
Leadership and Value System: The Challenges of 21st Century Education

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Abstract

This paper x-rayed leadership and value system as challenges of 21st century education. Leadership system and values have become a global issue that have formed basis for discussion. The current political system with its divergent leadership system has in numerable ways affected the country. It is the writers' opinion that values are standards of conduct, efficiency or worth that the society endorses maintains and transmits to future generation. The break down in moral values of the country in a way indicates the perpetration of a morally decayed leaders, who feed fat from those they are supposed to nurture, who eat the flesh and masses the bone. All these rotten attitudes exuded by our leaders have earnestly craved for public indulgence, as the paper also looked at the remedies to re-assure transparent leadership and quality in 21st century education. The failure of any educational system is a consequent of decayed values which led to failure of education system, vice versa. This paper however, focused on the issues of leadership and values with its attendant implication for even development and 21st century Education, hence the need for sustainable national development through sound education effected by the values and aspiration of the country.

Keywords: Leadership, Values, Institution, Politics, Administration, Education

INTRODUCTION

The importance of the presence of good and moral values in Nigerian leadership system has given it a new look for growth and development of the society which has a lot of impact on Nigerian education system. Leadership involves creating and articulating a vision and inspiring others to want to work toward that vision. But leaders may not be skilled at or involved with the day-to-day management of the work needed to turn that vision into a reality. As recorded by Cole (2002) leadership assists with rousing individuals to perform well. Regardless of whether a foundation has all the money related assets to exceed expectations, it might bomb terribly if the initiative doesn't spur others to achieve their assignments successfully. Leadership is the way toward impacting the exercises of a gathering of individuals by an innovator in endeavours towards objective accomplishment.

Leadership often requires leaders to take on some management tasks, but good leaders understand that their strengths are different than those exhibited by good managers who excel in articulating the steps required to complete tasks and holding people accountable for achieving their share of assigned work. Many individuals inherently possess some leadership traits, but most individuals have to develop many, if not all, of the characteristics associated with leadership. Some people can develop leadership skills through their everyday experiences. Moreover, some people do not hold any positions of authority or business titles, yet still demonstrate leadership through their actions and moral values and abilities to rally people to act on their visions for something better than the status quo. This is where the issue of value comes in. Values held by a leader can make or mar a leader. Multiple definitions of leadership exist, although the different definitions generally unite in the theory that great leaders have the ability to make strategic and visionary decisions and convince others to follow those decisions. The consensus is leaders create a vision and can successfully get others to work toward achieving that goal. They do this by setting direction and inspiring others to want to succeed in achieving the end result. Moreover, they are capable of getting people excited and motivated to work toward the vision. In other words, great leaders know how to both inspire people and get followers to complete the tasks that achieve the leader's goal. Be it as it may some Nigerian leaders only lead people to get done their selfish interest.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Leadership

Leadership is the ability of an individual or a group of individuals to influence and guide followers or other members of an organization. Leadership involves making sound -- and sometimes difficult -- decisions, creating and articulating a clear vision, establishing achievable goals and providing followers with the knowledge and tools necessary to achieve those goals. Abraham (2003) submitted that leadership is the process of influencing the activities of an organizational goal towards goal setting and goal achievement.

Leadership is the initiative of a new structure or procedure for accomplishing organizational goal and objectives or changing organizational goal and objectives.

Also, Abraham (2003) posited that leadership has to do with influencing members of an organization to achieve predetermined objectives. He went further to state that leadership is a function of fellowship and followership. Leaders are found and required in most aspects of society, from business to politics to region to community-based organizations. An effective leader possess the following characteristics: self-confidence, strong communication and management skills, creative and innovative thinking, perseverance in the face of failure, willingness to take risks, openness to change, and levelheadedness and reactivity in times of crisis.

Values

Utilitarianism is a teleological principle which subjects values to relativism. What gives pleasure to one person might however, not give to another. For instance, alcohol consumption may be valued by one person and not by the other. Furthermore, what is of pleasure to one individual might not necessarily be of good value. A man who derives pleasure in sleeping with other people's wives is not doing so because adultery is good and or socially acceptable in the society. Jeremy and Mill (2008) are proponents of utilitarianism. Bentham claims that man is by nature a pleasure-seeking and pains avoiding animal, that pleasure and pains are the two guides of all human action (Omeregbe, 1999). In Bentham's ethics, pleasure and pain are the determinants of what should be valued. Emotivism - Emotivism is a form of subjectivism which reduces value statements to mere expression

of an attitude or feeling. The theory denies that value statements are factual statements which convey information about actions. A moral statement about a particular action tells us nothing about the action which can be true or false. According to this theory, if I say that stealing is not good, I am only giving information about stealing; I am expressing my attitude towards it. I am also trying to make the values of other people conform to my own value judgment in the matter. For the emotivists, the statement means nothing than to make somebody disapprove stealing as I do. Emotivism is unacceptable because it reduces value statements to pure subjectivity and removes completely objectivity from it.

Idealism - This theory also known as absolutism was propounded by Plato. The theory rejects the position of the relativists. The Idealists contend that values are objective, eternal and unchangeable. Values such as truth, honesty, goodness are objective irrespective of human preferences. Values for the Idealists remain the same today as they were years ago and will remain so in future. For instance, regardless of race, class, creed or sex values such as charity and honesty are good for all men and at all times. They believe that values are based on the nature of things. However, even though values are culture bound, human beings have similar needs such as those for survival, procreation, love, security, hunger and friendship. If this is so and human beings seem to value these things, then are values really relative? It is in the nature of value that things are taken the way they are. If one knows the value of one's life, one will also know the value of and need to preserve one's neighbour's life.

However, according to natural jurisprudence of law, what should be considered as acceptable moral value and right should what is in conformity with natural conscience of justice. To illustrate this, Okunniga (2008) put forward – if 10 men from 10 different countries are put into different rooms and asked in a language they understand whether it is good to steal or not. Majority will say it is not good to steal, because they would not want to be killed. As such Nigerian Leaders should be able to lead in accordance with natural principles of justice.

Leadership Theory

Just as there are multiple definitions of leadership, many different leadership theories exist. These theories are often grouped into buckets based on the ideas each theory professes. For example, one group is the Great Man Theory, a category that originated in the 19th century and stresses that great leaders were men born to the task. Another group is the Trait Theory, which dates to the mid-20th century and also centres on the idea that some people are born with the traits that make them great leaders, such as integrity and self-confidence (Nwankwoala, 2016).

The second half of the 20th century saw the arrival of several more categories. Those include situational leadership, where the leadership style is adjusted based on the readiness or skill level of followers in a given situation, and contingency theories, in which effective leadership depends on having the right leader for the right situation; transactional leadership theories, in which leaders reward or punish followers to achieve results; and transformational leadership theories, where leaders help transform followers through example.

Challenges of 21st Century Education

Leadership cum Educational System

The discrepancies or disunity between politics and education has arisen as a result of decisions, policies and actions taken by those in authority which have had negative implications to the stated goals of education. Lots of these decisions however were as a result of inputs from the environment in the form of demands and supports. These inputs were adopted and made into political decisions

just as they are or were adapted to meet the needs of the political system; while others were dropped. But sometimes, somehow some of these decisions were contrary to the goals which the educational system was set up to achieve. Discrepancies between politics and education could be found in the following areas:

1. The Nigerian Political System is not yet matured, nor are Nigerians ripe enough to run a democratic government. The political system contrary to the goals of education has taught the citizens including the younger generation powerful lessons on selfishness, tribalism, the uncontrolled lust for power and the greed for more money at the expense of the common man. It has taught good lessons on vices like bribery and corruption, insincerity and lack of accountability. There is the adage which says that the 'calf watches the mouth of the mother cow as she is grazing'. We cannot say we are confused about which comes first, the egg or the chicken. The elders in the political arena have always betrayed the trust placed on them. National consciousness and unity cannot be achieved when the greater population of the people are being deceived and told lies daily. What we have seen is more effective than what the classrooms are supposed to inculcate into Nigerians.

2. The creation of states in the attempt to provide a more acceptable political structure in order to usher in peace and unity has in variably led to some dangerous discrimination attitudes which are ultra-vires to the goals which education is supposed to achieve. Such attitudes Include;

- i) lack of easy employment opportunities in the public sector of the different states in the country.
- ii) admission of Nigerians into the different state owned institutions sometimes this anomaly has been covered up in the name of quota system.
- iii) the discriminatory payment of fees in some state owned higher institutions. This is a situation where the non-state indigenes pay, higher fees as if they are expatriates. As said earlier on, these attitudes are working against the little education in trying to inculcate into the individual.

3. Some authorities in sociology of Education see education as an arena of competing groups. Some others see it as the scene of class struggle. It is also believed that education is the training ground in which the child learns the ideology of the ruled and the rulers, and the exploited and the exploiters. These interpretations of the educational scene are negative aspects of the society which education is supposed to wipe out. Quite contrary to the accepted beliefs that the school produces social changes and reforms which make for unit and positive learning, what education seem to be re-enacting through the traditional school system is a situation where people have learnt to reward a man for what he can do, rather than what he is. It is the same old belief that the end justifies the means. If politics has become survival of the fittest, one does not hope to expect much from education.

4. It is also clear that politics uses education to perpetuate or breed constantly political 'trouble shooters who come to destabilize the society that gave them the education. The number of times military coups take place in developing countries is a sign that something must be missing somewhere. Also noticeable is the highly timed way robberies have been carried out in the country. The blame has been put on unemployment but can we actually say this is the real cause of the problem? There is also the contradiction associated with government policies to control what goes on in the universities, including the type of course, that should be taught. This is basically an attempt to rape the academic freedom of the Universities. This is not surprising because the universities are now

being funded by the government, so also, is the appointment to important positions at the universities. Most of the appointments were based on political connection and not upon the academic excellence of the individuals concerned, this sort of situation not only kills initiative and creativity but also the Spirit of hard work and these are the basic things politics hope education will inculcate into the individuals. Connected to this problem until recently, is the discrepancy whereby education is encouraged to produce the right calibre of manpower but when it comes to political appointments, qualification and experience of the individual no longer matters. What now becomes very important is the political leaning of the individual.

5. One other discrepancy associated with the relationship between education and politics is what has been termed the ambivalence in the social role of education. Education in its broadest aspect is a process of cultural contact. Through education, Nigerians have acquired foreign tastes, habits and attitudes which are contrary to the political aspirations for the country. The fact is that the Nigerian is caught in a dilemma. In such a situation, one is in a constant struggle to retain the right types of attitudes and values for the survival of the society. Unfortunately, it is the society that has suffered more from the dilemma. What we have is a situation where education is put into a very uncomfortable position and finds itself playing two roles.

Politics and School Mapping

Politics in its ubiquitous nature cuts across every facet of human endeavour of which school mapping is not an exception. The evidence of ills of politics on Nigerian education is felt with its accompanied effects, having a critical view on school mapping. Politics in Nigeria has led to over concentration of institutions in some localities while in some other places may not be unconnected with political considerations, given rise to the location of schools close to the abode of politicians in power (Ibara, 2018). In Nigeria and most other developing countries of the world, political parties and candidates use education and provision of school facilities as instrument to seduce prospective voters. But however, as soon as the election is won, the leader goes back into his or her shell to hide and re-appear during the next election.

Most schools are sited arbitrarily to suit their whims and caprices the corrupt politicians who believe that amassing ill wealth is better than good name. Politics has had a great influence in the siting of schools in Nigeria. It is so because educational policies are made and supervised by politicians. It is commonly observed that only areas or localities loyal to political parties are provided with meaningful educational facilities, or have existing facilities adequately maintained. The teaching work force is not spared of politics, for example, the distribution of secondary school teachers in Rivers state is not devoid of political interference (Ibara, 2006). Thus the problem in education in recent times could be associated with politics, ethnicity and god-fatherism factors in Nigeria. To this end, political considerations among others determines who gets what, when and how (Olaniyan & Anthony, 2013). This ugly situation in education affects fair distribution of educational resources in Nigeria. Nwadiani, (2010), the location of schools is an important aspect of educational activity and not a mere political game as is presently in Nigeria. When the basic factors are not considered in siting schools, it may certainly lead to wastage of resources and unequal access to education with its attendant dire consequences.

System Theory of Education and National Transformation

Scholars and educationists such as Cole (1996) cited in Ijaiya (2012) have identified the correlative between the school system and the society through their postulations of 'input-process-output' model. An educational system is seen as an open system because "an open system is said to be

greatly influenced by its environment from which it receives most of its inputs (e.g. financial, technological, material and human resources), and it expectedly has to respond to changes in the environment" (Ijaiya, 2012). Schools can be likened to other social organizations with open system. Cole, (2002) for instance had identified three features of open system. These are as follows:

- They receive inputs or energy from their environment;
- They convert these inputs into outputs; and
- They discharge their output into their environment.

The above input-process-output' model given by Cole suggests the significance of education in the attainment of sustainable development and national transformation in Nigeria. For education in Nigeria to help in the attainment of sustainable development and national transformation, there should be adequate translation of educational programme or policies into reality. For any educational programme or policy or innovation to be translated into reality and success, it must reach the classroom, the heart of teaching" (Ijaiya, 2002). The quality of Nigerian education is becoming questionable each day because of the second-fiddle role that teachers are subjected to in the policy formulation and implementation. Teachers are seen as the rejects of the earth that only need to be pitied with pittance as salary. The welfare and the favourable conditions of service for teachers are only considered by the government to score a political mark. Despite this maltreatment of teachers, they still receive blames for the failure of educational system. Government should be sincere and proactive and stop blaming teachers. It is therefore expected that the government should take the advice of Ijaiya (2012) that: Blaming teachers for everything is however not the solution. The teachers are not responsible for the way education is being managed. In fact, they are themselves victims in a way. To change the tide, there is a need to re-invent our management practices that would produce positive change.

Going by the above opinion of Ijaiya (2012), it can therefore, be said that teacher training and welfare are central to the success of the system theory of education through "input-process-output" model. For education to help in the attainment of transformation agenda in Nigeria through system theory, the following plans for action are given:

- i). Teachers should be well-trained and their welfare should be well taken care of. This is so because teachers are the important human factors in the process of education. They translate educational programmes and policies into realities for sustainable national development.
- ii). Education at all levels should not be free. In the opinion of this paper, free education is seen as a political propaganda. Education should be quality and qualitative for sustainable national development.
- iii). Approval and registration of private institutions by designated ministries, parastatal and commissions should be done with probity, accountability and transparency. This will help to check the proliferation of private institutions. Consequently, this will ensure the availability of quality human- capital and infrastructural resources for quality education.
- iv). The supervision and monitoring of schools should be routinely done with relative objectivity. This will ensure proper implementation of the school curricular.
- v). There should be town-gown collaboration in the design and implementation of educational curricular.

This practice will enhance sustainable national development because it will cater for the manpower need of the country. The case is made for teachers because they nurture and maintain the foundation of tertiary education in Nigeria.

The proliferation of education institutions in Nigeria have also been found in the tertiary education in Nigeria. It is not uncommon in Nigeria to see individuals, corporate bodies and religious organizations establishing universities. At present, as at the time of this research, there are 40 federal universities, 39 state universities and 50 private universities in Nigeria. These statistics shows that there are more private universities that the federal and the state universities. This should have been a welcome development in national transformation if the opportunities are proactively utilized by the government. There is no pragmatic intervention from the government in the affairs of these private by the Federal Government, except in the areas of monitoring and control. The government does not engage in any financial assistance in these private institutions in terms of aids and grants. This situation is unhealthy for the growth and development of tertiary education in Nigeria. These private universities and other higher institutions of learning should be given the opportunity to benefit from Tertiary Education Tax Fund (TETFUND) to cushion the financial commitment of the founders of these tertiary institutions. This paper, therefore, corroborates the view of Adedipe (2013: 26) that:

Education and Realities in Nigerian Leadership

The state of education in Nigeria calls for the urgent attention of educationist and policy makers to ensure sustainable development and attainment of national transformation. It is a truism that no nation can outgrow the quality of its education. Nigeria education from pre-basic to the post-basic stage requires purpose-driven reformation for sustainable national transformation. We engage our argument with the review and critique of the national educational goals, as contained in the FRN (2014). In the policy, it is written that the goals of national education are:

- (i) The inculcation of national consciousness:
- (ii) The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigeria society;
- (iii) The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around; and
- (iv) The acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individuals to live in and contribute to the development of his society.

Successive regimes and administrations in Nigeria have not been able to achieve the national goals of education as identified above. Some socio-political factors such as Eurocentric attitude of Nigerian populace, poor implementation and lack of programme continuity as a result of constant change in government are responsible for the failure of the country to achieve national educational goals, as observed so far. Nigerian education sector, like every sector in the county has witnessed unstable programme implementation. In the tertiary education, graduates become or remain unemployable after graduation owing to the following observable problems in the country's tertiary education:

- (i) **Dilapidated facilities for effective teaching and learning:** The laboratories and libraries are ill-equipped for proactive and pragmatic learning outcome that will be problem-solving in approach.
- (ii) Poor staffing. The teaching and the non-teaching staff are not adequate for effective teaching and learning.
- (iii) **Monetization of admission process:** In the contemporary Nigerian society, admission process had become monetized under the name of post-UTME. With this practice, the higher

institutions of learning in the country rake money from the helpless and hapless students. The consequence of this practice is that it amounts to double standard that favours the highest bidder, which may lack the moral and academic intelligence to pursue a particular course of study.

- (iv) **Incessant strike:** The country's tertiary education has been riddled by incessant face-off between the government and the lecturers in the colleges of education, Polytechnics and Universities. Among the reasons for this face-off are the poor funding of tertiary education and poor conditions of service for the lecturers. This faceoff lasts for the minimum of three months to one year, depending on the category of the institution.
- (v) **Poor process-product matching:** The country has not been able to record enough success in technological development and economic advancement because the products of tertiary education have not been able to translate theory into practice. Thus, it can be said that Nigerian education since independence has failed to inculcate national consciousness, national unity and the right types of value and attitudes for the survival of the individuals and the Nigerian society. This situation is reflected with the spate of violence and insecurity, coupled with the magnitude of corruption in the country. In the real sense of the matter, an educated man should be cultured and proactive in the making of decisions for sustainable individual, societal development and national transformation. Similarly, Nigerian education has failed to train and culture the mind to acquire appropriate skills (physical mental, social and psychological) meant for social and societal development. Expectedly, education meant for sustainable national transformation and development should culture and nurture the three Hs of the head, the hands and the heart. The development of these three His will pursue and facilitate the sustainable human-capital development of a nation.

The indicators of the above problems in the realization of the national goals of education can be seen in the rate of graduate unemployment. Many Nigerian graduates have not acquired the skills that can make them independent of the paid-employment. These graduates are rather trained to be job-seekers instead of being job creators. The reason for this problem in the non-vibrancy of the curricular of education across all levels. This needs urgent attention and proactive actions of all the stakeholders the government, the non-profit organizations and the society at large. In this instance, a case is made for vocational technical education (VTE). This form of education makes provision for skills acquisition and craftsmanship. In the National Policy on Education, the goals of vocational education are given. It is given in the policy that the goals of vocational education shall be to:

- (a) Provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business particularly art craft, advanced craft and technical levels;
- (b) Provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development;
- (c) Give training and impart the necessary skills to individuals who shall be self-reliant economically.

It is however disheartening that the current curricular of vocational education in Nigeria did not have any reflection of self-sufficiency and self-reliance because of poor infrastructures and inadequate personnel. The technical schools where the vocational education is expected to take place are poorly funded and maintained. The common characteristic of these technical schools are inadequate teaching and non-teaching staff, outdated and non-functional equipment, poor enrolment and poor

funding. The transformation of Nigerian society needs purposeful transformation of the education sector. In the opinion of this paper, education in Nigeria has been engulfed with the politics of the moment.

Consequently, the public schools have been subjected to the state of near collapse. The collapse the public school system is leading to the creation of a segregated school system and with it socialization patterns that have linguistic implications (Egbokhare, 2011). Apart from linguistic implications, as identified by Egbokhare, the collapse of the public school system also have political, economic and social implications. The consequence of this collapse on the Nigerian education system is the proliferation of many private institutions (from primary to tertiary) in the country. Before the collapse of the public school system in the Nigerian education sector, the number of private institutions was scanty and insignificant. At the wake of 1990s, private institutions of learning began to flourish in the country. Yet, quality education appears elusive (Obanya, 2008) and Lawal, 2008).

CONCLUSION

It is however becoming increasing clear that in spite of the fact that education is supposed to produce the manpower resources needed for scientific, technological, political and economic development of the nation, the nation is not achieving all that it hopes to achieve through education. The launching of programmes like the War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAIC) which the government hope will correct some of the ills in the society is an indication that education has failed, but unfortunately the discrepancies between politics and education has acted as a very powerful catalyst in this failure.

The interplay between education and politics is highly inevitable and so caution must be applied to debar undue influence in Nigerian Education. For education to assist in the transformation of the country, the paper makes use of system theory (with input-process-output) and its implications for sustainable tertiary education in the country. A case is also made for teacher education and welfare. This will ensure proper translation of education programmes or policies for sustainable national transformation. There should be town-gown collaboration for sustainable manpower development for sustainable national transformation.

SUGGESTIONS

The impacts of leadership and value system for national development and education per excellence cannot be over emphasized. To ensure that these are achieved, the following suggestions are given:

- i. A national leadership summit should be organized in all states of the federation.
- ii. A national summit on education reform should be organized by government.
- iii. Summit should be objectively implemented for national transformation.
- iv. Good character formation of institutional leaders and students should be given a high priority.
- v. There should emphasis on good moral values cultivation as against materialistic tendencies our leaders. functional education through vocational and technical education of practical skill acquisition.
- vi. There should be national need assessment to help in the formulation of sustainable education policy formational transformation.
- vii. Government should be proactive and pragmatic in the transformation of education by making financial commitment towards the growth and development of these private institutions. Owing to lack of financial assistance from the government, the fees of these private universities become prohibitive for the masses.

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