



RE-THINKING QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ETHICAL AND VALUES STRATEGIES TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



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Abstracts

The study examined strategies for re-thinking quality education for ethics and value system for national development. The study adopted literature research. It highlighted the effects of the degradation of ethics and values in Nigerian Educational system menace such as making individuals to be selfish, greedy and corrupt, fallen standard of education, increase in crime rate, insecurity, ethnicity, poor governance leading to economic hardship among others. Finally, the study concluded with the strategies for ethics and value for rethinking quality education for a productive society in Nigeria such as every social institution like the family, church, mosque, school and the government should take the culture of hard work, punctuality, self-discipline, humility, leadership by examples and so on seriously, and preach or lead campaigns against quick-rich syndrome, corruption, examination malpractice, violence, insolence among others for a productive Nigeria society.

Keywords: Education, ethics, strategies and value.

Introduction

Education is a process of inculcating ethics and values to equip the learner with a kind of life that is satisfying to the individual in accordance with the cherished values and ideals of the society (National Council of Education Research and Training, 2003). It is an important instrument of change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). Bolarin (2005) observed that many academics have articulated their individual reasons for education, but the ultimate end point is that, it is a requirement for societal formation, social change, societal leadership, human transformation and continuous process of growth and national development. In other words, education is seen as a powerful instrument that add values to the life of citizens and make them functional members of the society

Rethinking quality education for ethical and values systems is crucial for sustainable national development. This involves integrating ethical considerations and values into the curriculum, teaching methods, and overall educational experience to cultivate responsible citizens and promote positive societal change.



Conceptual Review

For clarity, some concepts within the write up were considered, such as education, ethics and value

Education

The word education is derived from the Latin *Educo*, which means educate, train. Education is a process of acquiring information. It means teaching and learning. Education has effects on human mind, character and physical abilities. The history of education begins with the human history itself. Education is also a way to become civilized individuals, and it maximizes human potentials.

Culture and cultural heritage can be transmitted by education, because the main occupation of man is to pass knowledge, skills and attitude from one generation to another. Kanu cited in Okere and Ofoego (2019) described education as an act, a process and a product. As an act, education involves various activities which aim at producing the acceptable man. As a process, it is guided by procedures that aim at producing capable human beings. As a product, educational activities and processes result in the production of acceptable, self-reliant, dependable, effective and efficient citizens.

Zubay and Soltis (2005) in their view, pointed out that education, itself, is essentially a moral undertaking because, "it is concerned with the development of human beings and human interactions". Teachers and school administrators impact how young people make sense of themselves and their world, respond to others, and how to carry out their roles as citizens, employees, family members, and friends.

Matthew and Obiesili (2022) noted that in ancient Greece, some philosophers' views on education such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle contributed to the development of our present educational system. In general, they all believed that the purpose of education is to improve humankind. Socrates' method is still used in modern educational practices. In this method, teachers ask some questions to improve the intellectual abilities of students and students try to answer these questions by using their reasons. Today's educational theories are based on the philosophies of these philosophers. Plato, who was the founder of idealism, claimed that the aim of education was to develop individual's abilities to better serve society. He also was the founder of Academy, the first university of the world. For him, both men and women had the right to education. He claimed that there were different stages of education. According to him, education was a key element for a society. On the other hand, Aristotle who was the father of realism believed that only citizens could be educated.

He believed that an educated person was a fulfilled person. He defended theoretical, practical and technical education. Education helps the development of bodily and mental faculties. Education builds character, gives knowledge, and helps progressing of State. Education makes a man complete and it also plays an important role in developing society and State. Schools are basic frameworks of education. School helps children to become good citizens and human beings. This is possible only by ethical education, so teaching ethics in school is important.

Ethics

Ethics is a branch of philosophy which deals with the morality of human actions or the norms of human behaviour. It deals with the morality of human actions or the norms of human behaviour. Ethics studies what is the proper course of action for man (Kanu, 2018). It studies right and wrong in human behaviours. It is a method by which we categorize our values and pursue them. Ethics is the very nature of man because, it is our means of deciding a course of action, without which, our actions would be meaningless and aimless. To the extent we pursue rational ethical standard, we will be able to correctly organize our goals and actions to accomplish our most pressing values. We act morally in order to realize full human well-being in the order of a created nature that is, ethics establishes the grounds for good relationship with others and God.

There are three meanings of ethics. First, ethics is commonly taken as a synonym for morality, the universal values and standards of conduct that every rational person wants every other to follow. Secondly, ethics is a well-established branch of philosophy that studies the sources of human values and standards, and struggle to locate them within theories of human individual and social condition. Thirdly, professional ethics, and it is not universal nor is it ethical theory; it refers to the special codes of



conduct adhered to by those who are engaged in common pursuit. Professional ethics is an integral part of a profession (Matthew & Obiesili, 2022).

Section 23 of the Nigerian constitution (1999) provides that the national ethics shall be discipline, integrity, dignity of labour, social justice, religious tolerance and patriotism. However, the lived experience of Nigerians is quite different from the constitutional provisions on ethics and values for the country. There is a lot of indiscipline in every facet of life in the country. Integrity is no longer cherished by many people. The get rich quick syndrome and pursuit of easy money has reduced the dignity of labour. There is high level of religious intolerance and the love for the country is waning. Many Nigerians have no respect for our institutions and national symbols. There is therefore a great need for ethics and value re-orientation.

Also, the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) (2004) recognized this need, and stated that value re-orientation was one of the four key strategies of the NEEDS programme.

The approach was to lead a campaign to re -instill the virtues of honesty, hard work, selfless service, moral rectitude, and patriotism. Unfortunately, throughout the period of the NEEDS, very little was done to actualize the campaign. Worthy to note that ethics and values re-orientation is a re-assessment, take a look again and put something back on course because it has gone off-course. Education has gone off course in Nigeria and the values expected from it lost. There is therefore the need to redeem education in Nigeria through ethic and value re-orientation in the system now. Re-orientation is to bring back the lost values in the school system of education in Nigeria (Magaji, 2014).

Values

Values is defined as the collective conception of what is considered good, desirable, proper or bad, undesirable, and improper in a culture. Values is central to human behaviour and development. Values guides the choices we make and the way it influences the behaviour of everyone in the society. According to Mukherjee (2020), values is socially approved desires and goals that are internalized through the process of conditioning, learning or socialization and that becomes subjective preferences, standards and aspirations. Lehner and Kube (2020) also saw values as an integral part of the personal philosophy of life by which we generally mean the system of values by which we live. The philosophy of life includes our aims, ideals, manner of thinking and the principles by which we guide our behaviour. Values, generally perceived, means those standards or principles which the society collectively hold as valuable and therefore to be imbibed by its members (Nwabuani, 2010).

Bodurin (2009) noted that values is basic beliefs and attitude in a society whether of individual or groups which is considered worthwhile and which serves as guide to choices and behaviour in daily life. Esu (2009) further defined values as ideals that guide or qualify your personal conduct, interaction with others, and involvement in your career. Values helps one to, and informs one on how he or she can conduct one's life in a meaningful way. On his part, Bolarin (2009) after broad consideration of various definitions of values, defined values to mean trait, practices, acts, ideals, beliefs, attitudes, and principles that a group or society considers to be of merit, worthwhile, dear, acceptable and right. Values is linked to beliefs and attitudes and guides human behaviour (Rennie, 2007). Nwosu (2013) identified societal values as follows:

- a. Honesty and integrity
- b. Humility and obedience
- c. Moderation and the golden mean
- d. Hard work and reverence for achievement
- e. Purity and chastity

Honesty: This deals with character and is associated with one's speech, actions, attitudes and projected thoughts. When the above attributes are conditioned by the principle of right and wrong as pre-determined by the society, one is said to exhibit honesty and integrity. Honesty and integrity predispose a person to exhibit exemplary moral character.



Humility and Obedient: They are also necessary for human development: A humble and obedient person offer selfless services to others because he is convinced, he is not better than others. Humility is the quality of having a modest or low view of one's importance. While obedience refers to submission to established rules and codes of conducts so that society can operate in a peaceful atmosphere and order.

Moderation: This is necessary for human development. Moderation means to be reasonable and balanced in actions and opinions. Moderation involves temperance and is in line with Golden mean principle which requires one not to engage in extremes. In all spheres of life –Politics, economy, social, etc. Extremism is abhorred in human conduct. Excessive quest for power in politics is frowned at, avarice and love of money is the root cause of evil. Excessive eating of food and drunkenness are condemned. In the same manner, religious fanaticism and obnoxious ethnocentrism do not receive accolades in human society.

Hard work and reverence for achievement: This is a core value among the Nigerian society. Hard work means constantly, regularly, or habitually engaged in earnest and energetic work. Hard work is one of the cardinal principles of human growth and development. Hard work builds character; you learn discipline and to be focused, manage your time and resources. In addition, hard work always accomplishes something, draws attention, brings new opportunities and blesses others. An adage says, "He who does not work, should not eat" Above all, hard work is important because it leads to high productivity, increased revenue, improvement in the living conditions of the individual, national development and decreased social vices.

Purity: This means freedom from immorality, especially of a sexual nature. Nigerian society has room for purity and therefore, any human community that is not built on cultural norms and ethos is bound to fail. For example, in Nigerian society, premarital sexual relationships, indecent dressing, indecent body exposure and other social ills are frowned at. Schools and colleges must mount large campaigns against indecent, dressing. There is need for change in our attitudes and behaviours if we must realize human development. Obviously, there is a dying moral culture and an ethical failure leading to total collapse of societal values.

All this total up to high rate of moral and behavioural rottenness. While supporting this view, Aremu (2014) claimed that our value system is grossly eroded, parents no longer have time to take good care of their children. Aremu (2014) stressed that inter-personal contacts have been replaced with e parenting. A situation where a parent asks the children on phone: Have you eaten? Are you in bed? What are you doing? etc., simply shows e-parenting and the children in return will put up e-behaviour and that usually results in e-consequences.

Nigeria Core Public Values

The core values of Nigeria that have been weakened over the years need to be strengthened in order to achieve a productive society. NEEDS (2004) described Nigeria as a multi-ethnic society, with a value system that is derived from the diversity of its people, religion and culture. These core values NEEDS identified include respect for elders, honesty and accountability, co-operation, industry, discipline, self-confidence and moral courage. The above core values are grossly compromised in the present Nigeria socio-economic and political contexts to the extent that this has constituted a serious moral problem. Their excessive compromise has manifested in greed, corruption, dishonesty, violent crimes, political killings, drug peddling, and so many other anti-social behaviours capable of jeopardizing all sincere efforts directed at stimulating national development or achieving a productive society. From this weak perspective, Dike (2005) called for the strengthening of ethics and values education in schools as corruption drives and shapes social values in Nigeria, and for some individuals the quest for easy money is a justification for violating the laws of the land and distorting official policies directed toward national and sustainable development. Given this circumstance, the imperative for ethics and values education cannot be over emphasized as they involve education for character and



for good moral values. This implies the teaching of respect and responsible adult life to the citizens. It is for good character and moral development which will lead to a healthy nation.

Enu and Esu (2011) emphasized that the fundamental moral values every responsible nation should teach its citizens include respect for constituted authority and sanctity of life, responsibility, values of honesty, fairness, tolerance, prudence, self-discipline, helpfulness, compassion, cooperation and courage, alongside some fundamental procedural values looked upon as basic ingredients of democracy. They include the rule of law, equality of opportunity, due process, representative government, checks and balances and democratic decision-making. These are the underlying democratic values that guarantee democratic stability.

Importance of Ethical and Values-Based Education

The Importance of Ethical and Values-Based Education includes the following:

- **Character Development:**

Ethical education helps shape character, fostering qualities like empathy, integrity, and responsibility, which are essential for a functional society.

- **Sustainable Development:**

Integrating ethics and values into education is vital for achieving sustainable development goals by promoting responsible consumption, environmental stewardship, and social justice.

- **Social Cohesion:**

By emphasizing shared values like respect, tolerance, and cooperation, ethical education can contribute to social cohesion and national unity.

- **Active Citizenship:**

A value-oriented education system can empower individuals to become active and responsible citizens, capable of contributing to their communities and the nation.

- **Combating Social Issues:**

By addressing issues like corruption, violence, and inequality through education, a values-based approach can help mitigate negative social trends.

Strategies for Re-thinking Quality Education in Nigeria

- **Integrate Ethics and Values:**

Infuse ethical considerations into all subjects and learning experiences, not just in dedicated "ethics" classes.

- **Promote Critical Thinking:**

Encourage students to analyze ethical dilemmas, evaluate different perspectives, and make informed decisions.

- **Foster Empathy and Compassion:**

Create learning environments that encourage students to understand and connect with the experiences of others.

- **Develop Global Citizenship:**

Help students understand their roles and responsibilities as global citizens, promoting intercultural understanding and cooperation.

- **Involve the Community:**

Engage parents, community leaders, and other stakeholders in the process of shaping ethical and values-based education.

- **Teacher Training:**

Provide teachers with the necessary training and resources to effectively integrate ethical and values-based education into their teaching practices.

- **Focus on Experiential Learning:**

Incorporate activities like community service, project-based learning, and real-world simulations to provide practical application of ethical principles.



- **Continuous Evaluation:**

Regularly assess the effectiveness of ethical and values-based education programs and make necessary adjustments.

By rethinking education in this way, nations can cultivate a generation of ethical and responsible citizens who are equipped to address the challenges of sustainable development and build a more just and prosperous futures

Effects of degradation of ethics and values in the Education

Matthew and Obiesili (2022) observed that in this materialistic world which values only worldly possessions and demeans the essence of character, it needs to be asked how one can develop and maintain self-awareness and self-consciousness during the course of our life. Almost two decades ago, words such as jealousy, distrust, corruption, abuse, were highly unlikely to be heard of. Today, these words have become an everyday occurrence. What does this tell us about society, individuals and the nation? A society unappreciative of moral values, ethics and proper mannerism is not worth living in. Lack of morals and ethics has resulted in individuals being selfish, greedy and corrupt. On the other hand, lack of respect, civility and proper etiquette have made it difficult for many young people to maintain healthy relationships and interactions with others.

Despite morals and ethics being of great importance, the individuals in the modern society do not observe them, and as a result, many negative things can be seen. First, failure to act in a moral and ethical way has resulted in many people being greedy and less concerned about humanity. What differentiates humans from animals is the ability to act in a humane way, and ethical and moral values are the strongest tools of ensuring a person is better than an animal. When individuals fail to observe the acceptable moral and ethical values in the society, it means that they can do anything, even harming their fellow human beings as long as they can benefit personally. This is the case in the business world. Some businesses have been found guilty of offering unsafe products to customers.

Also, failure of individuals observing moral and ethical values has resulted in cases of crime rising, such as homicide, theft, rape drug trafficking and so on. Due to deterioration of morals and ethics, most of the individuals in the modern society engage in criminal behaviours without fear. Young people are easily joining criminal gangs which terrorize innocent citizens through rape, stealing, murder, and engaging in internet fraud also known as “yahoo yahoo”, hook-up i.e. prostitution and other demeaning activities just to make ends meet.

The sum total of the effects of degradation of ethics and moral values is numerous as a lot of negative consequences are discernible. Among these problems is the stunted economic growth which the country is experiencing due largely to hyper inflation, low capital utilization and decline in foreign investments. The country is enmeshed in foreign debts and corruption prevalent among the political class. As such, a lot of money is siphoned into foreign accounts while the citizens of the country suffer in abject poverty. No public utility or infrastructure is functioning due to this moral recklessness. In the past one year under the present administration of President Tinubu, economic hardship has increased, tax net has widened, economy slowed down as many businesses are winding down due to high cost of doing business in Nigeria resulting in unemployment and retrenchment of workers, and high cost of petroleum products even when there exist of four refineries owned by the Federal Republic of Nigeria and a private one owned by Dangote Petroleum Refinery.

Furthermore, there is the danger of insecurity. Lives of farmers and people are threatened from time to time by terrorists like bandits, Boko Haram, miscreants, kidnappers and hired assassins. Cases of armed robbery attacks are rampant. Abogunrin (1994) surmised that “the loss of the sense of security in human existence today is due to injustice, violence, the sinister aspects of the present-day politics, religious wars, economic problems, unemployment, etc.” The nation has been plunged into series of violent attacks from different militant groups, and this paint a picture of a nation that is incapable of solving its problems.

Also, the education sector is not left behind in moral decadence. In this area, things have fallen apart. Educational institutions which are supposed to be the bedrock of moral instructions have been hit



by this canker orchestrated by poor funding. The issues of strikes and industrial actions in our institutions are damning. This culminates in half-baked graduates with little or nothing to show at the end of the day. It equally accounts for high incidence of cultism in our tertiary institutions. Again, on the part of the students, loss of morals has made a good number of them not be studious but engage most of their time surfing the net for things that are not beneficial to their studies. When it is time for examinations, you see them engaging in examination malpractice. Some even go to the extent of “sorting” their lecturers in order to pass.

One can go on and on with the devastating effects of the rubbishing of ethics and moral values as it cuts across all sectors. The truth, therefore, is that the demeaning of ethics and moral values remains the cause of the problems facing us as a nation and until urgent steps are taken to remedy it, Nigeria will continue to wallow in this moral mess as productivity continues to dwindle.

Conclusion

It is an obvious fact that the rate of moral decadence in Nigeria is disturbingly alarming and this has affected the educational sector of the nation. Based on this, there is need for ethical and value re-orientation with a view to actualizing our potentials and harnessing our resources, both human and material, for a greater, purposeful, egalitarian and productive society. In this regard, ethics and value education must be given a pride of place in our society. Every social institution like the family, church, mosque, school and the government should take the culture of hard work, punctuality, self-discipline, humility, leadership by examples and so on seriously, and preach or lead campaign against quick-rich syndrome, corruption, examination malpractice, violence, insolence and other social vices affecting the nation’s productivity and putting her in bad light among comity of nations.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

1. emphasizing the fundamental moral values every responsible nation should teach its citizens include respect for constituted authority and sanctity of life, responsibility, values of honesty, fairness, tolerance, prudence, self-discipline, helpfulness, compassion, cooperation and courage, alongside some fundamental procedural values looked upon as basic ingredients of democracy.
2. There is need for change in our attitudes and behaviours if we must realize human development. Obviously, there is a dying moral culture and an ethical failure leading to total collapse of societal values.
3. By emphasizing shared values like respect, tolerance, and cooperation, ethical education can contribute to social cohesion and national unity.
4. Engage parents, community leaders, and other stakeholders in the process of shaping ethical and values-based education.
5. Incorporate activities like community service, project-based learning, and real-world simulations to provide practical application of ethical principles

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