

HEALTH EDUCATION: AN INDISPENSIBLE COMPONENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

The nature of the school worldwide and what is within it makes it necessary for an adequate of inclusion of health education in the school curriculum. The school environment is a meeting point for teacher's pupils and parents. Therefore a system made up of human and physical environments. It has all the attendants, physical, social, emotional and pathological problem found in any human society and these has made it very important for health education to be pertinent part of the teacher education. Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of diseases. Education simple means change in behaviour. The aim of health education is to show the student how to effectively improve their life for effective living within and beyond their immediate society through equipping them with the basic facts of lives. The paper also wrote that a relationship between health education and teacher education as well as health education strategies for improving teacher education. Based on the discussion, recommendations were made among which is that health education should be made paramount in curriculum planning for primary, secondary and tertiary institution. This is very necessary because the output through teacher education will help for economic growth and development. Conclusively and healthy nation is a wealthy nation. For there to be effective productivity in the country at large health issues should be made to occupy a prominent place in teacher education.

Keywords: Health, Education, Health Education, Teacher Education.

Introduction

In all facts of life, health was and is a cherished goal. People have struggled for survival in their effort to achieve the necessities of life. They soon realized that they had to achieve and maintain a specific level of wellbeing.

Definition of health differs from individual to individual community to community, and from environment to environment. Health is a goal toward which everyone in the world can aspire but relatively few reach (Onuzulike, 2016).

(WHO) defined health as a state of complete physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of diseases of infirmities? Current trend of health concept consists six dimensions physical health dimension, mental health dimension, social health dimensions, emotional health dimensions, occupational dimensions and spiritual health.

The current trend viewed health as a state of complete physical, mental, emotional, social, spiritual and occupational wellbeing of an individual and not merely the absence of diseases and infirmities (Onuzulike 2016).

Concept of Health Education

Education means change in behaviour as a result of expensive, undergone by the individual. It is a learning process through which an individual informs and adverts himself to

develop skills and intelligent action. Therefore effective education aim at growth and development as expressed by (Dale, 2000).

The term health education was widely accepted and adopted after being used in a conference in 1999 (Igwe, 2000). Although health education gained importance, a successful definition of health education has not been found. This gave to a situation where the expression means different things to different person when a health worker successfully import information in such a way that the recipient is imptuated to use that information for the promotion, protection, maintenance and restoration of his family's, community health, health education is a tool (Onuzulike 2016).

Health education is an involved undertaking which is influenced and determined by attitudes, beliefs, tradition and education and by the wants and the needs of the teacher and pupils. It seeks to bring about change in people, change in their knowledge, their attributes and habits, to help relate in the most effective way to their total environment. Health education equally is the acquisition of health knowledge that ends up in the development of desirable health behaviour. This behaviour implies the application of the health knowledge into real's life situations.

Bedworth (1998) opined that health education is a process with intellectual psychological and social dimensions which are translated into desirable behaviours patterns by means of the educational process. Health Education is the process of influencing, changing and reinforcing people's health, knowledge, attitude and practice. It is also a process of utilizing experiences for favourably influence understanding attitude and practices relations to individual and community health.

Health knowledge attitude and behaviour and terms very education. Health knowledge refers to the experience, related to health which an individual is familiar with.

Health attitude is the way an individual feels or read to matters relating to health. Example attendance to health education session of the antenatal clinic by pregnant woman. Health behaviour is the practical aspect of the knowledge and attitude one possess about health. Health education can further be described as a means of attaining optimal health trough education. It is a process of modifying the behaviour of people from negative to positive including educational courses that can be used in actualizing good health (Igwe, 2000).

According to WHO, health education refers to all experience of an individual in the community that affect health behaviour, attitude and habit. It involves participation that received health services.

Furthermore health education is concerned about the promotion at voluntary health habit. It is the transmission of what is known about health into desirable individual and community health behavioural pattern by means of educational process. Health education can be formal, informal and non-formal.

It is informal when it takes places between individuals, at causal group meetings. It is formal when conducted under the umbrella of the school or any organizational setting. It is non-formal when conducted in communities or out of school setting.

Objectives of Health Education

According to Fawole (2000) the main objective of health education is to improve the health of the individual community and nations through the development suitable habits, attitude and knowledge.

The author also stressed that health education is an experience both outside and inside of the school environment. Health education within the school expected the build top the foundation lay in the home and to help children grow in their ability to understand the importance of essential health measures and respect of that act wisely.

Specifically, the Objectives of Health Education in Schools are:

- ❖ Health education in the school aims at helping the child accept health as a valued asset as exhibited in his health behaviour. It makes them appreciate and also make effectual use of health services in the community (Igwe, 2000).
- ❖ Acquire skills that help in the promotion, maintenance and protection of health in the community.
- ❖ Develop the positive health habit of participating un community health programmes such as health campaign or immunization, and family planning.
- ❖ Be actively involved in community health programmes such as improving the sanitary conditions of a community, construction of health centres, sanitary of market places etc.
- ❖ Acquire health skills that will help them emergencies involving their health and the health of others.
- ❖ Develop emotional stability in their effort to cope with stresses in their environment.
- ❖ Acquire health knowledge and skills which enables them to subdue negative cultural forces that influence the adoption of scientifically established positive behaviour. (Onuzulike 2015)
- ❖ Health education also helps people to adopt and maintain healthy practices and lifestyles.

Reasons why Health Education is offered to Students

- ❖ Health knowledge, guide students in anticipating the consequences of communicable diseases which we might be exposed to as a result of our insanitary habits.
- ❖ It can help students have the knowledge of what to do in cases of accidents.
- ❖ Though health education students can understand fast about chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes, and what to do when they attack them.
- ❖ Health education prepares students to manage their sexual lives, particularly in selection of marriage partners and strive to optimal family wellbeing.
- ❖ Health education adjusts student to cope with crises of living and be aware of alternatives to crises and to make right discussions with respect to cases of alcoholic, cigarette, smoking, apathy to exercise, obesity, promiscuity, divorce, cultism and drug abuse etc.
- ❖ It exposes the knowledge of how people can protect themselves against the damager of medical quackery and superstition.
- ❖ Health education can help students to have the knowledge of nutrition that emphasizes on the type of essential nutrient consumed daily.

Effective Health Education Is Characterized With Promotion Action That Are Realistic And Feasible.

- ❖ Building ideas concepts and practices that people already have.
- ❖ Repeating and reinforcing information overtime using different methods.

- ❖ Entertaining and attracting attention of the community providing opportunity for students to dialogue and discuss to allow further learners participation.
- ❖ Using demonstrations to show the benefits of adopting practices.

Concept of Teacher

A teacher is a professionally trained person who is knowledgeable in theory and practice of education. The person must be dedicated and committed to the course of effective, efficient and competent training of learners under his/her care. An efficient, effective and competent teacher must focus on moulding individuals that will be functional members of the society.

A teacher is one who provides interventions in the school to ensure that the learners graduate as good products. These interventions include the teacher's methods, approaches, strategies and techniques employed to change the behaviour of the learners so as to facilitate learning.

According to Edigbo and Edegbe (2013) a successful teacher is the one who understands the learner and care about them. Obanya (2016) opined that a teacher should guide others and serve as a role model.

A teacher is the person who discovers, orders, directs, transmits, disseminates and administers knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in any teaching and learning setting (Okeke 2014).

Concept of Education

Cremin (2017), defined education as deliberate, systematic and sustained efforts to transmit, evoke or acquire knowledge, values, attitudes, skills and sensibilities.

Education is a process for transmission, preservation and improvement of the culture of a people. It is a process through which human beings become morally good members of their society. The central purpose of education is virtue or character training.

Education is the basic force for the socio-economic and political transformation of society. People are schooled to accept a society but they are educated to create or recreate one. Going to school does not mean being educated. To be educated, one must be found worthy in character and learning. Therefore, to be educated entails being able to apply the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes learnt in one situation to solve personal problems and those of the society (Ocho 2015).

Concept of Teacher Education

Teaching is a skilled task involving conscientious arrangement of what to teach and how to teach and evaluation. It also demands adequate and careful classroom management, motivation and inspiration of the learners to achieve positive results.

According to Osuji (2016), teacher education is regarded as the professional education of teachers to equip them with the right attitude, skills and knowledge which will make them to embark on their responsibility efficiently and effectively focusing on the needs and aspirations of the society at any time. Teacher education is providing professional education and specialized training to individuals who are interested in grooming the young learners to become responsible and functional members of the society. Teacher education refers to the policies and procedures defined to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviours

and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school and wider society (Akintade & Eyengbo 2015).

Objectives of Teacher Education

- Ensure that teachers have sufficient mastery of content and varied methods of teaching that are subjects – specific, including teachers for special needs learners.
- Ensure structured, effective and supportive supervision of teaching practice and indication as well as certification and licensing.
- Motivate teachers and provide opportunities for their continuing professional development, retention, advancement and improvement in their chosen careers.
- Ensure that teachers constantly upgrade their skills in order to remain competent and relevant.
- Produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system.
- Encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers
- Help teachers to fit into social life of the community and the society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals.
- Provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and make them adaptable to changing situations.
- Enhance teacher’s commitment to the teaching profession (Edegbo, & Edegbo 2013).

Relationship between Health Education and Teacher Education

Teacher education are policies procedures designed to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitude, behavior and skills students require in the development of desirable health habits. This behaviour is an application of health knowledge in real life situations. It influences the way the recipients think, feel and act regarding personal family, community and societal wellbeing (Cremin, 2007).

The teacher is one who provides intervention in the school to ensure that the learners graduate as good products. This promotes health actions which are realistic and feasible and builds ideas, concepts and practice that the learners already need to flourish in the community he/she finds him/her self.

Health information helps the learner to become aware of their health problems, in developing proper perceptions about them and seeking appropriate solution for the same. The teacher creates the learning environments for the learner in the process of planning health teaching and learning activities, the teacher affects the crucial aspect of the learner’s environment through the selection of favourably health content, organization of the activities to be embarked upon in the health process, content, delivery, selection of instructional resources and interactions with the learners. The teacher discovers, directs, transmits, disseminates, appreciates and administers knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in the teaching and learning of health (Iduma, 2014).

The teacher is a significant asset in the health educational system. This is because a lot of teaching method is being adapted to impact health knowledge, such as the use of existing channels of communication such as songs, drama and story-telling that is adaptable. This helps in entertaining and attracting the attention of both the learner and the community. They

translate health educational policies into practice. They make health policies that are functional. They play roles as curriculum planners. The teacher has the responsibility of linking the school to the community or homes of the learners. A good rapport between the community and the school promotes functional health education and community development. (Nwagwu 2014).

Health Education Strategies for Improving Teacher Education

According to Unachukwu (2014) there is urgent need to re-organize the current strategies for educating health teachers. The reason is that the performances of students in examinations are very appalling. If new strategies are adopted and current ones improved on, a lot stand to be gained in facilitating and realization of the goals of teacher education. The following health education strategies therefore need to be adopted to bring a good change in teacher education.

- **Improvement of Teacher Quality**

Whatever healthy strategy that should be adopted has to start with improving the quality of teachers. This begins with the type of training given to the teachers while in school. The teaching profession involves a lot of challenges and they require the knowledge and ability to meet up with such challenges (Unachukwu 2014).

- **Remedial Courses for Students Health Teachers**

Another good strategy is remedial courses especially in the first year of their study. A good knowledge of subject matter is very vital because that is the crux of teaching. (Okebekolo 2013)

- **Integrating Research Results to Classroom Teacher Education Instructions:**

Synthesizing research results into classroom practices by teacher-trainers and subsequently teaching health trainee teachers to do same in their future classrooms will be a good strategy for improving teacher education but which are not accessed and applied in classroom instruction. (Philips 2015).

- **Qualified Health Teacher Trainer:**

Qualified teacher trainers should be employed and employment should not be politicians. The current mass unemployment in Nigeria has given politically, the impetus of reserving any available job position for their candidates whether qualified or not and this has affected teacher education (Philips 2015).

- **Health Teaching Practice Should be taken seriously:**

The education of health teachers in Nigeria needs a total overhauling, the challenges facing the education system requires teacher education to shift from the norm emphasizing theoretical aspects of course works loosely linked to school-based experiences. It is rather advocated that more attention should be paid to clinical practice combined with academic content and professional course. This combination will give the health student teachers the opportunity of internalizing what has been learnt with the actual field practice. This helps the student teachers to blend theoretical knowledge with teaching practice as they learn more by doing (Nwokocha 2013).

Recommendations

1. The Government should sponsor in-service programmes for teachers so as to properly enlighten them on health innovations thereby making them more creative.

2. The health education sector in the three tiers of government has to be properly equipped and adequately funded by government. This will of course impact positively on teacher education.
3. Government should organize and sponsor seminars and workshop periodically on reasons for health education strategies for improving teacher education.
4. Government should employ qualified teacher trainers and the employment should not be political but by merit.

Conclusion

Health is wealth. For there to be effective productivity in a nation, health issues should be made to occupy a prominent place in teacher education. Also the training of health teachers both in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions should be of paramount importance so as to effectively impact this knowledge.

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