VALUE-FREE INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES AS A CORRELATE OF ANTI-CORRUPTION POLITICS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The thesis of the sociological foundations of the curriculum is that the outlook, orientation or social condition of any society is a reflection of its education system. Accordingly, the school is regarded as an agent of change for society which is why values and vices are normally traced to curricular provisions and instructional practices, in the educational parlance. The central argument of this paper is that the perceived inefficacy of the various anti-corruption policies introduced by successive administrations in Nigeria, is in part, traceable, to the growing value-free nature of instructional practices at various levels of education in the country. The paper, which is analytical in method and situated within the broad scholarship of pedagogical ethics, highlights some of the pitfalls of anti-corruption politics in the country and attempts to correlate such pitfalls with its largely value-free educational system. The significance of such study lies in its potential to contribute scholarly to the ongoing debates and growing concern over corruption in Nigeria, improve our understanding of the subject and, more importantly, offer a curricularist's perspective on the subject, which itself is capable of contributing towards a change in the landscape of education, for character formation and nation building in the country.

INTRODUCTION

In the educational parlance, the quality of manpower which is technically described as the output variable is regarded as a product of the input variable which comprises admission criteria, school curriculum, textbooks, the teacher, the school setting, instructional materials and other educational resources in the school. Accordingly, any strength or deficiency in the quality of the performance of manpower is regarded as traceable to the quality of the education system that produced it. If this time of argument is not benefit of merit, then it may be conjectured in simple logic that the pervasive corruption as well as the melo-dramatic nature of anti-corruption politics in Nigeria may not be unconnected with the value-free educational system, especially instructional practices, in the country. The hypothetical thinking is that a value-free education cannot but produce an ethically deficient citizenry.

Literature is replete with information on the centrality of values and virtues to instructional practices. (Bricker, 1993; Power, 1993; Noddings, 1993; Strike & Temasky, 1993; Bull, 1993; Grant, 1993; Goodlad, 1990; Thomas, 1990; Socket, 1990; Macfarlaney, 2004; Hashim, 2000; Haste & Abraham, 2008; Frimer, & Walker, 2008; and Reed & Stormer, 2008). However, there seems to be a wide gulf between what literature presents as ideal and what is practiced in the classroom settings especially in the Nigerian context. For instance, Fanstermacher (1990: 132) observes that "teaching is disconnected from its moral

underpinnings" which are central to the purposes of teaching which themselves "are rooted in the moral development of the young". Fanstermacher elaborates his view where he writes that, children do not enter the world compassionate, caring, fair, loving and tolerant. Nor do these qualities emerge in due course like hair on the body or hormones in the endocrine system. Rather, moral qualities are learned and acquired in the course of lived experience. If there are no models for them, no obvious or even subtle pressure to adopt moral qualities, no hints, no homilies, no maxims, and no opportunity to imitate moral actions, the moral virtues may be missed, perhaps never to be acquired.

It is obvious from Fanstermacher's words that the teacher is not expected to fulfill only the role of a transmitter of knowledge but also that of character developer and role model. Fanstermacher's view finds support in Bull (1990:74-75) who maintains that, in order to ensure that teachers' instructional practices are value-laden, teacher preparation should ensure a faculty wide agreement on the moral basis of teaching as well as on what ethics of teaching forbids. There is no gainsaying that such a curricular provision as suggested by Bull will constitute a guiding principle with regard to the moral dimension of teaching which, for a very long time, has received little or no meaningful attention in the scholarship of teaching. Such an unfavourable disposition to pedagogical ethics among teachers, teacher educators and researchers cannot but culminate in an increase in the rate or volume of value-free practices in the classroom.

According to Goodlad (1990:47), "The degree to which teaching in schools… carries with it moral imperatives" is obvious. The implication of that, Goodlad rationalizes, is that there is need for "a body of subject matter to be synthesized into part of the teacher, education curriculum" or at least make "moral imperatives in school teaching" part of every academic activity. In the event that Goodlad's opinion sounds lacking in merit in one's estimation, it should be of interest that his view has found a better articulation in the words of Ryle (1987:56): What will help make us self controlled, fair minded or hardworking are good examples set by others, and then ourselves practicing and failing and practicing again, and failing again, but not quite so soon and so on. In matters of morals, as in the skills and arts, we learn first by being shown by others, then by being trained by others, naturally with some worded homily, praise and rebuke, and lastly by being trained by ourselves.

Ryle's idea as articulated above in his own words is self-explanatory: we depend on others for moral development and it goes without saying that the student depends on his teachers who is supposed to set good examples worthy of emulation. The implication of this is that teacher's obligation transcends knowledge transmission or information dissemination.

It is evident from literature that the ethical dimension of teaching began to engage the attention of scholars and researchers in the area of education from the 1990s (Strike & Ternasky, 1993). The first wave of consciousness over the issue was probably generated by the large-scale study conducted by Goodlad (1990) on teacher education in the United States. This was followed in 1991 by a special issue on the subject in the *Journal of Teacher Education* which is a publication of the American Association of Teacher Education Institutions. According to Bull (1993) who insists that the subject had even received a special attention in a 1986 issue of the prestigious journal, the development marked the "rethinking of the role of ethics in teacher education". Consequently, the rethinking culminated in minor reconstructions which have since begun to alter the landscape of instructional practices in several parts of the globe.

However, Nigeria's education sector seems one of the settings that are probably oblivious of this development, especially with regard to teacher education. For instance, the *National Policy on Education* (4th Edition, 2004) is almost totally silent about ethics of

teaching. The closest it comes to that is where it identifies as one of the goals of teacher education in the country "enhancement of teachers' commitment to the teaching profession" (p. 39) and this, infact is not directly applicable to the moral angle of teaching. Similarity, the *Roadman for the Nigeria Education Sector* (2009) does not concern itself with anything related to pedagogical ethics.. Also, the Federal Ministry of Education in its *Implementation Guidelines for the National Teacher Education Policy* (2009) only states "the need for teacher educators to develop a TEACHING PERSONALITY and infact fails to connect this to the growing concern over ethics of teaching or the moral obligations of the teacher.

Given the obvious absence of provisions for this concern, there is hardly any instructional practice or pedagogical action or inaction that may be declared unethical in the contemporary educational setting in Nigeria. This situation has culminated in a preponderance of value-free exchange between the students and their teachers. And given the correlation between the input variables and the output variable, the present researcher attempts to establish a link between the pervasive corruption and incredible anti-corruption politics in Nigeria on the one hand, and the value-free instructional practices in her schools, on the other. The researcher hypothetically states that both corruption and the corrupt practices involved in anti-corruption politics in Nigeria are traceable to the value-free instructional practices in Nigerian schools. Hence, the need for this systematic investigation, for verification.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

There has been an avalanche of research in various disciplines on the nature of the relationship between input and output variables. In the educational parlance, there is a sophisticated body of scholarship strengthening the validity of the thinking that the quality of education determines the quality of manpower. However, there has not been a systematic and comprehensive study on the correlation between the pervasive corruption in Nigeria and value-free instructional practices in Nigerian schools. And that, of course, is what this paper seeks to do.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The paper is intended to correlate corrupt practices in Nigerian to value-free, instructional practices in Nigerian schools, and offer an ameliorative proposal.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The present study seeks to provide answers to the following questions:

1. What are value-free instructional practices?
2. Is there any significant relationship between corruption inside and outside the school environment in Nigeria?
3. What is the nature of ethics for the Nigerian school setting?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study has the potential, to enrich the literature on ethics of teaching and improve our understanding of the subject in the Nigerian context. More importantly, the significance of the study lies in its potentiality to provide a correlation between corruption in the society and

instructional practices in the school, and recommend a way out in the form of pedagogical ethics.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. Its quantitative dimension involves descriptive statistics while its qualitative angle concerns inductive and deductive analyses which require the collection and analyses of data based on both existing framework and emerging themes (Bogdan & Bilken, 1998; Patton, 2002; Wasonga & Murphy, 2007).

Research Design

a) Population and Sample

The population comprises all the undergraduate students and lecturers in Nigerian public universities while the sample comprises 600 students and 100 lecturers from two South-western Nigerian universities, one being a Federal university and the other, a state-owned one.

b) Instrumentation

To collect qualitative data, two sets of questionnaire were used namely the student' questionnaire and the lecturers' questionnaire. The questionnaires contained a number of items designed to elicit information about the nature of instructional practices as well as both students and lecturers' perception of what is value-laden and what is value-free in instruction. They students' ages ranged from 16 to 39 years and the lecturers from 32 to 51 years and their academic qualifications from MA/M.Sc/M.Ed/Ph.D. To obtain qualitative data, the researcher decided ahead of both the classroom observation and interview schedule what really is value free and what is value – laden and later handled his coding and interview questions, along that line.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

It is not an acceptable standard in the ethics of teaching that "teachers are not able to demonstrate classroom behaviors that are consistent with the ideal of fairness'… or 'do not model professional dispositions with their work with students, families, colleagues, and communities (NCATE, 2008:20).

The researcher made several classroom observations of teaching using a systematic and tested classroom observation form. He then rated the dispositions, during their classroom interactions, with the aid of a reliable rating form. He had earlier established criteria for and evaluation what constitute value-free instructional practices, so that the data collected on them can be correlated with immoral behaviors, unethical dispositions, negative attitudes and pervasive corruption in the country. The researcher compared such value free instructional practices with the standardized classroom or acceptable instructional standards with regard to pedagogical ethics, moral dimensions of teaching and teaching with integrity as established in research literature. Hereby attempting to draw a line of demarcation between pedagogical theory and instructional practices in the Nigerian context.

The questionnaire was administered by the researcher and personally hand scored by him in keeping with the administration and scoring instructions contained in the instruments.

The results tabulated and expressed in percentages, using appropriate binary choice. This provided some qualitative data for the study.

Consequently, qualitative data were collected through ten of the hundred lecturers sampled who were identified by the researcher as having cooperated most and provided the questionnaires completed by them. The researcher was able to identify them in the course of his personal administration and scoring of the questionnaires and therefore scheduled them for further participation in the study through interview on the assumption that they were more likely to have our informed view on related themes.

Consequently, the ten teachers were provided with a general description of the study and thereafter requested to profer answers to a set of questions concerning their perceptions of what constitutes value-free instructional practices in schools as well as their effects on morals and ethics in the larger society. The questions to which the ten lecturers were asked to respond are:

Despite your perception of value free instructional practices,
1. What are the effects of such practices on the larger society?
2. Identify the top five of these value free instructional practices that are rampant in Nigerian schools.

The responses attracted by these questions were analyzed both inductively and deductively. The essence of such analysis was to discover what is really happening and what is to be provided as an ameliorative proposal (Bogdan & Bilken, 1998).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION ON QUALITATIVE DATA

The qualitative data revealed that respondents had corrected though varied perceptions of value free instructional practices. It was also obvious from their responses that they knew the implication of such practices on the lager society especially with regard to morals, ethics and integrity of the citizenry. Their responses in these two instances confirmed the validity of the researcher's pre-determined judgement on what constitutes value-free instructional practices and how such practices correlate the corruption in Nigeria. It is interesting to note that there were commonalities in the respondents' identification of the top five of the value-free instructional practices that are dominant in Nigerian schools even though they all expectedly used examples from the tertiary level of education. All but two identified money for grades, sex for grades, inflation or deflation of examination scores to please or punish encouragement of materialistic tendencies in the Classroom as well as failure to teach well or cover the expected content of one's course. It should be noted that although eight respondents identified the above as the top five value free instructional practices, they did not all state them in this order. However, one of
the two other respondents identified teaching for social injustice and lack of commitment to the job in addition to the
first , three which he   stated in a different   order while the   second   one identified despicapable faculty politics, commoditization of grades, the growing trend of recruiting artisans as university lecturers, as well as lack of peer monitoring or examination, and what he
called "the Nigerian factor" as the top five value free instructional practices in the country.

The most interesting common denorminator in their responses was that the perturbing nature of corruption in Nigeria is a predict of such practices given that the citizenry is a product of the school system. This common position as variously expressed by the respondents confirmed the researcher's submission as earlier articulated in his analysis of

the interconnectedness of the antecedent, the input and the output variables. How do you expect the manpower produced through the agency of such despicable and highly corrupt school settings to be honest fair or morally upright in the discharge of their obligations as citizens" one of the respondents who repeatedly lamented and expressed anger and frustration over what is going on in Nigeria Schools, emphatically said;

Result of quantitative data

This section presents the quantitative data collected for the study through the use of questionnaires. It should be noted that the significant nature of the quality of information offered by student respondents in the questionnaires completed by them in form the focus of this section on the students' questionnaires. The data collected through the instrument are summarized, presented and analyzed in the following section

	Theme and Items	No of subjects	Yes	(%)	No	(%)	Undecided	(%)
1	My lecturers teach for social justices?	600	576	96			24	4
2	Practices promote moral thinking's	600	567	95.5		3.3	33	5.5
3.	My lecturers teach with integrity	600	30	5	570	95		
4.	My lecturers give good grades in exchange for sex	600	600	100				
5	My lecturers accept various forms of gratifications	600	600	100				
6.	My lecturers are models that can be emulated as good citizens	600	33	5.5	540	90	27	4.5
7.	I have been taught that corruption is inimical to development	600	36	6	564	94		
8	I can use what I have to get what (want because everybody does it	600	54	9	546	91		
9	An average Nigerian is involved in on kind of corruption or another	600	528	88	18	3	54	9
10	Those who is insist on doing it right in Nigeria always regret	600	564	94	18	3	2	
11	The corrupt leaders and citizens of Nigeria imbibed corruption right from school	300	50	186	124	31		

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings revealed that students have a negative impression about their lecturers' instructional practices. For instance majority of them (96%) see their lecturers as unjust and also promote injustice in their teaching (item 1) is interesting to note that the remaining (4%) of the respondents did not hold a contrary view about their lecturers but are rather undecided! In a similar token, majority of the students (94.5) see their lecturers instructional practices as promoting immoral thinking while the remaining 5.5% of them are not averse to the view but are rather undecided (item 2). In connection with lecturers' teaching with integrity show ever we have a minority (5%) saying, "yes, our lecturers teach with integrity while the majorly overwhelming insist that their lecturers lack integrity (items 3) as regards grades for sex and other forms of gratification all the respondents (100%) maintain that their lecturers are involves. In a similar token, almost all the students (90%) fail to see their lecturers as models worthy of emulation while only 5.5% of the respondents maintain that there are few role models amongst the lecturers whereas 4.5 of them are undecided (item 4-6).

As regards the implication of their lecturers' value free instruction to citizenship, the respondents, with only few exceptions who were either undecided or failed to answer in the affirmative, the various dimensions and implication of the instructional practices of their lecturers do not suggest that corruption is inimical to development or nation building that one should not use that one has to get what one needs , that one can make it without bending the rules, that those who insist on doing it right in Nigeria will not always regret their uprightness or that the corrupt leaders and citizens of Nigeria did not learn corruption at the fate of their teachers in the school (Items 7-12) .

Accordingly, such a common denominator in the students respondents confirm the value free instructional practices in Nigerian schools, as a correlate of corruption and anticorruption politics in the country.

CONCLUSION

This article has attempted a correlation between value free instructional practices, and anti-corruption politics in Nigeria. The analysis revealed that there is a strong correction between the experiences to which teachers expose their students in the classroom setting and the pervasive corruption in the larger society, especially with regards to pedagogical ethics, teaching with integrity and the moral dimensions of teaching. The study confirmed the researcher's conjecture that corruption in Nigeria is not unconnected with the nature of instructional practices in the school and that unless teaching is made value –laden, through pedagogical ethics, the unfavorable experience in Nigeria with regard to corruption may even aggravate. Accordingly, the study recommends the incorporation of elements of ethical pedagogy into the framework for instructional practices at tertiary level in a top-down fashion. However, the formulation of both the conceptual and design principles for such a curricular provision is beyond the score of their paper and may therefore be addressed in another study.

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