

Philosophical Examination of Integrated Education System in Nigeria

Nancwat Montex Audu

Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education and Extension Services, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto State, Nigeria. Email: montexnancwat1@gmail.com

Abstract

The main thrust of the study was to examine in depth integrated education system in Nigeria. Speculative, Prescriptive, Analytic and Dialectic philosophical modes of investigation were adopted alongside with the use of Key Informant Interview (KII) for the study. It was discovered by the study that the concept of integrated education system is polemical in nature and has been given varied, divergent and confusing interpretations. The researcher through the instruments of analysis was able to destroy wrong perceptions, interpretations, and inappropriate interpretation of integrated education system and presented the correct interpretation of integrated education system as the marrying together of all educational experiences such as the formal, informal and non-formal education systems to produce one whole and integrated individual. It was found by the study that Nigeria's government has made tremendous efforts towards integrated education system but fail to set up a body for linking the three educational systems together. The study concluded by advocating for the establishment of a body which would develop formal modalities for linking all the three educational systems in the country. It also advocated for the establishment of vocational training centres for all primary and secondary schools in the Nigerian communities nationwide. Local master craftsmen from within the communities are to be employed and paid by the government to teach their various skills to these pupil/students. Pupils/students in primary/secondary schools are to attend formal schools concurrently with vocational training for skill acquisition.

Keywords: Challenges, Facing, Implementation, Educational Policies, Secondary Schools

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Introduction

The yearning for educational quality, quantity and access has been the major concern of all countries around the globe with Nigeria not an exception. Although Nigeria has made some recent strides towards boosting coverage and standards in education, the existing European-style system is still characterized by ‘poor quality; dilapidated infrastructure; lack of basic instructional materials and furniture; high rate of unqualified teachers; weak and under-resourced channels of decision making; and weak relationship between parents and schools (Rasheid, 2015). In addition to this, UNESCO reported low enrolment rate of school-aged children of 10.5 million (out-of-school children of primary school age) in Nigeria (UNICEF DATA, 2019). Unfortunately, major educational concentration of nations over the years had been on the European- style system that is, formal education system. Formal education has however over the years been limited by the problem of access, problem of quality and quantity, and the problem of its meeting the felt needs and aspirations of societies (Willems 2017). Jurgen pointed further that “our traditional system of formal education – with a teacher or a professor in front of a classroom of passive listeners, backed up with a blackboard and lots of chalk – is becoming increasingly unfit for purpose; today’s world needs so much more, especially in a fast-changing society with substantial technological advancements and unlimited global connectedness, and lifelong learning” (Willems 2017). On his part. Bagudo (2018) accused formal education of producing jobless graduates who roam the streets of Nigeria in search of jobs which are not easy to come by, and that the education offered through the modern school system is well known to be most often divorced from the people’s needs, aspirations, and desired future life situations and opportunity. He reported further that available evidences show that drop-outs and a good number of youths who graduate from the formal school system roam the streets in search of white-collar jobs which they couldn’t find when they finish school.

The Jomtien Thailand educational convocation of 1990 provided a forum where nations of the world met to brainstorm on these problems. The outcome of the convocation strengthened the emphasis on “Education For All” (EFA) as a response to the problem of access, quantitative and qualitative education programmes were conceived as measures to tackle the problem of quality and quantity, and a demand was equally made on nations to diversify their

educational programmes beyond the formal education system, and to tailor such programmes into meeting the felt needs and aspirations of the society (<https://www.encyclopedia.com>).

Following suit, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) undertook several studies on promoting the importance of lifelong learning and career development, a reality for reshaping learning to match the needs of the 21st century knowledge economy and open societies. Such international studies included the Identification, Assessment and Recognition of formal, informal and non-formal learning, Transfer between formal, informal and non-formal education and Making Learning Visible (OECD, 2003). The studies also submitted a report on the need for diversification and recognition of non-formal and informal education as pivotal for lifelong learning.

Essentially, the outcome of the Jomtien Thailand convocation and the OECD reports as well as the criticisms labelled against formal education in its failures in meeting the felt needs and aspirations of the society served as propellants to nations to refocus their attention on other forms of education which had hitherto though in existence, been neglected and sacrificed for formal education system. This awareness subsequently exhumed a renewed interest and attention on the informal and non-formal education and other educational systems. The examination of the advantages inherent especially in the three education systems (formal, informal and non-formal) birthed the idea of their integration, and subsequently the springboard for integrated education system globally, and became an education policy, embedded in the National Policy of Education in 1986 in Nigeria (Amruta, 2020).

What then is integrated education system all about? Bagudo, (2018) describes integrated education system as the process by which all the diverse educational efforts in the nation such as the informal, non-formal and formal educational platforms are compacted into relatively simple and permanent system, with the sole aim of moulding and producing one whole and integrated individual. It is the marrying together and utilising all educational experiences available to a nation for the purpose of moulding or producing a balanced individual. It entails that all educational efforts such as the informal, non-formal, formal education, which are though varied in their functions, formations and institutionalizations to be summed up to cohere into producing a whole organism - a total human being.

Presently the idea of integrated education system has gone beyond the marriage of the three educational systems of formal, non-formal and informal to alternative education, entrepreneurship and shadow education to all educational experiences available to a nation for the purpose of moulding or producing a balanced individual, well equipped to live meaningfully and successfully for himself and to the society in which he lives and belongs (George, 2017).

Brief overview of Nigeria’s educational system

Looking at Nigeria’s educational system reveal an array of three major (players) educational providers namely, the formal, informal and non-formal educational systems respectively. The formal system according to Dib, (1988) corresponds to a systematic, organised education model, structured and administered according to a given set of laws and norms. It presents a rather rigid curriculum as regards objectives, content and methodology. It is characterized by a contiguous education process which necessarily involves the teacher, the student and the institution. Education provided by nursery schools, primary, secondary and tertiary institutions such as the colleges of education, polytechnics, monotechnics and universities all fall under this category.

The informal educational system on the other hand is a general term for education that can occur outside of a structured curriculum. It is the African traditional education system which is closely intertwined with the daily life of the African people with the idea that children learnt what they lived Claudio Z. Dib, (1988) buttresses further that the philosophy of traditional African education suggests that one’s education cannot be separated from the everyday life and the “curriculum” is thus considered a way of life with the ultimate goal being to create a complete individual, and a lifelong learner. Education received from local blacksmiths, fishermen, carvers of woods, skin tanners, farmers, hair dressers, tillers, potters, carpenters etc are mostly of informal nature.

The Non formal education is described as an organized educational activity outside the existing formal system in order to meet the educational needs of a particular group / public that seeks clear learning objectives. It is organized, has curriculum and flexible time table with completion period based on the contact hours. The recipients are called learners and they are regarded as

matured and experienced. Textbooks in this sector are called primers as they are specifically written for easy assimilation. The place of learning is called “center” and not schools and they are often chosen or selected by the learners. The teachers in this sector are called facilitators who are expected to have androgogical skills. Examples of non-formal education include National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), Centre for Continuing Education, Distance Learning, Open Systems, B.Ed Part Time Programmes etc.

The integrated education system (IES) essentially advocates that these main educational providers which make up Nigeria’s educational system as a whole should be integrated so that students at completion of their educational pursuits would have been moulded to have a whole round experience from these three major educational providers. IES holds that a child should not only be educated formally without the informal and non-formal educational experiences, and vice versa and that the marrying of these three educational experiences will result into producing a whole individual who is not deficient in any form, an individual with a certificate in one hand and skills for lifelong living in the other.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of integrated education system, however, stems even from the conception of the policy itself. One problem area of the policy lies in the interpretation attributed to it, and we all know that a misunderstood policy cannot be implemented rightly. A question as to what the policy is all about revealed a whole lot of conflicting and confusing responses. There tends to be so many confusing and conflicting interpretations given to the policy, and as we all know that clarification of meanings is central to philosophical discourse.

Another problem area lies on how the various heterogeneous educational systems could be integrated in practice. How possible in practice can formal, informal and non-formal educational systems be integrated as one considering how the conventional or formal system of education characterized by their daytime class sessions, residence- and age-based enrolments, teacher-delivered standards for national curricula, nine-year learning cycle (of basic education), and their almost exclusive focus on urban and future-oriented knowledge and cognitive competencies with a “stand-alone” or individuality spirit that had long existed away from the other forms of education be married together? Roslyn C. (2012) held that in practice, there are no any observable

interactions or linkages among the three forms of education which showcases integration rather, what is seen in practice is each form of education standing and operating alone. Bagudo, (2018) shared a similar view in saying that there appears to be walls of division even among the levels of formal education; the university stands or operates alone away from the polytechnics, monotronics, colleges of education, school of nursing and vice versa, and even among the various universities in the nation, there is no much meaningful element of interdependence rather, what characterizes them is autonomy; each university operates entirely of its own and with its own government. The question therefore is, if within the formal education system there exists watertight compartments such that each level closes its doors against the other among its various levels, how much more or what do we expect of its operations with other types of education such as the informal and the non-formal education which are outside its domain, considering moreover the fact that the formal education system has registered and enjoyed its superiority and dominance over the years on the other forms of education?

To further worsen the problems surrounding the policy is the argument that integrated education system policy is not possible and therefore needless Claudio Z. Dib (1988). These positions essentially constitute problem areas of which the researcher explored using his philosophic lenses.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- I. To explore, interpret and analyze the meaning of integrated education
- II. To examine what philosophers like Whitehead and others scholars say on integrated education.
- III. To explore the justification for integrated education system globally and in Nigeria.
- IV. To find out how integrated education system can be operated in practice

Research Questions

The following questions were raised whose answers were sought in the course of the study

- I. What is the idea of integrated education system all about?
- II. How did philosophers like Whitehead and other scholars around the globe view integrated education?
- III. Why should we have integrated education system in Nigeria?
- IV. How can integrated education system be operated in practice?

Theoretical Framework

Whitehead's philosophy of organism begins with "the analysis of process as the realization of events disposed in an interlocked community (<https://philosophynow.org/issues/114>). Actual occasions, as the final realities of which the universe is composed, are self-creating buds of experience, each one uniquely itself even while it remains internally related to every other occasion in the creative community of the universe. Whitehead always believed that appreciation of the whole to the part was central to understanding reality. Relatedness is fundamental. To Whitehead, nothing is in isolation. All things depend on each other. 'Everything in this world is in some way connected with every other thing in this world: "Everything is part of the whole". Whitehead's philosophy urges us to turn from reductionism, and, to instead think of the whole in relation to the parts and the parts in relation to the whole.

Methodology

The study adopted the three modes of philosophical study: the speculative, prescriptive and analytic modes. Dialectics were heavily employed in the study. The work also adopted the use of Key Informant Interview.

The speculative mode: This falls within the domain of metaphysics. It was used to raise questions as to that which perplexes or amazes the mind on issues throughout the study. Beginning from the setting of the research questions in chapter one to review of literature, analysis and appraisals, the speculative mode was applied. It also found expression in all the questions raised in the

course of dialectics in the work. In short, all the “Whats, Whys, Hows” in the work sprang from, and were the application of the speculative mode.

The prescriptive method: This falls within the domain of ethics. It was used in the study to prescribe action intervention strategy to solving pertinent problems associated with the implementation of integrated education system in Nigeria. It was employed to offer suggestions and recommendations on issues of inadequacies, inappropriateness or problems generated from propositions (thesis) and antithesis in the study.

The analytic method: This is in order word called logical positivism. The analytic method as the name implies was employed to dissect and separate aspects or elements of issues pertaining integrated education in regards to the central meaning of integrated education system in Nigeria. It was used to make relevant distinctions and clarifies concepts, phrases or words to remove ambiguities so that their true meanings would be known for the purpose of prescribing that which is appropriate and the inappropriate. Various propositions by scholars on integrated education system were generated and analyzed using the method. The product of the analysis was then compared with Whitehead’s theory of organism and process thought which served as the theoretical framework for the study and on which the idea of integrated education system emerged.

Dialectics: The dialectical method is a process of construction and deconstruction of ideas which ends up by destroying untrue elements in both the proposition-thesis and the antithesis thereby presenting a synthesis or a new proposition which embodies the true elements of both the thesis and the antithesis¹³. In dialectics ideas are constructed in the course of intellectual discourse. In it, a proposition or thesis is identified; it is then challenged or criticized by a counter proposition called the antithesis, a synthesis of both the thesis and antithesis is made and the true elements in both are upheld and the formation of a new thesis is made from the true elements of the thesis and antithesis. The researcher adopted this to construct and deconstruct ideas raised on the conception of integrated education system by various scholars in relation to the central meaning of integrated education derivable from Whitehead’s Philosophy of Organism which provided the theoretical framework of the study.

The researcher adopted the use of Key Informant Interview (KII) based on the professional advice of the team of experts in the faculty. The questions used for the KII were validated by experts in the faculty. The researcher visited and interviewed the heads of Islamic Trust Foundation (ITF) Sokoto, Evangel Bible Club (J. Allen) Sokoto, National Directorate of Employment (NDE) Sokoto Head office, the coordinator of Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto and the Directorate of Entrepreneurship Centre, Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto state. Others interviewed were local crafts men (blacksmiths) at Kara in Sokoto, motor mobile mechanics and carpenters. Responses from the Key Informant Interviews (KII) were recorded and afterward qualitatively analyzed through the process of Transcription, The matization, Annotation and Interpretation.

Result

It was discovered by the study that the concept of integrated education system is polemical in nature and have been given varied and divergent interpretations. Some scholars as shown in the study misinterpreted integrated education system for inclusive education, others as alternative education. The researcher through the instruments of analysis was able to identify wrong perceptions, interpretations, inappropriate presentations of integrated education system and drew a line of demarcation between what is meant by integrated education and what is not and presented the correct interpretation of integrated education as the marrying together of all educational experiences such as the formal, informal and non-formal education systems with the sole aim of producing one whole and integrated individual in line Whitehead's process thought theory.

It was shown by the study that the idea of integrated education system sprouts out from Whitehead's philosophy of 'organism and process thought' which held that everything in this world is in some way connected with every other thing in this world, for every organism is made of different components and each of the component is important and functions not in isolation but in cooperation to other component parts. Integrated education system was adopted and embedded as a Policy of Education in Nigeria in 1986. It was found out by the study that the numerous weaknesses labelled against the formal education system in Nigeria and globally beckoned for non formal and informal education systems and consequently the birth of integrated education system. Formal education system has been accused heavily of producing

jobless graduates who roam the streets in search of jobs which are not easy to come by and that the education offered formally is mostly divorced from the people's needs, aspirations and desired future life situations etc. These weaknesses stimulated or exhumed the renewed interest in the exploration of other alternative education systems was strengthened by the Jomtien Thailand educational convocation of 1990

The study found out that integrated education system could be operated in practice through curricular flexibility approach to education, culturally responsive school environment, mainstreaming integrated education centres, Community – based approach, strengthening and maintaining strict compliances to SIWES and entrepreneurship education in higher institutions of learning could enhance integrated education system in Nigeria.

Lastly, the study found out that the Nigerian government has made tremendous efforts on the three educational platforms (Formal, Informal and Non formal) but has failed to set up a body to develop modalities of linkage among these key educational players in the country.

Challenges to integrated education system in Nigeria

- I. No comprehensive and methodologically—sound researches into specific needs and interests of all categories of people, the adult, the children with special needs. No census with adequate data to specifically detect the educational needs of every Nigerian to ensure adequate planning for meaningful integrated education system in Nigeria.
- II. Curricular rigidity of the formal education system makes it not to absorb some important elements of the other forms of education. This makes it to operate under water tight compartments against other educational systems.
- III. Inadequate funding: The Federal Government of Nigeria's inability to fund general education has led to the total abandonment of any request for setting up suitable structures for other forms of education. The less than 20% UNESCO educational standard allocation makes it very difficult to fund adequately all the educational systems in the country.

- IV. Government over concentration on the formal education at the expense of other educational efforts further weakens the development of integrated education in Nigeria. Government emphasis on education is mostly at times focused on the formal system while the other systems that is, the informal and non-formal systems are neglected. Most operators of informal and non-formal education are mostly neglected in terms of funding by the government.

Conclusion

Nigerian government has indeed made commendable efforts on integrated education system reflected especially at the tertiary levels of education through SIWES and Entrepreneurship Education. The introduction of National Open University, Centres for Continuing Education, Adult and Non-Formal Education (ANFEA) among many others. The introduction of the policy has greatly boosted the development of the country in the education industry curbing seriously the menace of education access and illiteracy.

The study concluded however that vocational training centre (s) should be established by the government to serve all primary and secondary school students in the Nigerian communities nationwide just as SIWES and Entrepreneurship Centres in tertiary institutions. They are to be established in a way that each centre should serve a particular named school. Local master craftsmen from the communities are to be employed and paid by the government to teach their various skills to students of both primary and secondary schools in their community. Students are to run formal learning (formal education) in school concurrently with vocational training (non formal). They are to attend formal schools in the morning and vocational training centres in the afternoon. The curriculum and time table of formal schools should be adjusted to reflect this change. This would go a long way in ameliorating the problems of unemployment which formal education system has heavily been accused of.

The study also concluded that the National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) programme be reformed. That within the one year of service, all graduates in camps are to be exposed to, and be trained on various skills and vocations such as tailoring, weaving, plumbing, dish installations, carpentry, tilling, furniture works, fulcanizing, electric wiring, dyeing, fishery, poultry etc, and be certificated on the skills they have so learned. Vocational skills centres should be opened in the orientation camps in all the states and local

government areas of the nation for easy access by the corp members on camp. On passing out these corp members should be provided with equipments and kick off grants by the government to practice what they have so far learned, so as to be self- reliant. This would reduce the rate of unemployment and turn job seekers on passing out to be employers of labour. It would also provide a balance of the three forms of education.

Recommendations

In order to curb the challenges of integrated education system in Nigeria, the following recommendations were made:

- I. There is the need for a policy reform to show more commitment to integrated education in Nigeria especially at primary and secondary levels of education. This would involve the establishment of vocational training centres by the government nationwide where skills provided by local master craftsmen could be learned by students thereby tailoring education to meet the economic and social needs of society. Equally, an urgent census specifically to detect the educational needs of every Nigerian is necessary to ensure adequate planning for integrated education in Nigeria. The literacy programmes of the federal government should be vigorously pursued to ensure the removal of the prejudice and stereotype behaviours of people to other forms of education than the formal school. Provisions in the UBE act for basic education should include adequate learning and recreational facilities and equipment to cater for all forms of education in Nigeria.
- II. A special directorate for integrated education system should be created in the federal and state ministries of education charged with the responsibilities of planning, strategizing, implementing, and monitoring of integrated education activities in Nigeria. Membership should include representatives of ministries of education, ANFEA, SAME, SUBEB and National orientation agency.
- III. The curriculum of the formal system should be made flexible to absorb elements of the other forms of education; there is the need for massive retraining of the teachers of regular schools in integrated education pedagogies and skills. They are also to be trained not only in

the teaching of theories but also in entrepreneurial and lifelong skills which would be of great value to students on graduation.

- IV. There is the urgent need to set up community coalition groups to build up programmes that target the whole community. The programmes are to create awareness and sensitivity for all members of the community to embrace all forms of education offered by the government. Parents who are the custodians of children would need to see the importance of education, not only for their children alone but for themselves as well. Those who dropped out from formal school could get the opportunity to continue or even engage in other forms of education. This awareness would translate into more enrolment of children thereby reducing or possibly eradicating illiteracy nationwide.

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