ENHANCING SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH QUALITY EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHES

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Abstract
The study was on enhancing societal development through quality researches in Universities. The study adopted a survey research design. Purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the post graduates students, who were met in their clusters. Sixty-six (66) of them participated in the research. The instrument used was the Post-graduate Students Questionnaire (PSQ) comprising two sections: sections A and B. Section A included items soliciting responses on the categories of the postgraduate programmes, the knowledge and awareness of research ethics. The importance and the need to add it in the postgraduate curriculum were also sought. Section B of the questionnaire included ten (10) items soliciting responses on the rating of the level of the respondents' awareness on research ethics. The rating was done on 3 points scale: high (3), medium (2), and low (1). The data collected were analysed using percentages and mean scores. The criterion mean of 2 was set as the benchmark. It was clear that none of the items met the criterion set as the benchmark except item on knowledge of confidentiality which was high. Their awareness on research ethics generally, awareness on publication practices, collaborative authorship, animal welfare, knowledge of research misconduct, regulations, policies and guidelines that guide research misconduct, putting culture into consideration when carrying research, avoidance of pitfalls in carrying research and awareness that research ethics helps to build public support for research were within the medium range. The need to emphasize quality researches in education cannot be taken for granted. The emerging dynamics of the world necessitated the need to strengthen researches which invariably may attract more research funds to the universities.
Keywords: *Enhancing, Societal development, Educational Researches*

Introduction

Through a concerted effort of knowledge acquisition, man has lightened his burden by discovering the wheel, the sail and the lever. He has discovered the locomotive engine, developed vehicles, ships and airplanes. He has not only succeeded in conquering the distance on the surface of the earth, but also he is daily striving to conquer space. All these have been possible through research; a never-ending desire to provide answers to puzzling questions or solutions to unsolved problems. Research, like science, represents logic of inquiry about the truth of an event or object. This interrelatedness was well brought out by Kerlinger (1986) in his definition of research and science. He defines scientific research as "systematic, controlled, empirical and critical investigation of hypothetical proposition about the presumed relations among natural phenomena". Inferring from his definition of science, research is more formal and systematic than merely employing scientific approach; since this

approach can be used in an informal manner to arrive at conclusion concerning phenomenon. Thus, research is a more systematic activity that is directed towards the discovery and development of an organized body of knowledge. Research is defined as a process of finding out solution to a problem. It is an activity with a clear purpose in mind, the result of which will contribute to, or constitute the solution of a real problems (Nwana, 2008).

Nwana (2008) identifies two concepts in educational research. The first one is broad and generalized. This has to do with any field or discipline which is beneficial to knowledge. The second concept of educational research is technical and is defined as the study of problems of teaching and learning. Educational research is seen as a research aimed at teaching and learning as well as other issues directly or indirectly related to teaching and learning. Chatti, Dyckhoff, Schroeder & Thus (2012) defines research as a systematic search for facts. Research has also been defined as a systematic investigation into and the study of materials and sources in order to establish facts and reach a new conclusion. Research is a systematic search for an answer to any experimental process. Research is a diligent and systematic inquiry or investigation into a subject in order to discover a fact or revise it. Research can be defined as a detailed scientific and systematic approach in finding a solution to a problem. It is detailed because it follows step by step approach and it is scientific because the findings are based on objectivity and empiricism.

Carrying out researches and writing research reports are requirements in tertiary institutions before degrees are awarded. Research reports includes articles, theses, dissertations, scientific reports, as well as management reports and publishable reports, among others. Research is the key to sustainable development especially when the findings of the researchers are published. There is no gainsaying that the development of information and communication technology which has brought the world together as a global village is a product of research effort. Onuka, Emunemu & Onuka (2009) found that there was a positive correlation between evaluation/research and development in various degrees. Quality research is also akin to quality education but quality cannot be achieved without the development of the whole person vis-à-vis development of the society.

The Incheon Declaration for Education 2030: Toward inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all was signed at the end of World Education Forum (WEF) held in May, 2015. It set a new vision for education for the next 15 years. It states that learning outcomes must be well defined in cognitive and non-cognitive domains, and continually assessed as an integral part of teaching and learning process. Quality education includes the development of those skills, values, attitudes and knowledge that enable citizens to lead healthy and fulfilled lives, make informed decisions and respond to local and global challenges (Gercia, Carios & Yuri, 2016).

Non-cognitive skills are sometimes called social and emotional skills, behavioural skills, interpersonal skills or intrapersonal skills, and life skills, among others. Non-cognitive skills are vital to a person's ability to live a full life, including active participation as a family member, neighbor and engaged democratic citizen. These skills have been observed to increase trust, probability of voting and decreased the probability of being divorced (Gercia *et al.,* 2016). Non-cognitive skills also correlate with improved life satisfaction, ability to get on with others, to share, consider and respect alternative points of view. A study of over 200 socio-emotional interventions in the United States targeting children from kindergarten through high school (ages 5-18) found that participating students exhibited higher academic achievement with the gain performance estimated to be 11 percentile points. It has also been established that there were connections between non-cognitive skills and academic achievement.

Employers also highly ascribe to non-cognitive skills in their search for good employees. They look for skills such as verbal communication, teamwork/ collaboration, professionalism/work ethic, and critical thinking/problem-solving among the list of traits that are essential for workplace success. Positive relationship have been found between socio-emotional skills and competence and employment outcomes (such as having a stable employment or being employed full time) while weak non-cognitive skills are associate with variety of negative life outcomes. This include reliance on public assistance, criminal activity, substance use , and poor mental health, among others. Education in Nigeria has always

placed a lot of premium on cognitive skills. Nigeria has realized the need for inclusion of non-cognitive skills in its educational system. Accordingly, the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD) was launched in October, 2007. IECD aimed at adopting integrated approach for the care and support given to children aged zero through 5 years. This is a holistic approach in which the Federal Ministry of Education collaborates with other ministries including Health, Environment and Housing, Women Affairs, information and Communication, Finance, Agriculture and Water Resources, as well as the National Planning commission, to provide interventions for the cognitive, physical, social , moral and emotional development of the child (Obiwe and Luozor, 2015).

The National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, (FRN), 2013) emphasizes that basic education should be given to children aged 0-15 years. The policy endorses private participation in the provision of pre-primary education. Pre-primary education includes children aged 0-4 years. This stage of education prepares children for entry into primary school. Holistic education does not end at this level of education. Today's students will be tomorrow's doctors, engineers, business managers, teachers, faith leaders, politicians, citizens, activist, parents and neighbor's. While they need to be able to demonstrate key skills and knowledge to enact those roles effectively, they must also demonstrate good character in carrying out their responsibility (Nojeem, 2020). Ajayi and Ekundayo (2009) sees education as the acquisition of knowledge, skills, habits and attitudes of positive value which makes an individual function positively in the society. The role of research ethics in carrying in out any research must be put into consideration. Research ethics involves the application of fundamental ethical principles to a variety of topics involving scientific research. These include the design and implementation, animal experimentation, various aspects of academic scandal including scientific misconduct such as fraud, fabrication of data and plagiarism, whistle blowing; regulation of research, among others. Research ethics provides guidelines for the responsible conduct of research. Research ethics educate and monitor researchers. Research ethics ensures that researches are conducted to a high ethical standard. When most people think of ethics (or morals), they think of rules for distinguishing between right or wrong. Most people learn ethical norms at home, at school, in church or in other social settings. Ethical norms are so ubiquitous that one might be tempted to regard them as common sense.

Many different disciplines have norms for behaviour that suit their particular aims and goals. These norms help members of the discipline. Ethical norms also serve the aims or goals of research that apply to people who conduct scientific research. There are several reasons why it is important to adhere to ethical norms in research. First, it promotes the aim of research, such as knowledge, truth and avoidance of error. For example prohibition against fabricating, falsifying or misrepresenting research data, promotes the truth and avoid error. Secondly, since research often involves a great deal of cooperation and cordination among many different people in different disciplines and institutions, ethical standard promotes the values that are essential to collaborative work, such as trust, accountability, mutual respect and fairness. For example, many ethical norms in research, such as guidelines for authorship, copyright and patenting policies, data sharing policies and confidentiality rules in peer review are designed to protect intellectual property interests while encouraging collaboration. Thirdly, many of the ethical norms help to ensure that researchers can be held accountable to the public. For instance, federal policies on research misconduct, conflicts of interest, the human subject protection. Fourthly, ethical norms in research also help to build public support for research. People are more likely to fund research projects if they can trust the quality and integrity of research.

Finally, many of the norms of research promote a variety of other important moral and social value. Ethical lapses in research can significantly harm human and animal subjects, students and the public. For example a researcher who fabricates data in a clinical trial may harm or even kill patients and a researcher who falls to abide by regulations and guidelines relating to radiation or biological safety may jeopardize his health and safety or the health and safety of staff and students.

Babalola (2013) defines research ethics as the moral principles guiding any form of disciplined injury from proposing through to publishing and repacking for market. According to him the basic assumptions of research ethics are that: general morality makes it unacceptable to cause pain, death,

disability, or deprive someone of freedom, pleasure without justification: general morality also requires that acts of deception, cheating, promise-breaking and neglect of responsibility be considered examples of wrongdoing unless there is justification for the acts; and that researchers are moral agents and therefore, are aware or are capable of being aware of the expectation that they do not cause unjustified harm to other person, sentient (living, animate, conscious or breathing) beings or systems. Furthermore, Babalola (2013) suggested the training of researchers, reviewers, funding agents, research organizations, and users of research in research ethics. This would make them more responsive to their moral expectations.

Public Health Service (PHS) cited in Babalola (2013) identified nine core instructional issues in research ethics. They include the following: acquisitions, management, sharing and ownership of data; mentor/trainee responsibilities; publications practices and responsible authorship: responsible peer review; responsible collaborative science; research involving human participants: research involving animals: research misconducts: and conflict of interest and commitment.

Research is very crucial and beneficial to education as a discipline that is concerned with human beings and their holistic development. Holistic development of a person is crucial in this 21st Century when the world is riddled with all sorts of strife-kidnapping, terrorism, arson rape, murder, cultism, armed robbery, internet fraud, prostitution and other vices too many to mention. Research is significant in advancing knowledge, progress and for enabling man to relate more effectively to its environment, to accomplish his purpose and to resolve his conflicts. The benefits as identified by some scholars are many. Personal benefits of research include: growing as a crucial, analytical and independent thinking, meeting challenges and demonstrating the ability to complete a project, discovering personal interest and developing internal standards of excellence. Professional benefits includes: exploring and preparing for future careers, developing marketable skills, enhancing professional communication skills and collaborating with others and working effectively as part of a team. Educational benefits include: working closely with a faculty mentor, learning about issues, methods and leaders in students' chosen field, applying concept learned in course work to "real life" situations, sharpening problem-solving skills and learning to read primary literature. Having explored the benefits of research, the issue that bothers the researchers of this study is that it appears that only few researchers and tertiary institutions pay attention to research ethics. Focus on research ethics is imperative in this era of technological advancement vis-à-vis sustainable development.

Sustainable development is a process which involves human's intelligence, decision making efficiency, planning management skills, power of imagination, entrepreneurship, development and production with environmental safety. Usually, sustainable development is a human subject. The issues associated with sustainable development can be seen as one of the basics of any society. Sustainable development is a pattern of using natural resources in such a way that provides regular individual requirements considering the preservation of the environment for coming generation. Sustainable development is the development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Quality education provided by higher education is crucial to sustainable development. Quality research ensures quality education and invariably sustainable development. Strengthening the quality of research vis-à-vis research ethics is invaluable in tertiary institutions.

The main purpose of researchers in universities is to expand the frontiers of knowledge and enhance the process of societal development. Three main functions of the University are teaching, research and community services. One of the challenges researchers face is the ability to sustain integrity in carrying out researches. Invariably, research ethics has a significant role to play in this regard. Ethics comes from the Greek word ethos which means "custom, habit". It also means "the science of ideal character" or the science of moral duty". Research ethics can be viewed as the moral principles that guide researchers in carrying out researchers.

Onuka (2009) have pointed out that the focal concept of research ethics is "duty of care". The researcher owes a duty of care to his predecessors, research communities, his colleagues, his subjects

and himself. A lot of emphasis is placed on confidentiality. Private information and embarrassing experience have to be handled with care. The researcher has a duty of care to his respondents by respecting their privacy. Respondents or participants should always be valued and treated with some respect. There appears to be dearth knowledge of research ethics at the university level. This gap is what this study intends to full.

The main aim of the study is to strengthen educational research in tertiary institutions for sustainable development vis-a-vis holistic development of the individual. Specifically the study sought to determine the level of awareness of research ethics among Ambrose Alli University postgraduate student and also find out their views concerning it's important and the need to include it in the postgraduate curriculum.

The following research questions guided this study.
1.   What are the postgraduate students' view on the importance of research ethics and the need to include it in the postgraduate curriculum?
2.   What is the level of awareness of Ambrose Alli University postgraduate students regarding research ethics?

Method
The study adopted a survey research design. Purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the postgraduate students, who were met in their clusters. Sixty-six (66) of them participated in the research. The instrument used was the Postgraduate students' Questionnaire (PSQ) comprising two sections; sections A and B. Section A included items soliciting responses on the categories of the postgraduate programmes, the knowledge and awareness of research ethics. The importance and the need to add it in the postgraduate curriculum were also sought. Section B the questionnaire included ten (10) items soliciting responses on the rating of the level of the respondents' awareness on research ethics. The rating was done on 3 point scale: high (3), medium (2), and low (1). The data collected were analysed using percentages and mean score. The criterion mean of 2 was set as the benchmark.

Results and Discussion
Research Question 1: What are the postgraduate students' views on the importance of research ethics and the need to include it in the postgraduate curriculum?
Table 1: Views of postgraduate students on research ethics

S/N	Students	Positive %	Negative %	Total
1	Research ethics should be taught	56	44	100
2.	Need for knowledge of research ethics	100	0	100
3.	Research ethics is important	100	0	100
4.	Research ethics is useful and necessary	95	5	100
5.	Research ethics should be added to the curriculum	100	0	100

Table 1 presented the views of postgraduate students on research ethics. Fifty-six percent (56%) of the respondents were of the view that it should be taught as a course while 44% of them did not think that it should be taught. All the respondents (100%) stated that research ethics was important and there was need to include it in curriculum. Ninety five (95%) of the respondents viewed it as useful while 5% of them stated that it was not necessary. What one can deduct from these responses is that postgraduate student's awareness on research ethics was positive. All the sixty-six (66) respondents representing 100% agreed that research ethics was important and that the knowledge of research ethic was needed. They agreed that it should be included in the curriculum. However, 5% of the respondents opined that research ethics was not necessary

2. What is the level of awareness of Ambrose Alli University postgraduate students regarding research ethics?

Table 2: Level of Postgraduate Students Awareness of Research Ethics

S/N	Items	High	Medium	Low	Remark
1.	Awareness of research ethics	1	1	0	Below benchmark
2.	Awareness of publication practices	0	1	0	Below benchmark
3.	Awareness of collaborative authorship	1	1	0	Below benchmark
4.	Awareness of respondents' confidentiality	2	1	0	Below benchmark
5.	Awareness of animal welfare (animal used) in research	0	1	1	Below benchmark
6.	Knowledge of research misconduct (fabrication, falsification and plagiarism)	1	1	0	Below benchmark
7.	Awareness of regulation, policies and guidelines that guide research misconduct	1	1	0	Below benchmark
8.	Awareness that culture should be put into consideration when carrying out research	1	1	0	Below benchmark
9.	Awareness that research ethics helps in the avoidance of pitfalls	1	1	0	Below benchmark
10	Awareness that research ethics helps to build public support for research	1	1	0	Below benchmark

From Table 2 above, it was clear that none of the items met the criterion set as the benchmark except the item on knowledge of confidentiality that was high. Their awareness on research ethics generally, awareness on publication practices, collaborative authorship, animal welfare, knowledge of research misconduct, regulations, policies and guidelines that guide research misconduct, putting culture into consideration when carrying research, avoidance of pitfalls in carrying research and awareness that research ethics helps to build public support for research were within the medium range. The need to emphasize research ethics at this level of education cannot be taken for granted.

Conclusions

It can be seen from the findings that the respondents' awareness of research ethics was just on the average. Their knowledge on the confidentiality of information provided by participants was high. This alone is not enough. Babalola (2013) suggested that research training could facilitate research staff's awareness of their moral responsibilities during proposal writing, conducting research writing the report, publishing the results and marketing the output. Training in research ethics would make all stakeholders more responsive to their moral obligations. Almost all the respondents used for the above study agreed that research ethics was important and useful and that it should be included in the curriculum.

Knowledge of research ethics could strengthen researches in the universities thereby attract more research grants to the institutions. Invariably, more researches would be carried on development of a whole person which the education system is still grappling with. Quality research is akin to education and societal development, but it cannot be achieved without the development of a whole person. The invaluable role of non-cognitive skills or emotional/behavioural skills in the development of a whole person include: ability to live a full and satisfied life, increased probability of voting, decreased probability of divorce, and ability to get along with others. What is more, there is a correlation between non-cognitive skills and academic achievement. Usually, researchers try to avoid the discussion on the development of a whole person because it is complicated. For active learning to take place, the development of a whole person should take a centre stage in academic conversations. One is inclined to agree with some scholars who rightly assert that the conversations on a whole person are about people, feelings, barriers and relationships. Employers of labour now lay a lot of emphasis on non-cognitive skills in search of employees.

Recommendations

The researchers have come up with the following recommendations;

- Educational managers should insist that research ethics should be taught as a course in tertiary institutions, especially at the postgraduate level.
- Non-cognitive skills should be included in all the curricula.
- Researchers and practitioners should work together to identify non-cognitive skills which have their origin in early years of life. They should nurture and sustain them

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