologist and scientist Emily Durkheim (1897/1997) in his popular thesis "*suicide*". Durkheim (1897/1997) proposed that suicide tends to be relatively common among individuals without some form of social interactions citing people who were not in a marital relationship or had no involvement in a religion activity or

because interactions with others increases the opportunity for sense of belonging and support especially during periods of crisis.

Carrying out a comparative analogy between Catholics and Protestants, Durkheim (1897/1997) established that there are lower rates of suicide among the Catholics given that there exists stronger forms of social control and cohesion among them compared to the Protestants. From his data he deciphered that though suicide is as a result of multiplicity of social and demographic factors, social integration specifically is dominant. According to Durkheim (1897/1997) "The more socially integrated a person is -- connected to society, possessing of a feeling of general belonging and a sense that life makes sense within the social context -- the less likely he or she is to commit suicide. As social integration decreases, people are more likely to commit suicide".

Durkheim (1897/1997) cited the different aspects of suicide and intimated on how social factors contribute to each one. Beginning with *Anomic* suicide which is in response to the feeling of anomie by the suicide. Anomie according to Durkheim (1897/1997) is a feeling of "disconnection from the society which results from weakened social cohesion". This is usually the case when there is economic, social, political upheaval to the extent that a person become disorientated and disconnected from the society such that they commit suicide. *Altruistic* suicide occurs when a person is excessively under control by social forces that they might be moved to kill themselves for a specific cause citing the case of Japanese Kamikaze pilots of World War II or the hijackers that crashed the airplanes into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and a field in Pennsylvania in 2001. *Egoistic* suicide is that in response to people who feel total detached from society by their ineffectiveness in role which they formally partook such as work, family and other social association. These are usually he case when the elderly and the retired. *Fatalistic* suicide occurs among people such as prisoners who undergo extreme social regulation resulting in oppressive conditions and denial to access.

Fostering National Cohesion and Global Competitiveness through the Nigerian Secondary Educational System

The Nigerian government have made attempts through its educational systems to foster unity based on ethnic identity through the secondary education curriculum, especially through civics, history, moral education, Christian religious knowledge and Islamic religious studies where civic relates to the theoretical, political and historical aspects of citizenship. Civic education has been

made into a formal instruction that exists in many secondary school systems in Nigeria. Civic education has been made compulsory subjects for all secondary school pupils from JSSI to JSS3 for a period of 40 minutes in a week beginning from the year 1966. Civic education was brought into the Nigerian mainstream school system to impact four aspects of knowledge to Nigerian students: (1) knowledge about democracy and what it means in governance systems (2) the level of cooperation between the governed and governance (3) government and external bodies and (4) the rights and role of citizens in the governance and societal systems. The unity aimed at the civic education syllabus is one that sprung from the spirit of cooperation and harmonious relations.

Nigerian educational system operated a decentralized system with power and autonomy devolving into the various regional and state ministries of education. Currently, at the federal level, the ministry of education is responsible for design and planning guidelines for content and curricular of civic education. These guidelines consists of various standards printed in booklets that can be used by teachers at grade and secondary levels. For secondary school students which is the case in point for this paper, students are expected to have knowledge of the following: knowledge pertaining to civic responsibilities, nationalisms, democracy, relationship between Nigerian and other countries and political attitudes. Recently in a statement, the minister for educational planning as represented by the director for educational planning, research and development Dr. Chioma Nwadei stated that Christian religious knowledge and Islamic religious studies which were in the past administration under President Ebele Goodluck Jonathan (2012-2016) were sub-summed under a single heading 'Civic education' have been pulled out and reviewed so that they can be thought separately. She stated that the review of this curriculum were specifically geared towards a continuous upgrade of "the nation's educational system up to global standards so as to produce effective citizens who are conscious of their responsibilities to the family, community, and country".

This new civic education which was developed to reflect the current Nigerian situation as stated in the syllabus of the West African Examination Council (WAEC) for Nigerian students has the following objectives: (1) understand the importance of citizenship in the society (2) explain the structure, function and responsibilities of the Nigerian government to the people of Nigeria (3) be in the know as to the merging issues in the Nigerian society (4) understanding the rights, duties and obligations as a citizen both the government and the Nigerian society at large and (5) appreciate the democratic values of the government so they can be upheld.

In detail the syllabus is divided into three (3) major sections: section A, B and C. Section A which is titled "National Ethics, discipline, rights and obligations is divided into seven (7) sub-sections. The subsections are:

values, citizenship and nationalism, human rights, law and order, responsible parenthood, traffic regulations and inter-personal relationships. The second section titled "emerging issues in the society" is made up of five (5) subsection, cultism, drugs and drug abuse, Human Trafficking, HIV/AIDS and Youth Empowerment also made up of five sub-sections, Section C titled "Governmental system and processes" is made up of structure and functions of government, democracy, rule of law and national development, political apathy, civil society and popular participation and public service in a democracy. The senate who in 2016 assented to the immediate teaching of civic education and history in Nigerian secondary school were of the opinion that the teaching of these subjects would inculcate the spirit of Pan Africanism in Nigerian youth.

Management of Secondary School System for National Cohesion and Global Competiveness

Beginning from the mid-1990s and the inception of the education for all initiative (EFA) as well as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) most education efforts have been geared towards the acquisition of primary education. However, the voice of post-secondary supporters have over the years gained ground given rise to rapid proliferation of secondary education as a critical element in achieving the MDGs, political stability, socio-economic and global competitiveness and National cohesion (King, McGrath, Rose, 2007; UNESCO, 2008). As a bridge between primary and tertiary education, secondary education systems is a preparatory phase for youth before they gain access to the legal society equipping them with the required legal, social, political and scientific skills.

It is widely acknowledged that secondary education provides an optimal platform where young people especially teenagers can be developed and trained to lead health and productive adult lives and participate actively in the social, specific and economic spheres of life. Secondary education is also fast becoming a prerequisite through which countries which aspire to compete globally equip their citizens to gain specific skills and aptitudes required for increasing technology advanced global market place. For economies who are grappling and overcoming effects of years of crisis and conflict secondary education equip young people with required training and education to rebuild a stable nation and foster national unity (Buckland, 2005). To achieve the aims, the challenge is for countries trying to move from developing from developed or those recovering from crisis to ensure that their secondary education accommodate enough students to meet these requirement, provide a curriculum of sufficient quality and length, train her administrators and teachers as well as

monitor and evaluate them to ensure they deliver according to pre-set standards (UNESCO, 2010).

Currently, UNESCO (2015) estimates an increasing pace in secondary education especially in sub-Saharan Africa with a rise from 519 million in 2009 to 583 million in 2015. In Nigeria specifically, the country has witnessed an average of 25.65 percent enrolment in secondary education between 1970 and 2017 with a minimum enrolment of 14.43 percent in 1970 and a maximum of 65.15 percent in 2017 (World Bank, 2018). With these expansion in enrolment comes also the need to re-position and reform the whole secondary education curriculum to ensure that it is of quality and relevance for all students. Though there is no simple formula for ensuring that this is actualized one of the key mechanisms is effective management. From the planning stage, informed decision making is required to ensure that the revised curriculum meets the needs of both the nation and the individual economically, culturally, socially, politically and religiously. It should inculcate a detailed analysis of the current international labour market needs, opportunities for tertiary and professional education, the social and political values as well as the aptitudes required to build a sustained and peaceful democracy.

Also, a detailed financial analysis is required that would not only begin the process of reform but sufficient enough to do a post-impact evaluation. Management is required to ensure that not only is fund acquired, planning is conducted but also that teachers are adequately trained to deliver the new curriculum that supports the desired change. Qualified and training teachers and administrators are essential and the issues associated with these such as recruitment to professional development needs to be addressed. The process should also include multiple stakeholders; teacher unions' needs to be aware of these events so they can support agreed conditions of service and remuneration and the community for instance should be in the know to accept and legitimize the new curriculum and possibly contribute towards the required resources.

Management and Curricular Reform for National Cohesion and global competitiveness in Nigeria

From the above discussion we can decipher that the Nigerian government takes the promotion of national cohesion and by proxy global competitiveness seriously. There have been huge attempt on the part of the government through the recruitment of outstanding and credible teachers to handle issues referring to national cohesion encapsulated within the secondary school curriculum. In spite of these efforts the Nigerian civic education curriculum has been noted for its inattentiveness to the realities of the Nigerian political history or its contemporary events and according to

Koross (2012) it has been noted for failing to stimulate the interest of its recipients. Past programs have been designed in such a way that they insight thoughtful appreciation for Nigerian heritage. Most of these civic education curriculum especially at the secondary level have been known to contain dry abstract portrayals of the formal structure of the system of governance, charts on how the legislature formulates bills and pass them into laws and some idealized portrayals of the so-called heroes of our past.

More so, the common method with which these curriculum was taught was through 'lecture' with emphasis on facts memorization compared to other methods such as inquiry, discussion and debate. It is recommended that student-centered pedagogies should be adopted. To nurture enlightened and rational citizens, students should be allowed to debate on these issues especially at the secondary levels. Waghid (2005) stated that "if open deliberative argumentation cannot unfold in university and school classrooms, it reduces the chance of producing active democratic citizens who can one day enter and play a meaningful role in the public realm". This kind of method 'you will agree' connotes an imagery of dryness, irrelevance and dullness as far as the issue of civic education in Nigeria is concerned which necessitates reforms in these aspects of education: from the perspective of teaching methods and curriculum itself. This method has been referred to as the phenomenological approach whose aim is to inform students of the various ideals and values and not to induce these experiences to students. The curriculum need to be such that encourages more critical enquiry and open deliberation – attributed which have been deemed critical in the understanding of inter-ethnic issues which Nigerian faces on an often basis. The curriculum that shows the history of Nigeria seems to deliberately brush aside s past controversies and ethic discord such as the "Biafra war".

Where the goal is to attain global competitiveness providing citizens who are intellectually and socially sound for both local and international markets (Lewin, 2008) specific curriculum elements can be identified and prioritized for inclusion and improvement which might not necessitate outright reforms. While mathematics and English language continue to be benchmarks, other global work-oriented areas disciplines should be given credence as well. For instance, in this age of rapid trade and technological development there is an awareness that most curriculum should be modernized to inculcate software and information technology aids both a subject to be tutored and as tools for aiding learning and teaching. Nigeria progress towards adaptation of innovation and technology in the secondary school curriculum to prepare students for global knowledge is still a challenge. Significant expertise is required to develop, implement and maintain these new curriculum

especially in government-owned institutions. The cost of preparing the new technology based curriculum, modernized classroom facilities, preparing teachers for these changes and ensuring that these new systems are maintained is huge as such will require the coordination of multiple donors and private partners. Thus, curriculum innovation whether to inculcate new technology, update science, math content and civic education content or modernized teaching pedagogy and methodology requires care planning from activities of implementation to fund acquisition.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research findings are indicative of a widespread lack of knowledge of civic education areas and issues and low participation and these is not surprising when one takes a cursory look at the lack of widespread and effective civic education methods in our secondary school system as well as the inadequate preparation of those who have been saddled with the responsibility to teach these issues. In as much as Nigeria belong to diverse ethnic groups, religion and culture these should not be the bane of discord as other more diverse economies have proven to surmount their challenges. Nigeria must live in national unity and cohesion and education especially at the secondary level can be harnessed to instill the spirit of national cohesion of which the Nigerian Policy on Education leave no doubt these are the objectives of educational system in Nigeria. Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. It is recommended that based on the new curriculum structure of civic education in Nigeria. The different section: A, B and C should be thought by professionals in these fields; i.e. Political scientists should handle those aspects relating to politics; history specialist to the aspects relating to the Nigerian history etc. in addition to trained teachers in civic education
2. Just like mathematics and English language have become compulsory subjects and prerequisites to obtaining admission into tertiary institutions in Nigeria, the government can also makes civic education a compulsory one including an oral exams tagged "understanding and perceptions of the Nigerian democracy" of which awards and incentives should be tied.
3. The methodology for teaching civic education in secondary schools should be interactive fostered around inquiry, reflection and development of analytic skills.
4. Co-curricular activities should be strengthened and monitored such as those involving dialogues that promotes intercultural understanding.

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