Effects of Gender and Parenting Styles on the Acquisition of Democratic Values by Nigerian Youths in Secondary Schools

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Introduction

It is obvious that every level of education is expected to empower learners with adequate knowledge, attitude and skills relevant to build the society. This informed policy makers to formulate educational goals and values that can mould individuals towards such empowerment for effective life in the pluralistic society. Thus, education as an instrument per excellence for national development identified by the National Policy on Education (2004, revised) fosters the building of:

(i) A free and democratic society;
(ii) A just and egalitarian society;
(iii) A united, strong and self-reliant nation;
(iv) A great and dynamic economy and
(v) A land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens

It also listed the values which should permeate the quality of instruction in school as:

a) Respect for the worth and dignity of the individuals
b) Faith in man’s ability to make rational decision;
c) Moral and spiritual values in interpersonal and human relations;
d) Shared responsibility for the common good of society
e) Respect for the dignity of labour and
f) Promotion of the emotional, physical and psychological health of all children.

Iheoma (2000) regarded the first two objectives and the fifth national objectives as pointing to democratic values, that is, the values that make possible and sustain democratic society. He further referred to values a to f of paragraph three of the National Policy on Education as more specific values. They are indeed part and parcel of the network of democratic values.

The policy document calls the philosophy of Nigerian education various names as aims, objectives and even philosophy. They are enunciated values in the realm of philosophy. What then are values? What is democracy? And what are democratic values? Values are standards or principles for judging a good life. Onwuka (1994) sees values as beliefs about what is important to people and societies. Such beliefs determine the meaning of reality for both individuals and societies. He cited Tyler, that
education in democratic societies should endeavour to emphasise four values:

(a) The recognition of the importance of every individual human being;

(b) Opportunity for participation in various phases of activities in the society.

(c) Encourage of variability, because human nature varies enormously, and

(d) Faith in intelligence as a means of dealing with important problems.

Iheoma (2000) thus defines values as principles which guide our behaviour, actions and social interaction. Values therefore could be seen as any concept which promotes the historical, psychological, economic, political and social longevity of a society.

What democracy is- Traditionally, democracy is defined as government of the people, by the people and for the people. Democracy derives from respect for persons for dignity and worth of individuals, maximization of shared interest and experience, freedom of communication, resolution by discussion rather than by decree or force etc. In secondary schools, for example, selections of students to take up responsibilities as members of school prefects, class representatives and the likes may be described as democratic, provided that the recruitment is made open and not determined by factors as heredity, differences in privileges, racial disparity and arbitrary imposition. When peoples’ views about a desirable society and the aims of education in the society are selected for emphasis by its educators and educational policy makers, it is regarded as democratic values (Adewole and Bamisaiye 2000).

It therefore, connotes that democracy is inextricably tied to values. The democratic values identified in the content of this paper, which finding footing in the stated values of paragraph three of the National Policy on Education are the major areas which the education in secondary school should emphasize. They are Discipline, Division of Labour, Freedom, Intelligence, Leadership, Love, Morality, Respect, Security, Selfishness, Solidarity/Unity and Vocational Skill / Creativity. In Nigeria, a mass and compulsory education for the citizen for the acquisition of such values is imperative for the flourishing of democracy. This will also enable the masses to develop political awareness and the struggle for democracy.

Several factors account for the reason why students in secondary schools could differ in their acquisition of democratic values. These factors include teacher personalities, parental/guardian background, peer-group, home size, emotion, mass media, amusement centres, school programmes, feeding etc. These factors, whether resident in the learner or external to him have implications on the acquisition of democratic values the school is set out to achieve.

Salawu (1993) and Adeyanju (1995) found out that cognitive style, characteristics of students (e.g. study habits) and students’ perception of parental behaviour may sometimes have a cumulative effect on some students. These may result in withdrawal syndromes, cultism, drug addition, truancy and continue failure which may impair the overall performance of students and that of the families. Available literature also asserts that students with parents who use an authoritarian parenting style receive lower grades in schools than those students whose parents are democratic. It is also made evident that the grades of students with permissive parents are found to be lower than that of students with autocratic parents. It is also agreed that parental styles have much effects on students’ performance (Aremu,
Gender has also been found to be a good predicting variable on learners’ academic performance (Basu and Chakroborty, 1996). Oroge (1999) in her own view of the issues affecting women observed that cultures worldwide, have historically given men and boys preferential treatment in a variety of life matters such as education, health care, food, employment opportunities and decision making authority. It is discovered that in many part of the country especially in rural areas, female education enrolment and retention rates are much lower than for male. This is probably due to a variety of factors such as cultural practices, socio-economic background and others.

The political arena still restricts the feminine gender positions due to cultural believe that women exist primarily for economic activities and home chores burden. There is a great inequality of class and chasm between women and men in the office holding of political power. Despite the legislation which had been enacted over the years, which provide equal opportunities for women and men, there is still much discrimination against the feminine gender in practice.

From the foregoing, therefore, it is not mis-informing to clearly point out that cultural believes and practices, parental – child relationship / care and gender are strong predictors of learners’ academic performance. In this respect, specifically, this study also looked into the effects of gender and parenting styles on the acquisition of democratic values among secondary school students.

**Statement of the Problem**

The study sought to explore the effects of gender and parenting styles on the acquisition of democratic values among secondary school students with a view to making policy makers, curriculum implementers and other personnel in the promotion of these values make more input to students’ acquisition of democratic values without prejudice, autocracy and laissez – faire attitude.

**Research questions**

This study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the level of acquisition of democratic values among secondary school students?

2. Would there be difference in the acquisition of democratic values between male and female school students?

3. Would there be difference in the acquisition of democratic values of secondary school students whose parents are (i) democratic (ii) autocratic and (iii) laissez -faire in their styles of parenting?

**Hypothesis Tested**

Three null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance in the Study

\[ H_{01} : \text{There is no significance difference in secondary school students' acquisition of democratic values.} \]
There is no significance difference in the acquisition of democratic values between male and female school students?

There is no significance difference in the acquisition of democratic values among secondary school students whose parents are (i) democratic (ii) autocratic and (iii) laissez-faire in their styles of parenting?

**Methodology**

This is an ex post-facto form of descriptive survey design which involved collections of the already available data from the sampled schools. Also, because no variable was manipulated in the study.

**Population and Sampling**

The population consisted of all senior secondary school students in Ibadan North, Ona Ara, Ibadan North East, Ibadan South East and Ibadan South West located within the urban centre of Ibadan, Oyo State. Twenty students each (10 males and females) were purposively selected from each of the five schools selected in each of the Local Governments involved in this study to make a total sample of five hundred (500) students. Stratified random sampling technique was used for the selection of subjects comprising secondary school prefects and representatives of senior classes.

**Instrument**

A 16-item questionnaire was designed to elicit the responses on the acquisition of democratic values, gender and also the parental leadership styles explored in this study. The content and face validity of the instrument were based on the criticism and corrections made by six lecturers of a Nigerian university. Using Spearman Rank order coefficient of reliability, (r) a reliability level of 0.79 of the instrument obtained was considered reliable.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

The questionnaire was administered on the subjects with the assistance of some secondary school teachers and collected for analysis after three weeks. Statistical analyses were done using frequency counts, percentages, chi-square and t-test. Where chi square calculated is greater than chi-square tabulated ($X^2_{tabulated}$) the hypothesis is rejected, if not, the hypothesis is not rejected. The analyses were carried out at 0.05 level of significance.

**Results**

Table 1: Level of Acquisition of Democratic Values by Secondary School students

(N-500)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Democratic values</th>
<th>Always (%)</th>
<th>Sometimes (%)</th>
<th>Never (%)</th>
<th>$X^2$ Chi Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>300 (60.0)</td>
<td>40 (8.0)</td>
<td>160 (32.0)</td>
<td>203.2 **</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is clear from table 1 that there is a statistically significant difference in the opinion of secondary school students on the level of acquisition of democratic values. The chi – square calculated for the democratic values in each case is greater than the table value of 5.991. Hypothesis 1 was thereby rejected. A high percentage of the acquisition of democratic values was recorded in each area of Discipline (60.0%), Love (92.0%), Respect (88.0%) and Solidarity / Unity (84%) while the table also revealed a less than average percentage in the acquisition of democratic values in the areas of division of Labour (20.0%); Freedom (12.0), Morality (40.0%), Selflessness (12.0%), Vocational skill/ Creativity (8.0%) and Security (48.0%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>t-tab</th>
<th>t-cal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2       Division of Labour</td>
<td>100 (20.0)</td>
<td>300 (60.0)</td>
<td>5 (20.0)</td>
<td>290.2**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3       Freedom</td>
<td>60 (12.0)</td>
<td>280 (56.0)</td>
<td>160 (32.0)</td>
<td>145.6 **</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4       Intelligence</td>
<td>320 (64.0)</td>
<td>40 (8.0)</td>
<td>140 (28.0)</td>
<td>241.6 **</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5       Love</td>
<td>460 (92.0)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>40 (8.0)</td>
<td>612.4 **</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6       Leadership</td>
<td>300 (60.0)</td>
<td>180 (36.0)</td>
<td>20 (4.0)</td>
<td>236.8 **</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7       Morality</td>
<td>200 (40.0)</td>
<td>280 (56.0)</td>
<td>20 (4.0)</td>
<td>212.8 **</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8       Respect</td>
<td>440 (88.0)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>60 (12.0)</td>
<td>516.4 **</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9       Security</td>
<td>240 (48.0)</td>
<td>60 (12.0)</td>
<td>200 (40.0)</td>
<td>107.2 **</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10      Selflessness</td>
<td>60 (12.0)</td>
<td>180 (36.0)</td>
<td>260 (4.0)</td>
<td>121.6 **</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11      Solidarity/Unity</td>
<td>420 (84.0)</td>
<td>60 (12.0)</td>
<td>20 (4.0)</td>
<td>582.3 **</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12      Vocational skill/creativity</td>
<td>40 (8)</td>
<td>260 (52.0)</td>
<td>200 (40.0)</td>
<td>244.8**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Df = Degree of freedom = 2; NS = Not Significant **Significant at $\infty = 0.05$

Table 2: Acquisition of Democratic Values of Male and Female Secondary School students.
Table 2 shows that the calculated t-value (4.624) is greater than the table value (3.841) at 0.05 level of significance, hypothesis 2 was therefore rejected. Thus, there is significant difference in the acquisition of democratic values between male and female secondary school students. Students claimed that they are still very deficient in the area of division of labour, morality, selflessness and vocational skill/creativity.

Table 3: Parenting Styles and Students’ Acquisition of Democratic Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Parental Style</th>
<th>Always (%)</th>
<th>Sometimes (%)</th>
<th>Never (%)</th>
<th>$X^2$ Chi Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Democratic Parental Style</td>
<td>460 (92.0)</td>
<td>40 (8.0)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>612.4 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Autocratic parental style</td>
<td>100 (20.0)</td>
<td>180 (36.0)</td>
<td>220 (44.0)</td>
<td>165.1 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Laissez-faire parental style</td>
<td>60 (12.0)</td>
<td>280 (56.0)</td>
<td>160 (32.0)</td>
<td>145.6 **</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Df = Degree of freedom = 2
NS = Not Significant * * Significant at $\infty = 0.05$

As shown in table 3, parental styles could affect students’ acquisition of democratic values in school. It is agreed with a percentage of 92 (table 3) that parents whose style of parenting is democratic has a carry over influence on their wards acquisition of the identified democratic values (table 2) in their respective schools. Such influence is not always in respect of autocratic and laissez-faire parenting styles. Altogether, significant differences occurs in their responses, thus the null hypothesis 3 there is rejected.

Discussion

The poor acquisition of some democratic values as discovered in his study is evidence that it has been difficult to actualize the use of education as a tool at the secondary level to enhance democracy in such areas. This corroborated the assertion of Anuna (2000) that the curriculum is primarily concerned with how to read and write without instilling the skills and knowledge needed o develop practical awareness,
fight exploitation and sustained democracy.

The significant difference in the acquisition of democratic values between male and female secondary school students shows that the deep rooted tradition and cultural beliefs and practices which have been in use over time still give preference to male than female in the mainstream of education and decision making authority. Notwithstanding, 150 female secondary school students attested to the improvement of leadership access given to the female gender in the recent times (table 2). It is also recoded in table 3 that parental styles affect the acquisition of democratic values of secondary school students. Students whose parents are democratic differ significantly from students whose parents adopt autocratic or laissez-faire style. This may even reflect in the academic performance of students in schools. It implies that parental style of encouraging unity in the family, teaching to respect elders, active involvement in the welfare of children and the likes, could have a positive influence on the children readiness to acquire democratic values within the school system. Democratic parenting style qualities will hence serve as catalyst to students’ acquisition of democratic values in secondary schools.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has revealed that gender and parenting styles definitely influence the acquisition of democratic values in secondary schools. The conflict of gender and parental attitude to children’s education are strong variables of note which could obviously stunt the acquisition and growth of democratic institutions. It would be a process of reward commensurate to the needs of the emerging democratic society if education could be practically interwoven with democracy by not only stating the democratic values, but aspire to pursue their attainment to enhance the flourishing of democracy in all facets of human life.

Our educational enterprise (Vocational and Academic) need to be brought in line with the educational values through proper implementation of the curriculum in order to meet the needs of the target audience. All and sundry need a re-orientation towards developing a democratic society. This can only take place by campaigning against the wrong societal values; wrong priorities and the craze for self-enrichments. The campaigns will be effective in action not only in words (Alade 2002) referred to this as war Against Corrupt Values (WACV). The school system cannot do it all, parenting style of enforcing democratic values at home and adequate monitoring of wards are important for the survival of democracy in Nigeria. It should be one of the priorities of education to instill democratic values in children and orientate them towards a quest for a democratic nation.

REFERENCES


