

Review of: "From Victory to War: a Case of History Education and History of Education in Nigeria, 1982-2022"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

The author affirms the central issue of the paper with the following research questions: Who should be aware of curriculum modification before it takes place? Were the historians of education represented in the processes of the new curriculum formulation? Are the policymakers aware of the importance of the history of education? These are good questions, but they are somewhat rhetoric in the article because the author had all the answers previously as opinions. In any case, the author presents with great logical and chronological precision the successive changes to the official documents regulating the curriculum in Nigeria, the entities involved, and the nature of the changes. The assertions that motivated the writing of the article become apparent to the reader, namely: history was absent from the school curriculum in Nigeria for 36 years, a situation that was reversed only by the insistent action of historians' associations; the policy has subsumed history of education in a non-specific pedagogical discipline in higher education courses, and the reversal of this policy constitutes a new "war" against the State itself.

The author selects short passages by authors from different countries, sometimes denouncing and lamenting the absence or reduction of history teaching in national curricula. Concerning the history of education, it points out how, in other countries, this curricular unit for training education professionals has shown a tendency to retract, either when it is removed from the curricula or merged with the philosophy of education, or dissolved in other curricular units. I agree with the identification of general trends and the evidence that in Nigeria, teachers and educational institutions have not been convened to discuss policies and their effects, as should be the practice and custom of all democratic regimes. I agree with the evidence that one person or non-representative committees have centralized the decisions, which is also not advisable. However, I am still determining whether policymakers are ignorant about the relevance of history, as I intend to discuss in my contribution.

The following questions could be explored in interviews with those involved so that the author could ascertain their level of awareness regarding the issues they raise: Are those involved in the development of CCMAS not aware of the prolonged battle to reintroduce history education into the school curricula? Are those who developed CCMAS unaware of the funds expended to develop the new history education syllabus for primary and secondary schools by the Federal Ministry of Education? Are there no people in the Federal Ministry of Education who could remember the efforts to reintroduce history education in schools? Are some intellectuals willing to learn from history?

This procedure would strengthen the research and allow the central hypothesis to become more sophisticated, since it is based mainly on an alleged "lack of knowledge" or "negligence" by policymakers. It would be essential to hear from them and listen to those who defend positions that affirm education history and the History of education.

The author affirms: "History connotes the entire human past as it did happen in all spheres of life. It is a record of the significant past that may be interpreted to discover the essential things that may influence or affect the future", but I could point out that the idea of History as the past as it happened is a nineteenth-century elaboration, which fell into disuse. Also, the idea that awareness of a nations' History can awaken patriotism, national attention, and social responsibility in favor of development through the internalization of shared beliefs and values is a dangerous assertion since it restores its functional ideology to the emergence of nationalism. Contemporary historians tend to refute this kind of "contribution" of History to constructing patriotism and shared beliefs and values that conform to a nationality. I also wonder if we would endorse the Prime Minister of Iceland's complaint instead of questioning whether memorizing former ministers' names is relevant knowledge for children and young people.

I believe that, as it is a text in defense of valuing history and the history of education, which seems to include curriculum designers and policymakers as recipients, the author thought it is appropriate to show the advantages of this knowledge when applied to educational policies and cultures of nation-states. Concerning history, however, I believe that the article overemphasizes the ideological and functional potential in which knowledge of the past confers national identity and stimulates the patriotism of a people. It is a pleasant argument for the powers, but does not correspond to contemporary historians' beliefs about the functionality and applicability of the knowledge they produce about the past. Also, concerning the history of education, the author emphasizes its pragmatic aspect and its usefulness. As a professor of the history of education for more than two decades, I'm not at all convinced that its role is to examine and judge past educational pedagogies, policies, and actions to discard the mistakes and apply the successes to improve education. For both historical education and the history of education, I believe that both have as their primary virtues making known the past (not just national and not just the winners), recognizing narratives about the past from a temporally and social perspective, to find strange the past, due to its essential difference relative to the daily lived experience, and to denaturalize the present, introducing the historicity of everything that composes it. As well as the history taught, the history of education develops skills and abilities that add to the curricular set in the integral formation of individuals. Therefore, it is not appropriate to designate useful "functions" and "tasks" that come to justify its appreciation as a component of the Core Curriculum.

I agree with the author's analysis regarding the data presented on the contents of the history of education in Nigeria and on the indicators of decision-making processes regarding curriculum policies. In the first case, I highlight the pertinent observation of the occurrence of a disparity between the old and the new contents for the history of education, which is detrimental to the development of the history of education in Nigeria. I agree that

educators should always be involved in curriculum issues, that it is evident that there needed to be a representative presence of historians of education in formulating the new curriculum, and that the universities senates should have been consulted and heard. As a mistake in the educational policy implementation process, it is also evident that in Nigeria, an individual/consultant has determined what should compose the curriculum and which agents should be involved in the process. The proposition that all curriculum restructuring should involve teaching actors is correct so that they contribute to the process. Another proposal I agree with is that curriculum innovations should not remove the history of education from the curriculum, but instead make it mandatory.

As for the third question, “whether public policymakers are aware of the importance of the history of education?” The author argues that the curriculum innovators exhibited traces of ignorance of the importance of teaching history and the history of education in the constitution of the CCMAS committee and claims, with reason, that the introduction of Western education destitute the traditional education of the original communities, which it caused Nigerians to abandon it and feel disoriented. This aspect appears very clearly in Achebe’s novels. The author could have emphasized this issue more to defend the teaching of history rooted in the traditions of indigenous communities and not in “Geschichte” history. Western history, which sustained the legitimacy of the political model of the Nation-State, therefore, colonizing and ethnocentric, also became historical school education since schools became a vehicle and product of imperialist hegemony.

This article represents a relevant contribution to the field of education, and I hope my review could help improve it.