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PROMOTING PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOCIETY THROUGH EFFECTIVE INCLUSION OF CHARACTER EDUCATION IN NIGERIAN SCHOOLS' PROGRAMMES

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined the importance of promoting peace and development in the society through effective inclusion of character education in Nigerian schools' programmes. Several concepts were defined in the paper and they included: peace, development, character and character education. The paper highlighted the need for inclusion of character education in the Nigerian schools programmes and levels of education such as Early Childhood Care and Development Education (ECCDE), Basic/Primary education, Post Basic or Secondary education and Tertiary education. Benefits of character education for peace and development in the Nigerian society were highlighted in the paper. Further discussed in the paper included; the various dimensions of character education requisite for peace and development in Nigeria, core values and personal qualities that can be inculcated through the teaching of character education in the Nigerian schools and the principles guiding the inclusion of character education in the Nigerian schools were identified. Strategies that can be adopted for inclusion of character education in the Nigerian school systems and teachers' strategies for teaching character education in the Nigerian classrooms were also discussed in the paper. In conclusion, recommendations were proffered as way forward and among these recommendations included that the government needs to review the Nigerian curriculum of various levels of education in order to fully integrate character education as a core subject in the curriculum for inculcating the right values and competences into the students for promotion of peace and development in the society. Also, resources should be adequately provided for inclusion and teaching of character education in the Nigerian schools.

Keywords: Promoting, Peace, Development, Society, Effective, Inclusion, Character Education, Nigerian Schools

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Introduction

Education is certainly an indispensable tool for character formation, social adjustment and societal development. It is an important instrument for social change and national development. Education has been responsible for quite a number of national transformation and changes in the society, especially, since the introduction of western education by the Missionaries. Many nations, Nigeria inclusive, have utilized various forms of education through formal, informal and non-formal systems in order to develop the human index for national development. In Nigeria, there exist different levels at the various forms of education including various school systems. The forms of education operating at difference levels as indicated by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) includes ECCDE, Primary/Basic Education, Post Basic/Secondary Education, Tertiary Education, Adult and Non-Formal Education, Nomadic Education, Special Education, among others. According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013), the Early Childhood Care and Development Education (ECCDE) operates in a nursery or crèche for children between the ages of 0-5 years. The main purpose of ECCDE is to offer care, protection, stimulation and pre-primary school learning for children which prepares them for basic/primary education. Basic/primary education is the type of education which offers 6 years or 9 nine years training as the case may be, which is received from the age of 6 years and above. It exposes children to different kinds of training for further development in the society. Secondary education on the other hand prepares students for tertiary education. This type of education inculcates in youth rightful skills and competences that will enable them to participate actively in the world of work in future. Secondary education which is also called post basic education is six-year training received after successful completion of basic/primary education. It operates at two levels of junior and senior secondary school. Secondary education generally provides entrepreneurship training which will enables the youth to participate in socio-economic development in the society. It also prepares the youth for the world of work and wealth creation (FRN, 2013).

Tertiary education which students receive as adults helps to train in different career of their choices for capacity building. Tertiary education which is also the bedrock for national development operates at different levels such as university education and inter-universities centres, polytechnics, monotechnics, colleges of education and other specialized institutions. The duration of tertiary education depends on the individual's area of specialization (that is, course of study) or field of study (FRN, 2013). All these forms of education with their levels of education, operate in Nigeria, in order to provide various training for achievement of the national goals. They also have their different goal and objectives in order to train and prepare citizens for peace and national development in the society. For instance, at the ECCDE or basic/primary education level, the child as an individual is exposed to certain training that will enable him or her imbibe certain social skills, in which character formation is one of them, that will enable the child fit in properly in the society. The individual is also expected through the exposures gotten from different teachings in the curriculum to develop into a sound and vibrant personality, an effective citizen that will contribute towards national development.

Education acquired by individuals should enable them to actively work towards building the five national goals in the Nigerian society of: a free and democratic society, a just and egalitarian society, a united, strong and self-reliant nation, a great and dynamic economy, and a land full of bright opportunities for all citizen. These five national goals can only be obtainable where there is peace, harmony and tranquility. But with the recent happenings which has to do with matters of insecurity, killings, murders, kidnapping, political thuggery, armed robbery and theft, herdsmen attack, vandalism, destruction of lives and properties (both private and government),

among others, raises a question about the Nigerian citizens' values and morals. It looks as if people no longer show love to one another in the society. There is a lot of hatred, jealousy and despise among people and across various ethnic groups. All these despicable situations have necessitated the need for strengthening the Nigerian education system to provide such training through its various teachings that will assist to raise and develop sound individuals that can promote peace and national development in the society. Education of any sort develops one's personality to the fullest. It enables one to acquire attributes that will enable the individual to live peacefully in the society with others, conform to the laws, customs and values of the society. Through the teaching of character education individual will imbibe good traits and potentials that will lead to peace and development in the society. As a result, there is need for proper inclusion of character education into the Nigerian schools programmes and curriculum as a core subject for every form and levels of education. This has remained the thrust of this paper. So many Nigerian youths have deviated from the society norms/values and imbibe such ill-mannered character that is unacceptable in the society. For this reason, character education is a requisite in the Nigerian schools for inculcation of the spirit of patriotism, tolerance, national unity, social integration, love and care, peace, justice, among others, which will lead to peace and development in the society. With character education youths tend to imbibe good personal qualities and core values that will enable them to live peacefully in the society. Looking at the curriculum of the various forms of education at the different levels, character education is yet to be fully internalized and integrated. Character refers those behaviours the society consider desirables as good character. One means in which such personal qualities can be developed is through education. Character education is therefore, the process of learning behaviours that help one throughout one's life. Failure to include character education into the Nigerian school systems and programmes is a threat to peaceful co-existence and sustainable development in the society. Children and youth will grow up not having the sense of "goodness" in them for peaceful and successful living in the society, which has effect on national development. Therefore, discussions were made in this paper in different sections/subheadings in order to expose and create an understanding on the importance of promoting peace and development in the society through effective inclusion of character education in Nigerian schools programmes.

Peace Defined

Peace as defined by Mbaji and Ebirim (2013) is the maintenance of orderliness and absence of war, fear, anxiety, suffering and violence. Peace is the absence of threat to security. It is the condition where there is absence of violence or other instabilities in order to guarantee development in all sectors of the economy. In any society where there is no conflict or fight, that society is said to be a peaceful society. Gyot and Talatu (2013) defined peace as the absence of manifest violence, crisis, tension, anxiety and war. It can be either direct (such as killing, inflicting physical injuries, verbal assault) or structural (poverty, hunger, deprivation, exclusion and social alienation). Peace is the indispensable condition for economic and social development. It is the basic condition for survival and progress. Gumut cited in Gyot and Talatu (2013) maintained thus that peace concerns itself with the global ethics, gender issues and various aspects of cultural violence. According to Nwankwoala (2013), peace is based on a philosophy that teaches nonviolence, love, compassion, trust, fairness, cooperation and reverence for human family and all life on our planet. Peace is all about building a sustainable environment and protecting it from exploitation and war. It creates safe world based on justice and human rights. The culture of peace aids individuals to develop positive approaches towards dealing with conflicts from the personnel to the international. Peace will enable individual

build, maintain and restore relationship at all levels of human interactions (Nwankwoala, 2013). UNESCO cited in Nwankwoala (2013:13) pointed out yamoussouwo declaration on peace found in the minds of men as "peace is revenue for life; peace is the most precious possession of humanity. Peace is more than the end of armed conflict. Peace is a mode of behaviour. Peace is a deep-rooted commitment to the principles of liberty, justice, equality and solidarity among all human beings. Peace also entails a harmonious partnership of humankind with the environment". Any motive or programme which is centred on promoting peace in the society is tailored towards raising awareness of individuals to acquire the values, knowledge and to develop the attitudes, skills and behaviours to live in harmony with oneself, with others and the natural environment. Therefore, effective inclusion of character education at the various levels of education is one way of moving closer to a peaceful global community and enhancing development in the society.

Development Defined

Development is a holistic phenomenon which can be defined as a comprehensive change or transformation in cultural, economic, social and political fields to enhance the living condition of the greater majority (Mbaji & Ebirim, 2013). Development also entails the process of economic, social, political and cultural change engineered in a given area by the efforts of all stakeholders, both internal and external (communities, government, private sector, civil society, etc) with a view to improving the conditions of life of the population in a sustainable way (Seyi cited in Mbaji & Ebirim, 2013). Nwankwoala (2013) opined that development is a process whereby a country or countries is/are able to improve the social welfare of the people, by providing social amenities like quality education, potable water, transportation, infrastructure, medical care, security, etc. Gyot and Talatu (2013) conceived development as a process of improving the conditions in which human being live. It involves first improving man's understanding of the laws of nature (science), second, applying this understanding to creation of toils and other implements that improve man's working conditions and living environment (technology); and third, equitable organization of work and rewards (social relations of production). What this definition seems to suggest is that, the whole life of an individual revolves around the desire for constant improvement- that is, development; and for improvement to take place, each individual therefore need peace. Development and peace therefore, are dynamic and continuous processes which positively impacts on the existing social conditions including human lives, and can be measured with some precision as it increases. No state or country can ensure effective national or sustainable development where violence, crime and general insecurity prevails (Mbaji & Ebirim, 2013). One way of guaranteeing development in the society is through education which includes character education that molds people's behaviour, mindset and attitude in order to work towards the development of their society.

Character Education Defined

Character simply refers to how 'good' a person is. Such a person will exhibit personal qualities as those behaviours the society consider desirables as good character. Character can be interpreted as a good individual quality, meaning that an individual knows virtues, has good value orientation with willingness to do good deeds, and is well behaved, as the result of intellectual development, spiritual and emotional development, physical development, affective and creativity development (Suherman, 2018). Berkowitz (2000) refers to character as a much broader constellation of attitudes, behaviors, motivations and skills. It is more than simply avoiding involvement in socially undesirable behaviours. Character to Berkowitz also includes attitudes such as the desire to do one's best and being concerned about the welfare of others; intellectual capacities such as critical thinking

and moral reasoning; behaviours such as being honest and responsible and standing up for moral principles in the face of injustice; interpersonal and emotional skills that enable us to interact effectively with others in a variety of circumstances; and the commitment to contribute to one's community and society. Stated simply, character is the realization of one's positive development as a person—intellectually, socially, emotionally, and ethically. To be a person of good character is to be the best person that one can be. Good character also includes being committed to making positive contributions to one's community, and to promote a democratic way of life based upon justice, equality and respect for all people. From the above definitions of character, Berkowitz (2000) therefore refers to character education as the deliberate use of all dimensions of school life to foster optimal character development. This comprehensive approach to character education utilizes every aspect of schooling - the content of the curriculum, the process of instruction, the quality of relationships, the handling of discipline, the conduct of co-curricular activities and the ethos of the total school environment—to foster good character in all school members. While recognizing the primary role that parents rightfully play in the character development of their children, Berkowitz also affirm the essential role that schools must play in promoting students' character development and preparing them to be effective citizens. Character education as described within the context of this paper is an umbrella term loosely used to describe the teaching of children in a manner that help them develop variously as moral, civic, good, mannered, behaved, non-bullying, healthy, critical, successful, traditionally, complaint or socially acceptable beings. The goals of character education are thus essentially the goals of raising good children and youth, who understand, care about, and act upon the core ethical values (such as diligence, compassion, integrity, and fairness) that make for a productive, just, and democratic society. As they grow in character, young people grow in their capacity and commitment to do their best work, do the right thing, and lead lives of purpose. Effective character education involves creating the kind of classroom and school environments that enable all students, without exception, to realize and develop their potentials to achieve these vital goals (Berkowitz, 2000).

Character education will enable children/youths develop social and emotional skills, moral reasoning and cognitive development, life skills, ethical reasoning, value skills, conflict management skills, among others. Character education will assist students to develop critical thinking skills that will guide their actions in the society. For instance, through exposures of character education, children and youths could differentiate between good and bad/evil and thereby "think before the act". Character education therefore aims at mostly promoting good manners and compliance with rules, norms and traditions of the society including the value systems of the society. Battistich, Schaps, Watson, Solomon, and Lewis (2000) opined that character education is a requisite for children development which enables them to develop positive personal and social attitudes and skills that will help them to lead satisfying and productive lives in the society. With effective inclusion of character education, individuals in the society would be exposed to see reasons for their existence in their societies and likewise realize the need for the development of their societies. Given the recent social problems, insecurity and crisis in the society which includes terrorism, murder, kidnapping of children in schools, among others, there is need for inclusion of character education in the Nigerian schools academic programmes, which have equally been discussed in the next section.

Need for Inclusion of Character Education in the Nigerian Schools Academic Programmes

Character education is a requisite for Nigerian schools programmes. Looking at the Nigerian society presently, there exist a lot of social vices, crimes and violence. There are no

days which will pass-bye without one getting ugly reports or incidences about deaths, attacks, killings, bomb blasts, murder, and kidnaps from the national dailies or media broadcast. In fact, it is as if the country is faced with the challenges of insecurity. Different social vices reported daily calling for character reformation among children, youths and adults which have deemed it necessary for inclusion and teaching of character education in the Nigerian schools include: stealing, gangsterism, kidnapping, insecurity, robbery and theft, vandalism of private and government properties, bribery and corruption, juvenile delinquencies etc. Amaele (2009) opined that the destructive activities such as examination malpractices, sorting, cultism, drug abuse, sexual abuse and harassment, indecent dressing are among the vices that have assumed high premium in our schools today. Apart from vices, crimes and violence in the society which warrants inclusion of character education in the Nigerian schools programme, Suherman (2018) noted that one of the causes of problems in the educational field is the lack of education that can develop intrinsic values of humanity. It is therefore undeniable that there is a degradation of national identity values in the younger generation, which is caused by the lack of character education. Whereas, education is the transformation vehicle of culture, value, science and technology and art, character education should be the center of the development of national character in both formal and informal education.

The FRN (2013) also pointed out the need for character education by indicating that education generally is an instrument par excellence for social transformation, nation-building and character formation, character education will therefore enable its recipients to maximize the creative potentials and skills of the individual for self-fulfillment and general development of the society. Thus the need for the inclusion of character education in the Nigerian schools programmes and curriculum, which serves as a mechanism towards achievement of national goals, educational goals and objectives. In addition, the rationale behind inclusion of character education as vehicle for promoting peace and development in the society as culled from the FRN (2013) national policy, United Nations (1982) and other documents include the need to enable children and youths in the various school systems to think logically, critically and creatively towards peace building and national development; the need for students to explore moral and aesthetic values, social relationships, and critical thinking through the humanities for better living in the society; to enable people understand the importance of key social institutions, ethics and values, and how individuals influence events and function with others in these institutions throughout the world for societal progress and sustainable development; and the need to help students perceive the importance of wellness and values in human life. Aside from all the above discussions, inclusion of character education in the Nigerian schools programmes as described within the context of this paper refers to allowing the teaching of character education as a separate subject in the mainstream schools. According to Hodkinson, (2011), inclusion entails active participation of all students in learning (example: character education) which leads to the highest possible level of achievement; and the participation of young people in the full range of social experiences and opportunities that will guide them once they have left school. It could be viewed as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities. Inclusion of character education is meant to make schools as centers of learning and educational systems as caring, nurturing, and supportive educational communities where the needs of all students are met in a true sense (Suherman, 2018). Inclusion of character education attracts lots of benefits to the Nigerian society which is discussed in the next section.

Benefits of Character Education for Peace and Development in the Nigerian Society

Benefits of character education will include inculcating right values into the students, enable students develop positive and right attitudes that will assist them to have respect for others, and development of patriotic spirit among students, among others. In addition to reducing the risk of involvement in negative behaviours, Battistich, Schaps, Watson, Solomon, and Lewis (2000) opined that character education has the important additional benefits of helping youth to develop positive personal and social attitudes and skills that will help them to lead satisfying and productive lives, and to become active and effective citizens in our democratic society. For Battistich, Schaps, Watson, Solomon, and Lewis, character education is the systematic teaching of ethical principles and standards. The premise for character education is that people, especially young people, can be taught to value and to live by high ethical principles and standards in spite of negative influences around them. Therefore, from a policy perspective, the above-mentioned scholars suggest that an effective character education programme may be a more cost-effective approach to increasing learning, fostering pro social behaviours, and preventing a variety of social problems than the implementation of multiple, more specific school-based programmes aimed at influencing particular behavioural outcomes. Other benefits of character education includes that it affirms individual human dignity, promotes the well-being and happiness of the individual person, serves the common good, making it possible for individuals to live peacefully in their community, and defines individuals rights, duties and obligations as patriotic citizens.

Suherman (2018) pointing out the advantages of implementing character education opined that character education, strives to implement good behaviour so that children will be able to understand (cognitive), feel and make choices (affective), and implement them to their behaviour on daily basis (psychomotor). Similarly, Suryanto cited in Suherman (2018) believes that through the implementation of character education, children will be more sensitive and reflective to the sense of humanity, to themselves, to their surroundings, to others, and to God. Character education is a potent medium to motivate democratic living, which becomes the reflection of human character grown in each individual in the context of collective living. In a democratic society, every person has a moral commitment in terms of living together, such as respecting their own rights and the rights of others, following the norms and rules, participating in togetherness, believing in the benefits of living together, and so on. All these including peace and development in the society are the benefits which is achievable through effective inclusion of character education in the Nigerian schools programmes.

Dimensions of Character Education requisite for Peace and Development in Nigeria

Teaching character education in the school will aid to bring about peace and development in the society. There are several dimensions of character education requisite for promoting peace and development in Nigeria which has been developed from the six pillars of character and this includes trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. These six pillars of character are ethical values to guide people's choices and character. They have been described as: 1. Trustworthiness: This pillar is the most complex of the six core ethical values and concerns a variety of qualities like honesty, integrity, reliability and loyalty.

2. Respect: This pillar requires that an individual treats all people with dignity. It prohibits violence, humiliation, manipulation and exploitation. It reflects notions such as treating others with respect, civility, courtesy, decency, good manners, dignity, autonomy, tolerance and acceptance.

3. Responsibility: This pillar requires an individual to be in charge of his/her choices and requires that the individual is accountable, shows perseverance, self-disciplined, pursue excellence and practice self-restraint.

4. Fairness: This pillar requires adherence to a balanced standard of justice without relevance to one's own feelings or inclinations. It reflects notions such as playing by the rules, open-mindedness, listening to others and not taking advantage of others.
5. Caring: This pillar is the heart of ethics and it ethical decision-making. It reflects notions such as kindness, forgiveness, compassionate, expressing gratitude, and helping people in need.
6. Citizenship: This pillar includes civic virtues and duties that prescribe how an individual ought to behave as part of a community. It reflects notions such as getting involved in community affairs, effective citizenship, cooperation, staying informed, respect to authority, and protection of the environment.

All these dimensions of character education which is also embedded in the culture of peace building helps individuals to possess certain core values and qualities necessary for promoting peace and development in the society.

Core Values and Personal Qualities Inculcated through the Teaching of Character Education in Nigerian Schools

Inclusion of character education in the Nigerian schools programmes and curriculum will enable students imbibe certain core values and qualities. According to the National Foundation for Educational Research (2017) such traits and vales embedded through teaching of character education will include resilience, creativity, determination, leadership, communication and compassion. Students are encouraged and expected to demonstrate and develop these traits throughout their time in school to enable them to participate in society development. Suherman (2018) noted that certain core values are embedded through character education. This scholar further explains that these values are "values of being" and "values of giving". Values of being are values embedded within the self that develop into actions and how we treat others, for example: being honest, kind, peaceful, dependable, discipline, and in the limit. Values of giving are values that need to be practiced or given; with consideration that what will be received is equal to what will be given, for example: fidelity, trust, respect, love, affection, sensitivity, unselfishness, virtues, friendliness, justice, and generosity. Other core values that can be inculcated through character education includes: stewardship, courage, freedom, equality, critical thinking, sense of patriotism, hardworking, tolerance, sense of national unity and integration, among others. Some of the core values and qualities of character education pointed out by most scholars' requisite for peace and development in the country have been represented in a diagram in figure 1.

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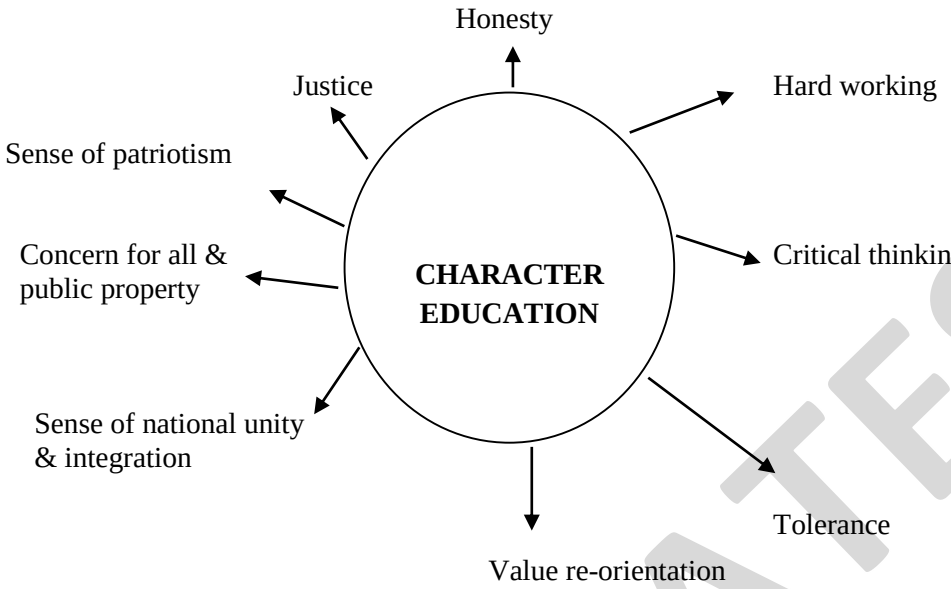


Figure 1: Core Values and Qualities of Character Education

The above diagram illustrates that character education helps children/youths to have sense of responsibility by showing willingness to complete assigned task, use self-control and to be accountable for their behaviour. Character education enables children/youths to become trustworthy which is being honest with words and actions and keeping their promises. It enables them show respect to others in a polite and courteous manner, show concern for all things, people, property and authority. It will enable children/youths develop caring attitude to show love, kindness and understanding towards others. Enable them show compassion in order to be sympathetic towards others and reach out to those in need. Children/youths will also develop a sense of justice in order to speak out for what is fair, right and true character education will assist children/youth show tolerance to respect and recognize opinions and beliefs of others without judgement. Cooperate with others by having the ability to work and play with others in a fair and responsible way to complete a task. However, there are certain principles guiding inclusion of character education in every school system. These principles which are expectations from schools that want to build a culture of good character within the school environment have been pointed out in the next section.

Principles Guiding the Inclusion of Character Education in Nigerian Schools

The Character Education Partnership (CEP) cited in Lickona, Schaps and Lewis (2003) has identified 11 broad principles that are comprehensive approach and cornerstone to effective character education in the school. Each principle outlines vital aspects of character education initiatives that should not be overlooked in programme implementation and they include:

i. Promote core ethical values as the basis of good character. The school should always promote core ethical and performance values as the foundation of good character.
ii. The school should define 'character' comprehensively to include thinking, feeling, and behaviour.
iii. Use a comprehensive, intentional, proactive, and effective approach to character development.

iv. Create a caring school community.
v. The school should provide students with opportunities to engage in moral action in the school.
vi. The school should provide a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners, develops their character, and helps all students to succeed.
vii. Foster students' intrinsic motivation to learn and to be good people.
viii. Engage school staff as professionals in a learning and moral community.
ix. Foster shared moral leadership and long-term support for character education.
x. Engage families and community members as partners in character education.
xi. Evaluate the character of the school, its staff, and its students to inform the character education effort. The school should regularly assess its culture and climate, the functioning of its staff as character educators, and the extent to which its students manifest good character.

Strategies for Inclusion of Character Education in the Nigerian School Systems

Strategies as a concept can be conceived as several ways of doing things, plans or approaches set aside in order to achieve an educational objective. Certain strategies can be adopted in order to introduce and expose children/youths in ECCDE, basic/primary education and post basic or secondary education and including adults in tertiary education to character education in the schools. This includes; a. exposing teachers develop different skills through training in character education; b. teaching character education as a subject at all levels of education in the Nigerian school's curriculum; and c. providing teaching aids and instructional materials that will aid teaching the subject in Nigerian Schools, among others. Ogundele, Jimba and Luka (2016) identified strategies which could be used to integrate moral education in the schools, which could also serve for character education as well. For Ogundele, Jimba and Luka (2016) these strategies include: provision of educational services for the students and staff in the school. The schools need to provide adequate educational services like counseling services, vocational services, religious services, welfare services, recreational services in the school system. It should be noted that the provision of the essential services will modify individual students and make them relevant and responsible to the society. Teaching of character education and government in the school system will surely assist in training the youth on the spirit of togetherness, belongingness and national integrations and all minds that will enable individuals to behave well. Furthermore, formation of formidable associations and clubs will inculcate spirit of peaceful living, citizenship and leadership in the mind of the students; it should be noted however that belonging to a club and society in the school will monitoring help individuals against bad behaviours. Also, character education can be integrated into the school curriculum through the use of the available resources in the schools. As Ogundele cited in Ogundele, Jimba and Luka (2016) stated that community resources can be used to teach character education. The use of the resources available will aid character education and moral value among the school aged people and when individuals are morally sound right from the schools, the certificates bagged will be accorded respect in the society. The use of educational videos and films should be encouraged in the school system. The teachers and parents should try to monitor the students on the type of videos and films that the students view while in the school and at home. There should be effective use of social media, according to Etejere and Ogundele cited in Ogundele, Jimba and Luka (2016), the teachers should make use of social media to give assignment, test, research topics and online examinations to the students. The effective usage of social media will reduce the use of social media for immoral acts or immoral behaviours in the society. Apart from all the above mentioned, other strategies which instill good character into children and youth by building a culture of good character in the school

for promoting peace and development as highlighted by Battistich (n.d.: 6-9), Berkowitz and Bier (2005), Greenberg, Weisberg, O'Brien, Zins, Fredericks, Resnic and Elias (2003, 466-474) and Watson and Ecken (2004), among others, includes the following:

a. Building caring and supportive relationships in the classroom and throughout the school: the school environment first and foremost must be one characterized by safety, mutual trust, respect, and concern for the welfare of others. This begins, of course, with the classroom teacher, who needs to try to establish a positive, personal relationship with each of his/her students. This will not always be easy, but even with very difficult students it can be accomplished, and it establishes the essential foundation for positive development. However, while a positive teacher-student relationship is necessary, it is not sufficient. The teacher also must create an environment where relationships among students are caring and supportive. This can begin as simply as providing opportunities for students to get to know one another as individuals, and opportunities for students to work together toward common goals, such as through cooperative learning.
b. Model positive behaviour among students (i.e., 'walk the walk, don't just talk the talk'): an essential part of establishing a caring and supportive classroom environment is for the teacher to model caring and respectful behaviour in his/her interactions with students. Whatever the rhetoric in the classroom, students are very attuned to their teacher's actual behaviour and will reflect on what they observe, not only with respect to the particular circumstances, but more importantly, with respect to their developing understanding of the nature of the world they live in. In the process of developing their own identities, students seek role models that help them to personally understand what it means to be a good person and effective citizen, and their teachers are influential in this process. Being a good role model also includes being an advocate (although not an indoctrinator) for basic social and moral values (see "moral discourse," below). Thus, teachers not only should exemplify positive relationships in the classroom, but should express their own opinions about right and wrong when warranted by circumstances, provided that this is done from a stance of reason rather than simply authority.
c. Create opportunities for students to be actively and meaningfully involved in the life of the classroom and school: leadership in most schools are usually authoritarian which create autocratic environments where students essentially have no say in how the classroom, much less on the school operations. Yet, as noted above, providing young people with the skills and inclinations they need to succeed in life as productive citizens in a democratic society requires that they have opportunities to develop these capacities. To do so, schools must become more democratic environments where students make decisions, act on them, and reflect upon the results of these actions. A well-established and effective approach to accomplishing this is through the frequent use of class meetings or group discussion, where, at the beginning of the school year to involve students in establishing classroom norms and rules, and throughout the year to involve them in decision-making about classroom activities and in helping to resolve the inevitable problems that develop in school and other social settings. Class meetings also provide excellent opportunities for helping students to develop interpersonal skills and their understanding of democratic processes.
d. Teach essential social and emotional skills. Although creating classroom practices, structures, and a positive climate are very important, this, in itself, is not enough for all children. An essential part of promoting students' positive development includes the

direct teaching of social-emotional skills, such as listening when others are talking, recognizing and managing emotions, disagreeing respectively, and resolving conflicts through non-violent means that respect the needs of both parties.

e. Involve students in moral discourse. It has been persuasively argued that discussion about moral issues is the essence of educating children to be pro social, moral people. School administrators and teachers need to engage students in meaningful dialog about what it means to be a caring, fair, and responsible person if they are to develop the understanding and skills, they need to be successful in life, and avoid the pitfalls of involvement in negative behaviors. Young people are actively striving to understand themselves and the world in which they live, and they certainly need guidance to accomplish this. Because schooling, like any social enterprise, inevitably involves social and moral issues and conflicts, teachers can and should take advantage of these "teachable moments" to further develop their students' understanding of the meaning and importance of core social values. Class meetings provide one mechanism for engaging students in such discussions. Another is the use of literature and the media to involve students in dialogue about what it means to be a good person and the potential outcomes of different life circumstances and decisions.

f. Make learning tasks meaningful and relevant to students' lives. Although the academic curriculum may seem removed from the goals of character education and prevention, it is, in fact, a very important part of creating a school environment where students feel that they belong and of promoting their positive development. For too many youth, much of what they are asked to do in school seems an exercise that has little or nothing to do with their "real" lives. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that many youths lose interest in school and, too often, disengage from school and drop out. This is particularly true for young people who are most at-risk of becoming involved in problem behaviors. One important way to keep this from happening is for teachers to help students to see how what they are learning in school is important to their lives outside of school. This can be done by engaging young people in discussions about how particular learning subjects will be important in helping them to achieve their personal aspirations, and by connecting the academic curriculum to their lives outside of school, such as engaging them with their families and community members in academically-relevant activities.

g. Leave no child behind. The full measure of a successful school includes educating all students to realize their full potential by helping them to develop their unique talents and abilities, and by inspiring their growth intellectually, ethically, socially, and emotionally. A student may be relatively poor at basic academic subjects (as assessed by current, norm-referenced achievement tests), yet be exceptional in music, athletics, or art. If, as suggested above, a sense of connection to school is critical to prevention and the overall positive development of youth, then it is imperative for schools to provide diverse opportunities for students to demonstrate their individual competencies. When multiple avenues exist for making a meaningful contribution to the school community and demonstrating one's talents and abilities, the proportion of youth who value their school and demonstrate the motivation and effort needed to do as well as they can at school is likely to increase, resulting in overall improvements in student performance in many areas, including "high-stakes" assessments. From all the foregoing, teachers are influential when it comes to students' learning. They need to be effectively incorporated into character

education programmes designed in the school for promotion of peace and development. Strategies have been outlined for teachers to teach character education in their classrooms in the next session.

Teachers' Strategies for Teaching Character Education in the Nigerian Classrooms

Teachers are one of the important machineries that promote effective teaching and learning in the school. In fact, teachers are important education agents that implement the education policies at the classroom level. No meaningful learning can take place without the contributions of effective teachers. Teachers can apply different teaching strategies or methodologies that will aid students' learning. There goes a trite statement that 'no education system or nation can rise above the quality of its teachers', this showing that teachers are vital in teaching and learning of character education. Certain teaching strategies coupled with the ones mentioned previously can also be applied for teaching character education in the Nigerian classroom by teachers for peace and development. They include the following:

1. Summarize exemplary behaviours from the story told in the classroom.
2. Appeal to student interest for good character exhibition.
3. Reading stories about character building concepts to the students in the classroom.
4. Read stories to the students how families, friends, and neighbours in the community help each other.
5. Provide opportunities for students' reflection on character related issues e.g. essays, journal writing, class meetings, class discussions, artistic expression.
6. Work with colleagues to share ideas and resources in other to build a culture of peace and development in the school.

Conclusion

From all the foregoing discussions in the paper, it is important to effectively include and integrate character education programmes in the Nigerian schools as a way of promoting peace and development in the Nigerian society. Also, character education should be taught as a core subject in the various Nigerian schools' curriculum at all forms and levels of education for promotion of peace and development in the Nigerian society. The curriculum refers to all academic and extra curriculum activities which children/youths are exposed to in the school. The Nigerian curriculum is derived from the happenings in environment. What a child receives in school must enable the child leave successfully in the society, without this, it is difficult to achieve sustainable peace and development in the society. Therefore, it is important to establish programmes and principles of character education in the Nigerian schools be it ECCDE, basic/primary education, post basic or secondary education and tertiary education, using various strategies, institutional frameworks and teacher strategies in order to attain peace and development in the society. Based on all the discussions made in the paper, recommendations were proffered in order to aid the inclusion of character education in the Nigerian schools which is necessary for promoting peace and development in the Nigerian school systems and society at large.

Recommendations

1. The government needs to review the Nigerian curriculum of various levels of education in order to fully integrate character education as a core subject in the curriculum for inculcating the right values and competences into the students for promotion of peace and development in the society.
2. Resources should be adequately provided for inclusion and teaching of character education in the Nigerian schools.
3. School administrators and teachers should be exposed to different principles of character education through constant training and retraining programmes so as to enable them to build an effective culture of good character in the school environment which will aid the

promotion of peace and development in the society.

4. Teachers should also use effective strategies that will enable instill good character principles and moral values that will guide them throughout their lifetime in order to aid peace and development in the society.
5. Nigerian school systems should adopt the principle of building good a character which will aid them imbibe good societal values and peace traits necessary for promoting peace and development in the society.

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