Exploring The Relevance of School-Based Curriculum Development with Culture Integration

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ABSTRACT

In some decades past, a lot of efforts have been put together within education policy, curriculum reform etc. both as a means of implementing change and for the purpose of fostering educational and school improvements from a central governing body outside the school. However, not much has been achieved with those efforts. School-based curriculum and development has been observed to not only facilitate the change needed in education, with its relevance and development but totally improves societal wellbeing. Integrating culture in its development improves the school education system and society at large. Schools need to be given a chance to develop their own curriculums to promote educational advancement.

Keywords: Culture Integration, Curriculum Reform, School-Based Curriculum, School-Based Curriculum Development

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the past few years, education, school and curriculum reforms all over the world have been challenged by globalization, international competition, technological progress and social changes. Some scholars believe that school autonomy is what schools and society need to cope with the considerable make-over and challenges of the global economy. An adaptive methodology is therefore needed to facilitate the development of the anticipated change and foster improvement to education. An elated stratum of school autonomy makes it possible for schools and teachers to be flexible and diverse in teaching, this is considered to offer a beneficial effect on students' outcome. With this view some authors have stressed the need for decentralization within schools, giving teachers greater autonomy.

Amongst the several aspects of school autonomy, decentralized curriculum development or school-based curriculum development has over time caused controversy in the international arena. Leading many to have doubts about whether the traditional curriculum developed and managed by a central agency can be effectively implemented at the school level to meet the needs of students in this dispensation and in the future.

This thought has been a major reality in the Nigerian basic education sector where good standards of curriculum have been set for the education sector but we have not often succeeded in ensuring that such standards are attained or maintained. Olubadewo (2007) observed that education in some parts of this country has lost its most cherished values, due to total dependence on a source for general resources and support, no wonder Davydon (1991/2013) has this to say: Education is losing its cultural, moral, and personal context meaning as well as any content and meaning as regard subject matter and subject-related activities. In other words, the gap between education and culture, between education and actual life, and even between education and science is becoming wider because the ability to manage large number of people has declined.

Therefore, we encourage school-based actions to promote teaching-oriented curriculum change, subject matter change, and teaching-oriented innovation in classroom practice and close the opening gap being experienced between education and life. When teachers are given more liberty, and they leverage on it, they can be very effective in response to situational issues and meet students' needs by initiating and carving out school courses tailored to a specific situation.

The impingement of internal decentralization of school autonomy on the successful implementation of school-based curriculum development at both the national and international levels are problems with global significance for educational and curriculum reforms. With the purpose to benefit Nigeria and other countries still aspiring for much better education through curriculum development, this paper aims at exploring school-based curriculum, development, and its relevance.

II. SCHOOL-BASED CURRICULUM, RELEVANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

A. *School-Based Curriculum and Relevance*

Before deciding on the terminology of SBCD, we must first explore the concept of SBCD, which has become the center of our discourse. All curriculum decisions are made at school level; this is what the term "school-based" signifies. When used in conjunction with "curriculum development", it means that all actions linked to the creation of curriculum materials, such as planning, design, production, implementation, and evaluation need to and should be carried out at the school's level. The term school-based curriculum and development have had both global and personal views. When considered from a broad standpoint, there are two categories of School-based curriculum development. Number one category is the school-based curriculum development that is implemented in decentralized countries in which the national or provincial (state) government formulates and promulgates the types of courses and their standards. In the development of this form of curriculum, the school independently selects and edits teaching materials in conformity with the laws and regulations governing education and determines the content of teaching. The number 2 category is that which is implemented in centralized countries, that is, the central government establishes a structure for curriculum planning and regulates most curricula while leaving little curricular elements to the discretion of the schools. Looking from the culture and reality of life about education, "school-based curriculum development" can be organized in a way that there will be no inconsistencies between the "national curriculum" and "local curriculum." In other words, the above writer's point is that this school-based curriculum should be centered on the synergy of existing curricula, incorporating all to mutually promote the education curriculum system's quality, irrespective of the state of any country, be it decentralized or centralized; the school-based curriculum can be functional in any nation. SBCD over time has been practiced, yielded success and has therefore become important and relevant for our society to imbibe. From scholars' views, we can observe the following relevance;

1) Builds Collaborations and Commitment

Generally speaking, SBCD has been looked at by various scholars and has been defined in a range of ways in different literature. According to Bezzina as referenced by Rachel (2004; 6), it is a process in which some or all members of a school community plan, implement and or evaluate an aspect or aspects of the curriculum offering of the school. This might imply to accept formally and put into effect an existing curriculum, just like being experienced in a decentralized country or creating a new curriculum. In other words, it is a cooperative endeavor which should never be confused with individual efforts by teachers or administrators who are working outside of a mutually agreed-upon structure. Needless to mention the great significance here, school-based curriculum development brings about more collaborative spirits in the school community. The report "*How the World's Most Improved School Systems Keep Getting Better*" analyzed school systems in 20 diverse countries that experienced sustained improvement. A heavy emphasis on teamwork to detect and respond to problems was one of the recurring threads. In the report's introduction, Michael Fullan explained;

> The power of collective capacity is that it enables ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things—for two reasons. One is that knowledge about effective practice becomes more widely available and accessible on a daily basis. The second reason is more powerful still—working together generates commitment. (p. 72)

Administrators, teachers, etc., are opportune to access wider knowledge, collaborate and become more committed to the teaching and learning course.

2) Promotes School Community Relation

Skilbeck (1984) regarded SBCD as the planning, design, implementation, and evaluation of a program of students' learning by the educational institutions of which those students are members. This can only be achieved with recourse to the tenets of the school society where the school is existent. From this statement, we can deduce that, for school-based curriculum, the school is to be responsive, and needing the liberty, chance, obligation, and wherewithal to ascertain and run their affairs. It implies that SBCD gives school the opportunity of realigning the curriculum to suit student's needs, and meeting the local resources of its community. Rather than engaging and supporting their local communities, it is argued that schools often focus on more professional (and non-local) priorities, responding to state curricula and broader economic and union demands resulting in the isolation of a school from its community. It was further suggested that the community's capacity to live and develop be given great consideration when formulating educational policies, by so doing schools stand a great chance of offering more development opportunities to their communities than being extractive of it. Not only is SBCD an avenue for school to develop from the community but the community in turn gets developed because, with SBCD, the school does not only focus on the professional priorities but considers the local state of the community in to maintain the culture of the society.

3) Promotes and Upholds Teacher Professional Development

The curriculum in school-based curriculum development is internal and organic to the institution, rather than an external imposition. It involves a web of connections with diverse groups, as well as a set of values, rules, procedures, and roles. Stenhouse (1975) in his Humanities Project explicitly defined SBCD in terms of a process of teacher's personal professional development. Following in his footsteps Ebbutt and Elliott (1985) saw SBD as a paradigmatic transition from teaching as a theory-applying activity to teaching as a theory-generating activity. Teaching as a theory-applying activity believes that generalizations gained from practice studies can be framed as general norms of conduct that the teacher can apply in real-world settings. Stenhouse questioned the predictive potential of generalizations regarding teaching, claiming that their value can only be determined after the fact. They encourage

instructors to seek new insights into the ever-changing conditions they encounter in the classroom. (Stenhouse, 1978). Ebbutt and Elliott (1985) argue that the theory-generating model assumes a 'bottom-up' view of teachers' development, and contributes to the professional status of teachers. The concept of teachers as curriculum developers overturns the traditional hierarchy of teachers at the bottom of the professional pyramid, with curriculum developers and researchers occupying the two upper strata respectively as producers of subject knowledge. The hub on controlling effective educational knowledge shifts from outside organizations to individual schools to promote and maintain teacher professional development.

4) Enhancing Students Academic Achievements

A School-based curriculum has also been found to successfully promote and enhance students' academic achievements. Success is not an automatic one that spins from the school-based curriculum, however, the more success in implementation, the higher the value achieved by students. (Bambang Budi Wiyono 2018)**.** Bambang further stated from his research that, when analyzed in terms of its characteristics, the School-Based Curriculum placed a greater emphasis on students' active learning. That is, the higher students' learning activeness, the higher the learning outcome achieved by students. Only meaningful learning experiences can lead to significant learning outcome**,** which can only come from being active in and when learning.

These perspectives, SBC and D are seen to be far more beneficial in its process, not only is it an avenue for achieving extraordinary things through collaboration and learning new things or a way of making a school respond to the needs of pupils' through being directly responsive to the society. SBC and D are seen as teachers' arena for learning and reflecting on their practices. This helps them put new ideas to practice, and conceptualize them as teaching theories; a total avenue for teachers' professional development that brings about students' high achievement. above all, it can be developed and implemented in any nation.

B. Development of School-Based Curriculum and Model

Reality, the School-Based Curriculum Development is a good school curriculum management strategy, which involves all elements of curriculum management such as teachers, communities, educational scientist, education stakeholder, and education division, agent of education, companies, and so forth. This statement is based on what Skilbeck said, as quoted in A.V Kelly, 2004:115 He claims that this concept of School-Based Curriculum Development is based on several fundamental principles. First of all, it recognizes that a high degree of independence from both teachers and pupils is an essential requirement for fully educational curriculum to be provided. Second, it sees the school as a human social institution which must respond to its surroundings and, as a result, must be allowed to evolve in its own unique way to match that context. Lastly, it is considered critical to this development that each individual teacher, or at the very least a member in the team, accepts a research and development role in curriculum creation. In other words, it brings about the development of the teacher.

One method of developing a curriculum is to use models that have been pre-planned and successful by scholars. Models are analogies that are being used as a guideline to action. We can find models for nearly any type educational endeavor. The education profession has management model, supervision model, instruction, evaluation, and so on. There are models of curriculum development and school-based curriculum development as well. Using a model to develop a curriculum can result in greater efficiency and productivity (Olivia, 2009). By exploring its model, phases that are essential to the development processes are being analyzed.

1) Model of School-based Curriculum Development and its basic characteristics

a. Situational model

Malcom Skilbeck in his studies proposed a Situational Model to SBCD. This is a model in which the curriculum is positioned relative to its surroundings. It situates curriculum creation within a cultural context. It sees this design as means for teachers to modify and transform pupils' experience by providing insights into cultural values, interpretative frameworks, and symbolic symbols. Skilbeck further reiterated that for school-based curriculum development to work effectively; five steps are required for curriculum process. They are; situational analysis, objectives, designing (program building), interpretation and implementation, and evaluation (monitoring, feedback, assessment, and reconstruction). This model takes full cognizance of the society in which the school is situated. It is comprehensive, resilient, modifiable, in addition to being susceptible in the light of changing circumstances, and as such, it is the best model to emulate when developing a school-based curriculum.

b. Social model

Another is the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's eight steps (OECD). These involves analyzing students; analyzing resources and constraints; setting overall objectives; setting special objectives; identifying methods and tools; evaluating students' learning; allocating resources, personnel, equipment, and time; and implementation, assessment, and revision (OECD, 1979). Despite the fact that these steps are logically ordered, any step can be used as a starting point in practice, and each step must be examined in connection with others. For these models, its major consideration falls within the contemporary society; therefore, to ensure the worthwhileness of the curriculum, the planning should be based on the culture of the learners' society.

2) Key Features of These Developments

Some features are yet essential in curriculum development at the school level without which the school curriculum will not be fully developed. According to A.V Kelly, these features are of utmost importance in school-based curriculum development process as they play significant part to a broader grasp of its expected changes. They are the change agents and the outside support agencies and the centrality of the teacher.

a. Change agents and outside support agencies

In order to solve some the problems that this curriculum method causes, schools should employ senior instructors who would be responsible for coordinating and supervising the curriculum. They become curriculum co-coordinators and development officers which in turn become change agents within the school. Kelly noted that this process is necessary and highly recommended if the conditions are to be created for the curriculum's continual development and evolution. This process also ensures that there is one person in the school who can attempt coordinating outside assistance for any group of teachers working in an innovative activity.

Local education authorities and school council exist in the society, and they focus their efforts on supporting school-based curriculum development. It is apparent that schools require this kind of support and advice. As Chen *et al.* (2015), stated from their findings "the culture in most of the participating schools afforded an open atmosphere which encourages the expression of diverse opinions and experimentations in SBCD. The teachers from all the participating schools reported that they enjoyed being autonomous in their SBCD processes" (Chen *et al.*, 2015), therefore, it is important to create such team where schools collaborate because their impact is critical to school improvement as well as the development curricula at the school level, they can also serve as a channel through which societal culture is gathered to the school development process. The European Commission (2007) emphasizes the importance of enhancing connections between teacher educators, practicing teachers, the work place and other organization. Because teachers serve as role models, it is critical the profession reflects the variety of the society in which they work.

b. The centrality of the teacher

This is the most important aspect of the curriculum planning process in schools. If a teacher's function in the classroom has been established as critical to educational provision's effectiveness, then the teacher must be the center of all activity. The obligation indicated in the school-based curriculum requires a shift in teacher's function, which necessitates a significant shift in school organization and even personnel if he or she is to have the time and capacity in answering to the new responsibilities. In striving towards educational sustainability, we need to engage in the complexities of continuous improvement consistent with deep values of human purpose.

Teachers must be prepared to play a prominent role in curriculum creation from the beginning of their careers. As Kelly (2004) points out, it's even more important for them to be provided with adequate opportunities for continuing their education in the workplace, so that they can acquire any new skills that the innovations require, as well as gain insight into the broader educational issues, for which a comprehensive understanding is required or any kind of adequate planning, research, or development. The role of the teacher will continue to be very important in the development of the new curriculum. According to Carroll 1994, the role of the teachers is to be, "knowledgeable managers of students, ideas, and learning experiences that help develop compassionate links between all elements." Instead of merely imparting knowledge, their role will be to be facilitators of knowledge; partners in education, by making good use of technology as a tool in the process.

If, as previously stated, teachers play a critical function in the quality of a student's education, it is imperative that they receive all available help in this regard. The process of becoming' reflective practitioners,' experts who can examine their work in order to improve it continuously, requires assistance and guidance from the beginning of training.

In summary, these key features exist and are useful from the society, in other words, all deliberations points to society and culture is a pillar to school-based curriculum development. Therefore, it is pertinent to explore the culture and look at ways in which it can be integrated into or apply it to the school curriculum for better functionality.

III. CULTURE IN (SCHOOL-BASED) CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Ethnic culture is that which can be identified based on sharing common or distinctive characteristics of language, religion, beliefs, values, etc. Culture is the way I live my life which also affects the things I do. It is generally being referred to as people's way of life. Food habits, languages, festivals, wedding ceremonies, ways of thinking and manners and learning are all included. Education is a means of preserving and modifying culture. Educators are regarded to have a good impact on society's morals and culture when they fulfill their tasks successfully.

Culture, according to Anthony (2015), is defined as the prevalent values and beliefs that impact decision-making. In other words, the prevalent values will impact the content, the skills, and attitudes that are encouraged, the instructors-students connection, and many other aspects of living/learning, will all be influenced by the prevailing values/culture. The motivation, expectations, and working performance of school professionals who construct and implement the curriculum are influenced by cultural factors.

Within any society, values, beliefs, norms/customs are prevailing cultural components or characteristics that influences its learning environment and all other components

A. Culture Components that Influence School-Based Curriculum Development

Every curriculum's content is influenced by culture. Why? Education is fundamentally about transmitting society's culture to the next generation, and curriculum is a powerful tool for any society's educational aims. Culture comprises beliefs, values, and norms that are understood and shared by members of society. These are what will serve as guides for curriculum development and needs to be taken cognizance of.

a. Cultural belief

Cultural beliefs are notions on which people of a culture believe to be valid and that are based on the culture's shared values. Religious belief is one type of cultural belief, but it also encompasses issues such as justice, health, right and wrong, family, and nearly every other aspect of existence. Most cultures, for example, have views about how adults need to relate with children and how children should be

raised. These can differ greatly. Some advocates the importance of allowing children express themselves and build self-confidence, while teaching respect and self-control is emphasized by others. The societies we live in are different and therefore we are bound to have different beliefs and these societal beliefs need to be paid attention to when developing the school-based curriculum. The curriculum should reflect societal beliefs as well as changes that have been deemed fit to pass on to society through education.

b. Cultural value

Moral views that are generally held in society are referred to as cultural values. They include what the majority of people in a community believe to be right or incorrect. When individuals place a high value on anything, it becomes the norm (common or seen as normal). For example, if cleanliness is a virtue, handwashing becomes the norm. Even if individuals may not personally value this, society as a whole supports it.

Across board, cultural values support what people consider to be good or bad, normal or abnormal, tolerable or intolerable. To this end, the moral belief or values held by a society where the school resides will influence the school and its instruction as the school is to emphasize these values in instruction.

c. Cultural norms

The term "norm" refers to a culturally accepted standard of conduct. Norms define how people are thinking (shared reality) and behaving, and they control the behavior of people. Norms are informal yet commonly accepted standards that regulate people of a culture's conduct and decisions. Smiling or conversing with a cashier in a supermarket is common in some cultures, yet it is unusual or even unpleasant in others. In the formation of practices, norms serve as both input and output variables. Certain acts are defined by norms, and once socially routinized; they are referred to be practices. As a result, cultural norms influence cultural practices, and vice versa. This two are deduced from observations of others' common behavior. When these cultural norms are imbibed and integrated, they become the foundation for behavior amongst everyone in the school community.

These cultural components become the essential core for school-based curriculum development. It can be turned into explicit curricular and expressed in school-based curricula. Alternatively, it can be included into the school-based curriculum as a hidden co as a hidden core of spirit, philosophy, and values.

B. Integrating Culture into School-Based Curriculum Development

Integration involves the inclusion of the required knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes in the curriculum. According to Agwu (2009:172), 'integration means that what the school offers must be related to what the community holds and requires. Integration refers to the horizontal relationship between curriculum content material and learning experiences in the structuring of content and learning experiences (teaching strategy). It is the combining of linked information and experiences from a variety of fields into a singular knowledge base. It is concerned with reusing contents from one subject area to address difficulties in some other. As a result, our debate focuses on the inclusion of cultural components in school-based curriculum to demonstrate the link between what kids learn in school and what they encounter in reality or society.

Integrating cultures into the school curriculum requires sourcing for and collecting cultural values and data. These can be sourced for and collected from designated authorities in the society of residence as briefly discussed below;

1) Direct Information from a Society's National Policy on Education

Every society where a school is already in existence has its curriculum as well as culture, information from a National Policy of education needs to be co-opted and or reformed to use in the school-based curriculum. For Example, the full integration of learners into the community is one of the foundations of the Nigerian Philosophy of Education (FGN, 2004: 7). At the basic education level, which comprises primary and junior secondary schools, the curricula are integrated. The crux is to integrate the learners as useful and productive society's constituents. With this philosophy in mind, the broad field design is used to design its curricula wherein similar knowledge, abilities and attitudes are put together and methodically organized in terms of their complexity gradient. For example, Social Studies, Basic Technology, Basic Science, Business Studies, Language, Cultural and Creative Arts, and Civic Education are all integrated themes. Integration will be hampered if school curriculum is established without reference to the community's culture which in this case is guiding principles or philosophy that upholds its education system. As a result, it is incumbent upon school-based curriculum planners to connect curriculum material and experiences to the people's culture (educational philosophy and policy). This can be accomplished by conducting a situational analysis prior to developing a curriculum, as suggested by Taba's (1962) curriculum model.

Situational analysis entails investigating all of the essential factors that influences curriculum development as well as execution or implementation. It surveys the society, the environment, the educational system, the learner factors, the teacher factors, the learning process, school facilities, and the available accumulated body of knowledge. Society's values are also taken into account, as respect for society's ideals is vitally important. It provides a feeling of kinship and happiness, as well as self-respect, and self-esteem. Speaking of values, Behavioral, procedural, and significant values are the three types outlined by Khan (2004). Behavioral value is concerned with the kind of behaviors displayed by both the teacher and the students. It is mutual. The teacher models positive behavior, which the learners pick up on and internalize. The method of approach in problem-solving involves procedural value; regard for evidence for example, and a readiness to engage in reasoned debate. Substantial values are beliefs formed as a result of an individual's family, ethnic, religious or cultural experiences or their attitudes towards social or political concerns. The data (values) gathered from these sources would provide the curriculum planner with the necessary tools to create a better and workable curriculum.

2) Sourcing Direct Information from the Local Community

Alternative method of obtaining cultural data and to integrate into the school-based curriculum is conducted through interviews with important members of society,

including experienced and exposed elders, custodians of law, etc. who will provide detailed news, stories, advice about their culture, values, and ethical issues upon which the curriculum will be built. Esu and Enu 2009:288, claims that, Values and ethical issues are at the heart of society because they form the philosophical model which guides and directs interpersonal and intergroup actions. As these values, norms are infused into the curriculum, it becomes more productive.

For example, to address the necessities for students to be integrated into the local culture and culture to the students, school-based courses can be built with local aspects such as historical landmarks, folk traditions, architectural gardens, folk art, prominent persons, and so on. It will be far more admirable when certain schools start using the spirit of local culture as a source of curriculum objectives for schools that is if it is not in use already. The complete school-based curriculum planning is guided by this spirit, putting in delivery modes and creation of a variety of school-based curricula, with culture at the heart of these initiatives.

It will be much easier to tie the topics in curriculum to the learners' key life experiences (values/culture) in order to demonstrate the importance of the school programs using preplanned modes. They'll have everything they need to apply what they've learned in school to address their own and society's problems as a result of various kinds of learning. This is what education is really about (its essence).

IV. CONCLUSION

Educational advancement in our society today stems from educational policies, curriculum reform, and development, most of which is done from a centrally controlled body. Our basic educational curriculum up to date remains an example of this centrally developed one; even so, there have been records of challenges with its successes. A curriculum is considered the heart of any learning institution which means, it is an important part of the education process. The heart of this educational or learning institution should be allowed to be developed by the school which is the crux to educational advancement.

With changes that occur in our society, curriculum development should no longer be static from a centralized body but dynamic. Therefore, this development can be made from an individual school's point of view forming what is known as a school-based curriculum. Through this, collaboration skills and professional development of teachers who become core in the curriculum development process are enhanced. School community relation is also enhanced as well as students' academic excellence. Teachers and or Instructors' traditional ways of thinking about education are influenced by school-based curriculum, which undermines the top-down approach in which teachers and schools rely on a central curriculum. This becomes more meaningful as the central curriculum is not done away with but being put to use, bearing culture in mind in order to be functional, a well-designed school curriculum should capture the diversity of the people for whom it is produced. In other words, the culture of the society is a major factor of consideration and should be the foundation for developing a school-based curriculum since the school is viewed as a social institution made up of humans that must respond to

their circumstances, as a result, should be allowed to evolve as it deems fit to match its surroundings.

When all of these is been achieved with school-based curriculum development, the school education system become more enriched as its aims and objective are now seen being achieved through the successes and benefits realized from school-based curriculum development. This success and benefits in turn reflect on the society as the education system of any society depicts the face, level, and standard of that society. When student's academic success is enhanced through school-based curriculum implementation trait of emphasizing learning activeness, it means the educational system and standard have received a boost, and when an educational system has been boosted, and the society gets enriched with innovations that are a product of a boosted education from school-based curriculum development, meeting world standard in educational improvement becomes a steppingstone.

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