



TEACHER-LEARNER ETHICAL RELATIONSHIP IN BASIC EDUCATION IN CALABAR METROPOLIS, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the teacher-learner social interactions as model for value re-orientation in our society and it covers public primary schools in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of the study one research question and one hypothesis were formulated to guide the study. Literature review was carried out accordingly. Survey research design was used for the study. The paper examines the concept of value education through teacher-learner relationship some of which include honesty, integrity, hard work, empathy and respect for elders. Data was collected using researchers' well validated and peer reviewed instrument titled "Teacher-Learner Ethical Relationship Questionnaire (TLERQ)". The reliability co-efficient of 0.83 was established using Cronbach alpha reliability estimate. All the public primary schools in Calabar metropolis constituted the population of the study. A sample of 622 pupils was randomly selected for the study. The paper was anchored on social cognitive theory and attachment theory which provided the theoretical background for the study. The correlational analysis was the tool used for data analysis. The findings of the study reveal that the values learners are taught today, determine their behaviour in adulthood. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that positive teacher-learner relationship should be encouraged for it will bring about good value and moral re-orientation among learners, effective counselling and guidance should be provided in schools to help inculcate positive values among learners.

KEYWORDS: Teacher-Learner, Ethical Relationship, Basic Education, Calabar Metropolis.

INTRODUCTION

Value education refers to a type of educational practice which teaches morals, values, norms, dispositions and skills grounded in those values and are meant to change the life styles of learners. Today's educational system has lost its relevance and value probably because of the western influence, takeover of schools from missions inadequate teaching of values in the home, school and where the learners have interactions in their environment (Okeke 2024). Our Country is in chaos because of moral and cultural crisis and the country's education system has failed to create a decent society where values ought to strive.

This assertion conforms with the work of Asiye (2021), who maintains that the educational system has been producing new generations which can adapt themselves to technological developments well but do not know how to contribute to social peace, democracy and posterity. He further maintained that teachers and parents expect high grades from the students but they have been dis-regarding the value transition to the students.

There is a crisis of character decay and breakdown of traditional discipline in the society today. Get rich quick syndrome and grab the available political position by whatever means has been the sole motive of the products of this defective system of education.

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This disposition in the society is also eating deep in the students' outcome in academics, social life and the rest. According to Ushie, Okeke, Etta, and Edinyang (2021), blamed the parents on their inability to help inculcate right attitude and good values on their children's upbringing. This does not only cause low moral standard but also contribute to academic failure. The authors went further to laments that, "parents have erroneous opinion about the performance of their children in the universities; they do not know and seem to fulfil their role of guidance and encouragement right from the home." This is a clear instance of failure of family value in the society. Okeke, (2024), asserts that family values are conceived as the fundamental principles and beliefs that guide and determine how members of a given family function and interact with the larger society. It is a thing of concern to see how financial frauds, kidnapping, terrorism attack, violence, certificate forgery and so many other vices are being spear headed by some of the best brains blessed with the best educational and technological achievements that comes from a family where these values ought to emanate from and equally solidify in a school through teacher-learner relationship. We can see how the members of the learned professions indulge in scandalous unethical ways of making money without consciences. Getting a political appointment is now a do or die affair. Merit has been consistently ignored in academic set up, in government positions and other aspect of the society; ugly symptoms are seen everywhere. Students are obliged to rely on private tutors because the school system is not living up to expectations.

The students are required to depend so much on their memory that they have no thinking power of their own because the people ought to help them have failed in their respective roles. They resort to socially destructive and devastating ways of coping with stress as evidenced by increased rate of crime, alcoholism, drug abuse, suicides, depression, self-harm, low self-esteem, accidents and so on. The essence of teaching good character and moral values to children in the basic classes cannot be over emphasized. If children are taught moral values early enough, it will help them to have strong roots, be of good conduct and develop good thoughts and healthy life style. Duruamaku-dim and Anero maintained that values are important things in life that guide our behaviour in all aspects of our life especially at the childhood period. They are essential part of individual's character and should be taught right from childhood. Teaching children values early help them choose the right direction and it equally exposes them to choose the right path (Duruamaku-dim and Anero (2011)). It assists them to make informed and right decisions in life and thereby be accepted and respected in the society they find themselves.

It is the responsibility of the parents to inculcate good values, morals and right character in their children right from the home before going to school. They are to select good schools where these values and morals are nurtured and built into the lifestyle of a child, since children spend more time in school.

According to Billy Graham (2020) "if wealth is lost, nothing is lost; if health is lost, something is lost; when a character is lost, all is lost." Early childhood is the best period for character formation and development; therefore education at this stage will equip the learner adequately to be useful to the society in which he lives. Value education helps children learn the importance of moral, values and good character. Whatever children learn at an early stage remain with them throughout their life. Hence, the saying "train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it, Proverb 22:6 Revised Standard Version. An ethical relationship between teacher and learner cannot be over emphasised. This relationship include mutual respect, open communication, demonstration of linkages between ethical principles and behaviour, facilitating learner's understanding of their behaviours and recognition of legitimate individual differences in ethical positions. Among the main aims of ethics and values education are the following; to stimulate ethical reflection, awareness, autonomy, responsibility, and compassion in children. To provide children with insight into important ethical principles and values, equip them with intellectual capacities and critical thinking reflection.

The core of teaching consists of four basic values; dignity, truthfulness, fairness and responsibility and freedom. All teaching is founded on ethics whether it is to be the teacher-learner relationship or teachers' relationship with their work. The term Ethics and Values Education (EVE) applies to all aspects of education which either explicitly or implicitly relate to ethical dimensions of life and are monitored with appropriate educational methods and tools. Student- teacher relationship will effectively be promoted through teaching of value education in basic level of education in Nigeria in general and in Cross River State in particular. According to Cornelius-Ukpebi (2019), value education is the process by which moral values are inculcated into the young people to make them better individuals in the society. The author maintained that values are priorities that determine how one goes about his or her daily living, and that it serves as pointers to how we spend our time and life on earth. Therefore if values are taught at home, the schools, and churches or in an organization, it would create ethical relationship between the teacher and the learners. Beckett (2017) described value education as character education or moral education.

The author opined that it is an education where learners learn value from educators and put them into practice in future to lead a better life, the life of humanity where religion has no importance and what is valued most is someone's character. In a decaying society where there is no empathy, selfishness and self-centeredness abound, there is need for learners to learn value from parents at home, from teachers in school and the society and equally put them into practice to lead a better life where humanity is at heart. According to Cataneda-Pena, Calderon, Borja, Quitian & Suarez (2019) maintained that teachers have a crucial role to play in laying the foundations of a society in the future, because they will teach their students according to their beliefs and values. The teacher-student relationship will help in the development of all round individuals with well - balanced personality in our educational system today. Learners who will be democratically informed, cohesive, socially and culturally responsible and even intellectually competitive to promote national development. Unfortunately, emphasize are mostly laid on the intellectual development of learners that is knowledge based learning, leaving the learner without adequate emotional, social, physical, spiritual development which enhance growth of attitudes, habits, skills, and interests among learners. Cornelius-Ukpebi (2019), maintained that values education is an activity during which young people are assisted by adults in schools, family, homes, clubs and churches to make explicit the things that underlie their attitudes, to assess the effectiveness of these values for their own and others long term well-being and to reflect on and acquire values which are more effective for long term well-being to themselves and the society. Essien, Okeke, Edward and Ejoh (2021) in their work, opined that value education in schools should be given a higher priority along with raising learners with high basic academic achievements and basic humanitarian values. Therefore values such as honesty, integrity, hard work, empathy and respect for elders are values that will enhance well-being of all and sundry in the society if there exist ethical relationship between teachers and learners.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to examine if there is any ethical relationship between teacher learner in terms of honesty, integrity, hard work, empathy and respect for elders in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Research question

Is there ethical relationship between teacher-learner in terms of honesty, hard work, integrity, empathy, and respect for elders in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River state, Nigeria?

Hypothesis

Teacher-Learner ethical relationship does not significantly relate to honesty, hard work, integrity, empathy and respect for elders.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Globally, the level of moral decadence, is a thing of concern to many people in our society. In our contemporary society today, values have been devalued, therefore value education is necessary in our school system. There is need to teach values at the basic education level for this will help to nurture and inculcate good moral values to the learners at the basic level. The teachers need to help in promoting ethical relationship between them and learners through effective teaching of value education. According to Gimba, Essien and Gimba (2019), stated that "We must put values and character development at core of education system pg 1" The authors see value education in schools as a process of nation building and democratic consolidation which makes interplay between school system and the social-political environment particularly important.

There have been inconsistencies in our society today due to loss of moral values among our children. These inconsistencies have not been addressed and the decay has eaten deep into the character and behaviour of the people in the society. Gimba et al (2019), maintained that Nigeria is not better off, rather new criminal elements and loss of family values have consequentially given room for social problems of imaginable proportions. Thornbeg and Oguz (2013) carried out a study on teachers views on values education: a qualitative study in Sweden and Turkey. Using 52 teachers and qualitative interviews, it was discovered that values education is mostly compliance with societal values and norms, the learning goals on value education were mainly on how to treat others and self responsibly. The main value reported by the teachers was to be good role model in everyday interactions with students. It was equally observed that values education largely described as an everyday practice embedded in the stream of social interactions. It was also observed that professional knowledge is lacking in the domain of value education.

Teachers as the main factor in any educational system, have greater ability than every other actor in the school system and are in the position to influence students and curriculum (Cetin, 2016 cited by Essien, et al 2019). Teachers are in the best position to help promote values among the young ones and this can be achieved through ethical relationship between the teachers and the learners in the school with effective teaching of value education.

Sahin-Firat (2016), carried out an observational study on the relationship between the value preference of teachers and their behaviour towards the teaching of values. The study comprised 612 students at DEU's Buca Faculty of Education. Two instruments were used; Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ) and Attitude to Teaching Profession Questionnaire (ATPQ) were the instruments used for data collection.

The findings include: personal interest of teachers as the most professed, tolerance and self-direction, followed by universalism, and thirdly stability. Hence when teachers have high personal interest in their duties, practice tolerance and are stable, the learners automatically will follow suit in that character of the teacher. This finding is in line with Dasari (2017) who asserts that the most critical role of teachers training programs is to define the attitudes that teachers will have towards teaching values as a discipline, to find ways to instil these attitudes in students and to determine how successful the initiative has been.

Values are the most important factor affecting human behaviour at both personal and societal level. One of the essential characteristics of people is the network of value orientations, a hallmark of a developed individual, reflecting a positive disposition towards the social truth (Essien, Okeke, Edward & Ejoh 2021). Essien, et al (2021) carried out a study on personal value orientation of social educators and perceived attitude toward the teaching of values education in Cross River State, Nigeria. One research question was formulated and converted into a hypothesis, literature was reviewed. Using survey research design and purposive sampling technique to select 136 respondents, using Cronbach alpha reliability method, the reliability of the instrument was 0.79 and the statistical tool used was simple linear regression. The result revealed a weak influence of personal value orientation of social educators on perceived attitude towards teaching of values education. It was recommended that effective counselling and guidance should be provided in schools to help inculcate positive values among the students. Rajendra (2017), conducted a study on values system and value preference of prospective teachers of secondary schools: an Indian Survey. Using a sample of 330 teachers of B. Ed programme who were randomly selected, using Rokeach Values Survey (RVS) as the instrument for the study, the study reveals that prospective teachers are self-oriented towards the end state of their existence showing inclination towards the freedom, comfort and friendship. However it was also found out that their modes of conduct are much orientated towards hard working nature with duty consciousness and open mindedness. The study recommended that the curriculum and instruction should provide necessary input into theory and practical work to make pre service teachers realize the importance of values of equality, peace, self-respect and honesty. This finding is in collaboration with the work of cited by Cornelius-Ukpebi (2019) assert the following core values honesty, loyalty, commitment, dependability, reliability, passion, efficiency, optimism, positivity, truth, love, right conduct and peace. Thus for the society to have firm foundation for human progress, ethical promotion of values should be encouraged in the basic education level for that will play an important role in the inculcation of positive values.

This will enable them stand out as they grow up and can practice the values learnt in their early childhood formation in their adulthood in their respective social lives in the society. Therefore value education should be a priority of educational stakeholders through the ethical relationship of teachers and learners for the teacher has the ability to contribute immensely to the shaping of children's thoughts which decides their behaviour, character and actions later in their adult life.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for the study was survey design. The study area is Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria. The population of this study consisted of all the 6,339 pupils in Basic Level of Education class enrolled for the 2022/2023 academic session. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select schools and subjects for the study. The sample of this study consists of 634 students which is 10% of the population. The instrument used to generate data for the study was a questionnaire titled; "Teacher-Learner Ethical Relationship Questionnaire (TLERQ)". The instrument consists of two sections; A and B. Section A contains demographic information from the respondents such as age, gender and so on while Section B focuses on the variables of the study, which were measured using a 4 point Likert Scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SD).

To determine the validity of the instrument for the study, the researchers subjected the instrument to face validity by two experts in Test, measurement and evaluation who checked and ensured that the items were appropriate to measure what it was meant to measure. Items that lacked face validity were expunged and replaced with correct ones. 50 copies of the questionnaire were administered on 50 students who were not part of the study and the reliability estimate was 0.83 using Cronbach's alpha reliability method. Out of the 634 copies of questionnaire that were administered only 622 were successfully retrieved and were used as sample for the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The hypothesis of the study was tested at .05 level of significance.

Hypothesis one

There is no ethical relationship existing between teacher and learners in terms of honesty, hard work, integrity, empathy and respect for elders. The independent variable in this hypothesis is ethical relationship; while the dependent variable is value education in terms of honesty, hard work, integrity, empathy and respect for elders.

To test this hypothesis, ethical relationship and values education in terms of honesty, hard work, integrity, empathy and respect for elders were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the relationship between ethical relationship and relationship in terms of honesty, hard work, integrity, empathy and respect for elders (N=622)

Variables	X —	SD	r-value	Sig.
Ethical relationship	20.6731	2.26947		
Honesty	21.9679	1.61613	0.676*	.000
Hard work	18.3846	3.16118	0.629*	.000
Integrity	22.0577	1.36425	0.767*	.000
Empathy	21.5385	1.58779	0.286*	.000
Respect for elders	23.9487	4.02660	0.755*	.000

* Significant at .05, p-value value=.000, df = 620

The result of the analysis as presented in Table 1 revealed that the calculated r-value for honesty (.676), hard work (.629), integrity (.767), empathy (.268) and respect for elders (.755) are respectively higher than the p-value of .000 at .05 level of significance with 620 degrees of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis that there is no ethical relationship existing between teacher and learners in terms of honesty, hard work, integrity, empathy and respect for elders was rejected. This implies that there is an ethical relationship existing between teacher and learners in terms of honesty, hard work, integrity, empathy and respect for elders. The positive r-value implied that the higher the ethical relationship, the higher the relationship in terms of honesty, hard work, integrity, empathy and respect for elders tends to be. On the other hand the lower ethical relationship, the lower the relationship in terms of honesty, hard work, integrity, empathy and respect for elders tends to be.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study revealed that there is an ethical relationship existing between teacher and learners in terms of honesty, hard work, integrity, empathy and respect for elders. The findings are in line with the view of Gimba, Essien and Gimba (2019) who stated that we must put values and character development at core of education system' The authors see value education in schools as a process of nation building and democratic consolidation which makes interplay between school system and the social-political environment particularly important.

There have been inconsistencies in our society today due to loss of moral values among our children. These inconsistencies have not been addressed and the decay has eaten deep into the character and behaviour of the people in the society. They also maintained that Nigeria is not better off, rather new criminal elements and loss of family values have consequentially given room for social problems of imaginable proportions.

Thornbeg and Oguz (2013) also discovered that values education is mostly compliance with societal values and norms, the learning goals on value education were mainly on how to treat others and self responsibly. The main values reported by the teachers was to be good role model in everyday interactions with students. It was equally observed that values education largely described as an everyday practice embedded in the stream of social interactions. It was also observed that professional knowledge is lacking in the domain. Teachers as the main factor in any educational system, have greater ability than every other actor in the school system and are in the position to influence students and curriculum. Teachers are in the best position to help promote values among the young ones and this can be achieved through ethical relationship between the teachers and the learner in the school. Also in the work of Brady (2011) states that prospective teachers are self-oriented towards the end state of their existence showing inclination towards the freedom, comfort and friendship. However it was also found out that their modes of conduct are much orientated towards hard working nature with duty consciousness and open mindedness. The study recommended that the curriculum and instruction should provide necessary input into theory and practical work. This notwithstanding will enhance inculcation of values in the basic education level. Also (Essien, Okeke, Edward & Ejoh 2021), found out a weak influence of personal value orientation of social educators on perceived attitude towards teaching of values education. It was recommended that effective counselling and guidance should be provided in schools to help inculcate positive values among the students.

CONCLUSION

The values you teach your children today determine how they will behave when they become adults. It is the responsibility of the parents to teach moral education at an early age.

Children learn ethics though but teaching then values like fairness, honesty, and respect for elders and so on, will become part of them, if effectively done by the parents and the teachers as well. Parents and teachers must ensure they set a good environment at home and in the school for children look up to their parents and teachers as well.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Positive teacher learner relationship can bring about good values and moral re-orientation.
2. Teachers should establish rapport, trustworthiness with students by being fair, caring, respectful and enthusiastic.
3. They are to live exemplary lives and be a role models to the learners.
4. Effective counselling and guidance should be provided in schools to help inculcate positive values among the learners

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