GENERAL STUDIES EDUCATION A NECESSARY TOOL FOR VALUE – REORIENTATION AND PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE ON TERTIARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
This paper is on the acquisition of general studies education in tertiary institutions as a necessary tool for value-reorientation and peaceful co-existence. Democratic principles are upheld through institutions of learning. Nigeria as a democratic country should gear its curriculum in tertiary education towards instilling value - reorientation, peaceful co-existence and behaviour in the students. It must be done based on the respect for human dignity, patriotism, freedom and citizenship in egalitarian society, in peaceful disposition, respect, obedience and conformity to societal norms and values which are the consequent of value-reorientation and peaceful co-existence that general studies education is meant to address. The principles are formulated in order to produce graduates with broad knowledge of the world, nation Nigeria and her people with a view to inculcating in them mutual understanding and patriotism. Furthermore, the paper focuses on the concept of tertiary institutions and their objectives, concept of general studies education programme, objectives and importance, concept of value — reorientation and peaceful co-existence as a binding factor to students' career progression. Conclusion and recommendations were given among others to include that the general studies grade point average (GPA) should be used as a
requisite for admitting students in their various fields of study, well qualified/specialized teachers to be employed only to implement general studies curriculum etc.

**Keywords:** General studies programme, Tertiary Institutions, Value-reorientation, Entrepreneurship, and Peaceful co-existence.

No nation can develop without human resources, accounting and management of the understanding of the people as an important asset whose skills and qualities must be given attention. Education is a value laden enterprise directed to positively impact on the society practicing it. According to Diene (2004), it is the heart of the society. It prepares and feeds every facet of human endeavour with the need personnel, appropriate skills and infrastructural needs. Suleman (2009) in Harbison (1973) affirmed that the progress of a nation depends on the progress of its people, unless a nation develops the human potentialities, it cannot develop much materially, economically, politically or culturally. Education itself is lifeless but it is the society that makes it lively. There are different programmes / disciplines in education which General Studies Education (GSE) is one. GSE is a programme that inculcates in the students a broad based education which widens the student's intellectual horizons and endows students with necessary potential for effective and functional citizenship (Anyadike, 2013).

As a programme or a course of study in some tertiary institutions in Nigeria, it is a welcome agenda by the National University Commission (NUC) to bridge the gap in knowledge in areas not related to once course of study (for example entrepreneurship). GSE is a core elective course for all tertiary undergraduates which qualify them for a certificate in their chosen course of study. It brings to bear the innate ability and potential of an individual to be creative and contribute meaningfully to the economic, social and political development, as well as sustain the development of the host society. GSE unifies courses from different areas such as Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Technology, Physical and Natural Sciences, including entrepreneurship into a whole course of study to prepare students for lifelong education.

Since the tertiary education system in Nigeria is focused more on basic theoretical experiences of the learner at the expense of those areas like technology, science and entrepreneurship that could invoke creativity, equip learner with entrepreneur skills and new innovations that will reduce unemployment rate in Nigeria. Knowledge in the above unified field of study helps prepare students for work in numerous setting, as well as readying them for advanced study in a specific field. Education has been adopted as vehicle for all round development on most countries, Nigeria inclusive.
The role of education in value-reorientation could not be over emphasized considering the fact that the acquisition of intellectual and manipulative skills possessed by man is through education and training. GSE constitute a tool for rapid value-reorientation, peaceful coexistence, democratic principles and national development.

The paper is therefore discussed under the following sub-headings as; concept of tertiary education and objectives of tertiary education; concept of general studies education programme, objectives and purpose of general studies education; concept of value-reorientation and peaceful coexistence; general studies programme a binding tool for development and entrepreneurship relationship; conclusion and recommendations.

Concept of Tertiary Education

Education plays the role of socialization, occupational preparation and development of self-conception that brings about radical changes in attitudes; motivation and incentive, improvement in tastes efficiency and effectiveness which in turn lead to technological changes, invention and innovations. Education is the major means by which development is achieved. University environments are natural breeding grounds for creativity, the exchange of ideas, and new ways of looking at and studying things. Colleges and universities have embraced GSE, making it the fastest-growing field of study on campus and in some cases, resulting in the emergence of entirely new academic field. The main purpose of GSE for students in the higher education is to encourage them to think of innovation as a vehicle that can take them anywhere GSE matters in Nigeria higher education and to offer broad recommendations about the potential of GSE as a key element in undergraduate education, the major, graduate study, the evaluation of faculty, topics referred to as the "co-curriculum" and the management of universities.

To this effect, the NUC (2007) among its objectives states that general studies enable students gain deeper insight into their environment and ensure that before they settle down in their areas of specialization, they are exposed to major areas of learning in humanities, sciences, social sciences, use of English, entrepreneurship among several others. At the tertiary education level, students are to participate compulsorily in the study of GSE so that on graduation, the students no matter the discipline can function effectively in any field of endeavour irrespective of their area of specialization considering the complex dynamics of modern society. General studies courses are included therefore in the curriculum of tertiary education so that students could improve their communication skills, collaborate ideas, live in peace and understand themselves, their environment and society for peaceful co-existence and value-reorientation.
Objective of Tertiary Education
According to Anyadike (2013), the basic principle of tertiary education includes:
• The constitutional right for the individual, the universities and the will to improve social and national existence;
• Ensuring freedom of education of learning of science, arts, social sciences and other courses;
• To ensure higher vocation studies as well as bachelor and master degrees and qualifications to persons having completed their upper studies or post graduate training to those already practicing some professions and wish to obtain a certificate for degree to facilitate employment;
• Provision of knowledge on national and universal culture;
• Equipping students with elements of intellectual lifestyle.
• To teach students to appreciate arts, develop their command for mother tongue and their foreign language skills to the extent necessary for their qualification and for IT literacy;
• To ensure the conditions of a healthy and cultured lifestyle of the freedom of education;
• To ensure teacher, researcher and students participation in exercise / autonomy thus legal condition for higher education institutions;
• Tertiary institutions realize their general objectives through the education and further training they provide, their scientific activities, artistic networking, reading scientific services, etc.

All these objectives are aimed at production of a well rounded, morally, intellectual and knowledgeable citizens for peaceful, value-reorientation and national cohesion and development.

Concept of General Studies Programme
General studies programmes are course programmes that provides students with educational opportunities, experiences and career direction to meet their professional and academic goals (Hite, 2011). It is an interdisciplinary programmes, often highly desirable in a rapidly changing world and provides greater flexibility in creating a functional curriculum for all undergraduates in different fields of study. The regulating bodies for universities, polytechnics and colleges of education respectively, recognize the general studies programme as compulsory requirement for accreditation of any degree/certificate awarding institutions in Nigeria. General Studies programme affords broader course choices than are available traditional courses. The programme is compulsory in all tertiary institution s in Nigeria to provide intellectual knowledge and equip students to understand the complex dynamics of modern society. This is aimed at equipping graduates from any discipline to function effectively in all fields irrespective of his or her area of specialization. GSE is the brain child of Nigeria Universities for all Nigerian Higher
education to acquaint all students of universities for all Nigeria higher learning with the methodologies and technologies for understanding of Nigeria's heritage, social and scientific aspects of the world (UNN hand book). The general studies elective programme includes arts and humanities, use of English, social sciences, sciences and technological sciences.

The purpose of the general studies programme among others includes to:
- Provide flexibility to students with broad interest;
- Offer an option to those with new interests or those changing their major late in their academic careers;
- Prepare students for entry into graduate and professional programmes (Hite, 2011).

General studies programme has benefited students in all areas of study and endeavour as it has developed students' critical thinking, innovative and creative abilities, value-reorientation and patriotism. The programme is aimed at all round development of every Nigerian graduate for job creation and acquisition of entrepreneurial skills.

**Objectives of General Studies Education**

The objectives of general studies education programme according to Longman and Bently (2012), is to support universities' role and mission by providing opportunity, scholarly activities and encouraging services. According to them, the objectives include:
- Offering programme that prepare students to enter careers requiring broad background, knowledge and skills.
- Preparing students to achieve career and life goal by; promoting student progression and persistence through an active advice programme.
- Assisting students with career decision making skills and information concerning job opportunities through career planning courses.
- Informing students on how to relate his / her skills to the society and economy.
- To produce graduate who can make their professions relevant to contemporary problems and needs of the Nigeria society.

GSE, as an integral part of the university programme is included in the curriculum to improve students understanding of themselves, communication skills and their environment where they live and make peaceful contribution as worthy citizens of Nigeria.
Concept of Value-Reorientation and Peaceful Co-existence

Education brings about value-reorientation, productivity, creativity, initiative, innovativeness and inventiveness. These qualities in themselves cannot bring changes or development except they are embedded in human resource development. Educated people possess knowledge, skills, value-reorientation and in that position, they become agents of change or prime movers of innovations as they occupy entrepreneurial, managerial, professional and administration positions.

Value-reorientation could be referred to be as principles of right and wrong that are acceptable by an individual of a social group which helps people to understand their world view and understand cultural difference irrespective of ethical background. It is the benefits of understanding the contribution of values to successful individuals and organizational behavioural change. Culture as well as countries is formed by the emergence of value systems in response to life conditions. Such complex adaptive intelligences form the glue that bounds group together, defines who they are as people, and reflex the place on the planet they inhabit while co-existence means living together in peace with one another despite conflicting ideologies (Ogah, 2010). Therefore, the need for the introduction of the study of GSE as general studies course at the tertiary level for value-reorientation and peaceful coexistence. GSE brings students to bare with the culture and other peoples way of life thereby producing graduate with broad knowledge of Nigerian nation and people with a view of inculcating in them mutual understanding and patriotism that promotes peaceful co-existence (NUC,2007).

In recent times, there is relative political unrest in many countries; Nigerian in particular, this has resulted in insecurity of lives and properties, inter-ethnic clashes and in some severe cases, records of civil wars indicating a missing link between education and societal value. Youths are the pillars and precious elements of the society. Therefore, the mission links are the values of education for peaceful co-existence, entrepreneurship and development which GSE seeks to bridge. Since the youths are agents of social change, many revolutions in history were initiated by them (Egboh, 2008). Youths are strategically perceived as the engine house of the development of every nation. Any country that wants to develop in all her facets of life puts the youths at the forefront. In fact many countries of the world on their search to ameliorate social problems map out different programmes, strategies and policies to better the lives of the people. Hence, GSE which helps to address mans problems emerged and is being utilized by various countries providing educational system. For instance, in Nigeria to help re-channel and correct citizen's negative behaviors and inculcate in them worthwhile attitudes and values to enable them become effective and functional citizens.

The essence of society is solidarity through the cohesion of ideas (values) and mutual understanding. It ensures order, stability, peaceful relationship, continuity,
development and sustainability. All these can only be achieved by using general studies education as an essential tool. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) acknowledges education as an instrument 'per excell ence for the actualization of our lively goals'. Education and society are inseparable. Society equips education with the values to be transmitted while education exposes each of the young people the existing beliefs, norms and values of their culture (Schafer, 2000). Modern education systems are made up of people from different social classes, groups, and cultural background as obtained in a GSE programme. They are held together as a community by laid down rules and belief that guide, shape and direct the conduct of every member. The essence is to ensure harmonious relationship and peaceful co-existence among members in spite of their relative differences in social and cultural background. These words of relationship are called values.

Re-orientation according to new Webster dictionary of the English language is to readjust someone or something to the surrounding or situation to turn or guide in a specified direction. Roa (2013), see values-reorien tation as the process of redirecting the interest and passion of individuals to the desired social cultural values that promotes social development and good human relations. From these, value-reorientation therefore is to re-influence people readjust, turn to or re-conform to specified values needed by the societies.

Finally, the teachings of GSE in tertiary institution pave way for the students to be trained to appreciate the need for unity in diversity, develop the spirit of togetherness, entrepreneurship and inter dependents of members of both local and national communities. It provides training ground studies in the tertiary institution in inquiry, decision-making skill, critical thinking, problem solving and rational social actions which are paramount for the progress and development of both the individual and the society at large. Besides the acquisition, development, and inculcation of the proper values-reorientation for survival of the individual and the society is another objective of GSE at tertiary level.

General Studies Programme, a Binding Tool for Entrepreneurial Skills Relationship

The need to promote entrepreneurial skills relationship amongst students cannot be emphasized on development. Entrepreneurial skills understanding and peaceful co-existence in GSE is a sine qua non for student's relationship within and outside school. Curriculum of education with GSE programme inclusive is the vehicle that conveys the needs, aspirations and desires of a nation to the feature generations.

To promote peaceful co-existence, entrepreneurship and value reorientation, it is necessary to re-infuse such values as love, honesty, integrity, respect for life and property, cultural tolerance, order and understanding into the curriculum. Education of the feature generation would then inculcate these values in the minds of individuals to ensure and maintain entrepreneurship, peace and co-existence. In a
peaceful atmosphere of General Studies programme, the students strive to maintain proper understanding respecting one another's views and culture as the course infuses in them different ideologies from various ethnics and tribes. This is a process of involving activities that leads to effective communication, cooperative, intercultural understanding and tolerance with neighbors within and outside the school (Ogah, 2010). This is in conformity with the National Policy on Education (2013) which stipulates among its objectives the inculcation of the right values and attitudes for the attainment of national unity and survival of the individual and the Nigerian society. Finally, GSE through value-reorientation and co-existence inculcates in the students, the process of acquiring the values, knowledge and developing the attitudes, skills and behaviours to live in harmony with one self, with others and with the natural environment (Ogah 2010). The study is also d at equipping students for respects for persons, personal relationships, conflict resolution, social justices, entrepreneurship, sharing the world's resources, cooperation among people in any given society thereby promoting development, entrepreneurship etc.

Conclusion
The paper concludes that general studies education is a necessary tool for cooperation and understanding among tertiary students. As a necessary vehicle that conveys the needs, aspirations and desires of a nation in terms of personal relationship, development and co-existence. Also there are not enough academic manpower in the field as well as the infrastructure. Furthermore, it x-rayed the essence of GSE to promoting norms, values, patriotism, entrepreneurship and peaceful co-existence among neighbours for functional development of the individual and the nation.

Recommendations
In view of the above, GSE should be introduced as a compulsory credit load course for all the new entrants; overhaul the tertiary institutions in terms of provisions of modern infrastructure, equipment, materials and maintenance; there should be concerted efforts and policy towards the adequate funding and massive investment in GSE; review the present curricula to be able to meet the modern globalization and technological dynamics; there should be moderate class size, so as to drive this all important course home.

References


