TECHNIQUES OF FOSTERING POSITIVE VALUES AMONG NIGERIAN SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This paper addressed the issue of fostering positive values in Nigerian school adolescents. Adolescents are known to engage in deviant behaviours like alcoholism, drug abuse, rape, occultism and terrorism. These negative behaviours portend danger for the adolescents' educational system and peaceful co-existence among citizens. Adolescents need to adopt, develop and pursue positive values like honesty, respect for elders and responsibility that will guide their day-to-day activities and interactions. To foster these positive values in school adolescents, teachers should employ techniques like values education, modeling, reward for positive values, special programs, and counseling for values, among others.

Keywords: Adolescents, School, Positive, Values, Techniques

Introduction

Adolescence is a critical stage of life, a transitional period between childhood and adulthood covering mainly the teenage years. Often times. it is a period of disorientation whereby adolescents engage in deviant behaviours (Ginikanwa, 2014). They experiment with drugs. alcohol and sex. As a result of peer pressure. adolescents often engage in social vices like armed robbery, drug abuse, alcoholism and sexual immorality. These negative traits indicate that such adolescents have negative values.

Research shows that the character of an individual is greatly influenced by the values he/she has acquired (Martins-Umeh & Onweh. 2007). An adolescent with a positive orientation is well-behaved or has a positive character and vice versa (Unigwe. 2007). Values are often acquired from the home, school and society. Generally. good or positive values are rewarded while bad or negative values leading to bad characters are often frowned at and punished in the society.

In Nigeria, adolescents exhibit various deviant behaviours that are against the norms and values of the society. Walu (2007) reported that many adolescents engage in alcoholism, teenage pregnancy, smoking, theft, fighting, drug abuse, rape and cultism. Also, Ubom (2007) maintained that there is high rate of moral decadence in Nigeria. In recent times, we have had cases of female teenagers in northern Nigeria, operating as suicide bombers. Many citizens have been killed or abducted by insurgents who do not value human life. There is also the campaign by some religious sects such as members of **Boko Haram** that 'Western education is evil' Adolescents are brain-washed to discard educational values. Other social vices perpetrated by adolescents in different parts of the country include rape, kidnapping, cultism, armed robbery, drug abuse, prostitution and selling of babies. These acts depict that many adolescents' values are corrupted or are being eroded. Chima (2007) described such as misplacement of values. The few adolescents that are making efforts to exhibit or promote positive values are considered weird or "out of this world". There is therefore need to muster efforts in reviving and fostering positive values in Nigerian adolescents towards good character and national development. This is the focus of this paper.

Conceptual Framework:

Values

Values refer to a person's ideas or beliefs about appropriate courses of actions. According to ethics Resource Centre (2014),

values are core beliefs guiding and motivating attitudes and actions. Values represent an individual's aims, desires and goals (Chris, 2010). Values refer to the worth people attach to things (Dobson, 1984). Values are like an integrated compass that helps an individual to think and act appropriately.

There are personal and societal values. According to Martins-Umeh (2007), values guide an individual on the basis of internally chosen options. An individual's values portray how he/she holds things to be right or wrong. Societal values also encompass a set of principles or beliefs representing acceptable standards of behaviour for members of the cultural group through modelling and teaching (Anameze, 2002). Values are dynamic and not static and are important for harmonius co-existence (Agbe, 2003).

Positive values

Positive values are those values that help to build good character and enable an individual to make the right choices in life. Positive values help young people to avoid deviant behaivours and guide their day-to-day actions and relationships (Focus, 2011). Positive values also inspire an individual develop good behaviours and make the right decisions. An individual with positive values is likely to be caring, independent, tell right from wrong and listen to his conscience (Focus, 2011). An individual with positive values will have a high self-esteem, be happy, seek the good of the society and have good morals. Morals or positive values are

acquired from the society through modelling and teaching (Anameze. 2012). Consequently. to be rich in positive values. an individual must cooperate by determining to consciously imbibe genuine or positive values that will benefit him/her and the society. It is therefore important to guide and teach the Nigerian school adolescents to acquire and develop positive values that will build good character in them and promote national development.

Positive Values To Be Encouraged In Nigerian Adolescents

Nigerian adolescents display false or negative values that portend danger for national development. Okolo (2003) highlighted some of these false values as contempt for hard-work. materialism. selfishness and ethnicity. For a nation to develop well, these false values should be discarded and replaced with positive values. Citizens with right attitudes to life make a great nation (Olowonirejuaro, 2007). Nigerian school adolescents are considered future leaders and should be trained in positive values that will form good foundation for their future endeavours. Some of these positive values are:

Knowledge acquisition (Educational values)

Nigerian school adolescents should be encouraged to value education and computer skills. Western education has been very much valued in Nigeria (Ikwuba. 2007). However. the recent campaign by some terrorist groups (such as *Boko Haram*) against western education is not a welcome development.

Adolescents should be encouraged to acquire education for it brings about enlightenment. discoveries and progress in life. Computer skills acquisition should also be encouraged.

Respect for Parents/ Authorities

Adolescents should imbibe the positive values of respect for parents and authorities. Adolescents sometimes show lack of respect for parents and teachers at home and in schools which make them disobey rules and regulations and so make wrong choices in life.

Honesty

Honesty is a positive value to be promoted among school adolescents. They should be taught the consequences of d shonesty and engaging in fraudulent acts. So ne engage in internet fraud. Nigerians pay little attention to honesty (Ikwuba. 2007). These should be replaced with positive value of honesty.

Dedication to duty

School adolescents should im be the value of hard work or dedication   duty. They should be taught to put in ha . work in their academic activities so   to achieve excellence. The practice f looking for shortcut to success where   some youths collect money from their parents to employ mercenaries that will write exams for them (Nor. 2007) should be discarded. Adolescents need to imbibe positive value of hard work in learning to achieve success.

Self-discipline

The value of self-discipline should be promoted in adolescents. Lack of discipline

has plunged many adolescents into disaster. Some are not able to resist peer pressure to experiment with drugs, sex and occultism. Even in terms of relating to junior students, Secondary school adolescents should show discipline or self-control.

Self-discipline is also manifested in not having excessive love for money. According to Ikwuba, (2007), most Nigerians are materialistic and can do anything to have access to money. Adolescents should be taught to pursue wealth legally or through honest means.

Moral Integrity

Adolescents need to cultivate the sense of moral integrity; to be sensitive to what is morally wrong or right. Insensitivity to what is morally wrong has made some individuals to accept immorality as the right thing (Nor, 2007). Some adolescents engage in nudity, corruption and ritual killings and they take that as the norm. Adolescents need to have value for human life. The idea of one person taking another person's life in the guise of "fighting for God" should be discouraged. Positive value of love and tolerance should be promoted in adolescents.

Patience

Nigerian school adolescents should be encouraged to have patience or endurance as a value. Today's adolescent wants "instant" actions such as instant wealth or riches, instant success, instant food and instant fame. They should be encouraged to know that endurance or patience is a desired value with immense benefits. They need to know that

life is in stages. A child delivered today does not become an adult tomorrow. Following the stages of life development step by step eventually brings about a fulfilled adulthood. Endurance and hard work lead to success in life.

Techniques of Fostering Positive Values in School Adolescents

Values are acquired early in life when a child can easily be shaped and guided to learn what is good, what is wrong and what is significant (Rosita, 2008). These and other adopted values are developed in later years. One of the most important things the adolescent does is to form values that he will live by. Although, parents continue to shape and influence their children's values throughout the teenage years (OAH, 2014); the school also plays crucial roles in character formation and transformation of adolescents.. It behoves the teachers to teach positive values since students spend a significant part of their time in schools (Ryan, 1993). The school therefore plays crucial functions in eradicating unethical values and replacing them with positive values. Some strategies to be used by teachers to foster positive values in school adolescents include:

Values Education

Teaching and learning of values is one of the most neglected areas in the society (Nwosu, 2004). Students should be taught good values, to understand themselves, their capabilities, interests and make wise decisions and choices. For teachers of adolescents in secondary schools, Values education can be taught through subjects like

Social studies, CRK and Group counseling. For teachers of adolescents in tertiary institu... values education can be taught through courses like General Studies. Citizenship Education. Psychology, Ethics and Religion. Furthermore, values education can be taught at any level through one-on-one interactions between teacher and student.

Moral Instruction Classes

Moral instruction should be re-introduced as a compulsory subject for all Secondary school students. Issues such as sex education, effects of drug abuse, decent dress codes, consequences of prostitution, materialism, armed robbery, kidnapping, terrorism and sanctity of life, sanctity of life can be taught. This will foster positive values in the school adolescents.

Modelling

The teacher is a role-model to the adolescent student. Teachers should therefore exemplify positive values for adolescent students to emulate. They should demonstrate the values in their words and actions.

Reward of positive Values

Recognition can be given to school adolescents exhibiting positive values. Prizes can also be awarded to them. School adolescents that are caring and of good behavior can be given prizes like. "The most caring student." "The best-behaved student." "Most friendly student." among others. These will go a long way to encourage others to emulate or embrace such positive values.

Special school programmes

Schools can organize special programs for in-school adolescents to re-focus their minds on positive values of honesty, responsibility, academic excellence, hard work and abstinence from hard drugs. These can be channelled through presentations like Drama, Songs, Seminars, Educational tours, and Vocational skills. At the tertiary level, *orientation seminars* for new students (100 and 200 levels) can be used to foster positive values in them.

Discipline

School adolescents can also be disciplined or punished when they err or break the school rules. However, punishment given to erring students should match the offence committed. Some students can be reformed after serving the school punishment.

Parents/Teachers' Discussion Forum

Parents/Teachers Association meeting is a good forum to promote values. Schools and parents should be partners in character development of students (Akintunde, 2013). The school should organize seminars for parents on adolescents' upbringing. Parents should be challenged to encourage adolescents to adopt values that will help them make positive choices throughout their lives. Parental modelling is also important so as to set examples for their adolescent children. These will complement the school's efforts in promoting positive values in the adolescents.

Counselling for values

School counsellors can guide the adolescent

clients to understand themselves, their aptitudes and interests and so energized them to form good values. Adolescents can be counselled to overcome value-conflicts. Adolescents are sometimes confused or have conflicts about positive values if they are mocked by peers when they show traits of good values. For instance, an adolescent that abstains from sexual intercourse or alcohol-intake can be mocked by peers. A counsellor can be of help to counsel such an adolescent towards maintaining those desirable values. Also, school counsellors can use group counselling and special programs to stress the importance of positive values like respect for elders and hard work.

Conclusion

The Nigerian adolescents are faced with a number of challenges prompting them to form undesirable values. The adolescents can overcome these challenges by deliberately imbibing positive values. Teachers have vital roles to play in fostering positive values in the school adolescents by utilizing various techniques outlined in this paper. This will prompt the adolescents to make wise decisions, from good characters, become useful icons in the society and enhance national development.

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