

Moral Education as a Veritable Instrument for Promoting Moral Consciousness in Secondary Schools in Nigeria

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Abstract

Moral education includes teaching and developing of critical awareness and appreciation of societal values that leads to the acquisition of ethics for maintaining stable living together. Moral education emphasizes respect for knowledge and truth, and ability to think rationally before acting on an issue. This therefore must be linked with the human experiences in the society. Values are to be caught from culture, religion, literature and from personal examples such as truthfulness, treating people with humanity, compassion, sacrifice and so on. Values have their source in Culture and are rooted in it. Hence a word about culture is relevant. Culture is perhaps best defined as a whole way of life of a people, from birth to the grave, at work and at rest, in life's serious moments and in lighter moments, and in all areas of human endeavour. And that way of life also includes a system of beliefs, namely their religion. We can also say it in reverse that religion is a whole way of life of a people. Without the support of faith or beliefs or 'myths'; the pathos of human life often becomes unbearable. Religion plays a critical part in this supporting role, by giving life a meaningful structure. This study recommends that, Curriculum experts should be involved to develop for all levels of the Nigerian education, a sound religious instruction curriculum that will reflect the expected moral values/character of the Nigerian society such as honesty, tolerance, peaceful coexistence, patriotism, love, national integration, unity etc and greater emphasis should be placed on encouraging healthy peer relationships among youths. This is because social cohesiveness and tolerance have been shown to improve the mental well-being of youth people.

Keywords: promotion, consciousness, moral, cultural value, veritable

Introduction

The term moral education is a continuous and lifelong education and it cuts across all the activities of an individual. The concern of moral education is to ensure the belief system that satisfies all moral standards and the manner of transmission the child also be regarded as an active person not passive when teaching moral aspects. The history of Nigerian education has been tied with colonial education, which in the first place, emphasized moral education as a core curriculum and it is still reflected in Nigerian education. Various courses

such as religion, general studies, civic and social studies form the bedrock of moral education. The various concepts that treat moral aspects are spread in the curriculum designs. Before the advent of colonialism, the indigenous system of education has been loaded with elements of moral education since it is a well known fact that no society has regards on any person that deviates from the ethics established by the society, Fafunwa (1991) postulated that character training is the corner stone of African education. He stated that “the parents participate in the education of the child. Everybody wants him to be sociable, honest, courageous, humble, persevering and of good report at all times.”

It is because of this assertion that many people believe that unless the indigenous elements of education are adhered to, moral decadence will still persist. Some even asserted that the intrusion of foreign traditions that contradict the indigenous culture is a major threat to moral development(However, moral education therefore is a universal phenomena, even the advanced countries have been clinging for an articulated and sound moral education that can curtail the social ills of the universal. The most serious social ill is moral decadence amongst the youth. The Encyclopedia of Education (1971) stated some of the aims of moral education as follows: i.) to inculcate moral way of judging actions, ii.) to foster a belief for adoption of some fundamental principles or ideas or values as a basis for moral judgment and decision, iii.) to foster a belief in on an adoption of a number of concrete norms, values and virtues, iv.) to develop a disposition to do what is morally right or wrong, v.) to promote achievement to reflect autonomy, self improvement or spiritual freedom even if it leads the individual to criticize prevailing ideas principles or rules.

Moral education cut across these overall objectives, and the whole goals of education that cut across the whole educational structure are reflected from these main national objectives. The changing nature of Nigeria requires re-fashioning of moral education Kelly & Downey in Olaogun (2012) contended that “technological advancement affect the social life of the people, the most obvious features of that change of course are those that affected the material circumstances of our lives, those technological developments have transformed our life style of living, advances in communication, in facilities for rapid long distance travel, in mechanical aids of all kind in the home and at work, in industrial machinery, in medical and surgical devices.” So, the above assertion indicates that there is high relationship between the survival of the society and the various changes that sprang from the social and technological revolutions. This in turn, affects the moral aspect of the members of the society. The changes in moral issues are highly affected by many forces, either internally or externally. Moral education therefore includes teaching and developing

of critical awareness and appreciation of societal values that leads to the acquisition of ethics for maintaining stable living together. Moral education emphasizes respect for knowledge and truth and ability to think rationally before acting on an issue (Adediran & Sobola, 2021). This therefore must be linked with the human experiences in the society. Kelly and Downey in Olaogun (2012), contented that “we do not normally accept that a person is behaving well morally if we discover that he or she has not thought out and deliberately choosing the course of action adopted.”

Moral education is relevant aspects of the educational system of any country that humanizes its citizens. A society in which youths were not taught to consider the needs and right of others will be a society with little social cohesiveness and much conflict. Morality as noted by the Nigeria voice (2011) is the border between human life and animal life; it is what gives the former a sense of humanity and spirituality. Furthermore, the youths’ belief about moral and immoral behavior affects their performance in school. Moral behavior is an evaluation of particular individual’s moral qualities. The concept of character can imply variety of attributes including the existence of lack of loyalty or lack of good behavior of habit. Moral behavior primarily refers to the assemblage of qualities that distinguish an individual from another, although on a cultural level the set of moral behavior to which unite and define its cultural distinct from others (Anasi, 2010).

Moral Education: Importance to Inclusive Education

Moral is the uniting phenomena adopted by the society or individuals, criteria which are believed to meet the needs of the society and be good for the individual’s benefit, judgments related to conscious, emotions, and excitement and motives which are imprinted in the individual’s conscious and shapes the behaviours. The moral presents a true perspective of the development of any society or nation. Education as an organized social institution has been considered as a vehicle for nourishment of values. The objectives of education encompass education for moral. Moral education may be defined as educational activities conducted to provide basic humanitarian values such as respect, responsibility, justice, honesty, solidarity, tolerance, and peace.

Guru in Adediran and Sobola (2021) insists that socialist, secular, democratic, justice, liberty equality, fraternity, dignity of the individual and integrity of the nation are the ideal conditions in the Constitution. Our values in life must draw their inspiration from these ideals. University education commission 1948-49 gave importance to the development of ethical value among the students in colleges and universities. It mentioned the various aspects of morality as: loyalty, courage, discipline, self-sacrifice and spirituality. Accordingly, the aims

and objective of moral education and its impact in bringing Inclusive Education involves the following:

1. Guiding life in the right path and to develop behavior with good qualities.
2. Developing sense of pride about our rich heritage in students.
3. Enabling to understand the national goals of socialism, secularism, social justice and democracy and to contribute to their consciousness.
4. To protect, preserve and conserve the natural and cultural environment and to make judicious use of natural resources.
5. To develop critical consciousness to analyze human development down the ages.
6. To help students lay a strong foundation for the development of different values.
7. To inculcate the spirit of patriotism and national integration.

Moral Education

Moral education cut across these overall objectives, and the whole goals of education that cut across the whole educational structure are reflected from these 5 main national objectives. The changing nature of Nigeria requires re-fashioning of moral education Kelly & Downey in Olaogun (2012). contended that “technological advancement affect the social life of the people, the most obvious features of that change of course are those that affected the material circumstances of our lives, those technological developments have transformed our life style of living, advances in communication, in facilities for rapid long distance travel, in mechanical aids of all kind in the home and at work, in industrial machinery, in medical and surgical devices.” Moral education according to Adewuya(2002) therefore includes teaching and developing of critical awareness and appreciation of societal values that leads to the acquisition of ethics for maintaining stable living together. Moral education emphasizes respect for knowledge and truth and ability to think rationally before acting on an issue. This therefore must be linked with the human experiences in the society. Kelly and Downey in Olaogun (2012), contended that “we do not normally accepts that a person is behaving well morally if we discover that he or she has not thought out and deliberately choosing the course of action adopted.”

Moral education provides those experiences and opportunities for developing the quality of students’ thinking about moral issues. The approaches to moral education according to Das(2010) include the following:

- Kind of moral upbringing needed by the children to carry them along in the society.
- The content of moral education and how to identify and differentiate moral and immoral acts.
- The relationship between moral education, moral training and moral instruction. In the first place the child has to be made to understand that moral opinions are pluck from the prejudices inherited from generation to generation. Moral education entails careful and critical appraisal of the contents and must portray the significance of moral behaviour.

The term moral education is preferably adopted rather than instruction or training because moral education is a continuous and lifelong education and it cut across all the activities of an individual. The concern of moral education is to ensure the belief system satisfies all moral standards and the manner of transmission the child also be regarded as an active person not passive when teaching moral aspects. The history of Nigerian education has been tied with colonial education, which in the first place, emphasized moral education as a core curriculum and it is still reflected in Nigerian education. Various courses such as religion, general studies, civic and social studies form the bedrock of moral education.

The various concepts that treat moral aspects are spread in the curriculum designs. Before the advent of colonialism, the indigenous system of education has been loaded with elements of moral education since it is a well known fact that no society has regards on any person that deviates from the ethics established by the society Fafunwa in Adewuya (2002) postulated that character training is the corner stone of African education. He stated that “the parents participate in the education of the child. Everybody wants him to be sociable, honest, courageous, humble, persevering and of good report at all times.” It is because of this assertion that many people believe that unless the indigenous elements of education are adhered to, moral decadence will still persist. Some even asserted that the intrusion of foreign traditions that contradict the indigenous culture is a major threat to moral development. Moral education therefore is a universal phenomenon, even the advanced countries have been clinging for an articulated and sound moral education that can curtail the social ills of the universal. The most serious social ill is moral decadence amongst the youth. The Encyclopedia of Education in DeRoche (2000) stated some of the aims of moral education as follows:

1. To inculcate moral way of judging actions.

2. To foster a belief for adoption of some fundamental principles or ideas or values as a basis for moral judgment and decision
3. To foster a belief in on an adoption of a number of concrete norms, values and virtues
4. To develop a disposition to do what is morally right or wrong.
5. To promote achievement to reflect autonomy, self improvement or spiritual freedom even if it leads the individual to criticize prevailing ideas principles or rules.

Education worldwide is believed to be the weapon for worthwhile survival. Education therefore, must consider the individual, the society and the future existence of both the individual and the society. Okere in DeRoche (2000), contended that: “since man is body and mind, complete education will entail training of our bodily and mental faculties and our mental faculties knowledge alone would not be enough, wisdom, skills, the virtues and other culture to make up an accomplished man an intellectual giant who was but a moral dwarf would be regarded not as an educated man.”

Methods of Teaching Moral Education in School

In preparing to teach moral education, the aims and objectives of moral education which is a general statement representing the ideals and the aspirations of society, i.e. the aim of moral education is to train individual to behave in accordance with the societal moral conduct. From the aims then teacher moves to assess the goals which describe the actual destination in general terms e.g. the goal of moral education in Nigeria (in relation to its aims above) is the provision of series of appropriate courses, topics, issues that lead to the production of a sound morally behaved person. The next step for the teacher is to analyze the objectives which are statement of quantifiable and operational in nature indicating, an event of the mastery of the desired activities or skills.

Basically, moral education centers highly on the affective domain of learning. The teacher therefore, after considering implication of choosing a method decides on whether to use teacher centered method or child centered. The modern trend of education emphasizes child centered because teacher centered method is a method of teaching (hat has been regarded as autocratic. These methods depend for their success to a large extent to the teacher's performance. Curzon (1980), described child centered methods of instruction as a directed and facilitated learning within environment in which the teachers play the role of a mediator and active participation of the children is the norm”

It is vital to state that teachers are not restricted on the use of any method provided such method can support the attainment of behavioural objectives.

Moral Education and Quality Assurance of Nigerian Schools

It is an undisputable fact that education is the only instrument for enhancing national transformation and sustainable development. As Ogundele (2015) rightly said that any nation that toyed with her educational provision to her citizens, such nation can never be ranked high among other developed nations at the global level.

It is therefore pertinent to note that everyone wants quality assurance in their children education this is to say that, no parents want to toy or joke with the educational quality of their children as such parents and teachers cooperate together in the total development of their children. Jaiyelola (1990) noted that, for any citizen to have quality education he or she must be morally and emotionally sound. Moral value therefore becomes a key word for a quality education provided at all levels. Ukeje (1998) also opined that moral value must be adequately reflected in the behaviours of an educated man. Adeyemo (1990) also stated that immoral behaviours and attitudes have a baneful reflection on the quality of individual education received. The author however noted that an educated person that is not morally sound in the society, the quality of the certificate received at the school system will be disrespected in the society. The author however conducted that it is better for such individuals not to go through, schooling; than bag high degree and find wanting in the areas of moral value. Jimba, Ogundele and Damal (2015) also, said that for any person in the position of authority to be accorded high respect in the society, they must be morally and emotionally sound. Moral value orientation is therefore important in the school system, for the quality of the education provided in such schools to be assured. Morally behaved individuals in the society lead to high respect at both national and international communities. The certificate acquired will also be accorded high respect and the quality of such certificate will be adequately assured.

The moral education, quality assurance, the types of immoral behaviours that hampered the quality of secondary education, the need for moral education in schools, the indicators of quality assurance in the schools. The important of moral education on the quality assurance of secondary education and the strategies for integrating moral education into secondary education curriculum in order to enhance quality assurance in education especially in Nigeria.

Moral Education and Types of Immoral Behaviours in Nigeria Schools

Morality according to Jimba (2015) is the act of being creditably standard, valued and respected in all aspect of behaviours in the society. The author noted that an individual that is not culturally, behavioural and emotionally respected in the society such an individual cannot command the respects of all and sundry members of the society. In the same vein, Ogundele (2015) stated that for every member of the society to be morally sound and command the respects of every citizen in such society, such person must respect the cultural value of the land, avoidance of any act or behaviours that contradict the traditional value of the society, giving adequate respects to the elders, language, religious tolerance and adequately involvement in the communal efforts of the society. Such person will be respected and high esteem will be given to such individuals. The author also went further to say that any member of the society that are morally sound, respected and stick to the good of the land and avoid the bad of the land such person will be adequately respected and whatever he does will also be recon with such society.

The need to identify good and moral behaviours, attitude knowledge and skills are therefore important and to be instilled in the mind of the young generation. Since every community has moral code which is an important and the major concern of the adult member in the society to instill in the minds of the young ones. The moral education programme is now becoming a shared responsibility of the school and the community within the society. However, moral education is therefore refers to the systematic ways of helping the children to acquire those moral habits that will help them individually to have good living and become a respected, productive and contributing members of their communities. The need for the youths in the citizens to acquire those behaviours that will give them high respect is therefore integrated into Nigerian educational system (Tony, 2004). Tony (2004) described moral education is the training and inculcating those desirable characters, habits, culture, attitude and behaviours in the youths, so that they will be able to differentiate between the good and bad moral value and understand the rationale for their choice of their action that will command good respect for him in the society.

Adeyinka (1991) identified the series of immoral acts that are perpetrated among the students. The author however noted that those immoral acts relegated the quality of education to background. The high perpetration or immoral acts and behaviour among the erring students diminished the integrity of the certificates and the rate of education received. Those immoral identified as being perpetrated in the school system are cultism, examination malpractices, bullying, killings, terrorisms, religious intolerance, sexual

harassment, indecent dressing, loose languages, bribery, truancy, absenteeism, prostitutions, lateness to school, poor time management, gossiping, student interest, thurgery, arsons, disobedience, disrespect to the constituted authority, arsons and noise making. The perpetration of immoral acts in the society has baneful effects on the quality assurance and students' academic performance. The high impetus to the relegation and stigmatization of the schools, individual and the certificate received in the schools. However, the integration of moral education into the school programme will therefore reduce high rate of immoral behaviours perpetration in the schools. It is therefore important to note that moral education is an effective tool for enhancing quality assurance in the education programme received both during the schooling and after the school programme.

Ogundele (2015) stated that any school where there are high rate of in disciplinary behaviours, the parental patronage, students' enrolment, accessibility and quality assurance are at stake. The reason being that no member of the society will respect or give high esteem to any schools where high there is perpetration of immorality act. Also, low integrity is accorded to the individuals that are found wanting in the aspect of immorality. However, in order to accord high integrity and quality to the education provided and received in the school system moral education in the school system are therefore inevitable. Ogundele, Gyot and Bwoi(2014) stated that it is an immoral act that in the schools that encourage high rate of unemployment, falsification of results, cheating during examination, and suspicions of individual dealings and the aftermath of immoral behaviours in the society do stigmatize such society, schools certificate and individuals. As the authors rightly put that good name are better than riches. That if you acquire high qualification or you are very rich in the society nobody will accord you any respect nor give you high esteem. If such an individual is not morally sound: integration of moral education will therefore enhance adequate moral behaviours that will inculcate good behaviour among the students and to build them for the future respect for the society.

School or individuals where there are high rate of moral decadence such schools would have low parental patronage low students enrolment and low students accessibility to the educational provision in that society. The author also stated that no societal member will respect the integrity of those schools with high rate moral decadence. That society will not humour the certificate or results that are acquired from such schools. That immoral acts or moral decadence in the school constitute low integrity to the type of education programme provided to the youths. Zubair (2011) said that the penetration of students in different types of immoral acts in the schools bring about high rate

of unemployment because the certificate received or presented will be given high suspicious and demand through verification.

Strategies for Integrating Moral Education in Nigerian Schools

Evidences in the abundant literature on the moral decadence in the society have relegated the progress of Nigerian education programme. However, in order to enhance quality assurance in the students' academic performance in Nigeria. It should be noted that there are growing concern over the years about gradual moral decay and loss of ethical value with society. The cankerworms seem to have drastically affecting the educational system. Unfortunately, members of the public keep shifting blames as to who is to be held responsible for the menace that is the parents, teachers, students or the government. The paper therefore examined all the issues relating to moral education and their implication for quality assurance and students' academic performance. The issue therefore called for the need to integrate moral education into Nigerian educational system. However, strategies for integrating moral education into the secondary school curriculum in Nigeria are:

Provision of educational services for the students and staff in the school: The schools need to provide adequate educational services like counseling services, vocational services, religious services, welfare services, recreational services in the school system. It should be noted that the provision of the essential services will modify individual students and make them relevant and responsible to the society. Teaching of civic education, moral education, religion education citizenship education and government in the school system will surely assist in training the youth on the spirit of togetherness, belongingness and national integrations and all minds that will enable individuals to behave well.

Dokatry (2014) suggested that for the moral decadence to be reduced in the society, the government should provide lunch for the pupils while in the schools. The author noted that hunger constitute the major cause of the moral decadence in the society. When a child is hungry he will not hesitate to partake on any immoral act that can give food reward. The introduction of school feeding by the government will eradicate the perpetration of immoral act within and outside the schools. The governmental efforts will enhance quality assurance in the education and the integrity of the education will be enhanced, Finally, Kumuyi (2011) also called for the preservation and protection of children dignity through avoidance of child abuse, child labour and child neglect. The author however suggested that the problem could be effectively managed through provision of effective guidance and counseling services in the schools, regular, health education, drastic steps against the culprits that violate the laws and edicts of child right and dignity and improved condition of

service and standard of living to reduce or alleviate poverty of the parents and other members of the society.

Factors affecting the inculcation of Moral Behaviour among Students

The problem of delinquent behavior among youths has been a prominent issue in Ohaozara local government area of Ebonyi State for years. Different societies have their own moral values which are considered normal, ideal and morally acceptable. Hence the conduct of the people in a society are regulated and controlled by their moral values (Anasi, 2010). The tendency and ability to identify what is right instead of wrong and as well practice it. Give it the moral virtues, thus good moral behavior had been emphasized and echoed in the society right from the era of Socrates to Plato through the Aristotelian philosophy perhaps that makes Fredrick Herbert to say that aim and indeed the total aim of education should be summed up under morality. Within the context of education therefore public holds the schools and teachers more accountable for students learning and behaviour (Omede & Odiba, 2010).

Tanaka (2014) Youth are people aged 18-35; it is a stage in life when a person is young, and especially the time before a person becomes an adult. Psychologically, it refers to the stretch of time in between childhood and adulthood. Alfrey (2010) opined that youths are referred to as those persons possessing certain distinct physical characteristics which include: Ability to think fast, ability to display much energy towards the actualization of goals, assertive and resistant personality, and ability to change a state of art. Thus, youths are expected to be the most active population of a country. The higher the number of youth, the higher the quantity of wealth and national income, all things being equal. But the reverse has been the case in most developing countries of the world today where the youths are either rendered redundant or marginalized by a clique of opportunists (Nkwopara, 2011).

The Nigeria youths according to Anasi (2010) constituted about 40% of the more than 140 million people in the country. The youths remain one of the greatest assets that any community can possess. They are behind most community project and ventures these make them useful and most times indispensable in any culture or community, whether macro or micro that allows a good percentage of her youths to be misdirected risks her future viability and survival. The youths are the future hope and glory of any nation (Omede & Odiba, 2010). But most of Ohaozara youths are highly misguided, recruited and used by some adults to achieve their selfish aims despite the fact that they are indispensable to the community, state and nation at large. Aside formal training in moral and values education, the first seed of moral education is to be sown within the family. The family is the child's first window to the outside world.

Parents are supposed to provide sound moral and value education to their children. Aside training, they are expected to serve as good moral examples. As noted by the Nigeria voice (2011) if we as parent are to attach great importance to the moral education of our children, we have to attach greater importance to our own moral education. This is because, in moral and value education, children pay more attention to what they see and hear from us who are adults and who may as well be their mentors.

Morality according to Tanaka (2014) refers to principles pertaining to right and wrong or good and bad behaviour, a system of moral principles followed by a particular group of people. Gert (2012) opined that morality signifies adherence to the moral code of the group, that is, conformity in behaviour to the manner or customs of the social group. Muraina and Ugwumba (2014) was of the view that morality is related to conforming to a set of conventional rules for determining one's social actions and which have been internalized. Njoku and Njoku (2014) opine that moral behavior refers to adherence to principle and beliefs involving right or wrong conduct. The word moral behavior could be used to connote obedience to the code of conduct, customs, habit and rules of a group of people. Also moral behavior as a concept is division and highly nebulous to give a particular definition to for instance in philosophy the descriptive definition of moral behavior is that it is keeping of a set of conduct put forward by any group and acceptable by the members of that group or the society (Gert, 2012).

More so, according to Haidt (2012) at the broadest level as interlocking sets of values, virtue, norms, practice, logical mechanisms that work together to suppress or regulate self-interest and make co-operative societies possible. Moral behavior is acting according to these values. Modern technology or modern advancement seems important at the time to different ages in different societies, psychologically if not practically, and the youth have put great importance to this and it's affecting their moral behavior or moral values. In a variety of modern societies for example youths presently feel a heightened empathy with the digital age (Bennett and Manton, 2010). The current revolution in technology, known variously as the "information Age" or "Age of technology, similarly is unrelenting; the older person who is reluctant to use a computer may even accept a basic mobile telephone once considered a glamorous accessory (Cockelbergh, 2012). With the growth of technologies as the internet, computers and television youths are becoming more dislocated from society (Griswold, 2012) most youths prefer watching television and playing computer games to those morally movies that positively position them for life challenges. Modern technologies impacts on mental and moral

development when compared with the old technologies especially on youths are different.

Conclusion

It could be concluded that effective integration of moral education into the secondary schools curriculum will help students to be upright in their dealings with others in the society where they find themselves. The integration will surely eradicate moral decadence in and out of the schools. It is therefore important to note that the perpetration of moral value and moral convictions in the schools give high quality and integrity into the education provided and the certificates acquired will be accorded high respect in the society.

Recommendations

- Curriculum experts should be involved to develop for all levels of the Nigerian education, a sound religious and moral education curriculum that will reflect the expected moral values/character of the Nigerian society such as honesty, tolerance, peaceful coexistence, patriotism, love, national integration, unity etc.
- Greater emphasis should be placed on encouraging healthy peer relationships among youths. This is because social cohesiveness and tolerance have been shown to improve the mental well-being of youth people.
- Schools should run workshops, seminars inform of awareness of the importance of moral value skills on how to solve conflict among inter-schools and more also between educators (teachers) and the learners (students).

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