
VALUES RE-ORIENTATION AS AN ANTIDOTE OF
EXAMINATION MALPRACTICES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Nigeria educational system is faced with a lot of challenges which has affected its efficiency in producing students with values. One of such challenges is examination malpractice. The lack of values in society is responsible for this menace in the educational system. Nigeria educational system is seen as a joke and this is not good for the nation. Values are lasting beliefs or ideals shared by members of a culture about what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable and they are very important. It has a major influence on a person's behaviour and attitude. It also serves as a broad guideline in all situations. The re-orientation of values into the Nigeria educational system could help reduce the menace of examination malpractice. This paper looks into the concept of values, types of values, examination malpractice, values re-orientation and Nigeria school curriculum. It also discussed how the re-orientation of values could help put a stop to examination malpractice in society. The paper recommended that being girded with the right values as a student, teacher, principal, a school administrator or an invigilator could help in not indulging in examination malpractices.

Keywords: *Values, Examination malpractice, Educational system.*

Introduction

There are five national goals of education in Nigeria of which one of them is to inculcate national consciousness, values and national unity. It is quite evident that this goal seems not to have been achieved. The school is meant to be a grooming ground where individuals are developed into morally sound, patriotic and effective citizens. Still, there are traces of unacceptable behaviours in the school systems. This does not tell well of us as a nation where students, academics and the general public indulge in all manner of examination malpractices in the school system which is supposed to train, develop and transform the character of students into a responsible, intelligent, self-directed and democratically-minded citizen.

Values play a very important role in achieving this purpose. Values have always been there but from the view of how corrupt practice is eating deep into the school system, there is the need for students to be given a reorientation of values to help them do the right thing even when no one is looking and for teachers and the general public to reshape their ideology of the values that are important and essential in the development and improvement of our society and educational system as well. In the domain of education, values are paramount, for they are tightly bound to the general idea of education and the operation of schools. Education must be something worthwhile and being worthwhile has value implication. That is why the National Policy on Education (2013) enumerated the following values to be inculcated in the Nigerian youth through education; respect for the worth and dignity of the individual, faith in man's ability to make rational decisions, moral and spiritual values in inter-personal and human relations, shared responsibility for the common good of society, respect for the dignity of labour, and promotion of the educational, physical and psychological health of all children.

The role of education is to promote moral and aesthetic values in learners and also teach learners implicit and explicit values. It

also enables learners to focus on common values in society (Yambeni, 2007). The value and functionality of any educational system lie in its ability to actualize its goals, and the world over, the examination process usually makes the difference. The goals of national educational systems and indeed natural development become like a mirage if examination ethics are not encouraged and instituted (Nwadiani in Egbue and Mathais, 2013). As a nation, we have failed to achieve this purpose which has led to the nation being faced with so many social vices in the country. Therefore, this paper seeks to:

- i. examine values and examination malpractices in Nigeria; and
- ii. determine values re-orientation as an antidote of examination malpractice in Nigeria educational system.

The Concept of Values

Values can be defined as basic beliefs that motivate or direct an individual's attitude or actions. It aids in determining the importance of things to mankind. It helps to describe the personal qualities that we deem important to guide our actions, what we want to be in life, how we treat others and the way we interact with people around us (Mintz, 2018). It is also a collection of guiding principles that an individual considers to be morally right and desirable in life, especially regarding personal conduct. It determines what individuals find important in their daily lives and help shape their behaviour in each situation they encounter. Since values often strongly influence both attitude and behaviour, they serve as a kind of personal compass for conduct. Obasola in Obasola (2015) defined values as a means through which individuals grapple with the needs and essentials of daily living, what they hold dear, what they cherish, what they practice as members of the society and what serves as a basis for social co-existence and cohesion. According to them, it is the basis on which sound morals and wholesome judgement are based.

Values develop in various stages during a person's upbringing and they remain relatively consistent as children mature into adults. Massey outlines three critical development periods for an individual's value system: Imprint period (from birth to age 7): Individuals begin to exhibit what will become their values; Modelling period (ages 8-

13): The individual's values are sculpted and shaped by parents, teachers, and other people as well as the experiences of the individual; and Socialization period (ages 13- 21): An individual fine-tunes values through personal exploration and comparing and contrasting with other people's behaviour (Boundless, 2016).

Types of Values

Values are categorized into terminal and instrumental values. Terminal values are desirable end-states of existence and also goals an individual would like to achieve during his lifetime. Examples of values under this category include world peace, happiness, friendship, freedom, pleasure, wisdom, respect, equality, beauty in nature, family security and national security etc. These values are seen as the most important or desirable.

Instrumental values are values that help in the way to achieving goals. They are also seen as preferable modes of behaviour or means of achieving one's terminal values. They include honesty, self-control, obedience, open-mindedness, politeness, affection and love, courage, responsibility, and intelligence (Khutliwala, 2011).

Examination Malpractice

Examination malpractice is defined by Wilayat (2009) as any illegal act committed by a student single-handedly or in collaboration with others like fellow students, parents, teachers, supervisors, invigilators, printers and anybody or group of people before, during or after examination to obtain undeserved marks or grades. Omemu (2015) defines examination malpractice as a product of a society that celebrates cheats and self-centred people and turns them into stars in society. It is a reflection of the moral decadence of our country. This definition describes exactly the state of examination malpractice in our school system. It is a deviant act and the involvement of parents, teachers, principals, supervisors, invigilators and others is quite alarming. The lack of values in our society is highly responsible for such behaviour from those who are supposed to be role models to our students in the society. The Nigerian school certificate is not valued outside the country due to the level of examination malpractice in our school system. Even with the

promulgation of Decree No 33 of 1999 (Now Act of Parliament) designed to check this illegal behaviour, the crime appears to be on the increase (Adegoke, 2010).

The Origin of Examination Malpractice

The origin of examination malpractice was traced to the year 1914 when the Senior Cambridge Local Examination leaked. This happened years before the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) was established. A Nigerian in 1948 had his paper on History cancelled for coming to the examination hall with foreign paper that was related to the examination in question. In 1963, WAEC detected leakages in the First School Leaving Certificate and General Certificate of Education/School Certificate Examinations. This unacceptable scenario has continued through the years to date (Alhasan & Anya, 2017). Gbenda in Makaula (2018) in noted the increase in examination malpractice in Nigeria in 1977 had reached an alarming stage with the leakage of the West African Examination Council question papers. This prompted an investigation and subsequent promulgation of Decree 20 of 1984 by the Federal Government of Nigeria. Since then, the situation has advanced to the extent that examination malpractice in Nigeria had become so internalized and legitimized among students that some of them regard it as the normal process of passing examinations.

Types of Examination Malpractice

Examination malpractice takes various. These forms are categorised as follows:

Leakage: This is the act of illegally getting examination questions before the examination time.

Impersonation: It is when someone is representing and writing an examination for another candidate.

Cheating: This is disobeying any of the rules governing the conduct of examinations. Taking foreign material into the examination room.

Collusion: This is malpractice performed in cooperation with others, such as passing notes, or receiving or giving assistance to

other candidates in the examination room (Okorodudu in Makaula, 2018).

Other forms of examination malpractice are allotment of choice examination centre, the appointment of choice invigilating staff, bribing, influencing and terrorising invigilating staff and paper setters and examiners, replacing or changing roll numbers and answer booklets, helping the candidates in practical and written examination, collecting money from students to award marks they do not deserve, and sexual harassment by male teachers or lecturers on female students or vice versa to award pass marks to students (Wilayat, 2009).

Values Reorientation

The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) has four strategies of which one of them is reorienting values (Nigerian National Planning Commission, 2004). NEEDS is not just a plan. It defines a process of development anchored by a clear vision, sound values and enduring principles. The strategy hopes to lay a solid foundation for a national rediscovery and strong values based on the certain principles which are enterprise, competition and efficiency at all levels, equity and care for the weak and vulnerable, moral rectitude, respect for traditional values and pride in Nigeria's culture, a value system for public service that results in efficient and effective service delivery to the citizens, and discipline at all levels of leadership.

NEEDS is anchored in the imperative to restore the fundamental values of Nigeria, which have been weakened over the years. As described in Vision 2010, "Nigeria is a multi-ethnic society, with a value system that derives from the diversity of its people, religion and cultures. The elements of this value system should include, respect for elders, honesty and accountability, cooperation, industry, discipline, self-confidence and moral courage. These elements are the core values for the new Nigeria devoid of corruption and malpractice.

Values Reorientation and the School Curriculum

The 9-Year Basic Education Curriculum was particularly developed for the attainment of the Education for All (EFA) goals, the critical targets of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS), and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It was developed in response to Nigeria's need for relevant, dynamic and globally competitive education that would ensure that learners at the Basic Education Level are capable to compete favourably anywhere in the world in terms of knowledge, skills, techniques, values and aptitude, thus, the 9-Year BEC addressed among other things, the issue of value re-orientation, poverty eradication, critical thinking, entrepreneurship and life skills (Igbokwe, 2015).

Values Reorientation and Examination Malpractice in the Nigerian Educational System

Lickona in Kumar (2012) laid great stress on the need for values education. He stated that values-based education promotes ethical values and these values serve as a basis for good character. This makes the citizen of a country portray good behaviour and character. He defined character as a combination of thinking, feelings and behaviour. The reorientation of our value system in Nigeria will bring about a change in the development of our nation and this can be done through education.

The Nigerian youth must be told that there are things greater than money and money is not the ultimate in life. We must learn to value hard work, integrity, honesty and accountability over financial gains. The social ills which include wealth without work, pleasure without conscience, science without humanity, knowledge without character, politics without principle, commerce without morality, worship without sacrifice which characterize the nation must be dealt with to ensure social sanity in the country (Nweneazizi, 2012). Values reorientation in the school curriculum will change the mindset of students and teachers alike as well as every other citizen in Nigeria. When one is equipped with the right values it can then be easy to face certain challenges with ease. We do not have to think twice before saying no to examination malpractice. These evil vices will become a thing of the past when values like integrity,

honesty, accountability and respect for others mould our character to be responsible citizens inside and outside the school system.

Conclusion

Nigeria has to take values most seriously. Values should be an integral part of any society for it to strive and be successful. A nation without values cannot succeed especially in the 21st century where advanced technology has taken over. A nation can only survive when its citizens are creative, critical in thinking and find solutions to the various problems erupting every day in society. It is only when a country is endowed with the right values that it can achieve success. A nation where examination malpractice is given room to brew can never produce sound minds that will be creative and find a solution to problems because they lack the values that will enable to realise that success can only come as a result of hard work.

The Way Forward

The home is the first social institution where the character of the child is moulded therefore parents have a major role to play in inculcating values in children. They need to set good examples at home. They should teach, train, monitor, guide and develop in children the ability to have self-control in the absence of external authority. The school which includes teachers and the school administration also has a role in moulding the character of children. The school should help to imbibe values such as love, respect and integrity into children as soon as they start schooling. Learning these values at this young age could help the young ones grow into responsible adults void of questionable behaviour and character. Teaching children, the right values to become better citizens has to start from the very beginning which is the pre-nursery to the university level, after the home which is the first unit of socialization. This will help actualize the goals of NEEDS which is to develop or create a new Nigeria devoid of irregularities in its conduct and behaviour. Girded with the right values students, parents, teachers, school administrators and invigilators will not indulge in examination malpractice.

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