

IMPROVING THE SYNERGY BETWEEN INFORMAL AND FORMAL EDUCATION IN EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

Education forms a basic and significant part of any individual's life. It is proper for individuals to understand the ways in which they want to learn. This paper examined improving the synergy between informal and formal education in educational management. The concept of informal and formal education is made available for one to decide on the type to go for in terms of learning. Informal education is gained through several life experiences, not contained in the books, no arranged school environment, helps in the skills and mental abilities of humans. Formal education is a framework set by individual boards of education. This is found in learning environment like educational institutions, classrooms with trained teachers, and students follow this planned structure. The characteristic, advantage and disadvantages of informal and formal education are outlined, differences, similarities and synergy between informal and formal education are specified. Educational management focusing on its aims and importance can enhance the synergy of informal and formal education aligned properly into the sector. The study suggested that formal system of education should take some courageous decisions in allowing graduate of informal education models to join them, interface between formal and informal education practice should go beyond equivalency education.

Keywords: Synergy, Informal, Formal, Education, Educational Management.

Introduction

Education is a globally available service that aims to fulfill various objectives for the benefit of individuals within each country. The advancement

of contemporary pedagogical approaches and technology has expanded learning possibilities to a vast and boundless extent, while also enabling rapid access. When considering the approach, one wish to use in order to acquire new knowledge and accomplish a certain objective, it becomes apparent that there are several pathways and alternatives. Mareva (2016) elucidated that these objectives include the competencies necessary for accelerated economic expansion and the dissemination of fundamental information among the populace. Movchan (2023) said that learners have the ability to gain novel and enhanced abilities and competences via non-traditional techniques, as opposed to formal learning. Stefanidi (2020), opined that knowledge has emerged as the paramount determinant of economic progress in the 21st century. He elaborated that in order to accomplish the objectives of the people, there must be a harmonious integration of many educational disciplines that are necessary for the citizens, ultimately enhancing the economic status of the nation. In Nigeria, particularly in cases when parents are unable to adequately provide education for their children owing to the prevalent poverty rate, many choose to acquire a vocational skill after completing the minimal education they can afford. Gaining insight into the difference in learning methodologies will provide a comprehensive framework for determining your preferred technique to acquiring knowledge. One might search for particular solutions that provide the desired lessons, or alternatively, one can design a personalized hybrid training program that combines the most effective elements of both techniques. In this scenario, individuals make decisions on what subjects to study and the methods they will use to acquire knowledge. This process encompasses both informal and official education. It is against this back drop that the researcher examined improving the synergy between informal and formal education in educational management.

Conceptual Clarification Education

Education is a fundamental and crucial aspect of every person's life. Education is the acquisition or transmission of information that contributes to the development of a skilled character, thereby enhancing the standard of living as stated in National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). Education encompasses more than just the information found in books, it is a comprehensive notion that fosters the development of skills and cognitive talents in individuals. Kdkasi (2018) explained that education extends beyond the confines of classrooms, schools, and institutions hence it imparts various techniques to learners for acquiring professional skills. Education is centered on

fostering the intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and physical capacities of an individual. Someone without formal education has several challenges throughout their life. Therefore, considering all these factors fosters a comprehensive understanding of various forms of education. It enhance the entire personality of each individual. Parents should exert conscientious effort in teaching their children optimally. Education may be acquired via several means, such as attending schools, engaging in life experiences, and participating in extra-curricular activities. Monitoring Education and Training (2016) stated that education is not limited or restricted by any requirements or restrictions. Hence, it may be roughly categorized into various classifications; however our primary emphasis is on informal and formal education.

- Formal Education
- Informal Education
- Non-formal Education

Formal Education

This form of education typically follows a hierarchical structure where the teacher imparts knowledge to the students through courses and curricula. This can take place in various settings such as classrooms, workplaces, mobile devices, online platforms, and e-learning portals (Movchan, 2023). It operates under the framework established by individual boards of education. In Nigeria, the organized learning environment include educational institutions, classrooms, instructors who have received specialized training, instructional equipment, extracurricular activities, competitions, exams, and a curriculum or syllabus. According to Stefanidi (2020), formal education is highly organized and follows certain criteria, requiring pupils to adhere to these norms. Formal education is pursued via structured programs offered in schools, universities, and other educational institutions, which adhere to a prescribed curriculum.

Characteristics of Formal Education

Casgrain (2015) outlined some characteristics of formal education as follows;

1. A proper chronologically designed structure based on the hierarchy is followed.
2. Syllabus, books are assigned correctly, the schedule is maintained and followed.
3. Regular exams and tests are conducted, fees are applied, and students work in a disciplined organization.
4. Learning has a mandated dimension and tends to have a cognitive emphasis.

5. Motivation for learning maybe extrinsic to the learner and linked to socialization.
6. Learning maybe recognized or measured through certificate by following curriculum.
7. Learning process is top-down, focusing on developing specific knowledge

Advantages of Formal Education

Global (2020) listed out the advantages of formal education which includes;

1. Works towards instilling technical skills in the students.
2. A proper schedule helps in disciplining the students towards achieving a common goal.
3. Teamwork and social interaction skills get developed.
4. Education is obtained under the influence of the professionally trained educators.
5. A certified course which is recognized by the institutions.

Disadvantages of Formal Education

Global (2020) listed out the disadvantages of formal education as follows;

1. Students are more susceptible to the negative influences of society as a large number of people are present in schools, colleges etc.
2. Students have different abilities and keeping everyone together under typical coursework can be disadvantageous to some specific students.
3. Costs incurred and the resources used can come out to be very expensive in the long run.

Informal Education

Informal education refers to the acquisition of information via various life situations. Movchan (2023) said that informal learning is an essential notion, particularly for persons who need to keep up with fast-paced technical and economic advancements. He added that informal learning encompasses the acquisition of knowledge or skills without conscious awareness of the learning process. This signifies a crucial means of accessing the realm of job and concurrently illustrates the progressive stages involved in constructing a successful professional trajectory. Hewko (2023) argued that this shape has the capacity to adapt to the demands and requirements of diverse persons or groups. Its purpose is to address the deficiencies and inconsistencies in the conventional educational system (formal learning) and fulfill the pressing requirements that are overlooked by formal education. Casgrain (2015) said that this knowledge encompasses the information acquired from our parents, elders, and surroundings. This category encompasses the essential abilities required for

survival and sustenance in an individual's existence. It lacks the theoretical information found in literature. Examples of informal education include acquiring skills in driving, cooking, making special arrangements, and arranging appointments (Global, 2020). Informal education is acquired via the impact of society and the community. The paramount instructor in informal education is the accumulation of personal experiences and interactions over one's lifetime. It is largely student directed, voluntary, opened to all and non-credit bearing (Hopkinson, Itughes& Layer, 2008). Home-schooling is a prime illustration of effective and amicable educational approaches.

Characteristics of Informal Education

Casgrain(2015) listed out the characteristics of informal education as follows;

1. It is not structured, no ethics guiding it.
2. It is devoid of the various schooling formalities such as following a schedule, carrying the necessary school items and a proper dress code.
3. There are no exams, and no complicated curriculum is followed.
4. Learning is promoted through indirect behavior.
5. Motivation for learning is intrinsic to the learners

Advantages of Informal Education

Global (2020) stated some advantages of informal education as follows;

1. A cost-free and natural system of gaining an education.
2. There is no time pressure and boundaries and no examination stress.
3. One can choose their preferred sources of gaining an education.

Disadvantages of Informal Education

The disadvantages of informal education are listed by Global (2020);

1. Reliable sources for getting knowledge are absent. A person may fall prey to all kinds of misleading information.
2. Absence of professional trainers can lead to inefficient learning practices.
3. Certain things that one learns in schools such as discipline, social interaction and communication skills are not available in an informal teaching atmosphere.
4. No proper schedule is followed hence making the whole procedure less efficient.

Difference between formal and informal education

The primary distinction between formal and informal education lies in the fact that formal education is conducted inside a classroom setting and delivered by qualified instructors. Movchan, (2023) defined informal education as learning experiences that occur outside of traditional classroom settings. It

encompasses the knowledge and skills acquired via everyday life activities or self-directed learning endeavors. Classrooms consist of a consistent group of students and instructors that interact on a daily basis. After-school programs often operate on a drop-in basis, resulting in irregular attendance and uneven leadership. Formal and informal education venues each provide distinct advantages for your educational outreach initiative. Casgrain (2015) said that creating resources for informal educational settings has the advantage of being valuable to parents engaging in home-based learning with their children, as well as to adult learners seeking to enhance their knowledge for the purpose of broadening their job prospects.

Kipruto (2019) outlined some fundamental distinctions between formal and informal schooling as follows:

1. Structure: Formal education follows a structured curriculum set by educational institutions. Informal education lacks a standardized curriculum and is often self-directed.
2. Setting: Formal education takes place in a classroom or educational institution. Informal education can occur anywhere, including everyday life situations, workplaces, or online platforms.
3. Learning Goals: Formal education focuses on achieving specific learning outcomes and academic qualifications. Informal education emphasizes practical skills, personal growth, and experiential learning.
4. Recognition: Formal education grants recognized degrees, diplomas, and certificates. Informal education may not result in formal credentials but can contribute to personal development.
5. Teaching Methods: Formal education employs structured teaching methods, lectures, assignments, and exams. Informal education relies on discussions, hands-on experiences, observation, and mentorship.
6. Flexibility: Formal education has limited flexibility due to predefined schedules and curricula. Informal education allows for greater flexibility, adapting to individual interests and pace.
7. Duration: Formal education often follows a fixed timeframe, leading to completion of a program or degree. Informal education has no set duration and can continue throughout one's life.
8. Accountability: Formal education involves accountability through grades, evaluations, and assessments. Informal education is more self-driven, with individuals taking responsibility for their learning progress.

9. Cost: Formal education usually requires tuition fees and other expenses. Informal education can be less costly or even free, depending on the resources used.

10. Accessibility: Formal education might have entry requirements and limited accessibility. Informal education is generally more accessible, as it can be pursued by anyone regardless of their background.

Similarities of informal and formal education

Informal and formal education both are geared towards achieving same goal since it provide knowledge and skills to individuals as detailed by Johnson (2017):

1. Informal education is not structured and it is not mandatory and maybe self-directed. It includes learning through everyday experiences, reading, or exploring on different skills practically.

2. Formal education is provided by institutions like schools, colleges, and universities. It is structured and follows a set curriculum and it is usually mandatory and is provided in the classroom.

3. The both of them can be effective ways of learning, and they often complement each other. For instance, formal education may provide a foundation of knowledge and skills, while informal education may allow individuals to apply and expand upon that knowledge in real-world contexts.

4. Certain experiences are organized specifically to support formal educational achievement but accessed in informal conditions

Synergies between Informal and Formal Education

Mareva (2016) highlighted the synergies between informal and formal education:

1. Emphasizing the importance of establishing connections between grassroots level informal education initiatives and broader development frameworks. It is evident that well-designed informal education interventions are not only crucial for preventing various social issues, but also have the potential to actively contribute to the formation of new local clusters of economic and social activities, as well as the cultural revitalization of communities.

2. The quandary of formalization in relation to informal education: while contemplating the suitability of integrating informal education with formal education systems, several inquiries and discussions arise about the matters of formalization and standardization. It is considered an educational method that gains its credibility by being voluntarily accepted by the target audience, specifically since participation is not mandatory. Instructional approaches and materials are effective due to their non-standardized nature, allowing for adaptation to the unique demands of diverse learners and demographic groups.

3. The ongoing issue of sustainability: in this instance, informal education plays a role in the development of specific initiatives that address local requirements, provide high-quality training, enhance institutional and technical capabilities, and determine the appropriate media and instruments to be used. Projects will only be considered relevant if they are founded upon a comprehensive comprehension of the needs and opportunities within the communities. The choice of methodologies should align with the trainees' background. In a developing nation such as Nigeria, it is more practical to initiate initiatives by using traditional, indigenous knowledge and skills to address fundamental issues and diminish the reliance of the community on external experts. The affordability of local innovations enables their widespread replication in any location facing comparable challenges.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation: In this process, the assessment of learning quality is based on the individual's subjective judgment of their learning experience. This encompasses the educational resources, instructional methods, and the educational environment. The quality of learning is a multifaceted matter that warrants examination from several perspectives. Incorporating learners' comments is an essential component of the quality assurance protocols.

Educational Management

Ahmed (2022) stated that educational management is the systematic coordination and control of an institution's operations, including planning, organizing, directing, and managing, in order to effectively and efficiently use people and material resources to achieve the goals of teaching, learning, extension work, and research. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) aims to achieve social, economic, and cultural progress in society by prioritizing the development of human resources via education. Education should include curriculum that are more applicable, adaptable, and enable students to effect positive societal changes while still upholding the essence of our current culture (Okoroma, 2001). The achievement of national development objectives necessitates the proficient administration of education in order to ensure the effective and efficient operation of educational institutions.

Aims of Educational Management

These aims are outlined by Pandya (2011) as follows;

1. Achieving institution's objectives and enabling job satisfaction.
2. Improving the process of planning, organizing, implementing within the institution, and enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the institutions.

3. Creating, enhancing and maintaining a positive public image of the institution and managing interpersonal conflicts/stress.
4. Optimal utilization of human resources (administrators, non-teaching staff, teaching staff, and students), creating and maintaining a congenial and cohesive atmosphere.

Importance of Educational Management

The importance of educational management is listed by Ahmed (2022) as follows;

1. It includes the study of various theories of management science which define and describe the roles and responsibilities of the educational managers and develop managerial skills.
2. It includes the study of educational planning at macro levels, its goals, principles, approaches and procedures. At micro level, it helps in understanding and facilitates institutional planning and educational administration.
3. It helps in decision making, problem-solving, communication, managing information, and building effective teams.
4. It helps in planning co-curricular activities, academic and preparation of time-table.
5. It helps in the maintenance of school records, evaluating students' achievements, including financing and budgeting of the institution.

Conclusion

In the 21st century, several educational models have emerged as a consequence of the effort to strike a harmonious equilibrium between the acquisition of information and the practical aspects of a really relevant education. There is a wide variety of experiences and interventions occurring in schools, training systems, and different learning environments in the workplace. These are intended to have an effect on an individual's opportunities in life. It is important to acknowledge that there are young individuals who may benefit more from being exempted from traditional schooling and given the opportunity to explore alternative learning initiatives. Several nations have established collaborations between senior/upper secondary education institutions and informal vocational skills providers. This has led to a growing recognition of the potential of these options in disrupting cycles of educational underachievement, poverty, and social marginalization. Hence, it is crucial for a student to seamlessly shift from formal to informal education. The transition implies the potential for seamless integration, allowing the informal education system to be readily incorporated

into the official system. In order to ensure the delivery of high-quality education, it is necessary to undergo a fundamental shift in the overall understanding of the purpose and potential impact of education in the rapidly evolving contemporary society. Educational management has transformed the substandard quality of the education system and inadequate information storage into a focus on staff management and talent management inside our schools.

Suggestions

The following suggestions provide guidance for the study.

1. The formal system of education is expected to take some courageous decisions in allowing graduate of informal education models to join the formal education system.
2. The interface between formal and informal education practice should go beyond equivalency education where learners should be introduced both system and their rolls in the career development process.
3. Educational management based on its components should include informal learning alongside the formal learning system of education to enhance effective capacity building.
4. Learners in the formal system should be set free to move around and search for best source to learn with full motivation and focus.

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