

Nigeria General Educational System: Mainstreaming Care and Integration of Sub-Normal Children Analyzing the Counselling Perspective

Maria Enemeba Ngwu (Ph.D)

Effiom, Bassey Ekeng (Ph.D)

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1170-763X>

Lucy Obil Arop(Ph.D)

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3208-2031>

Odey, Godwin Amuchi

Department of Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Educational foundations, University of Calabar, Calabar Nigeria.

Prof. Anthonia Inaja

Faculty of Educational Foundation, University of Calabar, Calabar.

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Abstract

Education in Nigeria is overseen by the Federal Ministry of Education. The local authorities take responsibility for implementing state-controlled policy regarding public education and state schools. The education system is divided into Kindergarten, Primary education, Secondary education, and Tertiary education. Nigeria's federal government has been dominated by instability since declaring independence from Britain, and as a result, a unified set of education policies is yet to be successfully implemented. Regional differences in quality, curriculum, and funding characterize the education system in Nigeria. Currently, Nigeria possesses the largest population of out-of-school learning youths in the world. The education system in the South is different from the North. Most northerners have memorized the Holy Qur'an and use that as their education. The educational systems in Nigeria are divided into two the public where the student only pays for PTA while the private where students pay school fees and some other fees like sports, exam fees, computer fees etc and they are costly. Therefore, Care and integration of sub-normal children will be necessary if the Nigeria General Educational System will succeed, while the duties of the counsellor remind important to the general education in Nigeria.

Keyword: Education, Mainstreaming, Care, Integration, Sub-normal Children, Counselling.

Introduction

Many academics have concluded that an overall lack of funding and centralization has significantly hindered the quality, funding, and implementation of literacy programs for both school age children and adults. However, many have achieved success at promoting employment and increasing economic mobility for those who have utilized the programs. Nigeria has experienced many changes in every facet of life and development. This has impacted on the social life of its citizens positively and negatively. Urbanization (movements of people to the cities, looking for greener pasture) and unemployment resulting in increase in crime, displacement of people from their homes as a result of insurgency, trauma, among others, lead to stressful situations, which citizens are exposed to; and these have several consequences, Maria E. N.(2021). Childhood learning may be more influential than learning dissociative behavior involves dullness & backwardness, heartbeat, muscle tension, and brain waves. The class of children that need special education treatment is the blind, the partial sighted, deaf, partially deaf, and the delicate. Others are educational sub-normal, the epileptic, the maladjusted, the physically handicapped, and those with speech defects, Effiom, B. E. (2022). The number of youth incarcerated in various prisons across the country has increasing number of young alcoholics and drug abusers have to a level of causing education sector much concerned, Maria, E.N. et al (2022). Drug abuse is a very serious problem among school adolescents and which has slowly made the average Nigerian student to be maimed sentence to life of delinquency, insanity, street walking and premature death, Maria, E.N. et al (2022). The economic situations in the country with its attendant hardship and precarious situation have led to many youths not being meaningfully engaged. The get-rich quick syndrome, resulting to some youth engaging in unwholesome activities and other reckless behaviour like kidnapping, armed robbery, is also a major problem, Maria, E.N. & Rachel, D.U. (2021). The demand to this commitment becomes so great, some unfortunately have moved from compassion caring to functional fulfillment of job, Maria, E.N. & Daizy N. (2016). The desperation for political power, greed and insensitivity of the political class to the needs of the citizens, have made youth to become ready tools used for political interest, perpetration of violence, among others, Maria, E.N. & Rachel, D. U.(2021). Parental guidance plays a vital role in the life of children and has a strong influence upon them especially on two significant life events - marriage and their vocational choice, the importance of parental influences upon their children's career choice is well established even across gender and racial lines, Effiom, B. E. et al (2022). These guidelines for practice are based on policies and standards in professional literature, ethical principles for counselling profession is concerned with its obligations to society, Maria, E.N. & Paulina, M. A.(2019). Teachers should be allowed to identify the best course for each child through continuous assessment and career counselling orientation, workshop/seminars be organized for parents with aim of changing their mind, Effiom, B. E. et al (2021). Counselling sessions can encourage student interest and need to seek professional's assistance on the other hand, if event turns sour, the counselling session may become biased and not welcoming by their professional which may result to breakdown of all client issues and problems, Maria, E.N. & Paulina, M. A.(2019). The fundamental consideration is that respect and protection must be given to the clients, something that can be done by counsellors who manifest honesty, integrity, objectivity in their behaviour towards the client, Maria, E.N. & Paulina, M. A. (2019). They are rearrested, reconvicted for repetition of crime; others for probation violation, where no meaningful counselling and rehabilitation structure are put on ground to handle such ex-convicts, Maria, E.N. & Rachel D. U. (2021).

Integration of Sub-Normal Children Analyzing the Counselling Perspective

Sub-normality is complex, uncertain, and quite confusing. Rather, segregated children with disabilities have re-enforced stigmatization inclusive approaches through mainstreaming are more institutionalized, Effiom, B.E et al (2022). Disabilities children such be careful and integrated through re-affirmation, confidence building understanding, and counselling, therefore is a service that is both preventive and corrective, especially with mental sub-normality, Effiom, B.E. et al (2022). According to Effiom, B.E. et al (2022), the economy suffers because the abused children are unable to contribute meaningfully to the economy, the abused children, who often try to report such incidences are often failed by the justice system which do very little to no action in apprehending and prosecuting the perpetrators. In the Nigerian school system various forms of examinations are noticed, these are the entrance examination, the terminal and promotion examination, the student certificate examination and the degree or diploma examination. Effiom, B.E. et al (2022). According to Effiom, B. E. et al (2021), the Nigeria government has taken a deaf ear to the people's agony and blind their eye to flood of poverty eroding country's integrity and existence, the Nigerian Government has failed to provide a good infrastructure there is a lack of teaching and learning material. In Nigeria, many studies have been conducted since the introduction of family life and sex education into the school curriculum to aserrtian it acceptability and people's perception of it, Effiom, B. E. et al (2022). since the status of family life and sex education in the area as well as teachers perception about the content of family life and sex education has been research into, this present study is therefore tailored towards ascertaining the perception of student who are the major beneficiaries of sex education in the area, Effiom, B. E et al (2022). Counselling disable Children with sub-normality is often misunderstood and frequently less attended to in the counselling profession by counsellor, these children need services just as much as other children, Effiom, B.E. et al (2021).In addiction all counsellor have a professional and ethical responsibility to facilitate conditions that promote full potential for all individual, including exceptional groups. From a counselling perspective, these student, regardless of their specific handicap, present similar characteristics that preclude using traditional counselling method, Effiom, B.E. et al (2021).

Academic Concentration and Academic Performance

Poor academic performance is a performance that is adjudged by the examines/test and some other significantly papers as falling below an expected standard, Effiom, B.E et al (2019). academic performance have being observed in schools. Most student are observed to engage in other non-academic activities before and after school, the situation make the children fell tired and most often goes to bed without revising what they have being thought in school . some of the children sleep in class while the lesson are on. Indulgences of children in these non-academic activities like child labour, wondering, etc, Effiom, B.E et al(2019). these consequences rage from behavioral problem , attention problem, and anxiety. some common psycho-social effects of these non-academic activities include concentration problem depression, eating disorder, dissociative behaviour, fear of shyness, failure to thrive, learning problem, malnutrition and self injury, all these could culminate into poor or low academic performance, Effiom, B.E. et al (2019).

Nigerian Education Statistics And Facts

According to statistics, 7.2 million children enrolled in early childhood education programs in Nigeria. In contrast, 22.2 million children aged above 6 years enrolled in a public primary school and 5.5 million children registered in a private primary school. For secondary school enrolment, the pattern was clear. The survey revealed that the enrolment rate in junior secondary school was 54.4%, while those for senior secondary school was 68.6%. A 2017 university census revealed that the total number of undergraduate students was 1.7 million, while the number of postgraduate students (students carrying out either a master's or doctorate degree) was 234,000.

What Is The Educational Policy In Nigeria?

The national policy on education is legislative guidelines from the federal government that set standards, procedures and implementation plans that ensure educational development and delivery of qualitative education in Nigeria. The first national policy on education was published in 1977 but has been revised several times by successive stakeholders in the federal ministry of education because of growing changes in education delivery. The 2014 edition of the national policy on education stipulates that the government handles formal basic education, which is compulsory and free to all. The basic education covers:

- 1 year pre-primary education
- 6 years of primary education
- 3 years of junior secondary education

Also, new objectives and curricula were highlighted in the national policy on education to guide and regulate educational activities across all levels of education, both in public and private schools.

How Education In Nigeria Works

The government and private stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations and private individuals manage educational facilities as stipulated by the national policy on education. The federal ministry of education regulates both public and private educational institutions. Nigeria has 3 government levels: Federal, State and Local. The federal government and state government manage public tertiary and secondary level institutions, while the local government oversees public pre-primary and primary level institutions. The Nigerian educational system was formerly structured using the 6-3-3-4 formula, which means 1 year pre-primary, 6 years primary, 3 years junior secondary, 3 years senior secondary and 4 years tertiary education. Tertiary education covers universities, polytechnics and educational colleges.

However, in 2008, the federal government introduced the 9-year basic education curriculum to achieve the goals of the universal basic education program. Thus, the Nigerian educational structure became 9-3-4, which means 9 years basic education, 3 years senior secondary school education and 4 years tertiary education.

The structure of the 9-year basic education curriculum is:

- Lower basic education curriculum- Primary 1-3
- Middle basic education curriculum- Primary 4-6
- Upper basic education curriculum- Junior secondary 1-3

The 9-year basic education program, together with the recent curriculum changes, was implemented in 2014 across various schools in Nigeria.

Educational structure in Nigeria

The Nigerian formal educational structure is divided into:

- Basic education
- Senior secondary school education
- Tertiary education

Basic Education

The 2014 national policy on education stipulated that basic education covers early child care and development education (creches, daycare), pre-primary education, primary and junior secondary education. Basic education provides formal education training to children aged between 0-15 years.

The age group distribution for sub-level of basic education are:

- Early child care and development education – 0- 4 years
- Pre-primary education (1 year duration) – 5 year olds
- Primary education – 6-12 years
- Junior secondary education – 12- 15 years

English is the official language of instruction at the basic education level, but they may adopt indigenous languages depending on the location. For instance, educators in a particular geopolitical zone of Nigeria may choose to teach primary school students in their local language, such as Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba. Schools use the national policy on education guidelines to decide on the curriculum and subjects to teach. They give a student that successfully completes primary education a primary school leaving certificate to progress into junior secondary school level.

Pupils such be exposed to vocational and technical awareness form primary school through counselling, they will find out their interest early enough through exposure of skills acquisition, Knowledge and competencies needed for self reliance, Maria E.N.(2015). Also, a basic education certificate is awarded to successful students that pass the entrance exams into senior secondary school education.

Senior Secondary School Education

The current curriculum prepares students to have vocational skills apart from their formal education training. Vocational training empowers senior secondary school students to gain skills such as hair styling, crafting, and fashion designing. The formal education curriculum offers core subjects such as mathematics, English, civic studies and entrepreneurship across the different fields of studies which include: science, arts, technology and business. For senior secondary school students to progress into the tertiary level of education, the student must pass the senior school certificate examination prepared by the West African examination council (WAEC) and national examination council (NECO). The WAEC exams are usually taken every year in May, and they only expect senior secondary school students in the last class to sit for this exam. Successful students are given a senior school leaving certificate upon completion of senior secondary education. For students to gain admission into a Nigerian university, the student must pass both the West African examination council (WAEC) or national examination council (NECO) and the unified tertiary matriculation exam (UTME). The joint admissions and matriculation board prepares the UTME as a uniform admission test for all eligible senior secondary students, regardless of location.

However, in 2016, because of some irregularities in the conduct of the UTME, some universities now conduct their internal exams to screen students further before admission. The main goal of education, at the inception of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Since 2000, is education for all by the year 2015 and consequently declared education free and compulsory up till the end of junior secondary school, Rachel D.U. & Maria E.N.(2016). According to Lucy O.A. & Maria E.N.(2019), the nation policy of Education (2014) enunciated the desire to inculcate in young people, the right type of values, attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigeria society as well as raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the view of others, respect dignity of labour and appreciate the values specified under our broad national objective and live as good citizen.

Tertiary Education

Nigerian tertiary education covers both universities, polytechnics and colleges of education. The National University Commission is the governing body that regulates the activities of accredited universities in Nigeria. The university curriculum is structured to prepare university graduates to contribute towards national development and to develop entrepreneurs to create employment opportunities. Entrepreneurs will boost economic growth by creating more jobs and reducing unemployment as well as crime rates among unemployed youths.

Colleges of education are training centre for preparing young students interested in the teaching profession. These colleges prepare their students to become competent teachers in the society. Polytechnics provides specialized technical training and skill acquisition for students so they can contribute to the industrial and economic developments in Nigeria.

Final thoughts

Education in Nigeria has developed over the years after the initial introduction by Christian missionaries because it is one of the major sectors in Nigeria that contributes towards nation-building and economic growth. The federal ministry of education regulates education in Nigeria, and the national policy of education sets standards and guidelines that educational institutions follow to ensure students are prepared for national building and development. The current educational system in Nigeria follows a 9 years basic education, 3 years senior secondary education and 4 years tertiary education.

Lack of Equipment and Teacher Shortages

Because there is a general shortage of school resources, facilities and equipment, many schools must share laboratories and equipment. This serves as a barrier to learning because learning depends on the accessibility of the laboratory or equipment. Because there is also a shortage of teachers in the secondary education system in Nigeria (less than 50% of the required number of teachers), teachers cannot give students individualized attention because there are so many students in a classroom.

One of the main problems that threaten the education system in Nigeria is “ineffective monitoring of the implementation of educational policy.” In addition, there are disparities in resources allocated to government schools versus public schools, the latter often enduring fewer resources and equipment.

CONCLUSION

The federal ministry of education regulates education in Nigeria, and the national policy of education sets standards and guidelines that educational institutions follow to ensure students are prepared for national building and development. They must clarify their feeling and attitude about working with children who are sub normal. The government and private stakeholders such as non-governmental organization and private individuals manage educational facilities as stipulated by the national policy on education. The federal ministry of education regulates both public and private educational institutions. An abuse child develops bad behaviour such as bullying other learners and has hatred to people surrounding him/her. These learners are often discipline problem children. They prefer solitary environment. Hence, academic achievement declines due to low concentration and divided attention.

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