
MORAL EDUCATION: IMPLICATION FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

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ABSTRACT

The study measured students' moral values: an implication for national security. The study was ex post facto research design. A sample of 150 Junior Secondary School One (JSS 1) students (comprising 75 males and 75 females) was randomly selected by means of proportionate stratified random sampling technique from Okpe Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria. The instrument used for data collection was a 4-point scale questionnaire, measuring the 3 major domains of morality and character, with specific moral values. The mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (SD) analyses were the statistical tools used for data analysis. The findings revealed that, although students have the knowledge of moral knowledge and that of moral values, but lack the ability and skills to convert or translate moral judgment and feelings into concrete actions. Based on this finding, and for the purpose of safeguarding the nation's future security and wealth (which is our youth), the study recommends that children and youths should be given opportunity to make sense of the concept of moral values; and all custodians of moral values should act the way we want them to act, rather than telling them how to act and what to believe.

INTRODUCTION

A nation's sources of strength depends upon her assets, including political assets and economic assets (highly productive domestic economy), supported by rich natural resources (Taylor, 1974). According to the researcher, there is urgent need to protect these assets that legitimize and make essential the role of national security. Paleri (2008: 52) defined national security as:

The measurable state of the capability of a nation to overcome the multi-dimensional threats of the apparent well-being of its people and its survival as a nation-state at any given time, by balancing all instruments of state policy through governance, that can be indexed by

computation, empirically or otherwise, and is extendable to global security by variables external to it.

While some nations use political power to gain more power for their leadership, others provide quality of life improvements to their people; thereby sustaining the institutions (home school, church, and the society) that ultimately feed the future of the nation state (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2011). All these have foundations in the internal educational system which serves to build any nation on strategic and tactical bases, creating the conditions for the nation's success or failure. For instance, the moral health of a nation through appropriate training of the human resources can facilitate the creation of personnel and socio-economic well-being of that nation. According to Nwoke (2011), human capital development is a form of wealth

that can create more wealth. Also, appropriate agricultural productivity provides food essential for the nutritional development of any nation. By this, there is national food security. The otherwise therefore, is insecurity, like the insurgency, terrorism and other social vices we have today in our nation, Nigeria.

Nwoke (2011:193) asserts that "Education is the critical factor in the development of human capital which includes the knowledge, skills, competencies, innovative abilities and attitudes embodied in individuals". Moral education on the other hand, is an aspect of education that brings to the awareness of the learner, the values necessary for good individuals and social life (Okoh 1983). Iwenofu (2010:2) defines moral education as 'the process through which an individual develops proper attitudes and behaviours towards others in the society based on social and cultural norms, rules and laws'. Morality (that is, conformity to the rules of right conducts) and virtue (moral goodness of character and behaviour) are learned. Even though some virtues could be inherited, good and Teller as cited in Ekpe (2012) assert that virtue is a condition of a person that can be attained only through education. Therefore, these attributes can be assessed or measured by means of psychological measurement techniques.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theory of education by philosophers like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle is a theory of life (Ekpe, 2012). According to the researcher, Socrates regarded virtue as a great aim of life; while morality as a pattern to be followed in daily living and not to be regarded as an abstract ideal. Still quoting Socrates, Ekpe (2012:196) stated that, "once the student is stirred, and he gains awareness, he sees a new meaning in life; he then probes and questions". The function of the teacher according to Socrates is to awaken the average man. This is what Ryan as cited in Kohn (1997) referred to as demanding good behaviour from students, rather than teaching them how to act or what to believe.

In the life of the children in any society, institutions such as the home, school, church, and the society itself, have very important and urgent duty to perform. These institutions help the child to recognize the existence of moral conduct or values in order to achieve a more secured and clearer framework of good living. Orr, as cited in Nwoke (2011:90) pointed out that, "a major shortcoming of children and even adults is moral blindness". That is, not being morally aware of how a situation at hand calls for moral judgment. Sometimes, until one knows what is true (to have lots of factual information), he or she may not be able to decide on what is right. Morality is one of the accepted value attributes enshrined as positive and desirable in the National Policy on Education (2004), and in the Federal Republic Constitution of Nigeria (1999). Ekpe (2012) opined that, virtues that make a person good, are nurtured in the person through moral education, developing his thinking skills of moral judgment about what is right or wrong. Moral education engages the child in a process of personal search for values, meaning and purpose in life, which helps in the development of a nation (Iwenofu, 2010). According to the researcher, the child needs direction (in life) that will help him to grow responsibly and in turn contribute positively to the welfare of the home, school, church and the society at large.

In the study, teaching of character education in primary Schools, Nwoke (2011) stated that, it is universally upheld that the ability to distinguish between good and evil or right and wrong (which is morality), is based on a well defined value system with respect to human character and conduct. Value (the principles about what is right and wrong) is "the peoples set of approved likes and dislikes, as vocalized or seen in their behaviours, through speaking, actions, thought, etc" (Omeje & Eze, 2007: 159). Eyo (2005), also asserted that value is the core base of ethics and social philosophy as it deals basically with the determination of what is good

and desirable or worthwhile. Children and youths in our society need at all stages of their development, the kind of moral character that respects personality and a faith that life has value and that all human beings including themselves are the vehicles of that value. Values are clearly related to life choices and are often measured in conjunction with attitudes, interests and preferences (Anastasi & Urbina, 2007). According to Aiken (1979), values, attitudes and interests are all viewed as personality characteristics, and the distinction among them are not sharp. Social psychologists have developed many scales like personality questionnaire for example, to measure a great number of attitudes.

Looking at the current behaviour of youth in our society, with the daily media reports about their moral vices, this study therefore, critically looked at the major domains (cognitive, affective and psychomotor) of morality and character as provided by Lickona as cited in Nwoke (2011), to measure values being inculcated in the young ones in our socialization institutions. Lickona as cited in Nwoke (2011:90-91), classified moral values according to the major domains as follows:

- a) Cognitive domain of morality and character (this is the ethical literacy that requires knowing). The 6 aspects of this domain include:- moral awareness, knowledge of moral values, perspective-taking, moral reasoning, decision making and self knowledge;
- b) The affective domain of morality and character (is the emotional or feeling aspect of character). The 6 aspects that comprised this domain include:- conscience, self-respect, self-control, empathy, humility and loving the good; while
- c) The Psychomotor domain of morality and character means (concretizing moral knowing and feeling). It has 3 aspects that Include: - moral competence, will and habits.

This study also looked at the understanding of values in terms of what each prescribes in various life situations. Values considered in this study include respect for life, politeness, caring, truthfulness, loving the good, discipline, hardworking, collaboration, perseverance, forgiveness, appreciation, tolerance, honesty, sincerity, modesty, self-control and friendliness. In considering the extent to which these moral values could influence a nation's development and by implication the national security of such nation, the study examined some empirical studies. Omeje and Eze (2007) reported in their study that adolescents no longer have value for respect of others and group in the society; but rather take delight in vices like wanton destruction of school properties, involvement in examination misconduct, robbery and cultism, among others. All of these threaten the national security of the Nigerian society. But the study of Iwenofu (2010), revealed that religion and moral education promote positive attitude towards honesty, discipline and hard work, thereby improving economic growth and development. The study of Walter (1998) revealed that pupils exposed to intensive combination of intellectual, ethical and social skills from kindergarten to elementary six, were found to be more spontaneously helpful, friendly and collaborative in the classroom. The study also revealed that the pupils exhibited a more advanced conflict resolution skills such as: patience in listening to others' viewpoints, communicating their own viewpoints without reducing the ego of the other person; working out a mutually acceptable solution to conflicts and helping those in distress. Ginberg and Hanson (1986) also reported that students who were self-disciplined were found to persevere, value learning and score high on achievement tests. Kohn (1997) also reported that to help children become moral people (as opposed to people who merely do what they are told), they should be given the opportunity to make sense of concepts of values; otherwise, they reflexively rebel against what

they are told. From the foregoing therefore, this study investigated the impact of the major domains of morality and moral values on students of the Junior Secondary School one (JSS 1) in Okpe Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria. .

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What moral values are exhibited by JSS 1 students?
2. What domain of morality and character have more impact on JSS 1 students?

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Okpe Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria; having 14 public Junior Secondary Schools (JSS). A sample of 150 (out of 417 JSS 1 students comprising 75 males and 75 females) was randomly selected from 3 co-educational schools with 66 students each on the average. Fifty (50) students were selected from each school (25 males and 25 females) to ensure gender equality; using the proportionate stratified random sampling technique.

A questionnaire of a 4-point Likert Scale, (comprising items measuring the 3 major domains of morality and character and specific moral values) was used to generate data for the study. The measurement instrument had construct validity and a reliability coefficient of 0.79; being measure of internal consistency. This measure was ascertained through the use of Cronbach Alpha statistical technique at 0.05 level of significance. The data generated were analyzed using mean and standard deviation statistics. Criterion mean of 2.50 was taken as the critical value for decisions; such that, a mean response that falls below 2.50 was regarded as domain not having an impact. While a mean response on or above 2.50 was regarded as domain having an impact on the students.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The results of the data analysis are presented in tables 1 and 2 below. Table 1 provides answer to research question 1 while table 2 provides answer to research question 2.

Research Question 1: What moral values are exhibited by JSS 1 students?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Moral Values exhibited by JSS 1. Students.

	Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
1	It is an offence in my family not to be respectful to one's elders	2.56	0.91	Agree
2	My culture teaches politeness	2.00	0.76	Disagree
3	My parents are known to be caring in my community	2.35	0.87	Disagree
4	I am taught that honesty pays	2.40	1.00	Disagree
5	My parents taught me to be truthful all the time	2.62	0.65	Agree
6	My school teaches us to always love what is good	3.10	0.95	Agree
7	My school teacher made me to know that a hardworking child helps to improve himself and the economic growth of his community	2.38	0.55	Disagree
8	I am taught that perseverance is one of the good qualities that enhances success in life and in academics	2.15	0.56	Disagree
9	My teacher encourages collaboration in order to learn from one another	3.41	0.72	Agree
10	I am taught to forgive even though I am the one being hurt	2.25	0.97	Disagree
11	We were taught at school to always appreciate whenever we are given something or something is being done for us.	2.74	0.96	Agree

12	My society encourages respect for life	2.11	1.00	Disagree
13	Elders in my community encourage friendliness in order to leave together peacefully	2.38	0.69	Disagree
14	My parents advised me to always be sincere in all dealings with people	2.51	0.88	Agree
15	Modesty in dressing and in other areas of life is encouraged by church elders.	2.66	0.90	Agree
16	I am made to understand being tolerance enhances peace and security in one's school and community	2.19	0.84	Disagree
17	I am taught that lack of self-control leads to insatiable pursuit of pleasure and financial recklessness	2.18	0.94	Disagree
18	A disciplined child makes his parents proud	2.85	1.00	Agree

Out of 18 items in table 1, only 8 items had impact on students; indicating that, more than half (50%) of the items had no impact on students.

Research Question 2: What domain of morality and character has more impact on JSS I students?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Domains of Morality and Character of Students.

	Domain		SD	Decision
(A)	Cognitive (Moral Knowing):			
1	Moral Awareness	3.25	0.91	Agree
2	Knowledge of Moral Values	3.10	0.67	Agree
3	Perspective-Taking	2.01	0.78	Disagree
4	Moral Reasoning	2.35	1.01	Disagree
5	Decision making	2.68	0.88	Agree
6	Self Knowledge	2.15	0.69	Disagree
(B)	Affective (Emotional or Feeling):			
7	Conscience (knowing what is right and feeling the obligation to do it)	2.50	0.98	Agree
8	Self-respect	2.62	0.79	Agree
9	Self-control	2.25	0.69	Disagree
10	Empathy	2.55	0.64	Agree
11	Humility	2.50	1.00	Agree
12	Loving the good	2.40	1.01	Disagree
(C)	Psychomotor (Concretizing moral knowledge and feeling):			
13	Moral competence	2.01	0.76	Disagree
14	Will (doing what is right despite competing wrong alternatives)	1.90	1.00	Disagree
15	Habit (Consistent pattern of thinking, feeling and acting)	2.00	1.00	Disagree

All items in table 2 above had means ranging from 1.90 to 3.25. Items 1,2,5,7,8,10 and 11 fell within the category of having impact on students. While items

3,4,6,9,12,13,14 and 15 fell within the category of not having impact on students.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Table 1 results show that, values like tolerance, Politeness, honesty, hard work, respect for life, to mention but a few, were not exhibited by students. By implication, the opposite of these values (that is, social vices) are more exhibited by students. This agrees with the studies of Omeje and Eze (2007) and Kohn (1997) that adolescents no longer have value for respect of others and groups in the society. Conversely, these findings are not in agreement with the studies of Iwenofu (2010), Walter (1998) and Ginsberg and Hanson (1986), who reported that the exposure of students to religion and moral education, intensive combination of intellectual, ethical and social skills, promote positive attitude towards honesty, discipline, perseverance, hard work and a more advance conflict resolution skills; thereby improving economic growth and development. These positive attitudes are pointers to enhancing any nation's security.

Table 2 results revealed that most aspects of morality and character domains have no impact on JSS 1 students, especially the psychomotor domain which concretizes moral knowledge and emotions. The results also revealed that some aspects of cognitive domain like moral awareness, knowledge of moral values and that of decision making have impact on students. Aspects of effective domain like conscience, self-respect, empathy and humility also have impact on students. These findings imply that students lack the ability and skills to show their moral knowledge by doing what is right despite competing wrong alternatives. It also revealed that students lack moral courage, consistent pattern of thinking and feeling to act fairly and truthfully without being coax into doing what is wrong. Hence, these findings are in agreement with Kohn (1997), and Omeje and Eze (2007). Kohn (1997), reported that children who are not given the opportunity to make sense of concepts of values, but only told on what to do, reflexively rebel against what they are told. Omeje and Eze (2007) also

reported that adolescents no longer have value for respect of others and groups in the society, but take delight in social vices. The outcomes of these social vices have negative effects on any nation's security.

IMPLICATION FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

Moral education is meant to develop the human character that can safeguard any nation's valuables (political and economic assets). It makes up the moral health of such a nation. Therefore, the appropriate training of the moral aspect of the human resources of any nation is most vital. The findings of this Study are clear indications that our school system and the custodians of moral values are not engaging students in deep critical reflection about certain ways of being. Students who lack positive attitude towards honesty, discipline, hard work, tolerance, respect for life, self-respect, self-control among others are vulnerable to cultism, examination misconducts, robbery and even terrorism. All these of course, have implication for our nation's security, since these students are the nation's future security and wealth.

CONCLUSION

From the findings of this study, excellent moral character involves more than just the understanding of what is good. Virtues require harmony between cognitive and affective elements of a person (in question). It is this harmony that concretizes the person's moral knowing and emotions. In helping children and students become decent human beings in our society, they must be made to understand that it is wrong, for instance to tell lies. Rather, students need to be taught about the importance of being honest. Problems should be dissected and solved from the inside out. Taken as a challenge, parents and educators should examine precepts in terms of what is going on in our social institutions, and together with the children and students make sure that even the unpleasant truths can be told and heard. This is a step in the right direction to bringing peace to the home, school, church and the society at large.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study and for the purpose of safeguarding our nation's future security and wealth, the study recommends that

1. The process of learning moral values requires that of meaning; such that, all socialization institutions (the home, school, church and the society itself) should give our children and youths the opportunity to make sense of the concepts of moral values.
2. Instructions should be based on intrinsic motivation to get compliance from the students; and
3. The teachers and other custodians of moral values are to act the way we want them to, rather than telling them how to act and what to believe.

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