

Vol. 6 (2)

27



KASHERE JOURNAL OF EDUCATION

**A PUBLICATION OF
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF KASHERE
GOMBE STATE, NIGERIA
JUNE, 2024**

ISSN
2756-6021 PRINT
2756-0613 ONLINE



EXAMINING THE ROLE OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS IN IMPLEMENTING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY: STRATEGIES AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract

This paper examines the significance of culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) implementation in the classroom by school administrators. By looking at different strategies and challenges, the study makes it clearer how school administrators can successfully lead programmes to develop culturally inclusive learning environments. This study provides insights into the complicated environment of implementing CRP by looking at the roles and initiatives played by administrators, as well as the challenges they faced and the achievements they made. Ultimately, the statement underscores the importance of proactive leaders advocating for inclusive, diverse, and equitable educational approaches to support each student's academic and socioemotional growth.

Keywords: School administrators, culturally inclusive, Implementing Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, Strategies and Challenges

Introduction

Fostering inclusive learning environments that respect and celebrate cultural diversity is crucial for advancing student success and wellbeing in today's diverse educational environment (Minz, 2023). A teaching strategy that takes cognizance of the significance of appreciating and honouring students' cultural backgrounds, experiences, and identities is known as Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) (Rigney et al., 2020). The fundamental tenet of CRP is that students learn best when the curriculum and classroom procedures validate and include their cultural identities. Leading initiatives to apply culturally responsive pedagogy in educational institutions is a critical responsibility of school administrators. According to Tintiango-Cubales, (2021), in their capacity as educational leaders, they must create policies, influence school culture, and offer teachers resources and assistance in order to guarantee that CRP concepts are successfully incorporated into teaching and learning methods. However,

implementing CRP may be challenging for a variety of reasons, including change aversion, resource allocation, and awareness-raising.

This study aims to explore the ways in which school administrators support the use of culturally responsive pedagogy, with a focus on the strategies they employ and the challenges they face. By looking at these traits, this study seeks to provide insight into how school administrators can successfully lead efforts to create culturally inclusive learning environments that support the academic performance and social-emotional welfare of all students. This research aims to contribute to the current endeavours to construct equitable and culturally sensitive educational practices that meet the diverse requirements of students in today's diverse and culturally pluralistic classrooms by offering a comprehensive analysis of the part school administrators' play in putting CRP into practice.

This study draws on the relevance of the theory of multicultural education to guide



and shed light on how school administrators might adopt Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) inside educational institutions. Theory of Multicultural Education according to Gorski, (2016), the goal of multicultural education philosophy is to advance inclusion, equity, and diversity in educational environments. It highlights the importance of cultural diversity and promotes teaching methods that value and respect each student's unique cultural identity and experiences. The goal of multicultural education philosophy is to establish welcoming classrooms where children from many origins have a sense of belonging, representation, and support. It places a strong emphasis on incorporating a variety of viewpoints, life experiences, and educational resources into the curriculum in order to foster empathy, understanding, and intercultural communication.

Overview of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) is an educational approach that emphasises the need of acknowledging and respecting students' identities, experiences, and cultural backgrounds in the classroom (Rigney et al., 2020). Similarly Shaw, (2016), stated that CRP recognises that learners originate from many cultural backgrounds and that their cultural identities influence their educational experiences, learning methods, and learning preferences. CRP strives to include students' cultural backgrounds into the curriculum, teaching techniques, and classroom relationships in order to foster a more inclusive and equitable learning environment. In the same vein, Allen et al., (2016) opined that CRP lays a lot of focus on assisting educators in developing their cultural competency so they can acknowledge and respect the cultural backgrounds of their students. Part of this is realising and respecting different cultural traditions, perspectives, and values. It

creates equitable and friendly learning environments where every student is made to feel valued, respected, and included. It seeks to close gaps in educational achievements by providing all students, regardless of cultural background, with the opportunity to succeed.

CRP highlights the importance of relational pedagogy in fostering meaningful relationships between educators and students that are based on trust, respect, and empathy. It recognises the importance of interpersonal connections in inspiring and involving students. Additionally, CRP encourages students to critically examine and question cultural norms, injustices, and prejudices, in order to empower them to become change agents in their communities and work to advance social justice and equity.

The following are Role of School Administrators:

Leadership in Culturally Responsive Practices

School administrators have a critical role to play in creating inclusive learning environments by fostering a climate of respect, acceptance, and belonging. They make sure that the ideals of fairness and cultural diversity are expressed in all facets of school operations, rules, and procedures by clearly stating and reiterating these concepts. In line with this, Intiangco-Cubales, (2021) stated that administrators provide an exemplary example for others to follow by acting inclusively and communicating openly and thoughtfully throughout the decision-making process. Administrators lay the groundwork for culturally responsive teaching and learning by promoting a good school atmosphere where diversity is acknowledged and all students feel valued and respected (Allen et al., 2016).

Culturally responsive behaviours are modelled by effective school administrators



in their relationships with students, staff, families, and the community at large. Through attentive listening and active engagement with a range of viewpoints, experiences, and backgrounds, they exhibit cultural competency. Kumar et al., (2019) opined that building connections based on trust, empathy, and understanding is a top priority for administrators, who also appreciate the value of continual learning and cultural humility. Administrators should encourage and empower people to embrace diversity, confront stereotypes, and establish inclusive learning environments where all students can succeed academically and socially by setting an example of culturally responsive behavior.

Policy Development and Implementation

School administrators have a responsibility to develop and implement curricula that respect and reflect cultural diversity. They work with educators, curriculum specialists, and community partners to make sure that curriculum materials, resources, and instructional methods are sensitive to the needs and experiences of all children and culturally relevant. Kumar, (2019) asserts that administrators prioritise a variety of perspectives, histories, and contributions in the curriculum because they recognise that diversity and representation are essential to promoting student engagement and academic success. By creating curricular standards that are inclusive of all cultures, administrators give every student access to strong and equitable learning experiences.

The integration of diversity programmes into school policy is a critical responsibility of administrators in order to promote social justice, equality, and inclusivity. They design and implement diversity, multiculturalism, and anti-discrimination policies to ensure that all students have fair access to opportunities and resources. Administrators collaborate with teachers,

staff, parents, and community members to identify and eliminate structural barriers to inclusion and equity in the school community. They endorse legislation that creates a friendly, secure, and affirming learning environment where children from different backgrounds are respected and appreciated. Kumar et al., (2019) submitted that by implementing diversity efforts into school policies, administrators demonstrate their commitment to achieving social justice and creating inclusive learning environments where all students can achieve.

Professional Development and Training

School administrators have a responsibility to provide teachers with the resources, guidance, and support they require in order to successfully incorporate culturally responsive teaching approaches into their curricula. They allocate funds and time for professional development opportunities that prioritise cultural competence, diversity awareness, and inclusive teaching practices. According to Bausch, (2022) administrators collaborate with district-level employees, community organisations, and educational specialists to design and carry out professional development programmes that meet the needs of teachers. Furthermore, they provide teachers with ongoing coaching, mentorship, and feedback to assist them in integrating culturally responsive practices into their lesson plans. By providing the resources and support they require, administrators empower educators to create inclusive learning environments where every student feels appreciated, respected, and supported.

Administrators promote collaboration and peer learning among teachers to foster the sharing of best practices and the development of a common understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy. Ragoonaden, (2017) buttressed this point by stating that administrators provide



chances for educators to collaborate, share ideas, and learn from one another through professional learning communities, peer observation, and collaborative planning sessions. Administrators encourage educators to evaluate their own work and solicit feedback from other educators on their methods. They also provide educators with a platform to talk on the benefits, drawbacks, and realisations they have encountered when implementing culturally sensitive teaching methods. Administrators create a peer-driven, cooperative learning atmosphere that helps teachers become more culturally aware. This makes it possible for educators to grow, learn, and create together (Bausch, 2022).

Strategies for Implementing Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

The role of school administrators is crucial in assisting instructors in incorporating alternative perspectives into their class plans. They advise teachers to consider the identities, experiences, and cultural backgrounds of their pupils while developing lesson plans and instructional materials. Baldwin, (2015) observed that by providing guidance and resources, administrators help instructors uncover additional points of view that could be included in their curricula, such as multicultural literature, historical narratives, and global perspectives. They also encourage the use of inquiry-based, student-centered learning techniques that enable students to actively research and engage with different viewpoints. By including a range of viewpoints in their lesson plans, teachers can provide students the opportunity to see themselves reflected in the curriculum and to develop a deeper awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity.

Administrators support instructors in selecting and utilising culturally relevant materials and resources that relate to the real-world experiences and cultural

backgrounds of their pupils. They provide users with access to an extensive range of instructional materials, including books, articles, films, and multimedia files showcasing many voices and points of view. Administrators also urge teachers to make the most of community resources and relationships in order to improve the curriculum's cultural relevance. To create culturally authentic learning opportunities for students, they support collaboration with regional cultural organisations, leaders in the community, and specialists. Teachers establish a welcoming and stimulating learning environment that confirms and affirms students' cultural identities and promotes a feeling of connection and belonging by utilising culturally appropriate materials and tools (Shaw, 2016).

Building Relationships and Community Engagement

To improve cultural responsiveness in the classroom, school administrators actively look to form alliances and collaborate with culturally diverse populations. They understand how critical it is to interact with a variety of community stakeholders, such as leaders of the local community, religious institutions, and ethnic and cultural organisations. In order to obtain understanding of the cultural norms, beliefs, and goals of varied groups, Prest, (2020) stated that administrators engage in conversation and cultivate connections with community members. In order to find cultural resources, knowledge, and support systems that can help kids and families, they collaborate with community partners. Warren, (2018) suggested that administrators can develop meaningful engagement and cooperation opportunities that enhance the educational experience and promote a sense of belonging for all students by forming connections with culturally diverse communities.



The involvement of students and families is given priority by administrators as essential elements of culturally responsive practices. They give families and kids the chance to actively engage in school events, decision-making procedures, and cultural festivals. To encourage students and families to share their cultural customs, personal narratives, and life experiences with the school community, administrators plan forums, workshops, and other events. They give families and kids a forum to express their viewpoints, worries, and goals while actively seeking input to improve school procedures and policies. In order to assist the learning and development of their students, administrators also act as a bridge for communication and cooperation between teachers and families. Administrators foster mutual respect, trust, and understanding between the community and the school by providing opportunities for student and family involvement. In line with this Han, (2014) stated that this fosters a more welcoming and encouraging learning environment for all students.

Assessment

School administrators place a high premium on using fair and equitable evaluation processes that honour the cultural variety of their student body. They collaborate with educators to ensure that the tools and procedures used for assessment are fair and considerate of cultural variances. Administrators provide opportunities for professional development and training to teachers so they can better understand culturally fair assessment practices (Han, 2014). They emphasise how important it is to employ a range of assessment instruments 'that consider students' diverse backgrounds, experiences, and learning styles. Administrators also support the use of formative assessment methods, which provide ongoing feedback and support students' growth and education. By ensuring fair and equitable assessment

practices, administrators uphold the values of cultural responsiveness and promote academic success for all students.

Administrators support the use of assessment instruments that are culturally sensitive and accurately gauge students' abilities, knowledge, and skills in a variety of cultural contexts. Allen et al., (2016) asserts that administrators work with teachers to find and modify evaluation instruments that take into account the cultural experiences and backgrounds of the students. Administrators support the development and implementation of culturally relevant projects, portfolios, and performance assignments that allow students to demonstrate their learning in meaningful and practical ways (Eliyahu-Levi, 2021). Teachers are also urged to employ grading standards and rubrics that are culturally sensitive and respect the contributions and opinions of all pupils. To enhance student motivation and involvement, administrators make sure that the assessment techniques are clear, easily available, and culturally acceptable

Challenges in Implementing Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

For school administrators, implementing culturally responsive pedagogy raises awareness and sensitivity challenges. It can be challenging for some teachers to engage with a diverse group of pupils because they are unaware of the diversity of cultures among their students or because they may hold prejudices and preconceptions. Administrators provide opportunities for ongoing professional development and training that prioritise sensitivity, multicultural knowledge, and cultural competency in order to address this issue (Maasum et al., 2014). They encourage staff members to reflect on themselves and have conversations in order to build empathy and understanding as well as a greater awareness of cultural differences. The hiring and retention of diverse



educators who can act as cultural bridges and role models for staff and students is another top priority for administrators. (Kumar et al., (2019) administrators may foster a more supportive and inclusive school environment that values and respects the contributions of all students by increasing awareness of and sensitivity to cultural diversity.

Allocating resources and providing support are two more challenges in putting culturally responsive pedagogy into practice. (Bausch, (2022) is of the view that funding, staffing, and time constraints for professional development and culturally relevant curriculum development may be a problem for administrators. They advocate for increased financing and support from the district government, lawmakers, and community people in order to address these problems. Administrators prioritise allocating funds to initiatives and programmes that promote equity, inclusivity, and cultural competency. They seek out outside funding sources, grants, and partnerships to support the implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy initiatives in addition to providing educators with ongoing support and mentoring. Administrators also utilise pre-existing resources including technology, instructional materials, and community networks to enhance cultural responsiveness within the school community (Tintiangco-Cubales, 2021). Administrators ensure that educators have the resources, training, and support necessary to successfully apply culturally responsive pedagogy and foster student success by fighting for resource allocation and support.

One of the biggest obstacles to establishing culturally sensitive pedagogy is resistance to change. Strickland, (2022) observed that when new teaching methods, curricular materials, or instructional approaches contradict their preexisting ideas and

practices, educators may experience discomfort or resistance. In order to overcome this difficulty, administrators encourage an environment of transparency, cooperation, and ongoing development among the students and faculty. They give educators the chance to express their worries, give their viewpoints, and have conversations about cultural responsiveness. Hanson et al., (2016). Administrators set an example for growth mindset and show that they are dedicated to lifelong learning and career advancement.

Implications for the School Administrators

School administrators play a crucial role in providing visionary leadership that prioritizes and promotes culturally responsive practices (Marshall, 2018). They have to set clear policies, make a compelling case for diversity and inclusion, and assist in implementing CRP programmes for the whole school community.

They must prioritise providing chances for ongoing professional development to educators in order to improve their understanding of CRP practices and principles. This category includes training programmes, workshops, and cooperative learning opportunities that help teachers incorporate culturally sensitive teaching strategies into their lesson plans.

In order to facilitate the execution of CRP initiatives, administrators must allocate resources wisely. This includes financial resources for instructional aids, training supplies, and support staff in addition to human resources and time for planning and coordination.

They should also support collaboration and joint ventures with cultural institutions, neighbourhood associations, and other pertinent parties in order to advance CRP operations. By leveraging outside resources and experience, administrators can enhance



their school's cultural responsiveness and better meet the diverse requirements of their students.

According to Barnes, (2019) administrators should use data to assess the effectiveness of CRP programmes and to guide their decisions about budget allocation and programme enhancement. Administrators can use data on student results, teacher practices, and school climate to identify areas of success and areas for improvement in their CRP programmes.

Additionally, they ought to play a significant role in creating and maintaining a welcoming, supportive, and inclusive learning environment for all students. They should support employees in becoming culturally competent, build relationships with students and teachers, and address any possible prejudice or discrimination.

Conclusion

The crucial part that school administrators play in implementing culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) is summed up in this. The article describes the various ways in which administrators direct, support, and spearhead the integration of CRP practices and concepts into educational settings. The primary findings of the study focus on how important it is to create an inclusive and culturally aware educational environment, provide teachers with tools and opportunities for professional development, and support policies and initiatives that advance these concepts.

This study emphasises how crucial it is to keep providing money and support for culturally sensitive teaching strategies. It highlights how transformative CRP can be in assisting children in achieving academic success, advancing diversity and fairness, and enhancing their social and emotional wellbeing. Administrators, legislators, educators, and stakeholders are encouraged to prioritise CRP programming, allocate resources, and collaborate in order to create

an environment where cultural diversity is acknowledged and every kid feels valued and prepared for success. By promising to continue support and investment in CRP, stakeholders may work together to create more equitable and culturally responsive educational systems that meet the diverse needs of today's kids

Suggestions

School administrators should place high premium on funding comprehensive professional development programmes, that equip teachers with the knowledge, abilities, and strategies required to successfully implement CRP. Regular coaching sessions, workshops, and training opportunities are provided as part of this, with a focus on inclusive teaching strategies, cultural competency, and building good relationships with students from a range of backgrounds.

Administrators should encourage collaboration and peer learning among teachers to help them share ideas, best practices, and support one another when implementing CRP initiatives. Establishing cross-disciplinary collaborative groups, professional learning communities, and mentorship programmes can all help to promote cooperation and information exchange among educators.

Administrators and educators should work closely together to establish and implement culturally inclusive curricular standards that reflect the diverse experiences, opinions, and contributions of all students. Curriculum materials, textbooks, and teaching aids should include a range of voices, opinions, and cultural content in all subject areas and grade levels.

Administrators should review and revise current school rules and procedures to ensure they align with CRP practices and values. Policies that support equity, diversity, and inclusion include developing guidelines for anti-bias policies, culturally



sensitive sentencing methods, and inclusive recruiting and hiring practices.

By actively incorporating families and communities, administrators may ensure that their perspectives, experiences, and cultural practices are valued and included into school operations. Parent workshops, community events, and cultural celebrations can all be used to strengthen bonds, foster cooperation, and build trust between schools and their communities.

To ensure that all students receive a first-rate education and additional services, administrators should advocate for equitable financing and support. This means advocating for increased funding, staffing, and resources for schools serving diverse student populations in addition to addressing structural inequities and barriers that may keep kids from taking advantage of educational opportunities.

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