

VALUE REORIENTATION: POLICY OPTION FOR TEACHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

By

A.G. OSSAI (Ph.D)
Faculty of Education
University of Education, Agbor.

Abstract

The world is witnessing a surge in patterns of behaviour that suggest value disorientation manifesting in high increased of violence, distrust, injustices, and social upheavals. Value disorientation in Nigerian society is evident in high level corruption, insecurity, lack of trust in basic human relationship and deep rooted social injustices. Education is supposal to be a panacea for social ills. The re-orientation of value system in our society is a search for national culture that would reshape national character and image. However, this can only be achieved when education is positioned to address vital social problems. The education system of a country will remain comatose as long as the teachers are ill prepared, half backed and lacks regular training. The current teacher education in Nigeria is skewed towards cognitive development of teachers with little or nothing to show in terms of development of their capacity to effect politics and desirable changes in the learner. Teachers would continue to be found wanting in influencing learner positively as long as their moral own development is left to chance. This paper suggests ways of infusing value education into the current teacher education in Nigeria at the pre-service and in-service levels such that teachers are quipped with the skill and competence to become moral agent irrespective of their subjects area.

Keywords: Value re-orientation, teacher education, value, teachers

Introduction

Education is the defining factor in human life, as it is what distinguishes man from the lower animals. This explains why every society provides education in one form or the other to socialize its young ones into its desired ways of life. Accordingly, as obtains in all human societies, education is as old as human existence in Nigeria. Without doubt, therefore, in the thinking of the original designers, education in our nation should be the vehicle for engendering citizens with positive values, and imbued with appropriate skills for personal financial empowerment for national development (Adesina 2005).

Teacher education in Nigeria is a two tier systems in which majority of teachers are trained in Colleges of Education and a few pass through faculties of Education in Universities (CSEA, 2018). Also National Universities Commissions Benchmark Minimum Academic standard, provides that teachers are expected to show competence in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills. One of the cognitive competence is the ability to effect positive and desirable changes in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor behaviours of learners. As such, teacher education programmes should aim at not only the intellectual capacity of teachers but also the acquisition development and inculcation of proper value-reorientation to education for the survival of individual and society.

While a lot of attention is paid to equipping teachers with capacity to effect positive cognitive and psychomotor changes in learners, the same cannot be said of equipping them with skills in effecting positive changes in learners affective behaviours. Efforts towards teaching of values and morals have been largely channeled towards religions and religious teachers. This has not been productive considering the moral crisis facing religious institutions in the country. Again, the multi-religious nature of Nigeria makes it difficult for schools to accommodate teaching of all religions in school. Teacher education in Nigerians as it is presently does not seem to be properly positioned by way of recruitment, training and re-training of teachers to produce teachers who can serve as moral compass for learners. Development of teachers' capacity for moral education of learner is being left to chance as no concrete steps are being taken to properly equip the teachers if the society is to be stable and developed, the citizens especially the younger generation should be properly oriented towards the positive shared values by teachers who are supposed to be custodians of the values. Therefore this paper will examine value reorientation as policy option for teacher education.

The Concept of Value Re-orientation

Values are key aspects of culture. They are broad principle that strongly influence people's belief, attitudes, lifestyles and convictions. Values influence how individuals behave and how society and nations are shaped. Values can be said to be positive when they conduce to societal wellbeing and they are said to be negative when they are inimical to societal wellbeing. Universally accepted positive values include honesty, justice discipline, respect for constituted authority and integrity while negative social values include indiscipline, corruption, dishonesty, injustice and the like.

Value orientation according to Okorafor and Njoku (2012) connotes directing the interest of somebody to something or to design something specially for something value re-orientation therefore is to re-direct peoples' interest and attention for values that are inimical to the society to values that can promote societal stability and progress Re-orientation is usually done by providing new information, ideas, knowledge and experiences with the aim of making individuals unlearn the previously held notions and beliefs.

Value re-orientation becomes necessary in the Nigerian society in the face of increasing social problems emanating from negative social values held by majority of the people. Though, it is clear that the entire populace require value re-orientation, the focus of this paper is on the coming generation of Nigerians who are still in the process of formal education. Therefore, in order, to put the incoming generation in the right ethical direction, there is the need to re-position teacher education in Nigeria to produce teachers who have the capacity to inculcate positive values on learners.

Theoretical challenges of Value

There are basically four prevailing theoretical frameworks commonly applied by scholars (Bohn & Haley 2002) in explaining the phonemes of value decay. These are classical, neo-classical, conflict and failed state theories. The classical theorists trace evolution of socio-cultural value system to the early civilization in the 5th century B.C, and how changes occasioned by time and environments propelled people to come together and established values and norms (Etakpe 2007).

For the neo-classical thinker like Vold (1958) and Schefer (1969), the issue is that of responsibility. The theory of responsibility is about the individual restraining himself/herself from certain deviant behaviours for the interest of other individuals or the society. This is generally referred to as a 'voluntary agreement' to sacrifice the minimum amount of liberty necessary to prevent anarchy or chaos.

Again, the conflict theorists deal with competing interest groups, namely – the political (ruling) class against the working class, and the privileged political executives (leaders) against the less privileged youths Proponents of this theory like Dahrendorf (1959), and Chambliss (1975) explain that those responsible for the moral decadence in any given society like Nigeria are the dominant political class. This class defines and redefines behaviours that seemingly challenge their interest as violation of values. It is for this reason that Adeoye (2009) interpret value decay as the activity of the

powerful minority groups (ie ruling class) promoted by capitalism. This conflict spurs young men/women to deviant behaviour in form of ethnic nationalism movement or military to challenge their predatory leaders.

The last is the failed state theory propounded by Nguyen (2000). The failed state refers to state not ordered and secured, or unstable to provide efficient infrastructure and execute the statutory duties. This theory is frequently applied by non-African scholars to describe African societies typified by Somalia on one hand and Nigeria on the other hand. In this regard Nguyen (2000) and Amoda (2009) have identified the characteristics of a failed state to include the following:

- i. High rate of traditional and white collar crime ;
- ii. Corrupt government and abuse of office;
- iii. Inadequate internal and external security and order;
- iv. Incessant intro-and-inter ethnic and religious violent and conflict; and inability to sustain physical force on the citizen.

Incidentally, these characteristics are found in the Nigerian state, and as such it qualifies to a large effect as a failed state. The failure of the Nigerian state has in no doubt, created the environment for value-decay and other anti-social behaviour. Therefore, in order to put the in-coming generation on the right perspective, there is the need for valiant reorientation in teacher education.

Values in Nigerian Education.

The first section in the National policy on Education starts with the statement of the overall philosophy of Nigeria which is to live in unity and harmony as one indivisible, indissoluble, democratic and sovereign nation founded on the principles of freedom, equality and justice and promote inter-African solidarity and world peace through understanding. The document further identifies the five main national goals which have been endorsed as the foundation for the policy. These are building of:

- a. a free and democratic society
- b. a just and egalitarian society
- c. a great and dynamic economy
- d. a united , strong and set reliant nation
- e. a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens

The policy goes further to list values that the educational enterprise should seek to inculcate and these include:

- a. respect for the worth and dignity of the individual

- b. faith in man's ability to make rational decisions,
- c. moral and spiritual principle in inter-personal and human relations
- d. promotion of the physical, emotional and psychological development of all children, and
- e. acquisition of competencies necessary for self-reliance.

Among the goals of teacher education according to the National policy on Education (2004) is to help teachers fit into the social life of the society and enhance national goals. Whereas values to be inculcated through the educational process in Nigeria are explicitly stated, the clear cut ways to achieve the goal are not explicitly stated. Infact value education is left to chance both in terms of the educational practice and preparation of teachers. It would be more rewarding if all teachers of every subject are empowered and educated in such a way that they see themselves as moral educators. Mere inclusion of a special subject in ethics would not be able to permeate the entire life of the school and bring about all round character development (Timothy & Kenneth, 2010).

A New Paradigm of Teacher Education

It is a fact that teacher are in a position to exert influence on learners both with their personality and their methods of teaching. Much depends on the teachers personality to inculcate moral values through both the official as well as the hidden curriculum. Through the teacher actions in and outside the classroom, he/she initiates the learners to a pattern of behaviour which could be positive or negative. Therefore teachers should be exemplary in learning and behaviour. In like manner, teacher through their methods of teaching can exert a great influence on learners moral sense and moral development. Efforts towards empowering teachers to be able to implement the new moral education paradigm would take two forms pre-service education and in-service education.

Prescriptions for Education of Pre-service Teachers

Entrants to Colleges of Education and faculties of Education must pass necessary integrity and aptitude test that would qualify them for the teaching profession. There is also the head to integrate ethical issues into the existing teacher education curricula in areas such as curriculum planning and implementation, child development, psychology of learning, philosophy and sociology of education and educational administration. With an integrative approach, every teacher would be made to know how to integrate learning of

factual content with relevant factual issues. For instance, topics like meanings and interpretation of morality, philosophical theories on morality as expressed by thinkers like plato, Aristotle, Immanuel Kant, Akingelu and the like can be integrated into existing courses in philosophy of education. Also psychological theories on morality as expressed by thinkers such as Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg , Carol Gilgan and the like can be integrated to existing course in psychology of learning and child development. Again sociological issues such as the influence of the home, media, peer group and other social institution on learners moral development can be integrated into course in sociology of education. More importantly, courses in curriculum planning and implementation should include the philosophical foundations of the various subject. Teaching methods such as methods of teaching and the ethical dimensions to teaching discussion method, co-operative learning, Socratic /questioning method and value clarification approach should be included and taught with a view to exposing the would-be-teachers to know how they can use the methods to promote learners moral development.

The teacher education paradigm being suggested could be better implemented through collaborative approach to teaching the courses by experts in the various fields and experts in moral education. Teaming or collaborative teaching is a method of instruction in which two or more teachers combine their individual subjects into one course which they teach as a team to a group of students (Janel, 2011). The teacher working as a team have to plan, conducts and evaluate the learning activities together. For example an expert in curriculum studies teach topics in teaching methods and techniques while an expert in moral education can provide a follow up teaching focusing on the philosophical foundation of the various teaching methods and how each can be used to promote learners moral development. This approach tends to expose lecturers to the subject expertise of colleagues and to different methods of planning, organization and presentation of instruction.

Professional teaching practice programmes should provide for the moral evaluation of the student teachers in the school where they practice. In addition stringent employment examination and interviews should be adopted to screen those who are to be admitted into the teaching profession. In order to achieve this, the teaching profession has to be made more attractive in terms of remuneration and conditions of service, so that the best available hands can be attracted and retained in the teaching profession.

Prescriptions for Education of in –Service Teachers.

There is the need for retraining programme for in-service teachers. The objective of such refresher courses is to re-orientation teachers towards using the various school subject to fosters learners moral development. Such training can cover such areas as value inculcation and modeling, ethical issues, and pedagogical issues.

Again, in order to educate for moral integrity there is the need for committed teachers who are professionally and morally sound to implement the programmes. Criteria for recruitment in the teaching profession should address the intellectual ability and also the moral standing of the would be teachers. However, this would only be possible when teaching is made a choice profession by improving on the condition of service and the remuneration of teachers. By so doing, the best minds in terms of intellectual ability and moral character would be attracted to the profession. Unless entry into the profession is competitive, they would be difficult to select the best among the application. The present situation in which the profession hardly attracts and retains the best hands available would not support education for moral integrity.

In addition, the entire teacher education programmes at all levels should be very sensitive to moral issues. Teachers who teach in colleges of education and faculties of education should be models of integrity. This would have a spill over effect on the entire educational system. Again honesty, self-discipline, fairness and general good conduct should be consciously observed and documented as part of the overall assessment of teachers. This implies that effective learning should be emphasised as much as this cognitive and pedagogical abilities at all levels of teacher education in Nigeria.

In service training should be a regular exercise and should include orientation of teachers on the great responsibility they owe the society as custodians of moral and values. The pivot of in-service training should be quipping teachers with the pedagogical skills which will enable them draw out the moral significance of their subject.

Conclusion

Education is a veritable tool for effecting value re-orientation and national development. Teachers have a key role in re-orientating the coming generations of Nigerians towards values that can promote social stability and wellbeing. The current teacher education programmes need to be restructured in order to better position Nigerian teachers irrespective of their subject area to

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infuse morals and values in learners. Suggestions have been possible on persisted ways of infusing values into the preparation of pre-service teachers as well as in-service teachers. These suggestions have covered the aspect of admission into faculties and Colleges of Education, curriculum contents and pedagogical skills of teacher education.

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