Introduction

Nigeria as a political entity and a young democratic society is blessed with multiethnic groups with cultural plurality. The uniqueness of this plurality has been stressed by Iyamu (1994: 87) that:

It is neither easy to define cultural values of national application nor have measure by which a typical Nigerian can be identified. In fact, there is no typical Nigerian in a pluralistic sense as no cultural group in Nigeria can satisfactorily and acceptably represent the others. Every culture enjoys autonomy, identity and independence.

Similarly, Nigeria is a heterogeneous society that is made up of more than 400 ethnic groups with diverse cultural heritage transmitted from one generation to another through the family and the school as agents of socialization (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004). However, the cultural heritage of the Nigerian society, despite its uniqueness is fast fading in the sight of the up growing generation so much that some people have lost memory of the historical origin of their ethnic groups. Our contact and interaction with the western world via education to some greater extent, has devastating effects on the Nigerian cultural values and orientations. For example, in some homes or families, the mode of communication has changed from the typical tribal languages to English language. One now wonders what has gone wrong. Is it a crime to come in contact with western civilization? In view of this, the aim of this study is to investigate and discuss the role of Social Studies education in the polarization of the Nigerian cultural system through the collection and analysis of relevant data with a view to suggesting the way forward for improvement.

Concept of Culture

Culture is as old as human race. It has been with mankind since the creation of Adam and Hawau in the Garden of Eden. Culture is a dominance of human environment. Therefore, it can be viewed as the total ways of life of a group of people within a particular area. Many scholars have defined culture in many perspectives. According to Mezieobi and Joy (2012:215), culture refers to:

- particular people’s way of life manifest in commonly shared knowledge beliefs, customs, traditions, skills, ideas, feelings, artifacts, activities, habits, values, tools, aesthetic objects, methods of thinking, methods of eating, institutions, methods of talking, occupations, music, celebrations and festivals. food eaten, house types, transportation. language. norms, folkways. rules, regulations. mores. and technical ways.
Introduction

Nigeria as a political entity and a young democratic society is blessed with multiethnic groups with cultural plurality. The uniqueness of this plurality has been stressed by Iyamu (1994: 87) that:

It is neither easy to define cultural values of national application nor have measure by which a typical Nigerian can be identified. In fact, there is no typical Nigerian in a pluralistic sense as no cultural group in Nigeria can satisfactorily and acceptably represent the others. Every culture enjoys autonomy, identity and independence.

Similarly, Nigeria is a heterogeneous society that is made up of more than 400 ethnic groups with diverse cultural heritage transmitted from one generation to another through the family and the school as agents of socialization (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004). However, the cultural heritage of the Nigerian society, despite its uniqueness is fast fading in the sight of the up growing generation so much that some people have lost memory of the historical origin of their ethnic groups. Our contact and interaction with the western world via education to some greater extent, has devastating effects on the Nigerian cultural values and orientations. For example, in some homes or families, the mode of communication has changed from the typical tribal languages to English language. One now wonders what has gone wrong. Is it a crime to come in contact with western civilization? In view of this, the aim of this study is to investigate and discuss the role of Social Studies education in the polarization of the Nigerian cultural system through the collection and analysis of relevant data with a view to suggesting the way forward for improvement.

Concept of Culture

Culture is as old as human race. It has been with mankind since the creation of Adam and Hawau in the Garden of Eden. Culture is a dominance of human environment. Therefore, it can be viewed as the total ways of life of a group of people within a particular area. Many scholars have defined culture in many perspectives. According to Mezieobi and Joy (2012:215), culture refers to:

particular people’s way of life manifest in commonly shared knowledge beliefs, customs, traditions, skills, ideas, feelings, artifacts, activities, habits, values, tools, aesthetic objects, methods of thinking, methods of eating, institutions, methods of talking, occupations, music, celebrations and festivals. food eaten, house types, transportation, language, norms, folkways, rules, regulations. mores, and technical ways.
From the above definitions, it is deduced that culture is past and present of every society. It is the way of life and certain attributes that every society possesses for meaningful living. Culture is transitional in nature. It is continually passed from old generation to new generation. Culture constitutes a vital element of human identification and the determinant of behavioral pattern of the individual or group of people in a particular geographical location over a given period of time. Cultural heritage of any group of people can be traditional or modern, material or non-material. Traditional culture represents traditional ways of life of people which manifest in the type of language, mode of dressing, traditional technology, etc. while modern culture constitutes western cultural values, beliefs, and norms. It is a borrowed culture which is associated with the sophisticated method of doing things.

Material culture according to Fagbeyinbo (2005) includes the concrete, overt, explicit, tangible and visible acquisition of man as he lives in his society. For example, cutlasses, houses, clothes, automobiles, furniture, painting, musical instruments, household utensils, and appliances among others. Rauta (2004) defined non-material culture as intangible comprising music, language, religion or beliefs, festival and so on. Parents and elderly persons in the family, community, and society at large play vital role in the preservation and development of culture. They serve as the custodians of traditional cultural values for the development of younger generation so that it could be protected from being eroded by foreign influence in the wave of development.

Statement of the Problem

Culture is never stagnant rather it is subject to change over a given period of time. Cultural dynamism occurs as a response to societal demands. In this context, Fagbeyinbo (2005) stated that culture may be altered or modified at a given period of existence in the society. Thus, cultural practices today were determined by the past and our culture of tomorrow will be shaped by present trend. However, the concern here is that the Nigerian culture has been polarised and almost being dominated by western cultural values. The influence is so strong that it has negative effects on our norms and values such as folkways, proverbs, etc. which is meant for intellectual development of the Nigerian child. Similarly, the indigenous languages such as Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, Fulani, etc. which are meant to develop communication skills of the respective groups of people have also been termed to be inferior by some people while English language (foreign language) is held to a higher esteem to the extent that some children cannot even speak their mother languages because these are not spoken at home. For instance, the type of food we eat, the way we eat them, how they are produced, where and when they are produced and sold have been altered. Accordingly, the behavioural patterns of some Nigerians have greatly been influenced by western culture. Some boys have turned themselves to women through the use of artificial make up such as plating of hair, use of earrings, and application of the new body design known as Tattoo.

In the same vein, some young ladies also wear clothes that are meant for men. Thus, the traditional attires typical of the Nigerian culture have also become occasional...
From the above definitions, it is deduced that culture is past and present of every society. It is the way of life and certain attributes that every society possesses for meaningful living. Culture is transitional in nature. It is continually passed from old generation to new generation. Culture constitutes a vital element of human identification and the determinant of behavioral pattern of the individual or group of people in a particular geographical location over a given period of time. Cultural heritage of any group of people can be traditional or modern, material or non-material. Traditional culture represents traditional ways of life of people which manifest in the type of language, mode of dressing, traditional technology, etc. while modern culture constitutes western cultural values, beliefs, and norms. It is a borrowed culture which is associated with the sophisticated method of doing things.

Material culture according to Fagbeyinbo (2005) includes the concrete, overt, explicit, tangible and visible acquisition of man as he lives in his society. For example, cutlasses, houses, clothes, automobiles, furniture, painting, musical instruments, household utensils and appliances among others. Rauta (2004) defined non-material culture as intangible comprising music, language, religion or beliefs, festival and so on. Parents and elderly persons in the family, community and society at large play vital role in the preservation and development of culture. They serve as the custodians of traditional cultural values for the development of younger generation so that it could be protected from being eroded by foreign influence in the wave of development.

Statement of the Problem

Culture is never stagnant rather it is subject to change over a given period of time. Cultural dynamism occurs as a response to societal demands. In this context, Fagbeyinbo (2005) stated that culture may be altered or modified at a given period of existence in the society. Thus, cultural practices today were determined by the past and our culture of tomorrow will be shaped by present trend. However, the concern here is that the Nigerian culture has been polarised and almost being dominated by western cultural values. The influence is so strong that it has negative effects on our norms and values such as folkways, proverbs, etc. which is meant for intellectual development of the Nigerian child. Similarly, the indigenous languages such as Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, Fulani, etc. which are meant to develop communication skills of the respective groups of people have also been termed to be inferior by some people while English language (foreign language) is held to a higher esteem to the extent that some children cannot even speak their mother languages because these are not spoken at home. For instance, the type of food we eat, the way we eat them, how they are produced, where and when they are produced and sold have been altered. Accordingly, the behavioural patterns of some Nigerians have greatly been influenced by western culture. Some boys have turned themselves to women through the use of artificial make up such as plating of hair, use of earrings, and application of the new body design known as Tattoo.

In the same vein, some young ladies also wear clothes that are meant for men. Thus, the traditional attires typical of the Nigerian culture have also become occasional
wears and inferior to western mode of dressing. Moreover, the effects of this cultural
dynamism or polarization can be felt in the absolute display of modern technology to
disrupt human activities and termination of human lives which the traditional culture
frowns at. Recent bombing activities across the country and lack of respect for
constituted authority and dignity of mankind are relevant examples.

In addition, the principle of responsibility known of the Nigerian family system
has also been eroded by western principle of “individualism” where people are no longer
being their brother’s keepers. Thus, the sense of affection, feelings and love experienced
in the extended family system is no longer in vogue. With the situation reflected above,
Can we as a people, continue in this manner? What becomes the fate of our cultural
heritage(s) in the generation yet unborn?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the harmonizing role of Social Studies in
the polarization of Nigerian cultural value system as perceived with a view to proffer
suggestions for effective Social Studies classroom instructions. Specifically, the study is
aimed to investigate:-

- The perceptions of students about western cultural values.
- The views of the students on the Nigerian traditional cultural values.
- The role Social Studies plays in preserving the Nigerian cultural heritage.

Research Questions

The following three research questions were formulated to guide the study:-

- What are the perceptions of students about western cultural values?
- What are the views of the students on the Nigerian traditional cultural values?
- What role does Social Studies play in preserving the Nigerian cultural
  heritage?

Methodology

The sample of this study consists of 300 Social Studies students randomly
selected from three colleges of education as follows: - Federal College of Education
(Technical) Potiskum, Yobe State, Umar Sulaiman College of Education, Gashua, Yobe
State and College of Education Azare, Bauchi. A fifteen – item questionnaire structurally
designed was used to elicit information from the respondents using 5 rating scales as
follows: Strongly Agree = 5 points, Agree = 4 points, Strongly Disagree = 3 points,
Disagree = 2 points and Undecided = 1 point. The questionnaire was divided into two
sections A and B. while section A bothers on the biographical data of the respondents,
section B focuses on the issues that have direct bearing on cultural values and practices.
The data collected were analyzed using mean score value of 3.00 which was obtained as
follows $5 + 4 + 3 + 2 + 1 = \frac{15}{5} = 3.00$ on which the decision for agreement and
disagreement of each item were based.
Result Analysis

Research Question 1: what are the perceptions of students about western culture?

Table 1: Mean Responses of students’ perceptions on western culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SN</th>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nigerian culture is inferior to western culture</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I appreciate western culture more than the Nigerian culture</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Students love western style of dressing because it makes people appreciate their beauty</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Western culture has dominated traditional norms and values</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>As a result of the domination of western cultural values majority of the students are not aware of the traditional arts and crafts of their people</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above shows the responses of the students to item 1-5 which bothered on their perception of western cultural values. Thus the mean value of 3.66, 3.22, 3.63, 3.80 and 3.69 in item 1-5 respectively are clear indication that western culture plays a dominant role in Nigeria.

Research Question 2: What are the views of the students on the traditional cultural values?

Table 2: Mean responses of students on traditional cultural values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SN</th>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Nigeria traditional beliefs are somehow confusing</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Traditional Drinks Such As Kunu, Zobo and Burukutu are preferable to western drinks among its members</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Traditional family system encourages moral training</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Co-operation, tolerance and togetherness are cherished in traditional culture</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Nigeria cultural practices are better in terms of moral development than cultural practices of the western world</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Judging from the above analysis, item 6 recorded means score of 3.39, indicating that Nigerian traditional beliefs are sometimes confusing. With the mean value of 3.38, it is evident that traditional drinks are still preferable to western drinks. While item 8 and 9
have 4.02 and 3.80 respectively indicating that traditional family system encourages moral training and culture of cooperation and togetherness, item 10 recorded 3.48 meaning that Nigerian cultural practices are better in terms of moral development than the cultural practices of the western world.

Research Question 3: What role does Social Studies play in preserving the Nigerian cultural heritage?

Table 3: The Role of social studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SN</th>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Social Studies discourages violence and other social vices in the society because they hamper socio-cultural development</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Social Studies Education is a tool for cultural preservation in Nigeria</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Social Studies deals with the historical origin of ethnic groups in Nigeria</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Social Studies develops in the students a sense of appreciating Nigerian cultural heritage</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Inquiry method is highly needed in Social Studies to enable the students understand the cultural values for national development</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates general acceptability to the role of Social Studies Education in the preservation of Nigerian cultural heritage. This is therefore a clear testimony that the students are aware of the vision and mission of social studies education in Nigeria.

Findings of the Study

The major findings of the study are that:

- Western cultural values have dominant influence on the Nigerian culture
- Moral development of the Nigerian family system is highly cherished by the respondents.
- The respondents are aware of the roles of social Studies in preservation of the Nigerian cultural heritage

Discussion

The perception of the respondents on western cultural values as indicated in item 1-5 where the mean scores of 3.66, 3.22, 3.63, 3.80 and 3.69 are obtained pointing to the danger of western influence on Nigerian culture. In this line of thought, Fagbeyinbo (2005) asserted that as a result of overwhelming domination of western education, new pattern of behaviour have been adopted. The pattern here can either be positive or
negative. Similarly, this finding is in line with Bozimo (2011) who out of worry by the danger of imbibed of western cultural values, described the situation as cultural bastardization of treasured values, norms and ethics that made us the once warm hearted citizens in Nigeria. Accordingly, the mean score of 3.39 for item 6 indicating that the traditional culture is confusing as reason for adoption of western behavioural pattern by some Nigerian youths. This scenario is worrisome and therefore underscores the need for proper orientation and socialization process of the youths by the Nigerian family system to cherish their cultural heritage.

Although, the respondents registered their agreement to items 7 which bothers on traditional drinks with the mean of 3.88, their acceptance to item 8 indicating that traditional family system encourages moral training with mean of 4. 02, acceptance to item 9 which states that co-operation, tolerance and togetherness are cherished in traditional culture with mean score of 3.10 and item 10 which indicates that Nigerian cultural practices are better in terms of moral development than cultural practices of the western world with 3.84 respectively is a testimony Mezeobi (2007) posited that the social functions of the family is to inculcate norms, traditions, culture and values of the society into the young once. Similarly, Bozimo (2011) endorses that family is a corner stone of every society that nurtures, preserves and passes values, norms and ethics cherished by the people from generation to generation. The Nigerian citizens therefore need to internalize and display these values for national development. The responses of the respondents to item 10-15 represent their awareness on the roles of Social Studies.

Roles of Social Studies

In view of the above exposition, the role of Social Studies Education in cultural preservation of the Nigerian society becomes inevitable. Social Studies Education refers to the study of man and his physical and social environment. This subject area is conceived by Enge in Okam (2002) as eclectic distillation of many disciplines. It is also an applied field which focuses on scientific knowledge with ethical, philosophical and social considerations which arise through the process of decision making as practical by the citizens. The Social Studies programme is expected to protect our national values, according to Okam (1981) in Bozimo (2011) it is not that which places major emphasis on the mastery of logical organized body of subject matter, rather the one which emphasizes the functional use of subject matter from many sources in order to increase social literacy traits, develop socially desirable behavior that evolves from sound attitudes and the appreciation and respect for national values and norms.

In view of this, Bozimo (2011) “the scope of Social Studies is limitless as it encompasses ideas, institution and interactions of human beings. Thus, its focus is on man in social group and institutions. how man lives and perceives his social and physical environments in an attempt to understand the structure and problems therein and how he solves them”. The functions of social studies education is to inculcate cultural values into the up growing generation with a view to effectively preserve them in such a way that would not only protect our image in the international communities but highly cherished,
internalized and proudly displayed by the old and up growing youths of the Nigerian society. Social Studies has potential to preserve acceptable attitudes and socio-cultural virtues such as tolerance, togetherness, cooperation, love, respect for human dignity and constituted authority, national identity, etc. through an integrated and interdisciplinary contents, instructional resources, strategies and diverse evaluative approaches.

Thus, the ultimate goal of Social Studies is to develop affective citizenship and patriotism in the students in order to enable them to be aware of the Nigerian cultural heritages and be proud of them. According to Okam (2002) it is the recognition of this noble role that social studies is given a place of pride as a core subject that the students cannot be dispensed with at the secondary school level by National Policy on Education. From the above deliberations, the role of social studies education cannot be over emphasized. Hence, the "teacher is at the hub of effective implementation of educational process" (Ukeje. 2000). In the same vein, Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) declared that "No education can rise above the quality of its teachers" underscores the place of social studies teachers in the implementation of the curriculum.

Conclusion

Amidst of the worrisome state of Nigerian culture, the role of Social Studies education as an interdisciplinary curriculum packaged with worthwhile knowledge, skills and desirable behaviour becomes inevitable in the scheme of events in Nigeria. Therefore, something should be done to reverse the situation by making our culture to be valued by the present and future generations. We sincerely need curative and urgent measures to save our cultural heritage from collapse or pushed aside by the western influence.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- The government should employ Social Studies experts to teach the course at all levels of the Nigerian education system so that the cultural values of the Nigerian society could be properly transmitted.
- The missing gap between junior secondary school and tertiary institutions should be bridged. Thus, Social Studies should be taught and made compulsory at the senior secondary level to enhance the cultural development of Nigeria.
- Social Studies Teachers should employ variety of methods especially inquiry for dissemination of the classroom instructions in the subject area.
References


