A Philosophical Reflection on the Gap between the Theory and Practice of Values Education in Nigeria

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Abstract
Education is generally believed to result in a total positive change in the behaviour of those committed to it and an educated citizenry, expectedly, begets a civilized society. Ironically, the reverse appears to be the case in Nigeria where social ills and vices increase as educational institutions and activities multiply. Sadly, many of the vices prevalent in the country today are invented and perpetrated by the supposedly 'educated' - an indication that something is indeed amiss with our educational system. This paper identified functional values education as the missing ingredient; it explained the meaning of values and mentions some of its types. It also expatiated values education, pointed out the link between it and national economic development and highlighted some of the challenges facing it in Nigeria today. Coming to the conclusion that we may never win the battle against corruption, insurgences, vandalism, money-laundering, embezzlement of public fund, religious and political violence or salvage our ailing economy by voting billions of naira yearly to security if we do not move away from mere theoretical to practical values education and transform our school system from being a hatchery of ruined, peccable eggs, it recommended the reintroduction and effective implementation of corporal punishment in our primary and secondary schools.

Keywords: values, values education, corporal punishment, economic development.

Introduction
Nigeria is currently at the middle of a terrible economic storm and majority of her citizens are facing extremely hard times. Many, having waited to no avail on government to deliver the promised 'change', have now given up the situation as totally hopeless. In an attempt to find a solution to this undesirable situation, this paper suggests that the nation should look inward rather than elsewhere, believing that our agony as a people is self-inflicted and requires attitudinal change, more than anything else to heal.

As the writers ruminate over the perilous times Nigerians are going through, the maxim: 'it is the man, not his weapon that wins the war' readily comes to mind. No country in the world is developed simply because she is resource-rich. In fact, if the possession of natural resources were the criterion for measuring development, Africa would have been the most developed continent in the world. The truth is that, beyond whatever nature has endowed us with, it is

who we are and how we manage what we have that determine our fortune as a people; everything boils down to our attitude.

The spate of insurgences, corruption, injustice, political killings, electoral violence, embezzlement of public fund, etc. evidences Nigerians' poor, undisciplined attitudes to national issues which, in the main, are inimical to national economic development. To come out from the economic, political, and social quagmire she has been stuck in for too long, Nigeria needs to reengineer her educational system to bring about positive transformation in the attitude and perception of her people. She has an urgent need of values education tailored to sound behaviourist theories – the kind of education that generates citizens who are civilized in mind and character.

Meaning and Types of Values
There is the need to start this discussion by clearly differentiating the term 'values' from 'value', in order to avoid the mistake many writers and scholars make in confusing the two as one instead of two different concepts. Whereas, 'value' is a mathematical or economic concept which refers to how much a thing is worth in monetary or numerical terms, 'values' is, on the other hand, an ethical concept emanating from axiology.
The word 'axiology' according to Osaat (2010) derives from the Greek 'axios' which means 'worthy'. As a branch of philosophy, axiology is concerned with the problems of value judgments' as to what is good, worthwhile, important, acceptable, etc. (Aminigo, 2003); it examines, analyzes, and suggests value standards (Okoh & Omordu, 2013).

Hornby (2000: 1649) defines 'values' as "beliefs about what is right and wrong and what is important in life…" To make it clearer, Amaele (2010) explains that values are standards of conducts or behaviour which a society endorses, cultivates, and endeavours to transmit to both her present and future members. Values are principles or beliefs that direct, influence and regulate our behavioural patterns, decisions and choices (Okoh & Omordu, 2013).
It is important, as well, to note that the words 'values' and 'virtues' are synonymous and may be used interchangeably. In fact, 'virtues' was the more preferred term in classical philosophy. 'Virtues' has been defined as behaviours or "attitudes that show high moral standards" (Hornby, 2000: 1660). A similar explanation is given by Rauhut (2007:249) who opines that "virtues are character traits that allow agents to act habitually well."
Values touch almost every facet of man's existence. Each type of values therefore, focuses on a specific aspect or area of human experience. Amaele (2010) listed and discussed several types of values, including: Religious Values, Moral Values, Social Values, Cultural Values, Intellectual Values and Economic Values.

Factors that Influence Values
Perhaps, some of the factors that influence values deserve a mention in this paper, since they equally affect values education. These include family background, religion, culture, mass media, and level of education. The point here is that a person's family background (up-bringing) can dispose him to be humble or proud, respectful or disrespectful, domineering or considerate, etc. In the same way, an individual can grow peaceful or violent, tolerant or intolerant, loving or hateful, depending on the content of the religious teachings he/she receives. Culture-wise, the predominant way of life of people in the locality an individual lives influences his perception of things.

Education

Education has been defined in various ways by different scholars, as a result of its dynamic nature which necessitates its constant change. Some scholars have pointed outthat education changes from place to place, time to time and people to people and that definitions of education may be sociological, humanistic, or ethical (Osaat and Okenwa, 2018).

Looking at education sociologically, Nwagwu in Okenwa (2018) claims it is the method by which every society endeavours to maintain and improve on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that it has amassed, just to continue to preserve her people and their cultural heritage. It is important to note that inherent in this sociological definition is the idea that education is packaged or designed to promote the interest of the society and not the individual's.

From a humanistic point of view, Okafor in Amaele (2010:17) defines education as "the process of acculturation through which the individual is helped to attain the development of his potentialities, and their maximum activation when necessary, according to right reason..." In this sense, the interest of the individual is acknowledged and promoted, with education geared towards the sharpening of his inborn capabilities.

To add his voice to the meaning of education based on ethical considerations, Peters (1967:5) sees it as a process by which "What is worthwhile has been or is being transmitted in a morally unobjectionable manner". He went on to describe education as both a process of imitation and of transformation. As a process of imitation, education introduces (exposes) individuals to worthwhile and desirable dispositions and as a process of transformation, it brings a deliberate, premeditated positive change in attitude over them (Peters, 1967).

The meaning of education may further be deciphered from a quick look at the two Latin words from which education is etymologically derived. The first is 'educare' – variously interpreted as 'to mould', or 'to make'. These interpretations are harmonized to suggest that education is a process of grooming, nurturing, and bringing to fruition the intellectual development of the child. It is from this standpoint that realists design education as a tool to fill and decorate the mind of the child which, to them, is blank at birth, with useful information, knowledge, skills, etc. The other Latin word, 'educere' has been rendered as 'to lead out', 'to build' or 'to uphold' (Amaele, 2010). Okoh and Omordu (2013:13), supporting the etymological concept of *educare,* uphold education as "the process of forming or training children". Based on this viewpoint, idealists settle with the conviction that every child is born with innate ideas that education should target to squeeze out and expand (Osaat, 2010). Whatever the approach, *educere* or *educare*, it is clear that education is geared towards an all-round transformation and development of the child in a morally unobjectionable manner.

To throw more light on how education goes about this lofty task, there is need to briefly explain the taxonomy of educational objectives. Taxonomy of educational objectives refers to a broad classification of the goals education aims at achieving in the development of those who are exposed to it. Opara (2016) classifies educational objectives into three domains - the cognitive, the affective, and the psychomotor.

The cognitive domain focuses on the development of the mental and thinking processes of the learner. The affective domain deals with efforts to change or affect the learner's attitude, character, habits, emotions, sentiments, and morals, while the psychomotor domain attends to the development of physical, muscular, manipulative skills as well as neuromuscular coordination (Opara, 2016). Developments along these domains form the basic criteria for identifying an individual who may be considered as really educated (Peters, 1967; Amaele, 2010). To this end, Okenwa (2018) posits that an educated man must be intellectually sound,

possessing wisdom and understanding (cognitive); he must be skillful, functionally fit, to ensure economic self-reliance (psychomotor), and he must possess a desirable and unquestionable character, to ensure a habit of good and acceptable behaviour (affective).

Values Education

In the previous paragraph, it was established that education, as a whole process, touches learners' cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains. It is understood that each of these domains focuses on different objectives and so apply different techniques in pursuance of its set goals. The psychomotor domain, for instance, may employ physical activities such as writing, drawing, painting, playing, etc. to achieve its objectives; while the cognitive domain may utilize mental exercises involving memorization, recollection, identification, etc. Now, in talking about values education, it becomes clear that we are zeroing in on a specifically unique dimension of education which is strictly concerned about prosecuting educational goals in the affective domain.

Hawkes in Osaat and Ibe (2015) describe values education as an approach to education which places the quest for meaning and purpose at the center of the educational enterprise. This opinion is however, both as vague as it is instructive, in the sense of not providing any clue as to the direction of the meaning and purpose that values education purportedly searches for.

To rid values education of all possible ambiguity that may arise from Hawkes position, Rauhut (2007) clarifies that virtues ethics considers judgment about character as more fundamental than judgment about rules, duties, and obligations and therefore, replaces the question: 'What should I do?' with the question: 'What sort of person should I be?' By this, he suggests that values education is the form of education that focuses more on the development of good character or personality rather than inculcating learners with knowledge of abstract rules that classify actions. Perhaps, here lies a major difference between values education and moral or religious instruction. The first is practical, directing the learner to what sort of person he should be, while the other is abstract, pointing out what rules and principles a learner should follow. By emphasizing strictly on character development than on abstract rules, values education indicates that being a morally good person results from right up-bringing and education rather than adhering to right moral principles. Rauhut (2007: 249) captures this by commenting that "good actions naturally flow from a good character."

Values Education and Economic Development

Development is a complex, multidimensional concept that has been explained or defined in a variety of ways by different scholars. Nnachi (2015) sees it as a process of qualitative changes which manifest either in an individual or a location, characterized by a transformation from a lower to an advanced state. Ofoeze (2015), remarks that it is a process of transformation from traditionalism to modernism, which touches the political, social, and economic spheres of man's life. These definitions indicate that development entails that the socio-economic and material well-being of citizens of a country is considerably improved in terms of high living standards. A developed country, therefore, is one whose people are secured and living in prosperity.

Amaele (2010) insists that it will take the development of good character in citizens to achieve economic growth and development in any society, pointing out that all great civilizations rose on the wings of moral character and failed with the decline of same. This underlines the fact that human personality development is the best and most important aspect of development any society can have. Omoregbe (1993) argues that development will be difficult, if not impossible, to imagine in a country whose citizens are morally bankrupt,

believing that if the moral development of citizens is not addressed and achieved first, other forms of development would be stalled. This is exactly the situation in Nigeria today.

Our school system is so concerned about the cognitive and psychomotor development of the Nigerian child that very little or nothing is done about his character development. In the final analysis, a lot of Nigerian students graduate only as 'learned' but not 'educated' people, since they lack the behavioural traits expected of the educated. So, every year, millions of youths who are mentally and physically sound but morally sick are injected into the public and private sectors of the economy. And, instead of contributing to our country's growth and development, these constitute hindrances. This trend is a confirmation of Amaele's (2010) prediction that students who have no respect for school rules and regulations; who disregard diligence and productive labour; who come late to, or stay away from, school at will; who employ all manner of foul means to pass examinations, when they graduate and hold positions of trust in the public and private sectors, will definitely continue to do as they did when they were in school. The spate of forgery, perjury, embezzlement of public fund and money laundering among public servants in Nigeria may therefore be explained as a hangover of ill-executed values education or the sheer lack of it.

Okere in the Guardian Newspaper of September 26, 2016 cites an NNPC's monthly financial report as saying that the magnitude of turbulence in the country's oil and gas sector as a result of renewed militancy has grossly affected oil and gas production with its resultant consequences for the economy. The same report claimed that the Nigerian Petroleum Development Company (NPDC) lost a substantial portion of crude oil estimated to be in excess of ₦27 billion naira to pipeline vandalism in the month of July alone. The question here is: who are these vandals? They are of course Nigerians. It is not surprising then, that Nigeria's development is stalled today by the immorality of her citizens, more than any other single factor.

Corruption is another monster that has withstood the nation's economic advancement. It has almost become a national attitude here that Nigeria was recently described by a popular British statesman as 'fantastically corrupt'. Just imagine that the various military regimes collectively deprived Nigeria of the chance of economic development by serially looting over $500 million (The Guardian in Agbo, 2010). In recent times, we hear of such major cases as the Dasuki-gate Scam, which involved the alleged diversion of $2.1 billion (₦546 billion); the NIMASA Scam involving the alleged stealing of ₦2.6 billion by six staff of the agency; the Maina Pension Scam involving ₦195 billion; the Lamorde Scam involving the alleged diversion of over one trillion naira (₦ 1tn) by a former EFCC boss; the SGF bribery case involving ₦507 million; the Osborne Towers Scam in which the total sum of ₦13 billion was recovered by the EFCC from a flat in Ikoyi Lagos. Nigeria is believed to have recovered no less than ₦17 billion stolen public funds within the first four months of the introduction of the Whistle Blowing Policy. These few cases of financial crimes mentioned above give a clue to the extent of the damage corruption has done to Nigeria's economy (Naija on Point, 2015).

Challenges Facing Functional Values Education in Nigeria
First, there is an acute shortage of role-model teachers. Incidentally, values education requires practical approach on the part of the teacher whose task includes the development of positive character in learners. Aminigo (2003) opines that for a teacher to effectively impart virtues to pupils or students he has to have a taste of the pudding by not only having knowledge of the values but being personally committed to them. Amaele (2010:150) agrees that "he must also possess the moral competence, which in most cases, must be expressed in

practical terms." These scholars' belief that, in teaching, one can only give what one has presupposes that to inculcate values to children, words must be matched with actions. They affirm, unequivocally, that values education can only become functional when it advances from the theoretical dimension to the practical. This is not a new rule; virtues ethical thinkers of the past always emphasized the need for role models. "A role model" according to Rauhut (2007:251) "is a person of excellent moral character who habitually acts well and feels pleasure when exercising her virtues." This is what made Socrates an outstanding teacher; "Socrates did not only teach virtue but he also practiced it up to his death" (Amaele, 2010:1). Unfortunately, our school system is replete with folks who are wanting in character, who pull down instead of building up school children morally. What values, for instance, could such teachers who manifest poor attitude to work; quarrel openly with, and conspire against, each other; take bribes from students or their parents to allow examination malpractice or to award students unmerited grades; demand immoral affairs with students of the opposite sex as a condition for passing their course, etc. impart to learners?

Secondly, there is the challenge of a surfeit of negative influences in our society. Whether we know it or not, values education goes on informally beyond the four walls of the school. Young Nigerians are, for instance, negatively influenced by the activities, of the political class who create the erroneous impression that politics is an avenue for getting rich quick through embezzlement of public funds (Anyanwu, Ewhe & Ozioma, 2015). Nigerian Politics is full of killings, thuggery, bribery, malpractices, dishonesty, etc. The message these vices send to the youths is that life is a do or die affair and that the winner takes it all.
Apart from politics, the youths receive negative influences from religion. It is rather ridiculous that some religious groups preach religious dichotomy, violence, hatred, fanaticism, false propaganda and the like (Amaele, 2010). Little wonder, there are religious and ethnic insurgences everywhere, championed by young people.

Thirdly, the lack of censorship of the mass media poses a challenge to values education in Nigeria. Plato, the great educator, knew very well that what children hear and see do have formative effects on their character and therefore, warned that all that is ugly and immoral should be avoided or omitted from children's stories (Amaele, 2010). It is unfortunate that our nation pays no heed to this useful warning. The Nigerian child is bombarded daily with obscene images, languages, and gestures via the mass media. Our entertainment industry now specializes in creating and marketing immorality, violence and all sorts of social vices. It appears almost certain that a musical album, film or movie will not sell in Nigeria today unless the clips show naked women or very offensive sexual acts. Adedayo in Nweke (2015: 170) frowns that "the recent moral scandal and indecency of African television programmes increase the rate of immorality" and blames appropriate institutions for doing nothing about it. Also unfortunate is the use of radio and television programmes and the print media to promote immorality publicly and people who engage in the production of such stuff only consider their financial gain and nothing about the harmful effects their activities have on the nation (Amaele, 2010).

Regrettably, the best our regulatory bodies have done is making these ungodly film and movie makers add a warning that young persons below certain ages should not watch this and that films. Such warnings only expose our hypocrisy and self-deception. It is in fact a mark of moral failure on the part of society to allow things it knows very well are capable of marring the character and ruining the future of its children to get to their homes. By condoning these, society inadvertently communicates the thought to children that if these stuff are worth producing, marketing, buying, watching, reading, and listening to, then the kind of life they

project is equally worth emulating.

Inefficient application of corporal punishment in our schools is another major set-back facing values education in this country. Having been participants in the Nigerian school system for several decades as pupils, students, and teachers, these writers vouch that discipline has lost its place in our institutions of learning. Whatever happened to corporal punishment in Nigerian schools (removal or non-implementation) is largely responsible for the high rate of immorality in our society today.

In the past, children were disciplined for every act of disobedience to school rules and regulations. Latecomers, for example, were knelt down on arrival at the school gate; they were flogged and later assigned manual labour such as sweeping, mowing, fetching of water, etc. at the end of classes. Other offences like truancy, noise-making, neglect of home-work or assignment, fighting, theft, etc., were similarly punished. In those days, pupils and students learnt such values as punctuality, contentment, tolerance, diligence, etc. directly and practically through school discipline.

Plato, realizing the place of discipline in values education, insisted in Osaat (2010:76) that "the child who shows signs of disobedience should be punished, no matter his age."Amaele (2010) echoes his support by adding that teachers should exercise the right to punish children when they misbehave. It appears to be the predominant view of behaviourist theorists that one of the ways children learn behaviour and develop character is through the reinforcement of appropriate behaviours and the punishment of inappropriate ones (Shaffer & Kipp in Okenwa, 2018).Unfortunately, there are schools today in many Nigerian cities (including Port Harcourt where these writers live) where one cannot as much as scold a child for coming to school late, for absenting from school without any good reason, etc. In such schools, a teacher cannot tell a child to kneel down, talk-less of flogging any, for whatever reason. We oppose the use of the cane on children while they are yet young and impressionable, in school and controllable; but we support government's use of arms to fight them when they are grown up and hardened, out of school and beyond control. The Nigerian society is paying a huge price presently for this unfortunate gap between theories and practice in her education system occasioned by her lack of discipline. For, it takes nothing but a disciplined society to appreciate the values of disciplining her subjects and doing so in words and in action.

The hostile attitudes of some parent, guardians and students towards teachers constitute another major challenge militating against values education in Nigeria today. Amaele (2010) cites two striking examples of molestations and harassments teachers suffer in the hands of parents, guardians, and students in the course of performing their legitimate duty of instilling discipline in pupils and students. The first is the case of a teacher who was killed by a student at Community Secondary School, Wiiyikara in Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State in the 1994/95 academic session. The second is that of a female teacher at Holy Rosary Girls' Secondary School, Port Harcourt who was nearly beaten to death in June, 1998 by two military men hired by the elder sister of a student she had disciplined. Most teachers now take a passive posture in matters of school discipline and this breeds more and more indiscipline among students.

Conclusion

By describing education as "the testing laboratory of human values", Okoh and Omordu (2013:97) suggest that the main task of education is human character development and perfection. Likewise, Amaele (2010;3) quips: "What makes a process educational is the virtue it carries and inculcates" and argues that it is an error to describe a mental and physical

training process which lacks elements of values, as 'education' or its products as 'educated'. The current situation where our elite class is almost entirely steeped in vices does not, therefore, speak well of the Nigerian school system. The shamelessly corrupt politicians and public servants, the militants, the vandals, the kidnappers, the money-launderers, all share a common characteristic – lack of values. Since all these are products of our school system, it goes without saying that our educational system is devoid of values and that the lack of it is the bane of our economic development. This being nothing but the truth, our nation is most likely neither going to win the battle against social vices nor to salvage her ailing economy by wasting, as it were, billions of naira yearly in prosecuting needless and futile wars, while her school system remains a hatchery of ruined eggs.

Recommendations

In view of the importance of values education to the economic, social and political life of our country, this paper recommends:

1. That, reasonable corporal punishment be reintroduced and effectively enforced in our primary and secondary schools (public and private), in line with behaviourist theories of learning that supports punishment for inappropriate behaviour in the learning process;
2. That, government should establish an agency that will provide a legal framework for defending teachers who are harassed or molested by parents and/or guardians for performing their legitimate duty of enforcing discipline in schools;
3. That, government, through appropriate law-making bodies and enforcement agencies, should exercise moral courage in confronting the heinous activities going on in the entertainment industry by censoring, confiscating, and destroying films, movies, records, magazines, etc. with filthy and morally offensive contents;
4. That, school authorities and various government agencies should introduce adequate reward mechanism for students and staff who exhibit high character traits. This should be celebrated annually in public to boost learners' character / ethical development, and
5. That, values education should not only be introduced in the entire system but should be incorporated into the routine assessments of public and private schools' pupils and students, through practical evaluations backed with certificates.

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