Notes on Contributors

- Kayode Olu. Ijaduola, Ph.D and Odunaike, K. Oluwafemi, Ph.D write from Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun.
- Dr. Patrick O. Akinsanya writes from Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Lagos.
- Amurawaye Funmilayo F. and Tobih D.O. (PhD) write from Department of Mathematics Tai Solarin University of Education, Ogun State.
- Oso, Senny Oluwatumbi writes from Department of Curriculum Studies Faculty of Education, University of Ado-Ekiti, Ado-Ekiti.
- Dr (Mrs) Catherine Oyenike Oke writes from Department of Science and Technology Education, Faculty of Education, University of Lagos.
- Prof. P.O. Adesemowo and Dr. B.O. Olanisimi write from Department of Counselling Psychology, Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State.
- George, Lukmon Abolaji, Fadimu, Aminat Adefunke and Arowosola, Omonike Atinuke write from Yaba College of Technology, Lagos.
- Niran Adetoro, Department of Library and Information Science, Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ogun State.
- Owoyele, Jimoh Waile (PhD), Lecturer, Department of Guidance and Counselling Psychology, Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ogun State.
- Oyebanjo O.A., and Joshua, E.O., Department of Physics, Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ogun State.
- Apanpa, Olasumbo S. & Lawal, Olufunke, Write from TASUED AND UNILAG respectively.
- S.O. Ajitoni (Ph.D), Department of Teacher Education, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.
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EDITORIAL

The eleventh volume, number two - Vol. 11, (2) March, 2014 of the Journal of Applied Education and Vocational Research is a special edition of the College of Applied Education and Vocational Technology, that is poised to report cut-edge research findings and discuss educational issues of interests. The topics of the articles in this issue are contemporary and challenging with their implications for national development and global empowerment.

The editorial board of JAEVR wishes to solicit through this medium well researched studies and articles for future publications. I will like to thank the reviewers and assessors of the articles published for their time and other resources well spent. To the contributors, the board says thank you and please continue to research and send qualitative papers to JAEVR. We solemnly promise a continued improvement in the subsequent publications.

Guidelines for Authors

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The following guidelines are to assist authors in preparing manuscripts to be submitted and considered through review and editorial process.

Language
- Submit all manuscripts in English.

Topic
- Subject matter from all areas of education and vocational technology.
- Report of research studies or project should include a section on practical implications and applications of the study or project.

Manuscript Preparation
- Use APA format being that, it is employed consistent throughout the manuscript.
- All manuscripts must be computer generated double spaced, with 1” margins, and pages numbered. Incorrectly prepared manuscripts will be returned without review to corresponding authors.
- Prepare a title page containing each author's name, position, affiliation, address and telephone numbers and e-mail address.
- For multiple authorship, identify which author should receive correspondence from all editors.
- Try to make the manuscripts no longer than 8 – 12 double-spaced pages, make the best and more appropriate length articles.


MORAL EDUCATION AND THE DEARTH OF VALUES IN NIGERIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

Dr Patrick O. Akinsanya
Department of Educational Foundations,
Faculty of Education, University of Lagos, Nigeria.
e-mail: sirdrpatrickakinsanya@yahoo.com
pakinsanya@unilag.edu.ng.com

Abstract

Nigerian education, as it is run today, seems to care less for value-system. This is indicated in the alarming rise of examination malpractices, cultism, victimization of all sorts, forgeries, and a host of other vices, cutting across all boards in the education sector. The present policy on education does not even help matters. It appears a great scandal for its exclusion of moral education in the curriculum. Despite the fact that the policy states on pages two to three, that the quality of instruction at all levels shall be oriented toward inculcating some values, and further positioned one of the national education goals as the inculcation of the type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society, the subject which should have predisposed the educand to such experiences is conspicuously absent. The Nigerian school could have been morally revolutionized but for this disconnection in policy-statement and policy-implementation. This paper thus argues that if Nigerians are exposed to moral education at all time, our education system could have faced with the needed values, and vicious practices thus reduced to the barest level in the education sector. The paper concludes that if the Nigerian child is not educated on why and how to behave morally, then, there should be less grown when cases like briberance, lack of respect, hooliganism and gangsterism, prostitution, examination malpractices, cultism, inter alia, grow unabated.

Key words: Values, Moral education. Policy and System of Education.

Introduction

The aim of education, according to William (cited in Akinsanya, 2008), is knowledge not of facts, but of values. This means that values should take preeminence in the education of a child. But what are values?
Values may simply refer to what is good or thought to be good; what is desirable or thought to be desirable (Omoregbe, 1993). Values could also be taken to mean the worth of a thing in the descriptive sense. In another sense, it could be taken to mean purpose or end towards which an action is directed. The study of values (axiology) could be properly considered from the angle of ethics or aesthetics. The knowledge of the former is, however, more beneficial to this paper.

Ethics inquires into the nature and significance of virtues and vices, and concepts of self-evaluation such as honour, pride, guilt, shame, humiliation, embarrassment, etc. Without the understanding of these concepts which moral education bequeaths, education will be worthless. Moral education, here, develops an individual intellectually in line with the principles of right and wrong conducts in order to endow him with psychological ability to use his knowledge to achieve a balance in interpersonal relationship with other individuals and groups (Sulaiman, 2004). The aim of such education is to produce a complete man who would be useful to himself, his family, his immediate environment and the nation at large. In this vein, education is seen as the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes at different stages of development. Nduka (2006) was quick to outline the aims of moral education as:

(i) transmitting a type of knowledge e.g. the rules and principles of morality, knowledge of the ideals and values regarded as important in the society.

(ii) the development of certain skills such as the ability to make sound and autonomous moral judgements, and

(iii) the promotion of moral conduct by the inculcation of habits (e.g. honesty), appropriate feelings (e.g. sympathy, respect) and so on.

Moral education as such becomes highly important because of the importance of the question of right and wrong, good and bad in human conducts which cannot be under-estimated. Human beings are so constituted that it is not all kinds of actions that befit their nature. Certain kind of actions befit man’s nature, promote his general well-being and lead him to happiness and self-fulfilment. Other kinds of actions are antithetical to his nature and militate against his general well-being, happiness and self-fulfilment. The nature of man in other words, is such that he has to behave in certain ways and refrain from behaving in certain other ways in order to attain internal harmony, happiness and self-fulfilment.

Nature intends man to live a moral life and it is only in so doing that man can attain internal harmony. To live a moral life is the law of man’s own very nature and to throw this law to the winds and behave anyhow can never in the final analysis, be in man’s own interest. Such a behaviour would be foolish, short-sighted and self-destructive. The way of happiness, then, is the moral way of life, that is, the way of life in compliance with the law of one’s own nature, and the sure way of treading the way is through a systematic study of morality. In other words, the knowledge of moral values helps in peaceful co-existence of men in the society. It helps in the correct discernment and apportionment of the moral knowledge in every man and in the society at large.

It has been established by many writers that character training is important and essential at different stages of development for the upbringing of children, hence, morality cannot be detached from education – education devoid of morality is like tea with no sugar. But while it is possible to take tea without sugar, the survival of the society does not permit education without morality – to be educated implies not only standards of performance in initiatives, but also standards of behaviour and comportment which give meaning to existence. Morality is thus an indispensable condiment of life. Thus, moral education aids in achieving the inculcation of the right attitude and values for appropriate development in individuals at all levels of education. It is a veritable weapon that could be used to combat all the ills in our society. This is the reason why a good curriculum cannot afford to omit moral education. In Dewey’s opinion, moral education should be an integral part of basic experience. For him, the school is a miniature form of society where the young undergoes various forms of development, of which moral education and development is the most important. He frowns at any acquisition of knowledge which is devoid of morality, and criticizes systems which claim to have the development of character
as the cardinal objective, but present curriculums and other aspects of school work which have little or no place for character nurturing. This can only lead to attempts to give moral instruction – attempts which are effective only in the barracks, religious houses or authoritarian societies (Dewey in Curtis & Boulwood, 1965).

Values, Moral Education And Nigerian Education Policy
Interestingly, the relationship between values and education was recognized in education policy when it states as one of the educational goals – “the inculcation of the type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society” (FRN in NPE 2004). In consequence to this, the policy goes further to state that the quality of instruction at all levels shall be oriented toward inculcating the following values:

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 interpersonal and human relations
d. shared responsibility for the common good of society
e. promotion of the physical, emotional and psychological development of all children; and
f. acquisition of competencies necessary for self-reliance.

The above enunciated values were however meant to be a lip-service, for no mode of implementation was channeled in the policy. One would have expected to see moral education featuring prominently as one of the subjects listed at the primary, secondary and even tertiary levels. What the policy presents at best, is religious instruction which is to be taken as an elective subject somewhere at the primary and junior secondary levels. Aside the elective position given to religious instruction, it needs no argument to say that moral education and the latter cannot be equated – while one is meant for enlightenment, the other is for indoctrination. Religious education has to do with the ethics of a particular religion which may be conflictual with another religion, for instance, the practice of vengeance – while Judaism lauds this practice, Christianity abhors it. Moral education, on the other hand, enlightens on ethics which enjoy some universal conformitance with man’s nature, with man-to-man harmonious and peaceful co-habitation. Thus, it is moral education that deserves a place in the curriculum. We shall return to this argument shortly.

Values And Nigerian Education System
Given the fact that no society can exist meaningfully and peacefully without some values in place, the Nigerian society will have to examine and reexamine her cherished values, and work out in practical terms, how to inculcate such values on the consciousness of the Nigerian child. To highlight values, as it is done in the present policy, is not enough; courses must be practically designed for dissemination and impartment of such values. The preposterous idea that religious instruction is capable of value-dissemination is grossly erroneous. Religious instruction, as pointed out earlier, is the art of training in line with the order of a recognized system of belief which is embodied in the human activities such as worshipping and performance of rites to God (or gods). It is a training peculiar to a group of people, whose members are identified by a mode of worship and act of faith (Sulaiman, 2004). The challenge here is that in the midst of disparate religious sects, with parallel belief-systems and value orientations, it is difficult to surrender the values to be appreciated by the general populace to various religious denominations. Again, there is a sterling difference between instruction and education, between religious instruction and moral education; they are of different functions. While instruction is concerned with mere training, education is more embracing. Training is the process of imparting some skills of manipulations to an individual in order to perform some set of operations. Sometimes, it implies regular exercises for the development of muscles needed for physical fitness; it could imply repetition of certain activities to achieve a desired end. It may also have to do with physical trimming or brashing. Examples include physical training which exercises the muscles for physical fitness; military training which prepares soldiers, police officers and other paramilitary forces for fitness for war, danger; assignments and hazardous tasks; mental training which exercises the mental facilities [memory,
intellect, imagining] for mental fitness. Training is often geared towards a particular end, that is, there is always a purpose for training. This means training is considered a means; and this is what differentiates it from education. Education is both a means and an end. From the foregoing, it should be obvious that moral education cannot be equated with religious education. In Akinpelu's opinion, religious instruction and religious bodies are “more concerned with restoring doctrinal purity as if religious fundamentalism or fanaticism [to call it its real name] is a substitute for good moral education” (Akinpelu, 2005). If it was a substitute, then those who received a high dose of it during the missionary era down to the period of regionalization, should have shown themselves as embodiments of morality. Nduka describes them as follows;

What is not so certain is that the often excessive religious indoctrination, especially with varying denominational emphasis, is a guarantee of eventual moral probity on the part of the products of the system. Infact the Nigeria case seems to belie any such claim. On the contrary, the very leaders and people, whose social and political activities manifested themselves in the form of moral miasma of the first and second republic, including the intervening civil war, were mainly those who had received high doses of religious indoctrination and moral instruction in either Christian mission schools or the parallel Muslim educational institutions (Nduka 2006:182).

Nduka’s irritation makes him to suggest that the government should take necessary steps to ensure that religious instruction is “removed from the school system and made a subject for private and denominational concern rather than that of the state”(Nduka, 2006). While the position of Nduka may be too radical, the fact is that even the present policy has no much recognition for religious instruction. This is explains why the course is given the status of non-prevocational electives (FGN in NPE 2004). To complement this relegation, the curriculum and class time-tables are designed in such a way that religious knowledge is pushed to one extreme end on the last school day in the week, which the learners could use to while away their time into the weekend. The choice of handlers is another issue of concern. But one may not worry much about all these since the course itself is not capable, owing to its nature, of inculcating the national values on the Nigerian child. It is the purview of moral education which sadly has no place in the present National Policy on Education. The Chief Federal Adviser on education and Chairman, Nigeria Educational Research Council, S.J. Cookey, who was one of the chief organizers of the conference that produced the policy, later laments the exclusion of moral education from the policy, in the following words;

I have been anxious about the present national attitude to moral education in our schools. It may interest us to know that the school curriculum published in 1977 by the Federal Government did not include moral education at all.

He goes further;

It is surprising to learn that among the most vociferous opponents of the inclusion of moral education in the curriculum are some of our religious leaders, who insist that religious education alone would take care of moral education. However, some of us know that religious education, as carried out in most schools, tends to emphasize requirements by examining bodies like West African Examination Council, to the neglect of the development of good character. The schools tend to concentrate on the passages from the scriptures selected for each year examination (Cookey in Akinkugbe 1994:8).

Moral education must now be introduced, not even as an elective, but as a core and compulsory subject from the pre-primary level
through tertiary. The reason for this continuum is that man by nature, needs a continuous moral formation to a certain maturity stage, to prevent him from relapsing into animalism. It is a continuous formation, and it should be on-going. Olarewaju (2009) suggested some important facts which must be taken into consideration if values are to really permeate Nigerian education system:

- The teachers must be trained on how to inculcate these values enunciated in the policy in their teaching.
- The structure and activities of the school must reflect these values.
- The classrooms must be structured in a way that students could sense and respect individual rights.
- School administrators must be trained on how to motivate their teachers and students to always be mindful of the values in all their academic activities. Administrators must also practically demonstrate the values as good example for others to emulate.
- The curriculum planners should be trained on how to structure the content of curriculum to reflect these values.

Introducing the needed change into the school curriculum might not be too easy for the curriculum planners, one must admit. There are, however, three basic ways in which the desired change in the curriculum could be achieved;

- introduce moral education as a totally new course of study into the curriculum
- add moral values and etiquettes to the existing subjects within the curriculum, or
- infuse moral values and etiquettes into the existing courses within the curriculum (Akinsanya, 2007)

Of these three, the infusion process causes the least disruption to the existing system and offers a good chance for permanent curricular change. The infusion proposed here is just an alternative to the introduction of a whole new course – moral education into the curriculum, in case it might not be too convenient for the policy-makers.

But in the face of concretization, the introduction of moral education as a separate course/subject on its own is more viable.

The argument here is that if the Nigerian child is exposed to moral education at all levels of his/her life, vicious inclinations and tendencies will be reduced to the barest level. If the Nigerian child is not educated on why and how to behave morally, then, there should be less groans when cases of tribal or ethnic unrest, religious intolerance, hooliganism, and gangsterism, prostitution, examination and election malpractices, cultism in institutions, and so on, continue unabated. Cookey’s conclusion is apposite here. He believes what we need today are not merely literate leaders and citizens. Goodness knows we are not short of graduates of all kinds; we do have them everywhere. What we require, for him, are men and women who have moral stature, and whose actions are based on noble principles. An all-round education, including character education, will broaden the mind of our young ones, and produce truly patriotic Nigerians who will ensure that in future, characteristics like personal greed, tribalism, ethnicity, bribery and corruption, and intolerance will be dethroned. It is then that we can build a genuinely great Nigeria respected by other countries and not merely tolerated as we are today (Cookey in Akinkugbe, 1994).

Conclusion
Thus far, this study has showcased that the present Nigerian education system, propelled by a national policy, lacks some values-inbuilt which occasioned the incessant vicious practices prevalent in the education sector. It was demonstrated that there is a connection between the curricular-absence of moral education, a subject meant to predispose moral values on the consciousness of an educand, and the seeming dearth of value-system in Nigerian education. This led the researcher to propose an integrative inclusion of moral education in the curriculum at all levels of our education system. It was thus strongly proposed that Nigerian education cannot continue in the present pattern where there is little or no concern for value-orientation and inculcation, for there cannot be a meaningful education without value-system; such would be an aberration.
References
List of Contributors

- Kayode Olu. Ijaduola, Ph.D and Odunaike, K. Oluwafemi, Ph.D write from Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun.
- Dr Patrick O. Akinsanya writes from Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Lagos.
- Amurawaye Funmilayo F. and Tobih D. O. (PhD) write from Department of Mathematics Tai Solarin University of Education, Ogun State.
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- Asanre Akorede A. and Abiodun Taiwo O. write from Department of Mathematics, Tai Solarin University of Education, Ogun State, Nigeria.
- Prof. P. O. Adesemowo and Dr. B. O. Olanisimi write from Department of Counselling Psychology, Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State.
- Banjoko, O. O., Gbadamosi, M. R. and Agbona Monsurat write from Department of Chemical Sciences, Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ijebu-Ode
- George, Lukmon Abolaji, Fadimu, Aminat Adefunke and Arowosola, Omonike Atinuke write from Yaba College of Technology, Lagos.
- Abudu, K.A., Banjoko, O. O. and Gbadamosi, M.R. Department of Chemical Sciences, Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ijebu-Ode
- Niran Adetoro, Department of Library and Information Science, Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ogun State
- Owoyele, Jimoh Wale (PhD), Lecturer, Department of Guidance and Counselling Psychology, Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ogun State.
- Oyebanjo O.A., and Joshua, E.O., Department of Physics, Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ogun State
- Apanpa, Olasumbo S. & Lawal, Olufunke, Write from TASUED AND UNILAG respectively.
- S. O. Ajitoni (Ph.D), Department of Teacher Education, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.