
**Extent of Integrated Curriculum Implementation for Effective Inculcation of School Ethos
in Secondary School Learners in Akwa Ibom State: An Empirical Approach**

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the extent of integrated curriculum performance for effective inculcation of positive ethos in secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The study postulated one specific objective, and one research questions for its guidance. It adopted a descriptive research design. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select 6 public schools in the State. The study population was 6,297 secondary school teachers. The Morgan's table of small sample was employed to determine the sample of 357 respondents, randomly selected from the target population. The instrument developed by the researcher was titled "*Integrated Curriculum Implementation for Effective Inculcation of School Ethos among Learners Questionnaire* (ICIEISELQ) with reliability coefficient of .91 through a test on Cronbach's Alpha for data collection. The data collected were subjected to descriptive statistics. Item by item analysis was conducted, which their mean and standard deviation values were used in answering the research questions. The results indicated that principals and teachers performed their positive roles regarding the inculcation of positive school ethos in students at a moderate extent. The study concluded that effective inculcation of school ethos in students would help to develop desirable characters as values to transform the society and guarantee patriotism in the country. It was recommended among others, that ministry of education and school management should implement realistic integrated curriculum that are embedded with school ethos for students to learn in order to benefit the society after school in the study area.

Key Words: Integrated Curriculum, School Ethos, Secondary School Students

Introduction

Ethos is the norms and social values that school teaches. School ethos reflects the underlying social values that are inculcated in children in learning environment for their successful livelihood after schooling. Allodi (2010) asserted that school ethos is the set of ideas, attitudes and manners that is associated with the particular group of people or a particular type of activities imbued in people for effective cultural adaptation in the society. Medibbo (2011) described ethos as the inarticulate expression of what the community values. It covers quality of relationships within the school, adherence to school customs, and proficiency in comportment as well as quality classroom behaviours that could promote out-of-class decorum with other members of the society. It is postulated that when learners are guided with those values such as respect, regards to elderly, humility and societal norms, there is that tendency for them to possess credible characters and personality in the society. But when these values are not imbued in the

characters of learners, they usually grow to exhibit negative characteristic traits and antisocial behaviours in extreme cases.

School ethos illustrates the character and cultural environment of the school. It underpins all practices, touching on all aspects of the schools' operations and reflecting on a collective understanding of how things are done in a school environment. Nabuzale (2018) stated that in activities of school ethos, it is observed that most schools tend to provide more positive experiences to their learners than others. These experiences are observed from the fact that every school has an identity, personal relationship rituals, set of moral codes, norms, folks ways, customs and a means to sanctioning people irrationally. It is instituted in order to guide the behaviours of all school members towards the attainment of the desired educational goals and quality of living standards of the people who passed through such environment. Thus, giving credence to the school culture, which is recognised as unwritten assumptions or rules, the collection of symbols, artefacts, combination of traditions and rituals, special language or terminologies that learners and staff are expected to use is to guide their behaviour towards achieving positive learning outcome (Hughes, 2012).

School ethos are the hidden curriculum which are unwritten rules, values and normative rules of behaviour that learners are expected to conform to and learn while in school. This ethos helps to regulate students' behaviours and the development of important quality aspect of learning environment that can influence their wellbeing and learning satisfaction. According to Thompson (2017), values that are necessary to be taught through the hidden curriculum include: respect to authority, respect for other's opinion, punctuality to school, aspiration for achievement and preparation to attain work ethics in the future. These values are important characteristics that can bolster the integrity and personality of learners in the future and it could also guarantee their successful life interaction with others. Allodi (2010) enunciated that schools whose hidden curriculum are embedded with responsive and respectful cultural ethos can train learners to acquire the motivation to participate in the educative process and achieve outstanding educational results than those who do not have their education in an environment that promote effective ethos.

Jesscia, Trayce and Kristen (2014) identified three integrated curriculum models that have proven successful with individual which claimed to be gifted and talented. These provided students with opportunity to read with reflections and discuss to create and construct meanings for key concepts of curriculum models. This allows for cross curricular connections; advanced content-pre-assessments allow students the opportunity to show mastery of concepts and skills in content areas. Whereas, Teachers also are able to compact the curriculum and guide students through advanced content at a more rapid pace; process/product-self-directed learning allows students to explore a topic of personal interest. They construct knowledge and apply it to products that are highly qualitative.

Integration acknowledges and builds on the relationships that exist among all things. An integrated curriculum implies learning that is synthesized across traditional subject areas and learning experiences that are designed to be mutually reinforcing. This approach develops the child's ability to transfer their learning to other settings. Curriculum encompasses what happens in the school with regards to teaching of arts, physical education, extracurricular activities and support services as well as programmes (National Middle School Association, 2010). The implementation of hidden curriculum at the middle level of education are accounting for concentration on the task of learning in the preparation of the learners. One approach to

curriculum implementation emphasizes by middle school models is in aspect of curriculum integration (NMSA, 2010; Mande, 2014). Integrated curriculum can encourage teachers and students to engage in active and purposeful learning. Many descriptions and studies have shown that curriculum integration can provide an engaging, purposeful, relevant and meaningful approach to teaching and learning (Foster & Linney, 2007; Huber, Hutchings & Gale, 2015).

Educational researchers have found that an integrated curriculum can result in greater intellectual curiosity, improved attitude towards schooling, enhanced problem-solving skills, and higher achievement in college (Austin, Hirstein, & Walen, 2007; Kain, 2013). Some schools have used an integrated curriculum as a way to make education relevant and thus a way to keep students interested in school (Kain, 2013). This strategy in curriculum implementation or performance can create opportunity for the school principals, teachers and other staff of the school to articulate dimension that can help to develop important values into the students. Mande (2014) remarked that school ethos are important values that help to create enabling environment for effective learning and teaching; it triggers the understanding of wellbeing underpinned by children's rights and promote positive relationships across the whole school community.

Notably, this value could help to promote social and emotional wellbeing and mental health for all school members for successful learning gains. These are core values, attitudes, beliefs and culture of the school which include school connectedness and a feeling of being accepted, respected and bonded to the school environment. Presumably, learners groomed from schools that encourage positive ethos throughout the school community are involved meaningfully in decisions affecting them at all levels of their education than those who have no opportunity to be developed from such school environment.

Statement of problem

Common observations indicate that most schools are not paying attention to positive school ethos that could affect students' behaviours in the future. It is a noticeable fact that Principals and teachers as well as other staff of the school are ignoring the hidden curriculum that would help to condition the life of students for successful livelihood. However, most students are roaming about the school premises aimlessly, unnecessarily become stubborn, and they seem not to have any supporting relationship with their teachers and other significant peers. These students are observed to feel insecure emotionally and socially, coupled with their inability to discuss sensitive aspect of their lives to anyone in the school environment for remedy. The feeling of social insecurity is due to not being involved in policy making and execution of educational issues that concern them and this negligence has affected their participations as well as sabotaging approach to integrated curriculum implementation.

Thus, students are usually feel stopped, and threatened in closely relating to other school members in the school community and they usually experience ignominy in learning environment. The inadequacy for inculcating school ethos in students as hidden curriculum has negatively affected the teaching and absorption of learning mathematics, English language, social studies and language art among others. The setback makes them find it very difficult if not impossible to concentrate, pay attention, and appreciate valuable learning in school as well as demonstrating positive characters as values in the school atmosphere. They rather subject themselves to antisocial behaviours that are detrimental to values and educational achievement which could sabotage educational benefits and ridicule their future endeavours. Hence, this study

enquires the role of school principals and teachers on the inculcation of positive ethos as hidden curriculum in secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State?

The specific objective of this study sought to:

- 1) Recognise the roles of principals and teachers for inculcation of positive ethos in students as integrated hidden curriculum in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Question

The following research question is posed in order to proffer solution to research problems:

How are the schools performing their positive roles of inculcation of positive ethos in students as integrated hidden curriculum in secondary schools?

Research Method

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The reason for using this design was that the researcher sought to describe the extent of the independent variables on the dependent variable of this study without manipulating them. The study was conducted in Akwa Ibom State, which was created from the former Cross River State on 23rd September, 1987. The state capital is in Uyo with the landmass of 7,245,925 square kilometres of Nigeria's Wealth Basin; lying between the Latitudes 4⁰30¹N and 5⁰33¹N North of Equator and Longitudes 7⁰30¹E and 8⁰25¹E of East of the Greenwich Meridian with the population of 4,805,451 people (2006 Census Figure of the National Population Commission, Abuja). The population for this study consisted of all the 6,297 secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom State (Planning, Research and Statistics Directorate of the State Secondary Education Board, Akwa Ibom State, Staff Nominal Role of 2018/2019). A sample size of 357 secondary school teachers were determined using Morgan's table for small sample size, using 5,000 population size with 95 per cent confidence at 5 per cent margin of error.

The Stratified sampling technique was used to select the subjects from 6 schools of the three education zones of Akwa Ibom State. The research instrument called "*Integrated Curriculum Implementation for Effective Inculcation of School Ethos among Learners Questionnaire* (ICIEISELQ) was developed by the researcher, derived from the finding of the reviewed literature related to the study. The instrument had two sections, A and B. Section A obtained personal information from the respondents, Section B elicited data from the variables of effective school ethos as hidden curriculum for secondary school learners (20 items). The instrument was administered by the researchers to the subjects, after obtaining permission from the Principals of schools. A total of 357 copies of the instrument were administered to the respondents, collected on the spots for statistical analyses.

The face validity of the instrument was ascertained by experts in educational management and planning, measurement and evaluation, all in Faculty of Education, University of Uyo, Uyo. They checked for accuracy of items and reliability. The instrument was subjected to internal consistency test with the Cronbach Alpha statistics that generated .91 coefficients, through a trial test on 20 teachers of public secondary schools in Uyo that were not part of the main study. This study used mean and standard deviation of descriptive statistics to answer the Research Questions. The researcher adopted criteria mean of 3.0 as the midpoint score and cut-off point for determining the extent in descriptive analysis using the real limit as follows: 0.00 to 1.49 = Very Low Extent, 1.50 to 2.00 = Low Extent, 2.10 to 2.99 = Moderate Extent, 3.00 to 3.49 = High Extent and 3.50 to 5.00 = Very High Extent respectively.

Results

The results of data analyses of this study are presented in table 1 below:

Research Question 1

How are the schools performing their positive roles of inculcation of positive ethos in students as integrated hidden curriculum in secondary schools?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation responses of the respondents on the role of schools for inculcation of positive ethos in students as integrated hidden curriculum in secondary school

S/N	ITEM	Mean	SD	Rmks
1	Our school does not compromise with discipline	2.97	.83	ME
2	Student's rights is respected in our school	1.54	.52	LE
3	The principal usually advices students during devotion	3.38	.74	HE
4	Our school usually allows open relationship with students	2.43	.56	ME
5	Positive atmosphere is acceptable in our school	1.75	.74	LE
6	The principal permits teachers and other school staff to interact with students freely in our school	2.68	.43	ME
7	Every staff including teachers are encouraged to pay attention to students at any time	1.52	.52	LE
8	Students are given social security support in our school	2.35	.74	ME
9	Respect for other peoples' opinion are taught in our school	2.41	.55	ME
10	Students are encouraged to discuss their challenges with anyone at school	2.89	.74	ME
11	Students' rights are respected in my school	1.95	.83	LE
12	Students are always welcomed during decision process in our school	1.67	.53	LE
13	Respect to authority is usually taught in our school	3.61	.77	VHE
14	The attitude of punctuality is highly encouraged in our school	1.97	.83	LE
15	Relationship seminars have been conducted for students in my school	1.54	.52	LE
16	Students are usually encouraged to have aspirations in their life	2.38	.74	ME
17	Parents are always allowed to participate in policy decisions of the school	2.43	.56	ME
18	Students are taught on how to develop work ethics for future endeavours	2.75	.74	ME
19	Our school maintain sound atmosphere for interpersonal relationships	1.68	.83	LE
20	learning materials for ethics are specifically provided for teachers to guide the students	2.52	.52	ME
	Cluster Mean	2.17		ME

Source: Field survey data from the respondents, 2019

Key: SD = Standard Deviation, RMKS = Remarks; VHE = Very High Extent, HE = High Extent, ME = Moderate Extent, and LE = Low Extent

To answer the research question 1, item by item analysis was performed on the respondents in recognising the role of schools for inculcation of positive ethos in students as integrated hidden curriculum in secondary school in Akwa Ibom State. Table 1 shows that out of 20 items, six items reported Low Extent (items 2, 5, 7, 11, 12 and 19); 10 items reported Moderate Extent (items 1, 4, 6, 8 to 10, 16 to 18 and 20), only item 3 reported High Extent, while item 13 reported a Very High Extent result. Accordingly, the cluster mean for overall items reported Moderate Extent. Hence, the answer to the research question is that principals and teachers are performing their positive roles regarding the inculcation of school ethos in students as hidden curriculum for the wellbeing of the society at moderate extent.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of this study indicated that principals and teachers are performing their positive roles regarding the inculcation of school ethos in students as hidden curriculum at moderate extent. The results showed that student's rights, positive atmosphere, paying attention to students' needs, students' value, students acceptability during decision making process, attitude to punctuality, relationship awareness and maintenance of sound atmosphere for interpersonal relationships were observed to be in low extent; not compromising with discipline, acceptability of open relationships among students, permission to interact with students by all staff, respect for people's opinions, students are allowed to discuss their challenges with school staff, students are encouraged to aspire, involvement of parents in policy decisions of the school, students are taught on how to develop work ethics and provision of learning materials for ethics to inculcate in students were observed to be moderate extent; the rights of students are respected was observed to be in high extent, while students are taught how to respect authority was observed to be at a very high extent.

These findings indicate that administrators at school learning environments are demonstrating their roles of inculcating school ethos in students at a moderate level which makes it difficult for these behaviours to affect the society positively. Learners regarding the quality of education anticipated in this country is associated with lack of skilled workforce that inhibit the quality of services staff offer to the nation have been traceable to inability of staff to acquire important positive ethos. This implies that the quality of school ethos is an indispensable instrument required in the transformation of individual values, beliefs and behaviours, as well as being used to preserve the societal cultural atmosphere. It is postulated that education that promote values through effective inculcation of school ethos to students, is capable of developing good characters and manners. These good and qualitative personalities can make people to be good administrators, teachers, learners, professionals and could create opportunity to recognise their consciences wherever they find themselves in the society.

Conclusion

The study recognised the role of principals and teachers in the development of character as being very pertinent and as a hidden curriculum through school ethos. The study concluded that effective inculcation of school ethos in students would help to develop desirable characters as values to transform the society and guarantee patriotism in the country. This would go a long way to help people observe and understand their behaviours and value interpersonal relationships with others in order to live peacefully with others in the society.

Recommendation

It is recommended that government through ministry of education should endeavour to checkmate the attitude of principals and teachers in implementing school ethos in the learning environment as hidden curriculum that would ensure behaviour modification of young people towards a greater quality learning gains. It is further recommended that school administrators such as principals and teachers should endeavour to improve upon the implementation pattern of school ethos in order to groom leaders that would give value to education and character wellbeing of the future generations.

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