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Resuscitating and Sustaining Professional and Ethical Values in Nigerian Tertiary Educational Institutions for Peace and National Security

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Abstract

The issue of security has become a matter of national importance and concern to all citizens in Nigeria, whether poor or rich. This paper looks into professional and ethical values in Nigerian tertiary educational institutions. Theoretical framework of Abraham Maslow's Needs Hierarchy Theory and Vroom's Expectancy Theory was explained to buttress their relevance to the study. Conceptualization of keywords to get full comprehension was done. Thereafter, the contemporary issues of unethical behaviour among school personnel especially leaders in Nigerian tertiary educational institutions are discussed. Professional and ethical values and value system also came to focus in the cause of explaining the concepts therein. In addition, it is suggested that lecturers and administrative officers should serve as role models to the young learners and there is an urgent need to inculcate values education in Nigerian tertiary educational system to promote peace and national security. It therefore concluded that, resuscitation and sustainability of professional and ethical values in Nigerian tertiary educational institutions will certainly lead to functional, moral and quality education in the nation's educational system

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that can easily address the issues of unemployment and insecurity thereby promoting peace and national security.

Keywords: Profession, Ethics, Values, Tertiary Institutions, Peace and National Security.

It is quite obvious that Nigerian tertiary educational institutions be it a Polytechnic, Monotechnic, College of Education, University, etc have an organized pattern of attitude; behaviour and agreed values. It is believed that any tertiary school community has code of conduct, rules and regulations that must be strictly adhered to. Simultaneously, academics or professional ethics are significantly correlated with moral values, the main basis, on which the Nigerian tertiary education system is founded. This paper is on the notion that professional and ethical values are fast disappearing in Nigeria tertiary schools hence the need for immediate resuscitation and sustainability to ensure peace and national security.

Resuscitating and sustaining professional and ethical values have recently become the main focus or issue to be addressed by government at all levels and non-governmental organizations due to the decay in the values, professional ethics and morality in the society. It is quite obvious in any part of the globe that Nigeria is currently facing incessant moral vices. The moral vices prevalent in our Nigeria society includes fraud, kickback, “419”, embezzlement of public funds, armed robbery, brazen corruption in high places, squander mania, exploitation of money from students, alcoholism, drug abuse, get rich-quick, political thuggery, nepotism, naira-counterfeiting, cultism, occultism, examination malpractices, general (indiscipline and a host of other vices (Uduigwomen, 2006).

Recently, some kidnapers invaded Ogoja town in Cross River State and were caught by security agencies and were found to be students of Benue State University, Makurdi. It is therefore clear that, the state of moral decadence in Nigerian tertiary institutions and the society/nation at large needs urgent attention by resuscitating and sustaining professional and ethncial values. Between 1960 and 1980 Nigerian tertiary educational institutions were rated as the most coordinated, organized, peaceful and well cultured society across the African Continent. That was when genuine appraisal and evaluation in schools were based on the quantity and quality of researches conducted and books published in each academic session.

Frankly speaking, staff performance then was measured by academic productivity, dexterity, prolific writing and innovative ideas. Nigerian tertiary educational institutions then referred to as “Ivory Towers” were idealistic and knowledge driven. According to

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Yaqub (2012), ethics breeds productivity resourcefulness and robust social relations within members of the academia. Apparently, that was what constituted professional and ethical values of the Nigerian tertiary educational institutions in the past.

Today all these values have gone in abeyance and the tertiary educational institutions have lost their role modeling ideals and no longer known as citadels of positive change in the society. Simultaneously, these lost professional and ethical values have impacted negatively on the fabric of the academia, thereby gradually wiping the minimum standards desirable of these educational institutions.

Rediscovering the lost professional and ethical values, would not only put the system in good shape but ensure its sustainability which would in turn assist tremendously in repositioning the Nigerian tertiary educational institutions in particular and the country in general towards achieving peace and national security. The moral decadence in Nigerian tertiary educational institutions, as reflected in the behaviour of staff and students personnel has no doubt impacted negatively on the essence or objective of tertiary education in Nigeria.

In April 14, 2014 Nigeria witnessed the abduction of over 200 girls from Government Secondary School, Chibok by Boko Haram. Recently, despite the numerous agencies and policies to curb crime in the country, there have been alarming cases of money laundering, assassination, kidnapping, human trafficking, robbery, examination malpractices, political thuggery, vandalization, election malpractice, etc in all parts of the country. Where then lies the professional and ethical values that are supposed to uphold by those in power and authority so as to promote peace and national security. Maslow (1949) as cited by Arikpe (2013) notes that every human being need and desire to be loved, protected and given food and shelter. Man is certainly posed to revolt when denied any of these afore-stated needs. In corroboration with Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs, it has been noted that, national security cannot be narrowed down to defence and military might alone, but the ability of a nation to overcome any form of its challenges through of food, water, good health and shelter to its citizens (Arikpe, 2013).

This paper therefore attempts to clarify some theories like Abraham Maslow Needs Hierarchy Theory and Vroom Expectancy Theory and conceptualize some terms like: profession, ethics values, tertiary educational institutions peace, national security, etc and integrate them in the explanation of where professional and ethical values is being compromised, or not adhered to, as often observed in Nigerian tertiary educational institutions today. Suggestion is hereby made that inculcation of values education in our education system is a necessary ingredient to curb unethical practices in the society so as to promote peace and national security.

Theoretical Framework

This paper adapted two relevant theories to back up the study. These are Maslow's Need Hierarchy Theory and Vroom's Expectancy Theory.

Abraham Maslow's Need Hierarchy Theory

Abraham Maslow, a clinical psychologist developed the framework in 1949 which has contributed significantly to the appreciation and understanding of motivation. According to Maslow, human beings are guided by needs and wants which are rather complex; but ordered in a hierarchy of prepondency. Some basic assumptions inherent in this theory are as follows:

1. Needs differ from individuals to individuals. The degree of needs influences to a large extent the behaviour of the individual at a particular time.
2. Needs are arranged according to hierarchy of importance to human beings irrespective of tribe or race, ranging from the basic physiological needs to the higher level needs.
3. As soon as the basic needs are satisfied they no longer serve as motivators, i.e. unfulfilled needs serve as motivators.
4. Human beings have many ways to satisfy higher-level needs.

Maslow's needs hierarchy theory is organized into successive levels of importance and also in ascending order such as, physiological needs, safety, social, ego and esteem and self-actualization. This theory is relevant to this study as an understanding to internal cognitive process - that is, what people feel and how they think is imperative. This understanding provides the educational managers and stakeholders in education sector with the ability to predict the likely behaviour of school personnel in given situations. This will help develop and exhibit positive skills, attitude and moral behaviour that will promote peace and national security at all times.

Vroom's Expectancy Theory

Vroom (1964:170) defines expectancy as a "momentary belief concerning the likelihood that a particular act will be followed by a particular outcome". Vroom's research on work motivation produced an expectancy theory whose model is based on three key variables: Valence, Instrumentality and Expectancy (VIE) theory. The theory argues that motivational force performed is a function of the expectancies that individuals have concerning future outcomes multiply by the value the place on the outcome. Thus, a belief by a hardworking student to obtain high grades and attract the respect and recognition of others are expectancies. Expectancy therefore serves as principles or guidelines by which an individual can go about planning to fulfill personal needs. The relevance of this theory to this study is that it attempts to identify the relationship among the dynamic variables, which constitute motivation. It is concerned with how behaviour is initiated, directed and sustained which is in relation to

professional and ethical values that need to be resuscitated and sustained to promote peace and national security in Nigeria.

Conceptual Framework

Concept of Profession

The term “profession” could be defined as a vocation, requiring specialized training and acquisition of skills in a field of learning. According to Oxford Dictionary of Current English (2010), profession is a type of job that needs special training or skill, especially one that needs a high level of education. This implies that, profession is found upon a systematic body of knowledge and requires a long period of theoretical and practical training. Therefore, those who perform such essential and unique social services are called professionals and are strongly guided by the ethics of the profession like teaching, law, medicine, etc. It is expected that every teacher, or lecturer in any educational institutions in Nigeria must have undergone some specialize training in a particular field of learning and acquired pedagogical skills in the teaching profession as well as belong to either, NUT, COEASU, ASUP, ASUU, TRCN, etc.

Meaning of Ethics

The concept of ethics could be explained as laid down rules and regulations which help to improve standard and to differentiate between good behaviour and bad behaviour. The word ‘ethics’ is derived from a Greek word ‘ethithos’, which means manners, tradition or norms (Wainaina, 2006). According to Nwajiuha (2007), ethics is a set of standards by which human actions are determined to be right or wrong. In the same vein, Blatner (2006) views ethics as the sphere of inter-personal groups and community politics at the level of values – not just what can be achieved or how to achieve it, but more of what should be sought, in the realm of social harmony and fairness. Uduigwomen (2006) defines ethics as being synonymous with moral, both connoting customs, habits and accepted ways of behaviour of an individual or a community.

From the foregoing, it implies that, ethics are rules, principles and regulations adopted to control individual’s or groups’ behaviour in a community or society. Sociologically, ethics is viewed as an attempt to use the rules that govern the relations between individuals and groups as the basis for understanding social structures (Weeger, 2007). Today, the way and manner in which professional and ethical values are formed and observed is of great interest in any society or organization. The Nigerian tertiary educational institutions, as complex organizations are full of unethical practices that attract urgent attention of every rational thinking stakeholder in the educational sector. This is why Bolarin and Pemedede (2014:415) affirmed that:

At the tertiary level of the education sector, some individuals choose to participate in unethical practices or illegal behaviour which include sale of handouts, extortion, aiding and abetting examination misconduct, sexual harassment, delay of students' results, abuse of processes in students' admissions, manipulation and falsification of transcripts, plagiarism and victimization of students and staff among others.

Frankly speaking, these observed unethical practices have damaged the Nigerian educational system especially in the tertiary level and unless careful and urgent attention is made at curbing such unethical practices, the Nigerian education sector will continue to face serious setbacks and crisis.

Concept of Values

Values are positive ideals that organizations or societies hold on to very dearly and warmly. It is quite obvious that every organization or community has some ideas that it hold on to achieving her objectives and such become values that tremendously facilitate and contribute positively to societal growth and development. Uduigwomen (2006) opines that values are also philosophical considerations which help an individual personally to judge how reasonable, truthful and appropriate his actions and relationship with others. This is why Uduigwomen further elucidates that whether we are aware of it or not, we are constantly involved in valuation and making value judgements in our everyday life. On the other hand, in as much as contradictions are the very essence of human existence, it become pertinent to note that, there are equally those values that are negative and serves as impediments to the growth and development of any society.

As a result of the co-existence of both positive and negative values in any society, it is a necessity for every society across the globe to always strive consciously and assiduously to cultivating good and sound values to enhance societal progress. It is also worthy to note that, bad values are easily cultivated and transmitted. To curb these negative values and stop it from spreading further, it behooves on any conscious society to consistently strive to hold on to the good values and ensure sustainability at all times.

Esu, Ukpepi and Ndifon (2009) view values as those things that one hold very dear and are preferred to some other alternatives. This implies that, values are overall guides to behaviour which give direction to one's life. Values are the end products of an individual's experience. This is why Esu (2009) opines that values can also be regarded as ideas that guide or qualify one's personal conduct, interaction with others and involvement in one's career. Values help an individual to differentiate between right and wrong act, as well as inform one on how to conduct his/her life in a meaningful way to promote peace and security in the society. Bodunrin as cited by Bolarin (2009) describes values as basic beliefs and attitudes in a society whether of individual or

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groups which are considered worthwhile and serve as guide to pattern of behaviour in one's daily life.

Concept of Tertiary Educational Institutions

Tertiary educational institutions are schools that provide higher education which is human capital development that contributes to the social and economic development of the country. Tertiary educational institutions are established to provide tertiary education to those who desire it. The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013:39) defines tertiary education "as the education given after post Basic Education in institutions such as universities and inter-university centres; such as the Nigerian French language Village, Nigeria Arabic Language Village, National Institute of Nigerian Languages, Institutions such as Innovation Enterprise Institutions (IEIs), and Colleges of Education, Monotechnics, Polytechnics and other specialized institutions such as Colleges of Agriculture, Schools of Health and Technology and the National Teachers Institute (NTI). Tertiary institutions also include research institutions, military, naval and police academics and other post secondary training centres and institutes.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria in her National Policy on Education (2013:39-40) identifies goals to be accomplished by tertiary education to include:

- a) Contribute to national development through high level manpower training;
- b) Provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities in formal and informal education in response to the needs and interest of all Nigerians,
- c) Provide high quality career counseling and lifelong learning programmes that prepare students with knowledge and skills for self-reliance and the world of work;
- d) Reduce skill shortages through the production of skilled manpower relevant to the needs of the labour market;
- e) Promote and encourage scholarship, entrepreneurship and community services;
- f) Forge and cement national unity and
- g) Promote national and international understanding and interaction.

Tertiary education institutions were established to attain the afore-stated goals through teaching, research staff development and services to the community. These institutions could also be referred to as educational organizations established for those who have completed secondary education to acquire skills and knowledge that are subjective to productivity of any given field of endeavour.

However, Nigerian tertiary educational institutions face numerous, incessant and often seemingly incompatible demand by different members and groups within the schools. They are therefore in continual, spate of internal or external conflict and crises

emanating from the non-existence or non-embrace of values in the system. All these myriads of problems if neglected can lead to a failure in achieving the goals of seeking and disseminating knowledge and more importantly of remodeling the society through resuscitating and sustaining professional and ethical values in Nigerian education system.

Concept of Peace

Peace is a deliberate effort at enforcing tranquility in the midst of individual or group difference. This implies that peace may sometimes be lost in a society but similarly regained. The Oxford Dictionary of Current English (2001) defines peace as a situation or period of time in which there is no war or violence in a country or an area. This can be achieved through the enhancement of professional and ethical values in social political, economic and educational institutions.

For the school system to succeed in the teaching and learning process, peace and tranquility of the school environment must be maintained (Abdullahi and Terhamba, 2014). Peace and tranquility are indispensable for any meaningful development to be achieved. In refocusing the education sector and the tertiary educational institutions in particular, an atmosphere of peaceful co-existence is an antidote for effective teaching and learning. This can greatly be achieved when the school personnel embrace professional and ethical values in the discharge of their responsibilities.

Emphasizing the significance of the tertiary educational institutions in promoting the future of human race, peace and national security, UNESCO (2011) opines that no country can hope to live in peace and prosperity unless it builds mutual trust between its citizens starting in the classroom. This revelation brings to light more than ever before the need to resuscitate professional and ethical values in all levels of Nigerian education system in order to facilitate peace, harmony and healthy living in our respective communities as one indivisible nation.

Concept of National Security

National security is the protection and assurance given by the government of a country to the citizens against internal and external aggression. Arisa (2011:255) defines “national security to include not only safety devices implored by government for the safety of lives and properties in the country but also to include developmental strategies put forward to actualize effective social, political, economic and technological reforms that will bring about improvement in the quality of the lives of the people”. Orngu (2010) states that national security relates to a conscious effort to achieve freedom from danger and a nation’s ability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values, legitimate interest and enhance the well-being of its people. This further means that national security can be viewed as the absence of the

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tendencies that undermine the national cohesion and corporate survival of a nation and its capacity to maintain and sustain its relevant institutions for the enhancement of its core objectives recognized as economic and socio-political values. National security can also be described as an all-encompassing goal that is pursued by all tiers of government for the achievement and maintenance of core values that in-turn facilitate the process of peace and national development. This is why Okorafor, Nzenwa and Oti (2012) state that a nation needs to protect itself from both internal and external forces that try to undermine or harm its collective interest, sovereignty, independence, integrity and its citizens wherever they may be in the world. National security in any nation can be likened to the central nervous system in the human body.

Ekpiken (2015) emphasizes that the issue of national security is very important because a nation's state in terms of the people's well-being economically, socially, politically, internationally and so on is greatly influenced by her status on national security. This further implies that national security encompasses the sum of what a nation does in order to safeguard itself as a sovereign entity and this include every aspect of a nation's life and existence.

Inculcating Professional and Ethical Values in Nigerian Tertiary Educational System to Achieving Peace and National Security

The concept of values in education plays a vital role in the teaching profession. Certainly, in every social or educational institution values remain significant to both chief executives and subordinates of such institutions. Values education is a process of equipping individuals in a community or organization with moral, integral, civic and career skills to become effective individuals in the immediate and larger society. It exposes individual to qualitative and functional education at all levels of education and even at non-formal settings (Denga, 2015). This type of education can lead to personal and social development. Wikipedia free dictionary defines values education as a process by which more experienced or older people may engage in activities of teaching and training or demonstrating to assist the less experienced to imbibe explicit and implicit values in life that will stand the test of time.

This implies that if values education is properly inculcated to learners in various institutions and the lecturers and administrative officers therein serve as 'role model' vices and other unethical practices will be reduced remarkably. Denga and Denga (2013) define values education as a positive curricular approach that foster creativity. It is also the education that helps people to develop a mutual understanding of one another. This will help to foster peace in no small measure, because values education refrain people from acting in unacceptable ways like fighting, lying, cheating, stealing, kidnapping, sexual perverseness-fornication and adultery as well as robbery, killing and other corrupt sharp practices.

Having elucidated what professional and ethical value means or connotes, it will be pertinent to also note that there is always a body of knowledge which the society considers to be very important and must be transmitted from one generation to another. This body of knowledge which the Nigerian society desires can be stably transmitted through the school system which is capable of assisting in bringing up well-behaved youths and adults who will be future leaders.

With proper inculcation of the ethical values in Nigerian educational system, the society will become peaceful and balance in terms of values and human uprightness. Resuscitating and sustaining professional and ethical values in Nigerian tertiary institutions therefore has to do with the ability to comprehensively bring back the good values of old back into existence by re-enacting the good values and making effort to inculcating these values on the individual or members of the society and ensuring its sustainability from one generation to another.

The state of unethical practices is so deplorable that government at levels and at all times have been adapting several measures to curbing these vices. The Nigerian government and many non-governmental organizations have made concerted efforts to orientate Nigerian citizens to imbibe the culture of virtue and to shorn immoral acts that are against the ethics of different professions to enhance peace and national security. For instance, General Muhammadu Buhari; as a military head of States introduced War Against Indiscipline (WAI) to change immoral behaviour of Nigerians for better and peaceful co-existence. Again, Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices and other related Offences Commission (ICPC) as well as Code of Conduct Bureau were established in the year 2000, 2003 and 2004 respectively by President Olusegun Obasanjo led administration to check corruption and restore the good moral values in Nigeria. Likewise, the National Orientation Agency (NOA) established in 1993 by President Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida has been working tirelessly to educate Nigerian citizens to curb negative attitude and immoral acts that are immoral to the growth and development of the Nigerian society. With the slogan “change begins with me” in the present President Buhari, this agency has been inculcating moral, professional and ethical values on Nigerian citizens. However, it is regrettable to note that most of these policies made by Nigerian government are still altered by the custodian of power and authorities of different administration in Nigeria.

The purpose of learners, mostly in the tertiary educational institutions is to acquire high level knowledge and skills that will enable them to be useful to themselves and the society at large. However, the acquisition of the knowledge and skills still need to be accompanied by a pattern of behaviour that will promote peace and security in the society. This is why Ogunleye (2009) affirms that the formation of values and attitude is dependent on the acquisition of certain knowledge and the interactions with other

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objects as well as people. This shows that, acquiring knowledge is not a sufficient condition for developing right values and attitudes. And as such, it is a necessary and mandatory condition.

Today, it is clear beyond every reasonable doubt that Nigerian tertiary education system still has a long way to go in its responsibility of inculcating acceptable professional and ethical values to the multitude of learners found in the various educational institutions. The Nigerian tertiary education system in particular is bedeviled with different types of unethical practices because the value system is fast eroding. Most Nigerian youths are no longer dedicated or interested in hard-work but rather interested in short cuts to success. It is sad to note that, the social and traditional values inherited from our fore parents have been completely eroded as almost every individual is struggling to survive and amass wealth in a twinkle of an eye through institutionalized corruption processes. This is one of the primary factors leading to violence and insecurity in Nigeria.

Wainaina (2006) opines that, people are aware that some useful skills, characteristics, attitudes and knowledge are developed in individuals who go through the educational system and as such, the importance of values and ethics in Nigerian system of education cannot be underestimated. The goals of education in Nigeria are rightly outlined in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013:2-3) as follows:

- a) Development of the individual into a morally sound, patriotic and effective citizen;
- b) Total integration of the individual into the immediate community, the Nigerian society and the world;
- c) Provision of equal access to qualitative educational opportunities for all citizens at all levels of education within and outside the formal school system;
- d) Inculcation of national consciousness, values and national unity and
- e) Development of appropriate skills, mental, physical and social abilities and competencies to empower the individual to live in and contribute positively to the society.

Taking a critical look on the afore-stated, educational aims and making a comparative analysis of what is obtainable in the Nigerian society today, one will quickly affirm that the Nigerian educational institutions, most especially the tertiary schools have done little or nothing to achieving this laudable goals. Furthermore, Section 1(9) of the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013:4) emphasized that the quality of instruction at all levels of education shall be oriented towards inculcating the following values:

- a) Respect for the worth and dignity of the individuals;
- b) Faith in man's ability to make national decisions;
- c) Moral and spiritual principles in inter-personal and human relations;
- d) Shared responsibility for the common good of the society;

- e) Promotion of the physical, emotional and psychological development of all children and
- f) Acquisition of functional skills and competencies necessary for self-reliance.

It is therefore expected that, these values be integrated in all levels of Nigerian educational institutions with particular focus on tertiary educational institutions. This will propagate and sustain the professional and ethical values in all fields of learning, which will further be transmitted from one generation to another so as to ensure sustainable peace and national security.

Recommendations

There are some strategies that need to be adapted by government and non-governmental organization to resuscitate and sustain professional and ethical values. These include:

- Resuscitation and sustenance of professional and ethical values to all sectors will help to promote peace and ensure national security. It therefore behooves on educational managers and counselors to give proper orientation to school personnel to desensitize them from the acquired negative values through the modeling activities of older ones and well placed citizens in the country.
- More emphasis should be made on the need for honest, decent and modest living. Stupendous wealth and ostentatious living need to be de-emphasized through effective teaching and learning process.
- Those in position of authority should be made to give account of their stewardship to ensure accountability, transparency and responsibility.
- Those saddled with the responsibility of teaching in all institutions and organizations need to model exemplary conduct and behaviour for the learners to emulate.
- Perpetrators of corrupt practices and other immoral or unethical behaviours no matter the status should be properly punished to serve as a deterrent to other members of the society.

Conclusion

In an attempt to get full comprehension of this paper, attempt has been made to elucidate some relevant theories and keywords in order to x-ray some contemporary issues related to unethical practices going on in various tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria that often lead to incessant strike actions, chaos, rancour and insecurity, etc. This paper has also suggested the urgent need for resuscitation of our cherished traditional and core social values through the inculcation of professional and ethical values as well as making recommendations to be adopted in all levels of Nigerian educational system with particular reference to tertiary education to promote peace and national security.

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