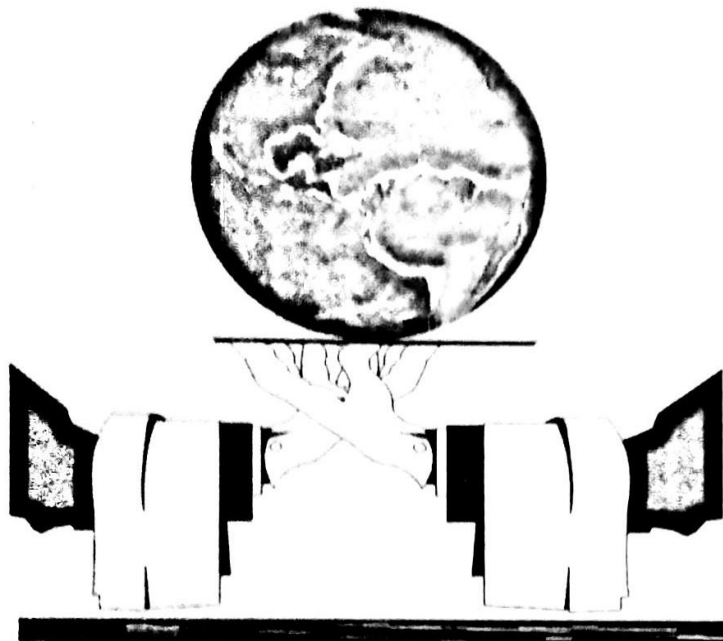
The background of the cover features a stylized globe with a grid of latitude and longitude lines. The globe is rendered in shades of blue and green, with the continents of Africa and Europe visible. The title 'WORLD EDUCATORS FORUM' is prominently displayed in the center. 'WORLD' is in blue, 'EDUCATORS' is in red with a blue outline, and 'FORUM' is in blue. The text has a slight 3D effect with a white outline.

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ROLE OF POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE: A PANACEA FOR EFFECTIVE BASIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION IN KOGI STATE.

By

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Abstract

The paper examined the role of a positive school climate as a panacea for effective BEC implementation. School climate in this work is seen as an "atmosphere or "tone" which makes an institution to get a unique quality of her own so that parents and visitors to school can notice easily the tone soon after entering as it plays the role of facilitating cordial relationships, safety, caring, participatory and responsive effort to foster greater learners' attachment to school. A positive school climate promotes cooperative learning, group cohesion, respect, mutual trust and communication flow within the school community leading to cognitive, affective and psychomotor development of the learners. School heads and teachers need to define sets of norms, goals, values and aspirations capable of shaping BEC implementation due to FME 's decision to restructure and re-align all extant BEC into a 9-year programme in 2008 which poor implementation was largely noticed. Based on the revised 2012 edition of BEC, the need for use of the role of PSC like interpersonal relations to support school-home-community partnerships as a prosocial democratic informed school system for effective BEC I becomes imperative in this work. The role of PSC assists in reducing absenteeism, less-Violence, bullying but motivates learners to learn via collaborative efforts by the stakeholders. FME has therefore been urged to organize seminars/ workshops on the need to use the role of PSC for BEC implementation.

Actually, school leaders and teachers need to constantly strive to define clearly sets of norms, goals, values and aspirations capable of shaping teaching and learning (curriculum implementation) environment promoted by a positive school climate believed to facilitate congenial communication free flow either vertically or horizontally. Ordinarily, the patterns of norms, goals, values, attitudes and interactions that shape relationships in schools provide an essential area of school climate (Cohen, 2012). The relationship between pupils and teachers in Kindergarten is closely linked to later academic achievement and positive behavioural outcomes for learners. From the psychological point of view, relationships concerning school climate connote not only how much one associates with others but also how we relate with ourselves, how we feel about and care for ourselves. Others include a safe, caring, participatory and responsive school climate which tends to foster a greater attachment to school as well as provide the optimal foundation for social, cultural, emotional, physical and intellectual development for pupils and students (McNeely and Blum, 2002).

School climate is an umbrella under which positive and negative reside to facilitate or frustrates effective Basic Education curriculum implementation (BECI). School climate is described as an "atmosphere" or "tone" of a school which makes the institution get a unique quality of its own. In this context, climate refers to an organization's communication flow, interpersonal relations and working conditions. Accordingly, parents, teachers and visitors to the school would become aware of the tone of the school soon after entering it (Onwuegbu, 2014). Climate is known as "tone" or "atmosphere" in Australian schools and it constitutes the sum total of relationships among all the elements and stakeholders to promote curriculum implementation as a teamwork (Wilson, 2004). A positive school climate is closely related to employees' involvement, effort and performance to shape the school.

Role of Positive School Climate

A positive school climate for example is expected to enhance cooperative learning, group cohesion, respect and mutual trust. The ever-growing body of research on school climate continuously reveals various overlapping roles it plays which include mental, social, physical, emotional, safety, positive youth developments and healthy relationships (Guo, 2012). A positive school climate also plays a role in appropriate curriculum implementation, higher graduation rates, school connectedness, civic learning and teachers retention to uphold the norms and values of the institution. Indeed, it has to be acknowledged that both roles of school climate and conditions which facilitate them are interconnected as a result of shared experiences of an ever-changing econological system (Cohen, 2012).

No doubt, school climate has an extensive impact on students' mental and physical health as several negative roles of self-criticism which affects a wide range of students' self-esteem. As it were, a positive school climate mitigates the negative effects of socio-cultural meliu thereby contributing to less aggression, violence, less harassment

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but it acts as a productive mechanism upon which effective curriculum implementation can be achieved (Devine & Cohen, 2007). A positive school climate reduces students' absenteeism from the classroom and motivates them to learn. However, the interpersonal variables that define school climate have indicated that many students and pupils do not feel physically and emotionally safe due to breakdowns of rules and regulations governing the school system.

Challenges Facing Positive School Climate

Apart from the supportive norms, structures, rules and disciplinary corrections within the school system which are often followed by a large number of students' absenteeism in the school, further reduces high-level effective curriculum implementation (Guo, 2012). It has equally been reported by Brown and Elias (2012) that students and pupils feel less safe in schools with a very large population due to verbal bullying believed to negatively affect curriculum implementation. As a result, where there is no bullying, students feel more comfortable seeking help from adult school personnel and possess more positive perceptions of the school climate. Astor (2010) claimed that unsupervised areas of school premises can make students to feel unsafe due to unproductive factors against risky sexual violence and drug use behaviours. In fact, school space is another environmental dimension impacting students' feelings about less safety which further illuminates how environmental variables such as lack of classroom activity, schedules and students' anti-social behaviours influence feelings of less safety.

2012 Basic Education Curriculum Review for effective Implementation

School climate is an important factor in the successful implementation of school reform programmes like the Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) according to Dellar (1998). For instance, teachers' perceptions of school climate influence their abilities to implement school-based character development programmes. This is so because teachers are the chief implementers of the curriculum of any nation around the world. They (teachers) need to be involved while developing or restructuring any curriculum to make their own contributions. This would help to ensure effective curriculum implementation.

The school curriculum is a dynamic and open document that is constantly changing with the needs, challenges and aspirations of society. Following the decision of the Federal Government of Nigeria in 2012 to revise the Universal Basic Education(UBE) programme, there arose the need to re-structure and re-align all extant primary and junior secondary schools (JSS) curricula into a 9-year Basic Education Curriculum for the attainment of the Education for All (EFA) Goals. Implementation of the 9-year BEC began nationwide in primary 1 and JSS 1 classes in September 2008 respectively (FR N,2008). However, the feedback on the implementation of the 9-year BEC revealed the ineffective implementation of the document (F ME, 2012). As a result,

the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) revised the 9-year BEC in line with contemporary global and national concerns which identified and grouped related disciplines thereby attaining a reduction in subject listings to include: English studies, Mathematics, Basic Science & Technology, Religion & National Values, Cultural & Creative Arts, Business Studies, Nigerian Languages, Pre-Vocational Studies, French and Arabic.

The reviewers made further efforts to reduce the overload within and across subjects without compromising the depth, appropriateness and interrelatedness of the curricula contents to address issues of value re-orientation, poverty-eradication, peace, and dialogue as well as human rights education, family life/ HIV and AIDS education. The review was an attempt to ensure continuity and flow of themes, topics and learning experiences from primary to junior secondary school levels. It is necessary to note that curriculum represents the total experiences to which all learners must be exposed to learn. The contents, objectives, activities for both teachers and learners, instructional materials plus evaluation guide are clearly spelt out in the curriculum. The minimum prescriptions to be taught in the schools to achieve the objectives of the 9-year basic education becomes the issue of curriculum implementation.

What is Curriculum Implementation?

Curriculum implementation refers to the process of putting an approved curriculum into operation via interactions between the teacher and the learners through the translation of the planned or officially designed course of study into syllabus, scheme-of-work, lesson plan and notes to be delivered to learners. It deals with the translation of planned curriculum objectives into action in the school system. Curriculum implementation is the actual translation of goals/ objectives of a curriculum from theory to practice (Okebukola, 2004; Offorma,2005). It is interesting to view it as the actual engagement of learners with learning activities by the teacher. The curriculum is meant to be a guide to the implementer (teacher) who in turn organizes it for effective implementation. (FME 2012).

To adequately implement BEC, teachers are encouraged to enrich the contents with relevant materials and information from their immediate environment and adopt it to the needs and aspirations of the society. Additionally, indices for adequate BEC implementation include the content and structure of the syllabus, available learners, quantity of qualified teachers, the quality and quantity of equipment used for instruction, adequacy of the classroom, space available to play, relevant and reliable assessment instrument as well as methods being adopted need to be ascertained.

Role of Positive School Climate (PSC) for Effective BEC Implementation

The roles of PSC to enhance BEC implementation include:

- (a) The positive school climate plays the role of involving the management team, teachers, clerks, parents/ guardians, community leaders, school community, students/ pupils and visitors to school who have high relational trust such as social relationships among members of stakeholders likely to make changes to enhance BEC implementation worthwhile.
- (b) Teachers' professional capacity, knowledge, skills and parent - school community tie is other roles in a positive school climate.
- (c) The instructional guidance vis-a-vis-curriculum alignment and nature of implementation technically set up by teacher that is targeted at enabling the learners' opportunity to acquire desirable knowledge, skills, values and attitudes could be encouraged when there is a positive school climate.
- (d) Positive school climate creates enabling environment through interpersonal relations which allows communication flow so that patterns of norms, values and interactions shape relationships in the school.
- (e) Initiating the need for collaborative efforts of stakeholders in enhancing BEC implementation. In this way, school climate can now reflect students', stakeholders', school personnel's, visitors', and parents' experiences of school life socially, emotionally, civically, democratically and ethically as well as academically (Cohen, 2012).
- (f) Enhancing BEC implementation is associated with positive child development, effective risk prevention, health promotion efforts, students' learning and academic achievement. Cohen (2012) reported that school climate reform efforts can prevent bullying among students which curriculum implementation alone does not.
- (g) To this effect, local, state and federal MOE's interest in school climate reform is seen as playing the role of effective means of curriculum implementation. The positive school climate is geared towards renewal efforts which support school-home community partnerships such as prosocial education and a democratically informed school system. This new dimension necessarily refocuses on and supports students, parents, guardians and educators in considering how effective the current prosocial efforts are and how they can strengthen curriculum implementation efforts (Brown & Elias, 2012).

Conclusion

The role of a positive school climate to enhance BEC implementation is the focus of this work. The paper noted that school climate leaderships and teachers needed to define clearly sets of norms, goals, values and aspirations as an essential areas of school climate capable of shaping effective BEC implementation. School climate is seen as an "atmosphere" or "tone" of the school which makes the institution get a

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unique quality of its own so that parents and visitors to school could notice the tone soon after entering. It facilitates cordial relationships, safety, caring, participatory and responsive effort that fosters greater learners' attachment to school. It equally provides basic cognitive, affective and psychomotor development for the learners to improve their future academic achievement. A positive school climate brings about communication free flow characterized by cooperative learning, group cohesion, respect and mutual trust which re-inforces collaborative efforts of stakeholders in-line with the decision of the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) to re-structure and re-align all extant primary and JSS curricula into a 9-year BEC to attain EFA Goals. However, poor implementation was noticed which further led FME to reduce the overload within and across subjects without compromising the depth, appropriateness and interrelatedness of UBE curricula contents. Based on the 2012 revised edition of BEC, implementation issues became imperative. Curriculum implementation is the translation of the goals/ objectives, visions and theories developed officially into practices. The paper is of the view that the role of a positive school climate when properly utilised in any school system could help mitigate negative tendencies such as violence, bullying and it acts as a productive device to motivate students to learn during BEC implementation.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made to enhancing BEC implementation via a positive school climate that:

- a. The Federal Ministry of Education in conjunction with stakeholders like PTA, political class, wealthy individuals and community leaders are urged to help finance seminars and workshops in respect of using a positive school climate to implement BEC.
- b. Basic education teachers need re-orientation on how to enhance BEC implementation through the role of a positive school climate by way of training and retraining programmes.
- c. School leaders and teachers should set up norms and values involving students' felt need to help in effective BEC implementation.
- d. The Ministry of education (Federal & States) have been urged to organize seminars, workshops and conferences for the stakeholders periodically.
- e. There is a need to carry out survey research involving many more states of the federation to ascertain the relationship between school climate and BEC.

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