Democractic Principles and life long Education of Citizens in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Life-long education is an on-going life process that starts from birth and ends in the grave. The essence being to enable citizens who were not privileged to acquire education while they were young to do so. This is more so as society is dynamic and citizens expected to adapt to those changes through life-long education. Literacy level in Nigeria still lags behind, a little above 50% of 200 million Nigerians are said to be without formal education. Democracy on the other hand, an alien system of governance that Nigeria keyed into since independence brought social challenges and accounts for majority of undemocratic attitude exhibited by the citizens which no doubt is contrary to democratic principles. Structured questionnaires prepared and issued to 300 respondents from 6 academic institutions in Enugu metropolis, were deployed for this study, out of which 280 were successfully filled and returned, following Likert's Five Points Scale. The study found that education in Nigeria is traditional and authoritarian; that traditional teachers see themselves as only persons that can inculcate knowledge to students and do not cherish contributions from students during classes, do not accept challenges from any one including the students' parents. They were also found to be undemocratic and recite to every group of students from their old lesson notes without update. On the issue of democracy, the study found that at every stage in our adult life, citizens should be able to not only use their heads but also their hands to acquire vocational training, that sound education develops a critical mind to enable citizens detect flaws and disagree with even those they respect most. However, the study does not accept that the desire for knowledge can also be for its own sake apart from for earning a living. Again, that education provides citizens with knowledge and minimum skill to take their place in the society.

Keywords: Education. Life-long education, democracy, politics.

INTRODUCTION

Education means different things to different persons, however majority are in agreement that education is a process and regarded as an instrument per excellence for the eradication of individuals from poverty, lack, ignorance and disease [1,2,3]. To others, it represents the means of transferring desirable values to the young ones to be useful to themselves and to the society as they grow [4,5]. Education could also be a form of learning in which the knowledge, skills and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next through teaching, training or research [6,7]. Education as a process implies that individuals at any point in their lives could pass through transformation from none literate to literate through adaptation of education tools to acceptable public life [8]. The aim amongst others is to lead productive lives according to one's talent and interest [9]. Evidently, before the advent of the Europeans in Nigeria, people were made to learn orally through close observation of their masters as there was nothing like issuance of certificates at the completion of courses of study other than skill acquisition and practical demonstration of arts learned [10]. Democratic principles in education is about applying diplomacy during teaching and learning rather than relying too much on the old ways of reciting to every group of students what should be done by the teacher. A good teacher under this system encourages his students to challenge his views in order to generate

good class discussions for the benefit of all, contrary to what obtains nowadays where teachers see themselves as persons who know everything and have every right to inculcate knowledge and morals in every child who crosses their path [11]. As a result, their authority cannot be challenged and instructions received as presented [13]. A situation where the traditional teacher does not want to alter his old ways of teaching no matter for how long and does not want to learn from his students is not democratic. However, [12] suggests that if our aim is to make education less painful to the students, teachers in the system need to be more democratic. Another example of democracy in education lies where students participate in the discussion during teaching and revision of teaching methods and or materials teachers used over so many years in the past [13]. The justification lies as students are given opportunity to choose from a set of subjects in a curriculum and teachers willingness to accommodate this as much as possible. For clarity, democratic education is the education that is based on a sound principle of freedom of choice and freedom of action on the part of people. To that effect, students are free to study the courses they are most capable to study. On the contrary, democracy is eroded when students who qualify for admission to particular educational institutions are denied admission while those who are less qualified are admitted, when students were compelled to study courses they were least interested in [14]. Lifelong education is the conscious and supportive process of development of human potentials that stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills and understanding they require throughout life time and applying such with confidence, creativity and for the enjoyment of all [15]. Such lifelong education is based on the theory that man can learn at any age as education is a continuous process through life. Education largely takes place under the guidance of others, but may also be autodidactic. Any experience that has a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels or acts may be considered educational [16]. To this effect therefore, most societies place high premium on their educational system so that individuals will not only come out refined and polished but become an asset to themselves and the society at large. [16], affirms that education in every human society is an indispensable instrument for human progress, empowerment and for national development [17]. Because of its relevance, the industry has witnessed active participation from non-governmental agencies, communities and individuals as well as government interventions. Lifelong education is not only important for an individual's competitiveness and employability, but also enhances social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development [18].

Nigeria education adaptation to democratic principles

Education which entails a lifelong process and a social process and takes place in the society is said to be worthwhile as it involves the overall development of an individual in such a manner that the person will be of best to himself and to the society and could positively transform one's outlook of life when the knowledge transmitted was understood [19]. It was in the realization of the relevance of education in every society that a National Centre for Adult Education was established in Kano in 1985 and three other centers subsequently in Uyo in 1952, Maiduguri 1976 and Bauchi 1978 for literacy education. The centers serve as a national non – formal education library, documentation and resources development and production centers. The institutes offer training courses for mass literacy personnel. In – service training was for the staff involved at state agencies for mass literacy and Non- government Organization (NGO) literacy program is conducted at the centers [20]. These measures constitute part of the

strategies employed by Nigeria government to ensure that adult citizens of the country who were not opportune to have formal education at the on – set of life have the full opportunity to attain their potentials and geared towards making sure that citizens were able to understand, follow and abide by government policies and programs as anchored in the principles of democracy. Essentially, life – long education increases literacy level in Nigeria [21].

In line with this, [7] identified three functions that education system performs: qualification, subjectification and socialization functions. By qualification, [9] argues that qualification is one of the major functions of organized education, though not restricted to preparation for the world of work, but providing students with knowledge, skills and exposure. Subjectification function saw education not only as contributor to qualification and socialization, but also about uniqueness of every individual. Socialization function has to do with the many ways by which through education, individuals become part of a particular social, cultural and political orders. In line with this disposition, [10] maintains that democracy can only thrive when the electorate is patriotic enough, articulate and well informed through education.

Adopting John Dewey's Philosophical Construct in Life – long Education and Democracy

Dewey in [7] also posits that democracy, the best form of government because of the full involvement of citizens in the process of governance is a system that runs under an open economic system and allows individuals to explore all the innate potentials to better his/her lots in particular and the society in general. Dewey in [6] ties up the aim of education with reforms and revision of the society. To him, education is an unending process which has no final goal except to promote democratic way of life and recommended that the process of education should reflect democratic way of life; that what the child learns should be determined by the child's outlook and interest and there should be close understanding between the pupils and teachers. Dewey draws the idea behind lifelong education to a system of education that has no bounds due largely to the fact that change is an inevitable social process that when it occurs, individuals need to adapt to it through education [8]. On the other hand, [8] maintains that life – long education is driven by the attitude of openness to new ideas, decisions, skills and behaviors as it provides one with learning opportunities at all ages, all levels and in various contexts. This suggests that lifelong education provides all the enablement's for democracy to thrive [11].

Another theory to Dewey's aim of education is that education is the reconstruction of experience as it transfers knowledge from adult to youths, helps youths to become agents of progress or improve the society, helps the child grow in his experience and directs future experiences in meaningful ways. When juxtaposed life – long education and democracy, the thrust of life – long education is that no society can survive without education, due largely to the fact that education is viewed not only as a formal process but include all processes involved in helping individuals participate fully in societal activities [13]. Thus, as changes occur, individuals are expected to adapt to those changes so that they will remain relevant in the society they belong. Again,[5] postulates that lifelong education integrates horizontally and vertically. Horizontal integration involves bringing together of all the types of education being provided within the society, in school and out of it so that they can support each other while Vertical integration involves the articulation of various types of education made available to individuals throughout their life time. In their studies, [8] state that lifelong education approach is a recognition of the world and oneself, creating new things, learning habits and behavioural mannerisms. Similarly, [20] noted that lifelong education involves all activities that include formal, prevalent and informal learning that continue from birth to death and it has a comprehensive and visionary structure. Democracy, by its principles suggests a system of government where citizens articulate ideas and through their representatives, implement those ideas for the support and development of the citizens. Evidently, the entire globe is tilting towards

the attainment of democracy. To key into the world of democracy suggests that citizens in various climes should be educated on the principles and practice of the order without which, participation in the global activities becomes difficult. For instance, it is through lifelong education that countries of the world appreciate the need for globalization and this can only be possible in an open society which is a strong attribute of democracy. Indeed, democracy brought a paradigm shift from the seeming despotic and fearful rule by Kings and queens to a leadership pattern where the opinion of the people is superior to any other, irrespective of social status. However, Nigeria is yet to adapt to these values hence the expected values of democracy is yet to be achieved. The third variant of Dewey's aim of education is the development of civilized social life in the society. For him, civilized society exists because education is transmitted from generation to generation, without which, social life cannot exist. This was why Dewey tied education to transforming the society. Lifelong education he maintains ensures that all the positive ideas that make citizens blend with the changing world are made available for them to learn and abide by.

Challenges of Life Long Education and its Implication on Nigeria Democracy

Nigeria education system is faced with enormity of challenges particularly in the process of life-long education which is said to start from birth and ends in the grave [11]. To corroborate this, [12] posits that man is an unfinished being and can only fulfill himself by continuous learning. Article 26(2) of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) which Nigeria was a signatory to says that education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect of human rights and fundamental freedom. Again, [8] argues that education shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. One such challenges facing life-long education is non-value based as what is learnt is theoretical as the immediate environment the learner finds himself has very little to do with the education so received and as education is seen as challenging and tasking instead of interesting and pleasurable and able to supply the needs of the society. To this end, the desired impact life-long education ought to have made in the life of Nigerians are yet to be felt. This supports the argument that literacy level in Nigeria is just a little above 50% of the population and largely accounts to why citizens find it difficult to understand what leadership is all about despite the enthronement of democratic rule in Nigeria. [21] did not agree less when it affirms that life-long education activities in the developing countries are conducted in an ad hoc manner where their programmeswere widespread but conducted in an unorganized manner. Moreover, majority of the citizens were unaware of such activities as they were run in Municipalities, NGOs, Universities, resulting to the inability of many citizens to imbibe the culture of education, particularly in the Northern part of Nigeria, where ''puddah''(a cultural practice where women are prevented from socializing with others) does not allow them to be part of the educational programme. Again, the crave to acquire wealth early does not help matter also. Wealth is today considered as the end in itself. To this end, people resort to unwholesome means of making money in order to belong, thereby relegating education to the background and democratic principles thrown to the winds [8]. There is also the erroneous belief that education is effectively obtained only at youthful age at schools and universities [11]. To this school of thought, returning to textbooks and other instructional aids at an old age is almost a shameful thing. Again, to another school of thought, education is associated with stereotypes such as cramming, passing examination and anxiety that are not always pleasant (Kabir, 2019).These according to Kabir (2019) make people to debunk the idea of education, leading to difficulty to cope with the processes and principles of democracy and explains why majority of those who are involve in election manipulations are largely on-literate members of the society.

METHODOLOGY

The data to be used in this study will be collected using structured questionnaires to elicit responses from a total of 300 conveniently selected respondents, comprising the staff and students of 6 educational institutions (2 tertiary institutions, 2 Colleges of educations and 2 Secondary schools) in Enugu metropolis. It will be based on 50 primary data distributed to each of these institutions and responses there from. Out of these numbers, a total of 280 questionnaires were completely filled and returned. The filled questionnaires returned by the interviewees would form the bases for the analysis which would represent the outcome of the research work. The choice of those to be interviewed is based on their knowledge of the subject matter.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

A sample of 300 staff and students of these academic institutions as represented in the cluster table below will be used for the analysis.

Instrument for Data Analysis

Data for this study will be collected using structured questionnaires. The questionnaires would be prepared following the Likert's five points scale.
There shall be specifications for:

SA   =   Strongly Agree
A   =   Agree
SD   =   Strongly Disagree
N   =   Neutral
D   =   Disagree

Methods and Techniques for Data Analysis

The collected data will be accurately grouped, arranged, analyzed and presented with reasonable conclusion drawn as the outcome of the research work. Cluster Mean analysis will be used to answer the research questions. This will also be complimented with percentages and table ratings.

Data Analysis and Findings

This section will be based on the responses from the questionnaires distributed earlier on. Three hundred questionnaires distributed were duly collected, collated and arranged. All the findings and discussions were based on the questionnaires returned from the respondents.

Table 1: Cluster Mean Analysis

	Democracy as an aim of education according to Onah (2010)	SA	A	N	D	SD	MEAN CLUSTER	A/R
1.	To what extent do you agree that education in Nigeria is traditional and authoritarian?							
2.	Do you agree that traditional teachers see themselves as only persons that can inculcate knowledge to students?							
3.	Do you also agree that traditional teachers do not cherish contributions from students?							
4.	To what extent do you agree that Authoritarian teachers do not even cherish challenge by anyone including the students' parents?							
5.	To what extent do you agree that traditional teachers recite to every group of students from their old lesson notes without updating?							
6.	To what extent do you agree that traditional teachers rely so much on dictating what should be done, whereas it should be democratic?							
	Table 2: Cluster Mean Analysis							
1.	**The aims of Education according to Onah (2010).** How far do you agree that the aim of education is to provide citizens with knowledge and minimum skills to take their place in the society?	SA	A	N	D	SD	MEAN CLUSTER	A/R
2.	Do you agree that at every stage in our adult life, citizens should be able to use not only their heads but their hands also to acquire vocational training?							
3.	Do you also agree that the desire for knowledge can also be for its own sake as well as for earning a living?							
4.	To what extent do you agree that sound education develops a critical mind to enable us detect flaws and disagree with even those we respect most?							

Table 3: Respondent Characteristics

S/N		SA	A	N	D	SD	MEAN CLUSTER	A/R
	Democracy as an aim of education according to Onah (2010)							
1.	To what extent do you agree that education in Nigeria is traditional and authoritarian?	400	240	30	160	50	3.1	A
2.	Do you agree that traditional teachers see themselves as only persons that can inculcate knowledge to students?	300	320	-	200	40	3.1	A
3.	Do you also agree that traditional teachers do not cherish contributions from students?	240	260	60	200	47	3.6	A
4.	To what extent do you agree that Traditional teachers do not even cherish challenges from any one including the students' parents?	250	400	-	120	70	3	A
5.	To what extent do you agree that traditional teachers recite to every group of students from their old lesson notes without updating?	400	360	90	80	40	3.5	A
6.	To what extent do you agree that traditional teachers rely so much on dictating what should be done, whereas it should be democratic?	450	400	-	140	20	3.6	A

Table 4: Cluster Mean Analysis

	The aims of Education according to Onah (2010)	SA	A	N	D	SD	MEAN CLUSTER	A/R
7.	Do you agree that Nigeria education curriculum aims at providing citizens with knowledge and minimum skills to take their place in the society?	-	-	-	200	180	1.3	R
8.	Do you agree that at every stage in our adult life, citizens should be able to use not only their heads but their hands also to acquire vocational training?	500	400	-	80	40	3.6	A
9.	Do you also agree that the desire for knowledge can also be for its own sake apart from for earning a living?	160	140	-	300	63	2.1	R
10.	To what extent do you agree that sound education develops a critical mind to enable us detect flaws and disagree with even those we respect most?	500	720	-	-	-	4.4	A

Breakdown of Required Responses

Number of questionnaires distributed	300
Number of questionnaires returned/usefully filled	280
Error Margin (default)	20 (7%)
% of returned/useful and analyzed questionnaire	93%

Research Question 1

To what extent do you agree that education in Nigeria is traditional and authoritarian? The responses to question number one have 80 respondents representing 29% strongly agree, 60 representing 21% agree, another 80, representing 29% disagree and 50 representing 18% strongly disagree, as 10 respondents representing 3% were neutral. We therefore accept that education in Nigeria is traditional and authoritarian.

Research Question 2

Do you agree that traditional teachers see themselves as only persons that can inculcate knowledge to students? From the responses to question number two, 60 respondents, representing 21% agree strongly,100 respondents, representing 36% merely agree, 80 of them, representing 29% disagree and 40 representing 14% strongly disagree. We therefore accept that traditional teachers see themselves as only persons that can inculcate knowledge to students.

Research Question 3

Do you also agree that traditional teachers do not cherish contributions from students. From the responses, 50 representing17% agree strongly, 65, representing 23% agree,20 representing 7% were neutral, 100 representing 35% disagree and 47 representing16% respondents strongly disagree. We therefore accept that traditional teachers do not cherish contributions from students during classes.

Research Question 4

To what extent do you agree that traditional teachers do not even allow challenge by anyone including the students' parents? From the responses 50 respondents representing 17% strongly agree, 80respondents representing 28% agree another 80respondents representing 28% disagree and 70respondents representing 25%strongly disagree. We therefore accept that traditional teachers do not allow challenge by anyone including the student's parents.

Research Question 5

To what extent do you agree that traditional teachers recite to every group of students from their old lesson notes without updating? Responses from the respondents show that 80 people representing 28% strongly agree, 90 people representing 32% agree, 30 people representing 10% were neutral, 40 people representing 14% disagree and another 40 people representing 14%strongly disagree. We therefore agree that traditional teachers recite to every group of students from their old lesson notes without update.

Research Question 6

To what extent do you agree that traditional teachers rely so much on dictating what should be done, whereas it should be democratic? Responses from the questions indicate that 90 respondents representing 32% strongly agree, 100 respondents representing 35% agree, 70 respondents representing 25% disagree while 20% representing 7% strongly disagree. We thereby accept that traditional teachers were undemocratic in their teaching.

Research Question 7

Do you agree that education do not aim at providing citizens with knowledge and minimum skills to take their place in the society? To this question, 100 respondents representing 36% disagree while 180 respondents representing 64% strongly disagree. We thereby do not accept that education aims at providing citizens with knowledge and minimum skills to take their place in the society.

Research Question 8

Do you agree that at every stage in our adult life, citizens should be able to use not only their heads but their hands also to acquire vocational training.100 respondents representing 36% strongly agree, another 100 representing 36% agree. Also 40 respondents representing 14% disagree while another 40% representing 14% strongly disagree. From their responses, we accept that at every stage in our adult life, citizens should be able not only to use their heads but also their hands to acquire vocational training.

Research Question 9

Do you also agree that the desire for knowledge can also be for its own sake as well as for earning a living? To this question, 32 respondents representing 11% agree strongly, 35 respondents representing 13% agree, 150 respondents representing 54% disagreed while 63 respondents representing 23% strongly disagreed. We thereby do not accept that the desire for knowledge can also be for its own sake apart from for earning a living.

Research Question 10

To what extent do you agree that sound education develops a critical mind to enable citizens detect flaws and disagree with even those we respect most. From the responses to this question, 100 people representing 36% strongly agree while 180 people representing 64% agree. We therefore accept that sound education develops a critical mind to enable citizens detect flaws and disagree with even those we respect most.

Table 5: Socio -Demographic Characteristic of Respondents for Questionnaires Administration

Variables	Categories	Frequency	%
Sex	Male	120	43
	Female	160	57
Total		**280**	**100**
Marital Status			
	Single	180	64
	Married	100	36
Total		**280**	**100**
Educational Qualification	Graduate/Above	160	57
	Under graduate	120	43
Total		**280**	**100**
Length of service	One year and below	60	21
	Two years to five years	80	29
	Six years to ten years	120	43
	Eleven years and above	20	07
Total		**280**	**100**

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS
SUMMARY

This study examined the effect democratic principles have on lifelong education of citizens of Nigeria. Using structured questionnaires prepared and issued to 300 respondents from 6 academic institutions in Enugu metropolis, following Likert's Five Points Scale. In the pursuit of the above, the work was divided into five sections. Section one presented the background. Section two contains the review of related literature. Section three has research methodology. Section four contains data analysis and interpretation while section five has summary and conclusion. Ten research questions were answered and Cluster Mean analysis and percentage ratings were utilized for the research questions. At the end, the following findings were made.

FINDINGS

Flowing from the study, we found that:

- *Education in Nigeria is traditional and authoritarian.*
- Traditional teachers see themselves as only persons that can inculcate knowledge to students.
- They do not cherish contributions from students during classes.
- However, they accept challenges from any one including student's parents.
- They recite to every group of students from their old lesson notes without update.
- They were also undemocratic in their teaching.

- Education aims at providing citizens with knowledge and minimum skills to take their place in the society.
- At every stage in our adult life, citizens should be able not only to use their heads but also their hands to acquire vocational training.
- The desire for knowledge can also be for its own sake apart from for earning a living.
- Sound education develops a critical mind that enables citizens detect flaws and disagree with even those they respect most.

CONCLUSION

Education curriculum should be innovative and assertive that can provide a child with critical thinking. A curriculum that can transform and empower them to ask questions and challenge the status quo respectfully rather than keep quiet when adults are speaking (GUNSC, 2020 – 2023). A curriculum that challenges them to think ahead; provides them with knowledge and minimum skills to take their place in the society. Such curriculum that allows a citizen, at every stage in their adult life, to be able not only to use their heads but their hands to acquire vocational training in addition to education as the desire for knowledge cannot be only for its own sake but to develop a critical mind that enables citizens detect flaws and disagree with even those they respect most and for earning a living. Such a curriculum arguably is largely democratic in nature

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