Role of Counseling in Cultivating Impactful Pedagogy for Sustainable Education in Northern Nigeria

BY

S. Y. Tsagem, PhD
Department of Educational Foundations
Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto
P. M. B. 2346, Sokoto.
e-mail: shehu.yahaya@udusok.edu.ng
Phone: +234 8032868031

And

BELLO, Jamilu
Department of Educational Foundations
Dr. Yusufu Bala Usman College of Education, Daura, Katsina State
e-mail: jamilufalale@gmail.com
Adm. No. 19310413007   Phone:08155552170

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Abstract

The paper discusses the role of counseling for cultivating impactful pedagogy for sustainable education in northern Nigeria. It gives information about northern Nigeria and the nature of its education and also how the region struggles to overcome its problem to achieve what it does in that respect. Education is an important key of achieving a sustainable national development, for a state or society to achieve a sustainable national development, thus the quality of its education should be improved. This paper explains to explain the concept of education, the concept of Pedagogy, the concept of counseling and the concept of sustainable national development. The paper provides an insight into various challenges confronting education in Nigeria such as gender inequality in education, dearth of teachers, inadequate infrastructures, overcrowded classrooms etc. It finally suggested ways for counseling on how to solve challenges confronting education in northern Nigeria. This is done through creation of conducive atmosphere for learning, allocation of enough funds for educational development, discouraging gender disparity in education by an enlightenment programme, setting up a trustworthy committee that will manage and supervise education etc.

Introduction

The northern part of Nigeria is a region that has been inherently considered as educationally less developed than its southern counterpart. Over the recent years, there have been efforts mounted by states, national and international government and non-governmental organizations in order to help the region made the necessary stride towards achieving acceptable gains that will position it to socio-economically develop and compete favorably. Thus, Farkas and Császár (2018) pointed that the northern area is inhabited by mostly livestock farmer nomads, namely the Hausa-Fulani people, the most populous Nigerian ethnic group accounting for about 30-32% of the total population of the country. The kind of sedentary and serious religious life of the majority of the people in the north, though lead them to enjoy a relative peaceful existence over years, is also a factor that led them not to fully accept western type of education. Thus, in comparison to the southern region, these and other factors, lead to the region being left behind in educational and economic advancements despite constituting the vast majority of Nigeria's population and sheer physical landmass.

Education developed from human struggle for survival and enlightenment. It is an act of acquiring skills passed on from generation to generation for the development and comfort ability of mankind. Gradually education has been developing from all levels. Hence it"s development needs to be fortified and sustained. Education has some problems contending with it just as there is nothing that is free from problems. If these problems are not solved, they can make education

retrogress in nature and use. Therefore, for the development of education to be sustained, this paper has attempted to proffer solution to such unprecedented problems in the area of guidance and counseling.

Part of the reasons for the region's educational challenges lies in its socio-cultural life and beliefs and that ethno-religious conflicts have been identified as a major source of insecurity in Nigeria (Ibrahim and Igbuzor; Hazen and Horner; Salawu; and Igbuzor as cited in Tsagem, 2023). But, as a result of these numerous efforts and interventions the region has made appreciative gains in its educational pursuits. Somehow, very recently a menace that is seriously threatening to tear down any educational gains so far achieved; insecurity. Thus, Tsagem (in Press) observed that in recent years the region has witnessed an alarming upsurge in the rate of religious extremism, insurgency, kidnapping for ransom, farmer/herder clashes, robbery, political crisis, wanton and insistent killings and general insecurity that threatened its collective survival. Whole villages and towns were attacked, especially by the activities of the Boko Haram Islamic sect in the north-east and by the insurgent bandits in the north-west, and the inhabitants forcefully made to evacuate as migrants. From the start, it is to be noted that thieves, cattle rustlers, armed robbers, kidnappers, insurgents and Islamic extremists are all and one thing in the region; it is very hard to separate one from the other in the region.

The fact that the Nigerian government seems to be incapacitated and incapable of curbing this menace or probably playing politics, perhaps doesn't want to put a stop to it for an undisclosed reason, is of more concern and worrisome to the state. As a social menace, insecurity is threatening every aspect of social and economic life of northern Nigeria and a notable sector that is seriously suffering is that of education in the region.

Conceptual Definition

The concept of counseling: is a form of 'talk therapy'. It is a process where an individual, couple or family meet with a trained professional counsellor to talk about issues and problems that they are facing in their lives. Professional counselling is confidential and non-judgmental. Counseling is a significant means of functionalizing and sustaining education through its array of qualitative services meant to make education goals meaningful and achievable to its recipient. Counselling is a talking therapy that allows people to discuss their problems with trained professionals in a peaceful and safe ambiance. The exact meaning of counselling might vary among individuals. But in general, it is the process where you talk about your issues in detail

either intending to overcome the same or to explore your thoughts comprehensively. Sustainability Education is often referred to as Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which has been defined as: UNESCO, 2014. "Education for Sustainable Development allows every human being to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a sustainable future.

The concept of Pedagogy: Pedagogy is concerned with the teaching processes. The instructors at all levels of education need to ensure that they put into practice.

The concept of sustainable education: is based on the terms sustainability and education. The term "sustainability" is derived from the Latin word *sustinere* and the term *"education"* from the Latin word *education.* The former is a model of thinking in which the quality of life is improved through balancing the environment, society, and the economy. The latter refers to an activity or process for acquiring or sharing knowledge or skills, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and intellectually preparing oneself or others for life (Thesaurus 2021). Many of today's challenges require a veritable shift in thought and behavior to support sustainable living. According to Sterling (2008), the necessary cultural change can be achieved through sustainable education (SE). He defines the concept as:
a change of educational culture, one which develops and embodies the theory and practice of sustainability in a way which is critically aware.

Counseling

Counseling is viewed by Aliero, Aliero and Tsagem (2022) as a dynamic and purposeful relationship between two people who approach a mutually defined problem, with mutual consideration of each other to the end that the younger or less mature or more troubled of the two is aided to a self-determined resolution to problem. Thus, it is a process in which the counselor give appropriate and correct information to the individual, suggests and offers several appropriate courses of action and options and helps to clarify needs, feelings or motivations so that appropriate decision could be made. Likewise, Okoye (2010) viewed counselling as an interactional relationship designed to facilitate the personal development of information leading to effective decision making and awareness of the self. Furthermore, Bashar (2020) draw attention that educational counselling could therefore be regarded as the type of counselling which is being applied within the educational setting to help the pupils not only to solve their

educational problems but also to be equipped with skills to effect satisfactory self-solutions to their educational problems. Such self-solution is geared towards meeting the demands, expectations, norms and morals of the society within which the individual operates.

Pedagogy:

Pedagogy refers to the strategy of how educators teach, in practice and theory. Pedagogy is shaped by the teaching beliefs of a teacher and relates the interplay between culture and a variety of methods of teaching. Pedagogy relates to the study of teaching strategies and how they influence students. Pedagogy relates to the study of teaching strategies and how they influence students. A thoughtfully considered and effective pedagogy is crucial for helping students to learn more successfully and in helping them develop high-order thinking skills. Online education presents unique challenges and opportunities for educators, and a strong pedagogy is essential for ensuring that students can learn effectively through online learning. This may include the use of age-appropriate teaching strategies and materials, as well as an understanding of the stages of child development and how these can affect learning.

In distance education, a strong pedagogy should also consider the needs and learning styles of students who are studying remotely. This may include the use of personalized learning plans and other approaches that allow students to study at their own pace and in a way that is most effective for them.

One popular pedagogy for teaching is constructivist pedagogy, which emphasizes the importance of active learning and student engagement in the learning process. This approach emphasizes the idea that knowledge is constructed by the learner, rather than simply being transmitted by the teacher.

Constructivist pedagogy encourages students to ask questions, explore ideas, and collaborate with others in order to build their own understanding of the material. By using this approach, teachers can help students to develop critical thinking skills and become more independent learners.

The following pedagogies impact the learner:

1. Student-Centered Approach

   Pedagogy is a student-centered approach in which the students take responsibility for learning in their ways.

2. Continuous Assessment Of Students

   Teachers evaluate the students regularly to see if they are improving and moving towards their target outcomes.

3. Encourages Teamwork

   The study methods encourage teamwork and group projects for the students to meet like-minded individuals and work with them

4. Develops Cognitive Skills

   Helps students to develop **cognitive skills** using evaluation, detailed analysis, comprehension, and application of the course.

Sustainable Education

Sustainable education was coined by Stephen Sterling in 2001 to provoke debate on education itself and not necessarily the effect of education on other aspects of human existence and development. In his own words, his aim was to "provoke a little cognitive dissonance and the question: 'what does that mean?' I wanted people to move from 'how do we educate for sustainable development' towards deeper attention to education itself: its paradigms, policies, purposes and practices (these are linked of course) and its adequacy for the age we find ourselves in." He went on to define sustainable education as a change of educational culture, one which develops and embodies the theory and practice of sustainability in a way which is critically aware. It is, therefore, a transformative paradigm which values, sustains and realises human potential in relation to the need to attain and sustain social, economic and ecological well-being, recognising that they must be part of the same

1. Sustaining: it helps sustain people, communities and ecosystems;

2. Tenable: it is ethically defensible, working with integrity, justice, respect and inclusiveness;

3. Healthy: it is itself a viable system, embodying and nurturing healthy relationships and emergence at different system levels;

4. Durable: it works well enough in practice to be able to keep doing it.

In a nutshell, sustainable education requires that vigour and life be returned into the educational system and that education should not be regarded merely as a manufacturing process which is guided by automation. Education must address real issues affecting human lives. Another writer, Mary Cathrine Bateson, stated that: "Our machines, our value systems, our educational systems will all have to be informed by (the) switch, from the machine age when we tried to design schools to be like factories, to an ecological age, when we want to design schools, families and social institutions in terms of maintaining the quality of life'

Challenges of impactful pedagogy for sustainable Education in Northern Nigeria

Tahir (2006), identified a number of daunting challenges which Nigerian education is confronted with. Among which are gender equity in education, dearth of teachers, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate infrastructure, funding of education, poor society perception of teacher education, and lack of commitment.

i.   Gender Equity in Education: Gender disparity is a well-known feature of Nigerian educational landscape. Educational policies and practices in Nigeria are to say the least gender insensitive and thus not fashioned to achieve gender balance in schools more especially in northern Nigeria. Gender Equity 68 Volume 14 Table 1. Nigeria – Regional and Gender Differences in Literacy Rates in 2010. ZONE WOMEN MEN South East 65 % 75 % South West 55 % 80 % North West 30 % 40 % North East 25 % 41 % Source: Unicef 2010 The table above shows the Nigeria- Regional and Gender differences in literacy rates in 2010. The table also shows that there is a disparity in literacy rates between men and women in some parts of the geo-political zones of Nigeria.

ii. Shortage of Teachers: It is a well-known fact that no educational system in a nation can rise above the quality of its teachers. In other words, the success of the system rests on the availability of good and qualified teachers who are internally motivated. Teachers are the way to improvement since they are the final brokers when it comes to educational policy. Likewise, lack of qualified teachers was responsible for the dismal performance of students especially in mathematics and English language. That poor performance turned out to be a child's play when NECO released its own SSCE results which showed that only 126,500 of the 1,260,765 candidates, just 10 percent of those who registered for the body's exams passed five subjects including English and mathematics. The statistics

also showed that only about 234,682 out of the 1,260,765 candidates who sat for the exams made five credits in five core subjects the minimum requirements for the university admission in Nigeria. That means only two percent passed the exams with five credits including English and mathematics. Therefore, where there are competent, capable and well-motivated personnel among other things, the educational system of a country can surely succeeds.

iii.   Over-crowding: The introduction of UPE brought with a sudden population explosion in schools and its resultant effects on teacher-pupil or student ratio. Overcrowding in the classroom is now the order of the day from Primary to university level. Because of the overcrowded classrooms, there are usually not enough places for the number of students in class/lecture rooms. This type of atmosphere is not conducive for effective teaching/learning process. Effective teacher/student relationship may not be possible in an over-crowded classroom. This probably explains why teachers in higher institutions of learning resort to the use of handouts (Akande, 2004).

iv.   Inadequate infrastructure: This refers to the physical and spatial enablers of teaching/ learning. They include classrooms, libraries, laboratories, workshops, play fields, school farms and gardens as well as provision of water and sanitation. These have to be of the appropriate quantity, size and quality to meet the minimum standards for promoting any meaningful teaching and learning condition.

v.   Funding of Education: The managers of primary secondary and higher institutions in Nigeria are in consensus that these institutions are grossly under-funded. This menace could be seen in the degree of dilapidation that characterizes the primary and secondary buildings in parts of the country. The non-payment of teachers' salaries and allowances which most times result in strikes. There is lack of necessary teaching and learning material at all levels of the educational system. Finally, the mismanagement and diverting of substantial resources from the educational system to other ends. The under-funding has been criticized and attributed to several factors ranging from military rule, diversion and mismanagement of funds and lack of focus (Victor, 2002, Dike 1999, Bolag 2002).

vi.   Poor society perception of teacher education Another formidable problem of teacher education in Nigeria today is the lack of interest on the part of the secondary school leavers in the teaching profession, because of the poor image associated with the status of

teachers in the society. The low status accorded to teachers in the country, does not make students enroll and be trained as teachers. The few who enroll do so because they have no choice. Ibukun (2004) lamented that many brilliant individuals are not willing to take up teaching as a profession. According to the author, this should not have been so if teaching is upgraded to a position of respect in the Nigerian society. It appears that the present system of education in Nigeria promotes the reservation of intellectually and financially deficient students.

vii. Lack of commitment It is no understatement to observe that most teachers nowadays are not committed to the teaching job. Ajayi and Shofoyeke (2003) posited that a number of interrelated factors like poor income, delay in payment of salaries, lack of job satisfaction, contribute to the seemingly declining attitude and commitment of teachers to their professional calling. The lack of commitment manifests in the areas of lack of enthusiasm to work; lack of concern for co-curricular and extra-curricular activities; inadequate preparation for lessons; failure to write lesson notes; careless handling of statutory records among others. Problem of attrition There is the problem of attrition in the teaching force and dwindling enrolment of teachers.

Suggestions for Counseling Roles in Sustainable Education in Northern Nigeria

Education in northern Nigeria has been battered by actions of insurgents and kidnappers/abductors and the achievements so far made is inadvertently being lost. Because, education as being instrumental to the development of any society, measures have to be put in place to resuscitate it, at all cost, as long as development is what is desired. Thus, the roles that counselling could play in reviving sustainable education in the region are highly influenced by Tsagem (in Press) proposals. Thus, it was suggested that:

i.   One of the cardinal goals of counseling is that it is for all people. Thus, counseling services should be employed by the particular states and Nigeria in general so that concerted effort should be made to ensure that government systems adhere to the international protocols which enshrine the fact that all children have the same right of access to education, regardless of their status or place of origin.

ii. There are needs for allocation of enough funds to various educational institutions; There are need for a committee managing and supervising projects to ensure implementation of project design for a particular developmental programme in schools;

iii. For the purpose of achieving sustainable national development, there are needs for learning under a condusive environment. As such, the dilapidated infrastructural facilities in schools and colleges must be improved;

iv. Teachers who are to disseminate knowledge must be properly motivated to give and put in their best. As such the need for salary increment and better working conditions;

v. Government at all levels Federal, state and local must contribute their respective quota to the development of education. This will ensure a speedy achievement of sustainable national development. Gender disparity and boys and girls drop out should be discouraged by a particular] enlightenment programme using media (such as radio, television, etc.

vi. Education systems should move towards inclusive curriculum reforms and teaching and learning practices that embrace diversity of cultures and languages and in doing so, counsellors should be highly involved so that their professionalism would bear in drawing up such plans. Thus, counselling should ensure that education policies in the country legislate teaching and learning methodologies that integrate children from different cultures, who speak different languages. The policy aims and implementation should work towards integrating migrant children into host education systems and communities, without alienating them or isolating them. The policy options should also enable migrant children to equally access exemption to fees or any other financial opportunities available in the specific communities.

vii. Counselling should be leveraged upon to ensure that at the local level appropriate policies and programmes related to education rights for migrant children are developed and utilized and should thus strengthen the capacities of relevant institutions in hosting communities to provide better quality education and to increase enrolment rates.

viii. The states should establish mechanisms through which counselling could handle cases of reported discrimination, for example where access to schools has been unfairly denied due to systemic policies or educational institutions. It has been observed that up till now states in the north have no specific policies as regards the internal migrants' educational provisions and plans. Most times, the IDPs are restricted in their respective camps with highly

inadequate or no any existent provisions as to their education. In this respect, counsellors could be given access in order to lend their hands in providing realistic grounds upon which educational would be made available to them.

Conclusion

Education is the cornerstone of achieving a sustainable national development. There are no doubts achieving sustainable national development is the goal of all developing nations, Nigeria inclusive. As such there are the needs to invest, encourage and enlighten people on education. The roles of government at all levels are to facilitate the achievement of any development. Government should continue the contribution towards achieving this sustainable development. However, the need for monitoring, supervising and ensuring that all the financial and other investment on education for the purpose of achieving sustainable development are not diverted for other purposes in northern Nigeria. The paper thus discussed possible ways through which counseling would prove vital in restoring education in the area. Also Solution have to be found to scale through the trying time that the region is going through and education must be resuscitated to ensure continued survival to restore confidence in the people and one of the ways to do is by utilizing counseling services.

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