UNIJERPS
Unizik Journal of Educational Research and Policy Studies
VOL. 7 No: 2 January-June, 2017 Special Publication.
https://unijerps.org
Indexing and Impact Factor URL: http://sjifactor.com/passport.php?id=21363

CONCEPTS, PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES OF PRE-PRIMARY AND PRIMARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Uba, Ifeoma M.B
Primary Education Department
Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe,
Anambra State, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT
This research work was on philosophy of education which deals with the important task of specifying the ends which education ought to achieve, as well as the general meaning towards the attainment of such ends, and any education that is not found on a sound philosophy becomes deficient. This study therefore focused on the philosophical provisions that are the raison d'etre for pre-primary and primary education in Nigeria. It also discussed briefly the contributions of some leading philosophers to the development of modern pre-primary and primary education.

Keywords: Concepts; Philosophy; Objectives; Pre-Primary; Primary Education.

Introduction

The terms pre-primary and primary education could jointly be described as childhood education programme provided for children between (3-12years). There are three types of programmes during this period:

1. **Nursery Education:** This is a programme provided for those between three and four years, and can rightly be referred to as pre-school or pre-kindergarten education. It provides well planned education for creative play, socialization, and beginning subject area skills, such as oral language, mathematics, science, art music, etc. with the active involvement of parents.
2. **Kindergarten Education:** This is provided for five year-old children and in contrast to nursery education, it is structured to provide activity and fulfillment. It prepares children and awakens their interest
3. **Primary Education:** This is a kind of education provided for children from six to twelve years. It is popularly known as elementary education. It provides opportunities for acquiring and laying a solid foundation in language, arts, social studies, sciences, mathematics, etc.

Nigerian Philosophy of Pre-primary and Primary Education and objectives

The Nigerian philosophy of education as articulated in the National Policy on Education is based on the anticipation that the equal educational opportunity to be provided at all levels will integrate an individual into a sound and effective citizen, useful to himself, his society and the nation. In realization of the above, all instructions at all levels have to be geared towards the inculcation of the following values:

i. Respect for the worth and dignity of the individuals,
ii. Faith in man's ability to make rational decisions,
iii. Moral and spiritual values in inter-personal and human relations,
iv. Shared responsibility for the common good of society,
v. Respect for the dignity of labour, and
vi. Promotion of the emotional, physical and psychological health of all children.

The philosophy of education should be a means of fostering national unity and restoring balance in inter-state and intra-state development, and should bring about rapid scientific, technological, political, economic, cultural and social progress. It should also be geared towards self-realization, better human relationship, individual and national efficiency, effective citizenship and national consciousness.

There is also the recognition of language as a means of preserving the people's culture and fostering unity, hence the need for every child to learn one of the three major language (Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa) in addition to his mother-tongue.

Objectives of Pre-primary Education

The federal government's concern in pre-primary education is to improve standards and encourage genuine participation of all in the provision of adequate care, development and supervision of children.

The National Policy on Education (1977, revised 1981, 1998 and 2004), indicates that pre-primary education as referred to, in this document, is the education given in an educational institution to children aged 3 to 5 years, prior to their entering the primary school. The policy document state the following purpose of pre-primary level of education:

a. Effecting smooth transition from home to the school;
b. Preparing the child for the primary level of education;
c. Providing adequate care and supervision for children while their parents are at work;
d. Inculcating social norms,
e. Inculcating in the child the spirit of inquiry and creativity through the exploration of nature and the local environment through playing with toys, through artistic and musical activities, and so on;
f. Teaching co-operation and team spirit,
g. Teaching the rudiments of number, letters colours shapes, forms etc. through play, and
h. Teaching good habits, especially good health habits.

In addition to the above, Maduewesi (2005) observes that the government while leaving pre-primary education to the private sector limits her role as follows:

1. Encourage private efforts in the provision of pre-primary education;
2. Make provision inn teacher-training institutions for students who want to specialize in pre-primary education;
3. Ensure that the medium of instruction will be principally the mother-tongue or the language of the immediate (environment) community;
4. Ensure that the main method of teaching in pre-primary education will be through play method;
5. Regulate and control the operation of pre-primary education, as well as ensure that the staff of pre-primary institutions are adequately trained and that essential equipment is provided.

Objectives of Primary Education

Section (3) three of the National Policy on Education (2004), which deals specifically with primary education, describes that level of education as one given to children between the ages of 6-11+. It also described it as the foundation of the education system which is the key to success or failure of the entire system. Because of the crucial nature of this level of education, the policy outline the following objectives for primary education, in all the state of the federation, as follows:

a. The inculcation of permanent literacy and numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively;
b. The laying of sound bases for scientific and reflective thinking:

c. Citizenship education for effective participation and contribution in the society;
d. Character and moral training;
e. Developing in a child, the ability to adapt to his environment, providing opportunities for the development of manipulative skill and
f. Providing basic tools for further educational advancement.

Apart from the objectives, the policy also makes some statements on how its implementation should be facilitated by providing adequate resources and materials, expansion and building of infrastructure, training of personnel etc. and making education at this level free and compulsory for all primary school age in the country.

Contributions of Leading Philosophers and Educators to the Development of Primary Education

Comenius Johann Amos

Comenius Johann Amos was born on March 28, 1592 in the small town of Uheisky Brod the modern Zechoslovakia (Jan Komensky was Latinized to mean Johann Comenius). His early education was deterred by the death of his parents and four older sisters. At twelve years, he eventually was able to distinguish himself as a student and this attracted the name Amos, signifying lover of learning.

Comenius was elected Bishop in 1632. He was the most influential educational philosopher reformer of the 17th century and the last bishop of Molavian and from Bohemian Brethren (Christian Communist Fellowship which develop from the Hussite revolution of the late early fifteenth centuries). His educational work was widely adopted during his life time and continued to influence current philosophies of education.

Education reforms: Comenius was the greatest educational reformer of his age. He contributed in education through discovering of Great Didactica which are principles and methods of pedagogy. Through this method, teaching would be effective. Its main objectives were:

1. To find out methods by which teachers may teach less and learners will learn more:
2. Where school will no longer be a place of noise, aversion and useless labour but a place of more leisure, enjoyment and solid progress, an appropriate

environment for effective education;

3. For effective learning to take place, there would be a fundamental change in the language of instruction; this he achieved by writing series of Latin texts mainly on simplified grammar; the sentences were arranged in two paralleled columns, one in the vernacular;
4. Learning should be made interesting, dramatic and stimulating.

Comnium developed pansophia which was a grandiose plan to make the learner capable of wisdom. The pansophic philosophy of Comenius was summed into seven parts.

First Part-Panagersia Universal Awakening: Comenius advocated the need for man to live in amity and peace and to be submissive to God.

Second part- Panaugia: he enumerated general ways of awakening.

Part Three –Pantaxia (Universal correlation): a means to make man's thinking conform to things as they really are.

Part Four: He explored the pedagogical problems involved in the pedagogical problems involved the universal cultivation of mind.

Fifth part-banglittia: a way of discovering ways of universal language study through which enlightenment can penetrate all nations.

Part Six-Panorthosia (Universal reform): reforms in education, Religious and civic affair.

Part Seven –panuthesia (universal admonition): he urged all men especially educated mean and potentates to devote themselves to making universal reform a reality.

He argued that education must start form prenatal existence till death. He believed that everybody must have the opportunity to learn. He advocated that exclusion of some individuals from learning was a denial of the divine will and a waste of their proven capacity to learn.

The deaf, the dumb and the blind would be given opportunities to learn. He recognized that there were opportunities to learn. He recognized that there were varying degrees of intelligence. For that reason, Instruction must be commensurate with the character of the learner.

Comenius' greatest contribution to education lies in his devised system of

education containing seven schools, one for each stage of life:

1. School of becoming
2. School of infancy
3. School of childhood
4. School of adolescence
5. School of adulthood
6. School of old age
7. Death, last school of all.

1. **School of Becoming:** This is the stage on which he placed special emphasis. According to him, mistake made at this stage can be scarcely corrected and if the foundation at this stage is not strong the entire structure may collapse.
2. **School of Infancy:** He proposed the establishment of nursery schools. At this stage, the child should be initiated into the adult world with affection. The child should learn to sing, shake rattles and play musical instruments. Arithmetical concepts should be introduced at this stage too.
3. **School of Childhood:** he prescribed that childhood learning should take place in an educational institution and it should be a pleasant place inside and out. The school should surrounded by gardens, shade trees, sculpture and an adequate playground. The purpose of this level is to increase the body senses and innate powers of the child. Textbooks appropriate to young children must be prepared at this level. Regular studies of the curriculum should be supplemented by music and games. The teachers of childhood school must be more highly skilled than others and should receive higher salary. They must be salaries industrious and models of wisdom whom children can observe and imitate.
4. **School of Adolescence:** Students at this level should be encouraged to study languages, arts, science and morals. The essential thing at this stage is to develop intelligence, understanding and judgment.
5. **School of Adulthood:** This is the school of education in which noting acquired in the earlier stages should be abandoned. Individuals, at this stage, should strike a balance between service to the community and individual intellectual development. A man's earlier at this level should be suitable to his natural, individual, intellectual development, suitable to his natural inclinations and aptitudes, and should live his life in such a way that it will help him to enjoy his living.
6. **School of Old Age:** The aged should not derive satisfaction in

idleness but should make efforts to bring to a successful conclusion what they have already begun. At this level, the aged should consider undertaking tasks which they have not previously considered. They should reflect on the past, rejoicing in what was good and should take special care to guard against mishap and illness.

7. **School death:** Comenius asserted that if death is properly anticipated and appreciated it will no longer be a pitiful experience but a fulfillment of living, to be sought and welcomed and to be adequately attained only as the individual consciously schools himself for this ultimate experience.

Ibn Khaldum

Ibn Khaldum (1332-1406) was born in Tunis and was an Arab historin, statesmen and judge. His family traced their origin to a South Arabian tribe that entered Spam in the early years of the Muslim Conquest. His early education theology, jurisprudence and mysticism, natural philosophy, metaphysics and politics. Ibn Khaldum taught as a teacher at A1-Azhar school in Cairo.

His Contribution to Education

He was known as the father or one of the fathers of modern cultural history and social science. He created a new science which dealt specially with the internal aspects of history-its principles, methods, subject-matter and purpose. He wrote a book which dealt extensively in Arabic Literature.

Maria Montessori

Maria Montessori was an Italian physician and educator who lived from 1870-1952. She developed a method of teaching young children because of her working experiences with mentally retarded children. Her method gained great ground because it worked out well.

Early years: Montessori Maria was the first woman who graduated with double honours degree in medicine and surgery in the University of Rome medical school. After her hospital internship, she was appointed assistant doctor at the University of Psychiatric clinic and that was where she developed interest for retarded children whom she believed that their mental deficiency presented mainly an educational rather than a medical problem.

Teaching Experience: Montessori was appointed by Rome minister of education to give in-service training to

Roman teachers in the education of retarded children. She was later appointed director of the state orthopnoeic school, founded to deal with retarded children from elementary schools. She opened the first child-day care centre in Rome in January 6, 1907, for children from three to six years old. Montessori's methodology in kindergarten and primary schools ere internationally recognized, accepted and utilized.

Montessori Methodology

In her Method, the environment of the child will be equipped with teaching materials that will encourage auto-education and make the child a self-activated learner. The child will be under the observation of s teacher whose role is to intervene only when necessary. This method will encourage development of confidence, competence, self-discipline and mastery of himself and his environment. The approach emphasized the importance of giving the child the opportunity to utilize his formative period, sensitive period, and absorbent mind.

Montessori's View of Child Development

1. The child should be given a type of education that will help him to accomplish his inner needs positively.
2. She believed in one prevention of defects rather than getting involved in its costly and often ineffective remediation. This she explained by saying that in nursery schools, development of Language will be taken care of so that the problem of correcting the defects of language in the elementary school would disappear.
3. The child should be reared in a stimulating and secure environment so that his intellectual development will not be thwarted. For example, a child reared in a culturally deprived or disadvantaged area can develop defects in learning formal language.
4. The child should be prepared for each stage of the learning process. The activities the child will perform will be arranged sequentially with appropriate materials and when each stage is mastered, it will serve as a point of departure to another stage. Children from 31/2 years to four years are interest din writing and she advised that while teaching them the complex skills of writing, it should be broken

down into component sub-skills which when mastered will lead to consolidation into writing.

5. She recommended a prepared environment and auto-education for the child. This offers the child the milieu and materials necessary for his self development; for example, when the child is provided with all sorts of learning games which will place him in direct contact with content thereby freeing him from dependence upon direct teaching by an adult. It will help him, to learn orderliness, concentration, development of concentration and interest.

Montessori posited that materials for learning will be arranged sequentially from simple to complex. The school classroom must be equipped in such a way that the child will have the opportunity to move about from one room to another as the need arises. In a typical Montessori class, the atmosphere is one of co-operation rather than competition. Children learn by watching older classmates. She is of the opinion that the best teachers for children are children themselves. She designed motor education to enable the child achieve efficiency and co-ordinator in his movements. Montessori used sensory education for the refinement of the differential perception of stimuli by means of repeated exercises. With the intellectual education method, the child does a series of exercises which prepare him for reading, writing, and mathematics.

Pestalozzi Johann

Pestalozzi was born on January 12, 1746, in Zurich. He was an advocate of each man's right to education at an early age. Pestalozzi understood the inequalities based on wealth. He was brought up by his devoted widow mother because his father died when he was five years old. Although he graduated as a lawyer, he abandoned this to farming, which was a decline in social status, in order to be of service to the poor.

He married Anna Schulthess in 1769 and she gave birth to a son Jacques. He devoted himself to the teaching of the poor and physically challenged reading, writing and computation in his large house at the Neuhof (New Manor). He lived his life as a beggar in order to stop the poor, in his house, whom he was taking care of, from begging. He is a humanitarian. After a brief illness, he died on February 17, 1827.

Pestalozzi Methodology of Education

He advocated a methodology of instruction that would have a natural beginning, guiding the child from simple to complex. For example, in the study of numbers the child begins by knowing what each number is. From this, he develops addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

He discovered Anschauung methodology of instruction (which means a method of instruction whereby the child sees, feels, touches, etc. the object of instruction himself). His intention was that the child would learn from simple and natural steps to more complex aspects of experience. For example, the child starts by learning dots, lines, angles and moves to complicated computation and geometry.

In learning language, for example, the child will learn the fundamental units like elementary sounds, letters, words and then sentences. The concept of Anschauung proved an invaluable contribution to the psychology of education which means from simple to complex.

Pestalozzi Views or His Ideas of Primary Education

1. Pestalozzi, in his views, posited that the child's mental and physical faculties can be motivated when love and affection are cultivated in the teaching.
2. He advocated that parents should carry out the essential task of teaching their children moral, vocational and intellectual education before their transition from home to school.
3. He is the view that education should be child centered.
4. Teachers should have knowledge of psychological principles which will give them the opportunity to understand the child's growth and mental development.

Froebel Friedrich

Froebel was born on April 21, 1782 in Germany. The institution for pre-school called kindergarten was discovered by him. He was an educational reformer. He believed that education is a process of self-activity in which all that an individual is naturally endowed with unfold in accordance with an all-pervasive law of organic development. He posited that the appropriate way to bring out the inherently good in every human or

child is through a proper method of education.

Froebel's Contributions to Education

1. He advocated that education is not complete unless it results into self-active behaviour which means that the teacher may make every effort to direct or teach the child but if it does not end up in the child making appropriate constructive reaction with it, it becomes a useless effort.
2. First school for infants was founded by Froebel which he believed was his true vocation in life. He coined the name kindergarten (an institution where small children are occupied). He was of the view that it will be an environment in which young children will grow in accordance with divine purpose, grow freely like plants in a garden.
3. He labored extensively in propagating the idea of establishing a school for infants which helps to assure youngsters a happier and healthier childhood.
4. Froebel developed instructional materials, trained first teachers of kindergarten, formulated its original rationale and moulded its practices.

Usman Ibn Fradiyo

Usman Ibn Fadiyo was born in Maratta in December 1754CE (Christian Era). The family migrated from Futa Toro to Hausa land in the 5th Century after Hijira. He was an Islamic scholar. He studied uner Jibril Ibn Umar.

Jibril Ibn Umar was Usman Ibn fadiyo's that had teacher the gretest influence on him. Usman Ibn Fadiyo wrote a book that criticized African Muslim elites for what he saw as their greed, paganism, or violation of the standards of Sharia Law and heavy taxation. He encouraged literacy and scholarship in primary education. He wrote books concerning religion, government, culture and society which every Muslim must re dfrom primary school.

Abdulah Ibn Muhammed

Abdulah Ibn Muhamed was born 570 CE (Christian Era) died 633CE. He was the son of Abulmutb Muhammed (meansting praised one of prasising one). He was younger brother of usman Dan Fodio and also his military adviser and commander.

He wrote books on Arabic, Fula and Hausa which Islamic children read in primary schools.

Muhammend Bello

Muhammed Bello Resigned 1815-1837. He was the son and aide of Usman Dan Fodio. He become the second Sultan of Sokoto following his father's retirement from the throne. After the success of the Fulani Jihad, Muhammed Bello built a new city of Sokoto which he constructed in such a way that mosques were strategically placed in different corners of the city for easy accessibility.

Conclusion/Suggestion

This work on philosophy of education has specified the ends which education ought to achieve. It examined the philosophical provisions that are the raison d'etre for pre-primary and primary education. It also examined the contributions of some leading philosophers to the development of modern pre-primary and primary education. It is suggested here that these philosophical provisions should form basic foundations for pre-primary and primary education in Nigeria.

References

Igboabuchi, B.O and Azubike, K. A (2006). *Childhood Education in Nigeria:*. Lincel Publishers Onitsha.

Igbobuachi, B.O and Ofojebe, W.N. (2000). *Philosophy and Theories of Education.* Lincel Publishers Onitsha:

Maduewesi, E.J. (2005) benchmarks and Global Trends in Education Benin: A Asulva influence Enterprises. *National Policy on Education (1981)* Revised Federal Government Pres, Lagos.

Okafor, F.C. (1981), *Philosophy of Education and Third World Perspectives.* Virginia: Brunswick Pub. Company.