Archery and Swimming in Relation to Security Education as Curriculum Design in Tackling Security Challenges among Nigerian Schools

Nasir Danzaria *[1], Clement Chukwueloka Okam[2], Umar Sale Magaji[3]

[1] Ministry of Higher, Technical and Vocational Education Katsina State Scholarship Board, Nigeria
[2] Faculty of Education Ummaru Musa Yar'adua University, Katsina State Nigeria
[3] Faculty of Education Al-Qalam University Katsina State Nigeria

corresponding author
✉ ndanzaria@yahoo.com[1]

Abstract: This study explores the integration of archery and swimming into Security Education as a curricular design aimed at addressing security challenges in Nigerian schools. The paper is divided into two parts: the first part elucidates the themes present in the primary and junior secondary school Security Education curriculum, as well as the concepts of archery, swimming, curriculum, curriculum design, and security. The second part discusses archery and swimming as components of curricular design, various archery shooting styles, basic swimming strokes, the functions of swimming, and how archery and swimming curricula have been implemented in other countries. The findings suggest a pressing need to include archery and swimming within the Security Education curriculum of the 9-Year Basic Education and Senior Secondary Schools in Nigeria. Additionally, the involvement of traditional archers and swimmers, along with private swimming pool owners, in teaching these skills to students is highly recommended.

Keywords: Archery, Swimming, Curriculum, Curriculum design, Security Education

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Nigeria has faced significant security challenges that have affected various sectors, including education. Attacks on schools, violence and Gender Based Violence (GBV), and insecurity have made it increasingly critical for educational institutions to prioritize not only academic learning but also security education. As part of a holistic approach to creating safer environments for students, innovative curriculum designs that incorporate physical activities like archery and swimming in the Security Education curriculum can play a pivotal role in enhancing security education.

The current Security Education curriculum, based on the National Values curriculum established by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), is designed to equip students with essential values for promoting national consciousness, socio-cultural development, and critical thinking. However, as noted by Adebayo and Adeduntan (2021), the content of Security Education in Nigerian schools has a limited scope compared to similar educational frameworks in the United States, Poland, and Jordan. They highlight significant challenges in implementing an effective Security Education curriculum, including inadequate curriculum content and a lack of alignment between assessments and students' educational needs. In addition, the curriculum is short of relevant tools that will equip students with the basic training for defending themselves or get out of sudden attacks. NERDC (2012) outlines specific themes for the Security Education curriculum at the primary level, which include concepts of security, sources of danger, and the identification of security agencies. At the Junior Secondary School (JSS) level, the themes expand to cover common crimes and emergency management (NERDC, 2018).

The origin of archery date back to ancient times when it was primarily used for hunting and warfare, and has been regarded as a timeless sport that have captivated people for centuries (Armory Daily, 2023). James (2011) opined that man has been hunting with a bow and arrow since before the beginning of recorded time. Thus, archery is a historically significant method for teaching self-defense, bravery, and societal defense that have been overlooked in current educational approaches, specifically the security education curriculum. The skill provide affordable and accessible tools for students, especially in the context of increasing insecurity in Nigeria.

In addressing security challenges faced by students, the curriculum design must ensure that both male and female students learn self-defense skills and cultivate bravery. Plato's philosophy of equal education for men and women, as cited by Murphy (2015), supports the notion that both genders should be equipped with skills such as archery and swimming. This inclusion could also support efforts to mitigate issues related to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in schools.

Curriculum is a planned learning experience aimed at achieving desired goals and set values for result. Tanner and Tanner (1995) as cited in Anyasodo and Ikonne (2020) defined curriculum as the planned and guided learning experiences and intended outcomes, formulated through systematic reconstruction of knowledge and experience, under the auspices of the school for learners continuous and willful growth in personal and social competence.

Curriculum design is one of the most crucial aspect in the development of curriculum and delivery of any content that is loaded in the curriculum. In designing curriculum, many issues has to be taken into cognizance to ensure coverage of important components that are required in the implementation process, such as aims and objectives, content which encompasses learning experiences, the methodology to be used, instructional materials, implementation procedures, techniques of evaluation and innovation when the need arises. Curriculum design has been described as the end result, or the product of curriculum development (NOUN, 2012). Daramola (1986) as cited in NOUN (2012) similarly defined curriculum design as a process of planning and selection of curriculum contents.

Security according to Achumba, Ighomereho, and Akpor-Robaro (2013) refers to the situation that exists as a result of the establishment of measures for the protection of persons, information and property against hostile persons, influences and actions. It is the existence of conditions within which people in a society can go about their normal daily activities without any threats to their lives or properties. Olubunmi (2019) defined security as the protection against all forms of harm whether physical, economic or psychological. Achumba, Ighomereho, and Akpor-Robaro (2013) argued that security is not the absence of threats or security issues, but the ability to rise to the challenges posed by these threats with expediency and expertise. Therefore, security specifically, in relation to students refers to ability of students to device means of defending themselves in times of attack by fellow human beings or wild animals, within schools and the wider environment. On the other hand, Beland (2005) as cited in Achumba, Ighomereho, and Akpor-Robaro (2013) has defined insecurity as the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection.

This research aims to emphasize the urgent need for a comprehensive review of the Security Education Curriculum in Nigeria to integrate self-defense mechanisms like archery and swimming.

ARCHERY AS CURRICULUM DESIGN

Archery presents numerous benefits and can be effectively integrated into the Nigerian school curriculum. Incorporating archery into the 9-Year Basic Education and Senior Secondary Schools and in particular, in the National Values Curriculum enhances students' physical and mental capabilities. Key benefits of archery, as outlined by Quranforu (2023), include:

a. Increasing Strength and Stamina: Archery enhances physical strength by utilizing various muscle groups during practice.

b. Improving Focus and Concentration: Students learn to concentrate on their target, which can translate to improved focus in academic settings.

c. Stress Relief and Relaxation: Engaging in archery helps reduce stress and anxiety, promoting overall well-being.

d. Self-Defense: Archery can provide students with self-defense skills in emergency situations.

e. Hunting Skills: Understanding hunting strategies cultivates bravery and prepares students for handling dangers.

Incorporating these benefits of archery into the security education curriculum will to a large extent served as safety as well as protective skills to the students. Archery skill is actually required by students in Nigeria for them to be able to learn various manners of handling dangers when confronted with at schools environment and outside the schools. It will also reduce school dropout rates which is being witnessed in some schools in Nigeria. This is evident from the Department of Natural Resources (2024) USA, who stated that statistics has shown that school archery programs engage more students in the educational process, improve classroom performance, and reduce drop-out rates.

Thus, archery can contribute in several ways to security education in Nigerian schools such as through:

a. Developing Discipline: The practice of archery requires immense focus and discipline. Students learn to maintain concentration and composure under pressure, skills that are transferable to emergency situations where swift decision-making is crucial.

b. Enhancing Situational Awareness: Archery demands an acute awareness of one's surroundings, including understanding environmental factors that may impact performance. This heightened awareness can translate into improved vigilance in real-life scenarios, encouraging students to be more alert to their surroundings and possible threats.

c. Building Teamwork and Trust: When taught in groups, archery fosters teamwork and communication. Students learn to rely on each other and build trust which is an essential aspect of community safety and support systems in schools.

d. Emotional Regulation: Archery teaches students to manage their emotions effectively. Learning to deal with frustration and maintain composure can help them respond better in stressful situations outside the archery range.

Styles of Shooting in Archery

There are various shooting styles utilized in archery, Strong (2018) enumerated the following styles used by archers defending on their targets: (a) Three Under: Placing three fingers under the nock, suitable for closer distances. Most beginner archers finds this style a bit easier (b) Split Finger: Index finger above the nock, while the other fingers are below, optimal for long-range shooting (c) Instinctive Shooting: A natural shooting technique where the archer shoots based on instinct (d) Gap Shooting: Involves adjusting the arrow point for different distances (e) Fixed Crawl: A precise shooting tactic that adjusts the nocking point (f) Fixed Sights: Commonly used in target and field archery for enhanced accuracy. Archery Dude (2023) opined that string walking is another shooting method leveraging the tip of the arrow for distance estimation.

Swimming as Curriculum Design

Swimming is a critical skill for personal safety and survival, particularly amidst increasing instances of drowning related to insecurity and natural disasters in Nigeria. Swimming can equip students with essential self-defense skills and foster overall health and well-being and as such very crucial aspect to be infused into the Nigerian security education curriculum.

The educational benefits of swimming extend beyond safety, according to Edsys (n.d) swimming benefits comprised of health benefits that enhances physical health, cardiac fitness, and stamina; focus and capabilities that improves memory retention and concentration; psychological fitness that can boost mood and overall mental health; teamwork that fosters collaboration and camaraderie among peers; time management that hones time management skills especially competitive swimming, balancing academics and sports, and; better academic performance through improved coordination, concentration, and stress management.

Research indicates that swimming contributes to better academic performance due to the physiological and psychological impacts associated with the activity (Schrothe, 2020).

Thus, swimming skills can contribute in several ways to security education in Nigerian schools through:

a. Water Safety Awareness: Teaching students how to swim can instill a critical sense of water safety. In Nigeria, where flooding and water-related accidents are common, this skill can be lifesaving.

b. Rescue Techniques: Swimming lessons often include rescue techniques, which can empower students to assist peers in distress aquatic environments. This contributes to a culture of safety and responsible citizenship.

    c. Confidence and Resilience: Learning to swim can significantly boost student's confidence. Resilience gained from overcoming fears in the pool can translate to other areas of life, including tackling security challenges at school.

    d. Physical Fitness: Swimming is an excellent way to maintain physical fitness. A healthy body supports a healthy mind, which is essential for students to effectively engage in security education.

Basic Swimming Strokes

Key swimming strokes that students should learn according to (Into the Swim, 2024) include: (a) Freestyle which is the fastest and most recognized swimming stroke (b) Backstroke is to swum on the back, that promote comfort and relaxation (c) Butterfly which is a complex stroke that requires coordination (d) Breaststroke which is a slower, yet efficient stroke often used for safety. In addition to these main strokes, specialized strokes such as sidestroke, combat sidestroke and Trudgen can be introduced for specific scenarios (SwimmJim, 2018).

Archery and Swimming Curriculum as Implemented in Other Countries

Various countries have recognized archery and swimming as essential components of their educational curricula. The main reason according to Goodwin (2015) that led many countries to include swimming lessons as part of their educational curriculum in their various schools is prevention of drowning. In Scandinavian countries, swimming programs are compulsory, in order to encourage children to be proficient swimmers by grade 4 (Olstad, Berg & Kjendlie, 2020). Similarly, in France, swimming is mandated in primary schools, while in the UK, there are initiatives that ensures all children can swim by the end of primary education (Guardian News & Media, 2023).

Archery is also gaining traction, with programs like the National Archery in Schools Program (NASP) in the US encouraging physical education teachers to incorporate archery into their curricula (Department of Natural Resources, 2024). In Dutch, Brown (2019) elaborated that most people learn to swim at school where swimming lessons are provided as part of the curriculum and students were set up to learn to swim at a young age.

Conclusion

Incorporating archery and swimming into the Security Education curriculum as part of a comprehensive security education strategy would offers Nigerian schools a unique opportunity to address pressing security challenges. By teaching students essential skills that align with physical education, they not only learn to protect themselves but also build resilience, teamwork, and a strong sense of community. As Nigeria continues to evolve in its

approaches to ensuring school safety, innovative curriculum designs that feature such practical skills are a promising avenue for creating safer learning environments and personal development, contributing positively to educational outcomes.

Suggestions

Based on the study conducted, the following suggestions were proposed.

a. Need to include swimming and archery in the Security Education curriculum of the 9-Year Basic Education and Senior Secondary Schools in Nigeria.

b. Involvement of traditional archers and swimmers, as well as private pool owners, in teaching the skills of archery and swimming extensively to students.

c. Recruitment of qualified teachers and instructors to ensure effective implementation of the Security Education curriculum in Nigerian schools.

d. Countries that share common experiences with Nigeria in terms security challenges and similar incidences of drowning can make use of this study for inclusion in their schools' curriculum.

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