

Need for Value Orientation in Nigeria for Sustainable National Development: The Role of Vocational Education

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Abstract

Positive and sustainable growth of any nation is as a result of positive values that is encouraged and practiced within the society, where social values have been looked down on, underdevelopment sets in hence the need for reorientation of values. this paper focuses on the need for value orientation in Nigeria for sustainable national development: the role of vocational education. the paper believes that integrating vocational education to the enhancement of value reorientation is the best to enhance growth and development in the society. The paper concluded that value orientation process should be a welcome idea and a priority of the government and everyone should be encouraged to be a part of this exercise for a better future and the desired better Nigeria can be achieved through vocational reorientation on skills acquisition. It was recommended amongst others that youth re-orientation should form part of school curriculum in order to instill discipline in them and workshops and seminars should be organized to educate the masses of vocational education to encourage parents to send their children to study in the various aspects of the discipline in vocational education.

Keywords: *Value Orientation, Vocational Education and Sustainable National Development.*

Introduction

Vocational education is the training given to learners to prepare them for skill acquisition; apprenticeship work such as trades craftsmen or professional career for national development. It equips learners with specific skills, technical and practical experiences needed for a particular profession by linking learners to labour needs. (Okoye & Okwelle, 2013). Vocational education trains people to have a basic scientific knowledge of practical education which involves skill acquisitions needed in the technical education. Vocational education in Nigeria has been part of national educational structure since the colonial era with the establishment of craft schools and technical institutes. However, it's implementation has often been plagued by inadequate infrastructure, poor funding and negative societal perception. According to the National Policy in Education (NPE, 2013). Vocational education is a requisite for manpower development and

fostering of economic growth. These underscores the need to train youths into vocational and technical education.

Vocational oriented education is a systematic acquisition of knowledge and skills that will yield professional personnel in selected fields of studies. To achieve these objectives, the value of youths and interest are to be re-oriented from quick and illegal ways of getting money to self-employment and production of materials. therefore, the government should carry out public campaign to register youths for empowerment programmes. Thus, catching them early will be more effective than later for future development. (Nwaodua, 2021).

Sustainable National Development

Sustainable national development is seen as growth and progress needed to meet with present generation's needs without compromising the ability of their future. It encompasses not just economic development but also social inclusion, environmental protection and institutional governance (United Nations, 2015). Achieving a sustainable national development in Nigeria remains a major challenge due to deep-seated issues like poverty, youth unemployment degradation. Ojo (2017), sustainable development in Nigeria cannot be realized without addressing the foundational values that influence governance, resource utilization and human behaviour.

Value Orientation

Value orientation could be seen as beliefs about what is right/wrong or most important in the life of a person. Or better still, it is a process of instilling desirable norms, beliefs and attitudes that governs behaviors in a society such as honesty, diligence, self-reliance, patriotism, respect for others and accountability. Olayinka (2014) opines that values are essential for guiding individual conduct and shaping collective behaviours. When societies upholds strong moral values, they are more likely to foster development that is inclusive, equitable and sustainable.

In Nigeria, however, value systems have been increasingly undermined by materialism, corruption and moral laxity. The result is a society where short-term gains are often prioritized over long-term integrity and national interest (Ezeol, 2011).

Re-orienting citizens -especially youths towards ethical and productive values is prerequisite for rebuilding national character and achieving meaningful development. Value orientation according to Ensure & Esu (2018) stated that values learned beliefs are well internalized actions and thought of the individual to produce a strong, emotional and intellectual responses. Values can be arranged in hierarchy from not so important to higher and most important cherished things. Nigeria has resources that can serve as a base of employment to the youths in the country. The government and nongovernmental organizations can carry out orientation value of some youths in tertiary institutions to get practical training which will help them and other members of the society. This can be achieved by reducing value to production of goods and services in this country. Joel (2020) opines that vocational development is convened with comprehensive training and care of individuals in such a way to make them have adequate and reliable skill acquisition in terms of their abilities and capabilities.

Value re-orientation is the act of changing, adjusting the attitude of people to take proactive steps in acquiring new skills in the field of vocational education for sustainability and growth of both the individual and the society at large. In the words of Juliet (2020) vocational orientation is seen as the act "of deliberately attempting to change the direction which attitudes and beliefs in Nigeria are currently orientated, adjusted, aligned behaviour, attitudes and beliefs of Nigerians in

a new or different direction with the public discourse from contemporary polices which will to some extent bring a shift from corruptions, terrorisms, kidnapping, Yahoo Plus (rituals) and so on.

Roles of Vocational Education in Value Orientation

Vocational education helps to nurture essential life values that contribute to societal progress in an individual. When strategically implemented, it becomes a platform for instilling discipline, promoting economic independence and encouraging ethical behaviour. In Nigeria's context, vocational education has the potential to reshape the nation's moral affected group by unemployment and value erosion. Vocational education promotes dignity of labour. In traditional African society, work (manual or intellectual) was reverend. However, the contemporary Nigerian society has been a shift towards the glorification of wealth without questioning it's source and this has led to the widespread neglect of vocational technical education careers often viewed as inferior to white collar jobs (Oviawe, 2017).

Vocational education encourages self- reliance and entrepreneurship by equipping learners with practical skills that can be converted into income generating activities. This emphasis on self-reliance is a core value often present in conventional academic systems, unlike University graduate who may rely on government employment or white collar jobs. Graduates are more inclined to start small businesses, form cooperatives or offer services within their communities. Ayonmike et al (2015) stated that vocational education fosters entrepreneurial thinking by teaching students how to identify market needs, manage resources and deliver value. Such training is critical in a country like Nigeria where formal job opportunities are limited and over 80%of jobs come from the informal sector. Government programs such as National Directorate of Employment (NDE) have emphasized vocational skills as a pathway to entrepreneurship. These programs when effected will reduce dependency on government and foreign aid while promoting values such as resilience, innovations and personal responsibilities.

Vocational education reduces youth restive ness and social vices which often stems from unemployment and disillusionment. When youths lack directions, skills or opportunities, they become vulnerable to recruitment into criminal gangs, political violence and cultism (Obasi, 2018).

Importance of Value Orientation in Nigeria

One of the most difficult things to effect in Nigeria today is restoration of our national values and integrity especially where a negative attitude has been formed by past governments. Value orientation means restoration or a change of attitude towards a number of things that have been identified as wrong, actions or wrong attitudes. Nigerians are suffering because of its non-social and criminal activities such as: "Boko Haram insurgency", "herdsmen/farmers crisis" among others. Fraudulent practice in Nigeria are too numerous that people are at a loss on what to do when one reads the highlights of newspapers and magazines as well as watch television, one reads and sees stories of the many crimes that Nigerians indulge in the decline and fall of Nigeria in behaviour is a well-known fact all over the world (Amino, 2022). The decline is rooted to the families and educational sectors where parents and teachers have failed in inculcating the right skills, attitudes and knowledge to the children in the initial stages of li development, it is common to hear people complain on the government of today. Value orientation is not just a moral imperative; it is a national necessity. Nigeria's developmental crisis is deeply tied to a break down in societal values across multiple sectors. Right from governance, business education to everyday interactions, there is growing evidence of ethical lapses and a departure from colonial and national

ideals. Therefore from the above discussion it is obvious that there is need for a sound educational foundation which aims at societal investment in human capital development education. This paper believes that the best approach to national development is the adoption of vocational education for gradual and sustained value change toward national development.

Concept of National Development

The concept of national development comprises of industrialization, human capital development, social and educational quality of people. Nations can only attain such height by keying into the tremendous power of education in their pursuit for the attainment of national objectives. For instance, the Germans during the second Reich of 1871 used education as an instrument per excellence for the unification of all the Germans, while Japanese during the Meiji Restoration used vocational education to inculcate cardinal case virtues as benevolence, justice and integrity in the life of people. In all these cases, each country demonstrated unflinching commitment to the realization of national imperatives. When Mergu period ended, with the death of emperor in 1912, Japan had highly educated population free of feudal class restrictions.. Ojo (2015) stated that one of the functions of vocational education is to provide a setting in which children can grow with the right intellectual capabilities that will help in the development of the society, Adejo (2021), further observes that Nigerians have numerous problems ranging from productivity, ignorance, misconceptions, mismanagement of resources and hunger, all these are routed to the attitudes of various Nigerians entrenched by corruption, disposition and desire to acquire all for self. The land is corrupt, even the air is corrupt and the war against corruption and consequences of corruption are worse than Coronavirus, robbery and kidnapping.

Benefits of Vocational Value Orientation for National Development

By focusing on vocational value orientation, nations can develop the following:

- Skilled workforce - this develops a highly skilled and competent workforce, driving economic growth and productivity.
- Industry growth: This supports industry development by providing trained personnel, leading to increased competitiveness and innovation.
- Reduced unemployment: vocational education prepares students for in-demand jobs, reducing unemployment rates and poverty.
- Economic diversification: Encourage entrepreneurship and innovation, leading economic diversification and reduced reliance on a single industry.
- Increased productivity: It fosters a culture of efficiency and productivity, leading to improved national output and competitiveness.
- Social stability: provides opportunities for social mobility, reducing inequality and promoting social stability.
- National self-sufficiency: It develops local expertise, reducing reliance on foreign labor and promoting national self-sufficiency.
- It encourages innovation, research, and development, driving technological advancements and national progress.
- Environmental sustainability: It promotes sustainable practices and environmental awareness, supporting eco-friendly development.
- Global competitiveness: It prepares the workforce to compete globally, enhancing national reputation and attracting foreign investment.

Challenges facing Vocational Education for Sustainable Development in Nigeria

Despite the critical role in fostering value orientation and promoting sustainable development in Nigeria, vocational education faces wide range of challenges that hinder its effectiveness. Addressing these issues is crucial if vocational education is to serve as a catalyst for value re-orientation and national transformation. Such issues as thus:

1. Poor funding and infrastructure

One of the most pertinent challenges facing vocational education in Nigeria is inadequate funding. Most vocational and technical institutes suffer from poor infrastructure, outdated equipment and lack of instructional material. Practical courses that require modern tools and functional workshops are often conducted in dilapidated facilities making it difficult to deliver quality training. (Oviawe, 2017).

The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) has consistently highlighted the underfunding of technical colleges as a major barrier to their performance. Without sufficient investment in modern machinery and learning aids, vocational institutes are unable to compete with their counterparts in more developed countries nor can they meet the expectation of employers in the modern labour market.

2. Negative perception of vocational education

Another major impediment is the negative societal perception of vocational education. In Nigeria, vocational education is often seen as a last resort for academically weak students or school dropouts. This perception stems from a deeply rooted societal bias that elevates white collar professions above skilled trades. (Ayonmike et al, 2015). This attitude discourages bright students from pursuing vocational paths and reinforces a system that undervalues practical skills. Consequently, many students and parents consider vocational education inferior, despite its capacity to provide employment and instill essential values such as diligence, responsibility and innovation. Changing this perception needs a nation wide re-orientation campaign and structural reforms that place vocational education on equal footing with conventional academic pathways.

3. Curriculum irrelevance and outdated content. The curriculum used in many vocational institutes does not reflect the realities of today's labour market with a fast evolving world driven by technology, innovation and globalization, Nigeria vocational institutes often lack behind in updating their programs. As a result, graduates may be skilled in techniques that are obsolete or irrelevant in current industry setting (Okoye & Okwelle, 2013). The gap between training and actual job requirements frustrates employers and reduces the employability of vocational graduates. Moreover, there is limited integration of value education, civic responsibility and ethical instruction in vocational curricula. Without these students may acquire technical skills but not the moral foundation necessary to apply them responsibly.

4. **Lack of Qualified Instructors.** The quality of vocational training is dependent on the competence and commitment of instructors in Nigeria. Many instructors lack industry experience and rely solely on outdated teaching methods (Ekpenyong, 2011). Furthermore, poor remuneration, limited career progression and inadequate professional development opportunities discourages talented individuals from entering the teaching profession in vocational institutes. Without qualified teachers who can model good values, Vocational education cannot fulfill its transformative potential.

Conclusion

Nigeria needs value orientation on acquisition of vocational skills for national development. Nigerian youths are generally seen to be proactive and creative but they need to be assisted at whatever level towards engaging themselves meaningfully by re-orienting their minds for a total turn around, this will help to improve the living conditions of youths and improve the way we perceive life and by the kind of environment created. Value orientation process should be a welcome idea and a priority of the government and everyone should be encouraged to be a part of this exercise for a better future. Conclusively, the desired better Nigeria can be achieved through vocational reorientation on skills acquisition.

Recommendation

1. Youth re-orientation should form part of school curriculum in order to instill discipline in them.
2. Workshops and seminars should be organized to educate the masses of the vocational education to encourage parents to send their children to study in the various aspects of the discipline in vocational education.
3. Programmes should be put in place for socialization of children to return to family values and this can be done by empowering traditional institutions and community leaders to set up machineries to resuscitate much cherished moral values, this will help children not to be available as cultists, kidnappers, ritualism and so on.
4. Federal, State and local government and other state holders should take measures to overcome the recent trends in the educational system.

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