

EVALUATING THE INFLUENCE OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES ON LECTURERS' PERCEPTION OF CURRICULUM HEGEMONY OF FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIA

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the influence of demographic variables and lecturer's perception of the Faculty of Education Curriculum hegemony in Federal Universities in South- South Nigeria. Four null hypotheses were formulated and tested to provide solution to the problem of the study. An ex-post facto design was adopted in carrying out the study. The major instrument for data collection was questionnaire named "Demographic variables and lectures' perception of faculty of education curriculum hegemony in south- south universities of Nigeria". It has two sections; Section A was Demographic Questionnaire for Lecturers' Perceptions of Curriculum Hegemony (DQLPCH). While Section B was a Scale of Assessment of Lecturers' Perception of Curriculum Hegemony (SALPCH). The researcher purposively administered 522 copies of a questionnaire to lecturers of Faculty of Education of Federal Universities South-South. Multiple classification analysis was used to test the hypotheses. The result showed that there is significant influence of Lecturers' gender and their perception of curriculum hegemony, there is no significant influence of years of teaching in the University and their perception of curriculum and hegemony, there is no significant influence of occupational status and their perception in curriculum hegemony, there is no significant influence of Lecturers' age and their perception of curriculum hegemony. Based on the above findings, it was recommended among others that Nigerian government should encourage researchers to studying curriculum as an area of specialization for the purpose of improving the quality of education in the country.

Keywords: Evaluation, Curriculum hegemony, Perception, Lecturers

Introduction

Hegemony is the leadership or dominance especially of one-state or social group over the others (Madunagu, 2006). The concept of hegemony was popularised by the Italian Marxist Gramsci as cited in Jay (2003). He conceived of hegemony as successful presentation of the dominant classes' definition of reality, worldview so that it is adopted by other classes as the norm. Therefore, curriculum hegemony is the undue influence of certain ideological persuasions on the educational experiences of a social group without considering the needs and aspirations of others. It is a formalized programme of study derived from theoretical considerations about

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society, assessment of educational needs, consideration of the structure of the society, particularly when the quality and contents of the programme is being dominated by discrete ideologies (concepts, ideas, beliefs, internalized values, methodology for investigating problems and accepting conclusion, models, and paradigms) of the oligarchy (Emeh, 2000).

Consequently, the school has been described as a tool of the elites to socialize the masses (Michael, 1985). Michael described higher education as a sophisticated system of stratified knowledge, where aristocratic elites promulgate their culture as more important and necessary than the pedestrian culture of the non-elites. Thus, schools deliberately or inadvertently perpetuate the dominant culture of the bourgeoisie. In this way, schools implement a hegemonic curriculum and shape the consciousness of the society by conscientizing them to interpret the world via the lenses of the economic and political oligarchy.

The curriculum continues to reflect largely the interests, values and ethics of the power blocks disguised as the needs of society. Most of those who wield political power and who can influence the curriculum are themselves the products of Western hegemonic curriculum. Therefore, they unconsciously, foist their inherited values and worldviews on the Nigerian educational system. The experimentations with different educational models, shifting with the swing of the political pendulum, betray this hegemony. Where there is curriculum hegemony, education gets appropriated as a 'hegemonic device' that secures a continued position of power and leadership for the dominant groups in society" (Jay, 2003, p.3)

The National Curriculum Conference of 1969 was supposed to be a revolution for our country's education as it was simply conceived, planned, and developed by Nigerians for Nigerians. The conference of 1969 considered issues concerning National Philosophy of Education for Nigerians, 'the position of science and technology in national development', the review of 'educational aims-for primary, secondary and tertiary levels, the 6-5-4 system of education and suggestion on the control of public learning. The conference was a reaction to the dominance of Western ideologies and values on the Nigerian educational system. The curriculum content was still foreign', as the history and Geography of Europe, etc., have been studied. Europeans were the authors of English language course or secondary school, Mathematics and Arithmetic textbooks, Modern Geography; (Foundation of Geography) were even in use until late 80s, lamented by D. W. Grieve, Lacombe's (Asante, 2011).

Unfortunately, most African universities were established by Europeans to support the colonization of Africa. The corporate interests of the Western world, and to make of Africans replicas of Europe who would serve, not the interest of their own people, but those of Europeans. The great tragedy is that since the independence era of more than fifty years ago we have not created one Afro centric university.

One of the greatest threats to designing, developing and implementing curriculum is that decision about what is worthwhile is not adequately made to ascertain the goals and objectives

of the educational outcomes. Inexperience curriculum decision makers present issues and decisions that do not conform with the trends and demands of society. Since the selection is biased, it follows that some things must be selected, and others ignored. This exercise requires justification; why more priority is given to English Language when it comes to admission into higher institutions of learning than the Nigerian indigenous languages even if the application is made to study the Nigerian indigenous languages. The problem of curriculum hegemony is observed in the aspect of dominance from the ruling class the absence of a deliberate consideration for women education thus, perpetrating the male hegemony of a largely patriarchal society,

The problem is also seen in the aspect of not considering the professions or academic qualifications of the team that assesses the curriculum and educational standard of Nigeria. Besides, the curriculum is supposed to be neutral, embracing the needs of the larger society, articulated goals, and acceptable means of achieving the goals. However, the integrity of institutions, examination bodies and quality of certificates and services obtained from the educational system is increasingly under scrutiny, it is on this premise that one would ask how demographic variables such as educational status does, experience, occupational status, gender, age etc. influence lecturers' perception in curriculum hegemony which is the basis of this research work.

The concept of curriculum hegemony

Among academics and researchers, the greatest constraints are the usual lack of consensus of definitions of concepts or variables. This is because of differences in exposure, experience, training, perception, and circumstances. Of course, it must be admitted that these differences and dialectics help to widen the scope of knowledge and enhance its rapid growth in each discipline. The case of curriculum hegemony is not an exception as it is presented below. Emeh (2008) posited that a particular mode of production conferred powers on those who control formalized programme of study, derived from the theoretical consideration about society. Those who control it define the policies, philosophies, objectives, contents mode of evaluation and implementation of the curriculum. This of course includes the historical colonial experiences and intercultural differences (ethnic cultural orientations and demands).

Emeh (2006) saw hegemony as a dominant class or group of individuals who are given the justification of how to see the world, what to accept or reject and their orientations towards others. He used the word "hegemony" to characterize the situation of total control of consciousness, the ideas, beliefs, values, orientation on establishing of ideologies and legitimizing the knowledge propagated in the institution of learning. Sarup, (1978), contended that the curriculum assumes that deliberate teaching requires deliberate decisions on objectives. Random teaching is not teaching. The decision must be made on what to teach. It will not be enough to discuss what is to be taught as what is found worthwhile, as liberal philosophers of education have done, but justification should be made rather than imposition of knowledge. Olofu & Agbor (2014) viewed curriculum hegemony as problematic, as reflective of human interest. Michael emphasized the fact that school knowledge is supposed to be the product of

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neutrality, experimental inquiry, resulting in an objective selection of the information most conducive to effective learning. Such neutrality is however opposed by the interests of powerful groups in society.

The emerging critique of the social roles of school curricula forces us out of the habit of accepting the curricula as given, out of a research program that manipulates all manner of instructional variables in search of the key to effectiveness." However, this view of schools also seems to take too seriously the planning or rational, component of the school curriculum by the powerful group in the society (Michael 1983). He added that school, as a tool that elites use to socialize the masses has different configurations in different societies. He describes higher education as a sophisticated system of stratified knowledge, wherein the high culture of aristocratic elites is promulgated as more worthy and more universal than the vernacular culture of non-elites.

Institutions of learning not only define what socially describable knowledge is but do so in ways that engender a "habitus" or disposition toward dominant values that goes beyond holding specific pieces of information. The school serves to shape the consciousness of a nation by disposing of individuals to define their world through the definition of those in power. Michael (1982) hypothesized that this type of movement speaks of the rising importance in cultural apparatus of the ideologies of class segment with contradictory class locations, especially what he called the new petty bourgeoisie. Those groups are made up middle management and technical occupations. The shifting from an ideology of individual autonomy, where a person is his or her own boss and control his or her destiny, to a careerist individualization, rather than the one imposed by the powerful group are interest of those individuals. Basil (1973) posited that the curriculum is observing a move in emphasis away from the school where the subject is a clear-cut definable unit of the curriculum tone where it is not so much a subject as an idea but topic-centred, inter-disciplinary inquiry. He further contended that the subject is no longer dominant but subordinate to the idea which governs a special form of integration and the curriculum is an idea which is supra subject that governs the relationship between subject, and number of consequences that follows. If the subject is no longer dominant, this could affect the position of the teacher as a specialist. Marx (1982) opined that the emergence of free, compulsory, universal elementary schooling arose not as a vacuum, not as a response to well-meaning educational theories, and certainly not as a manifestation of a working-class victory in the class struggle. It was to meet the contingencies of capitalism.

...and stands now much as it stood in the beginning as the intermediate institution between the family and the labour market; as the key institution the process of reproduction of labour power, operated by the state for the reproduction of bearers of labour power in general for capital in general (98). Marx, further noted that ideology, like politics can be seen in terms of dominance and subordination, but this time in the realm of consciousness, this itself entails two factors: promulgation of ideas", and the establishment, maintenance and legitimating of particular social condition which both determine and 'justify' the form of consciousness in question.

The ideological function of the state then is the establishment of hegemony, which, in its broadest terms means ensuring that the relationship between capital and labour remains unthreatened by obtaining voluntary submission on the part of labour to the form and processes of capitalist production. Now in some contrast to the establishment of political domination, a large part of this process is undertaken by individual capitalists (Marx 1982).

Methodology

The population of the study consisted of faculty of Education lecturers of six (6) Federal Universities in south South political zone of Nigeria. These schools have a population of six hundred and sixty-six (666) lecturers. A total of 666 lecturers of faculties of education of federal universities in South-South Nigeria were used for this study.

The instrument used for these studies was a questionnaire. Section A: Demographic Questionnaire for Lecturer's perception of Curriculum hegemony (DQLPCH) and Section B: Scale of Assessment of Lecturer's Perception of Curriculum Hegemony (SALPCFI) to elicit information from the lecturers' Demographic variables and their perception of curriculum hegemony of the south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Section A of the instrument titled demographic Questionnaire for Lecturer's Perception of Curriculum Hegemony (DQLPCF1) represent demographic data of the lecturers such as gender, experience, educational attainment, age, income level, occupational status, and age, etc. There were eleven (11) items in this section.

Section B of the instrument is thirty (30) items of the 4-point Likert scale entitled Scale of Assessment of Lecturers Perception of Curriculum Hegemony (SALPCH). It was designed to measure lecturers' perception on curriculum hegemony of Federal Universities of South-South States.

The questionnaire required the respondents to indicate their demographic information and to provide an assessment of their perception of curriculum hegemony. There were four levels of responses. Always (A), Sometime (S). Rarely (R) and Never (N). Each respondent was urged to respond to all the items of the instrument. Each instrument had the necessary instruction to guide the effective completion of the instrument.

Mean and SD of lecturers' perception of curriculum hegemony in universities according to the independent variables.

Findings

4.2.1 Hypothesis one

There is no significant influence of years of teaching experience of university lecturers on their perception of curriculum hegemony in universities. To test this hypothesis, multiple classification analysis was applied to the data. The result is presented in table 1.

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Table 1

Source of variance	Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F-ratio	p-level
Combined effect	1764.260	9	196.029	3.997	.000
1. Years of teaching in the university	26.805	2	13.402	.273	.761
2. Gender	276.653	1	276.653	5.641	.018
3. Occupational status (Rank)	195.134	2	54.783	1.117	.328
4. Age	109.573	2	97.567	1.989	.138
Model	1764.260	9	196.029	3.997	.000
Residual Total	25281.464	512	49.042		
	26873.724	521	51.581		

Table 2

Factorial analysis of variance on lecturers' perception of curriculum hegemony in universities according to the independent variables

S/No	Variables	Groups	N	Mean	SD
1	Years of lecturing experience	1-9years	175	70.53	7.987
		10-19 years	148	71.19	7.486
		20 years and above	199	72.09	6.074
2	Gender	Male	260	71.95	7.384
		Female	262	70.68	6.931
3	Occupational status (Rank)	Grad. Assist. –			
		Lecturer II	190	70.83	7.788
		Lecturer I - Senior	156	71.10	7.256
		Lecturer	176	72.02	6.374
4	Age	Reader - Professor			
		25 – 30 years	8	61.88	10.176
		31 – 40 years	207	71.30	6.639
		41 years and above	307	71.56	7.307

Table 1 shows that there is no significant influence of years of teaching experience in the universities ($F_{2, 521=273}, p>0.5$) on lecturers' perception of curriculum hegemony in universities. Hypothesis 1 is therefore upheld, Table 2 indicates that the adjusted mean scores for the groups 1, 2, and 3 in terms of years of lecturing experience in the universities are 70.43, 71.27 and 72.12 respectively; suggesting that though there is no significant influence of years of lecturing experience in the universities on perception of curriculum hegemony in Universities, but group 3 (those lecturers with more number of years of lecturing experience), tend to have more positive perception of curriculum hegemony in Universities, followed by group 2 and then group 1, with less number of years of lecturing experience. The result also shows that a beta value of .100 for the influence of years of teaching experience in the Universities, was obtained, suggesting that years of teaching experience in the Universities accounted for only 10.0 percent of variance of scores on lecturers' perception of curriculum hegemony in universities.

Discussion of findings

The discussion of findings that emerged from the result of the analysis are presented in this section. This discussion is presented according to the hypotheses of the study.

Years of teaching in the Universities and lecturers' perception of curriculum Universities

The result of testing this hypothesis revealed that there is no significant influence of years of teaching experience in the universities on lecturers' perception of curriculum hegemony in universities. This implies that years of teaching in the universities does not significantly influence lecturers' perception on curriculum hegemony. The study is in line with martin and smith (1990) perceived that middle-aged teachers propagate the curriculum than both younger and more elderly ones. Fillan (1992) supported it by asserting, "Teacher education is a matter of lifelong learning, starting before one enters teaching, pre-service (probationary period), and continuing throughout one's career (p.114). Thus, the accumulated knowledge derived from lifelong experimentation, puts the person at an advantage for greater performance and higher productivity and responsibility, Gender, and perception of university lecturers of curriculum hegemony in universities.

The result of testing these hypotheses reveals that there is a significant influence of gender and their perception of university lectures on curriculum hegemony in universities. This implies that male lecturers have a high perception than female lecturers of curriculum hegemony. The results are not in line with Martin and Smith's (1990) study which sought to determine teachers' perception of the impact of gender upon the current state of the curriculum. The result suggested that female teachers were more perceived to have broader knowledge on the current state of curriculum. This is supported by Rose (1990) who stressed the importance of change of attitude towards women with a view to eliminating discrimination against them. In time of resistance, struggle for independence, freedom and curriculum implementation, women performed men's traditional as well as other decisive roles. Their sensitivity, tenacity and capacity for sacrifices and devotion to duty can ensure their performance in knowledge propagation. Michael. (1982) concurred that even though women have struggled over the years

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to gain a more equal footing. Recent data illuminate how difficult this will continue to be if females do not measure adequately as well as their male counterparts about their perception of curriculum hegemony. There is no hope that gender gaps are indeed closing as suggested from the results of the findings.

Occupational status (rank) of lecturers and their perception of curriculum hegemony in universities

The result of testing this hypothesis revealed that there is no significant influence of occupational status of lectures on their perception of curriculum hegemony. It implies that lecturers with higher occupational status or ranks do not perceive curriculum hegemony differently in universities than those with low ranks. The study findings disagree with Wilborg (2010) who observed that lecturers occupational status influences their job performance. He maintained that high occupations have opportunities to greater cognitive challenges while those from low occupational status have little cognitive challenges. Ball and Junemann (2010) also supported that human occupation tends to be related to the way they live outside his own work situation. They believed that since the occupation is linked to income can invariably affects their involvement in their perception of knowledge propagation.

Age of lecturers and their perception of curriculum hegemony in universities

The result of testing these hypotheses revealed there is no significant influence of lecturer's age and their perception of curriculum hegemony in universities. This implies that the increase in lecturer's age does not significantly influence their perception of curriculum hegemony. The study is in line with Martin and Smith (1990) perceived that middle-aged teachers propagate the curriculum than younger and elderly ones. This could be because of differences in awareness of lecturers in their area of study.

Conclusion

This study of the demographic variables and lecturers' perception of Faculty of Education Curriculum hegemony in South-South Federal Universities provided some important results. The results point to the invaluable place of curriculum hegemony as a critical factor in the provision of adequate education to Nigerian universities. This underlines the need for prescribing and enforcing who controls the curriculum in the Nigerian educational system. Therefore, appropriate strategies should be put in place to ensure that these objectives are achieved. The capacity to achieve those objectives rests essentially on the degree to which intellectuals are ready to improve the standards of education in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations are made: -

1. Given the importance of quality education in Nigeria, curriculum experts with higher qualifications should be allowed to take part in designing, developing, planning, and implementing the curriculum.
2. Nigerian government should encourage researchers to studying curriculum as an area of specialization for the purpose of improving the quality education in this country.
3. Curriculum experts should increase the number of evaluation occasions and should diversify the type of evaluation conditions that may be used to assess the curriculum.
4. Curriculum experts and lecturers should be given the opportunity to update their knowledge to enable them to increase the quality of education.
5. Efforts should be made to disabuse the practices of curriculum hegemony which may serve as setbacks to improving the standard of education in Nigeria.

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