

ENHANCING SKILLS ACQUISITION IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION: A KEY TO VALUE EDUCATION AND REDUCTION OF CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Skills acquisition in science/technology in the development of the national economy cannot be overemphasized. Any of the nations with priority in skills acquisition in science and technology will among other things improve economic growth substantially; hence reduce the menace of corruption and other vices. Science/technology skill acquired will provide the best brains, first class professionals and exemplary techno crafts to transform Nigeria and Nigerians into a great country, where things work as they should be. The paper revealed that science/technology education has the capacity to influence values and attitudes of a person for positive transformation to meet up with current challenges of the society. The paper also is of the view that proper funding of science/technology education will equip citizens with proper skills capable of engaging the youths or providing employment. It also discussed the conceptual framework of science technology/corruption, role of skills acquisition in science and technology in reducing corruption and re-orienting learners for a better society. The paper recommends that proper funding is very crucial to science education in Nigeria.

Key Words: value education, skills acquisition, science and technology education, insecurity, corruptions.

Introduction

Education is expected to inculcate ethical conduct in scholars and students in order to create noble character like excellence, tolerance, incorruptibility, fairness and justice, hard-word, nationalism and patriotism

Education is expected to be a transmitter of worthwhile values. It is transferred to upcoming generations of the environment as they act on the environment. This transfer is carried on through the education process. Education is a means of life and living. The ultimate end of education is man's happiness. Education is expected to free individuals from the prejudices and irrational assumptions of everyday life and enlarge their experience. It was also to emancipate the human mind from error, prejudices, false opinions and values. Since solutions to problems can have more than one answer, this challenges the scientist to solve problems by observing and collecting data and constructing inferences from those data. Through this process students also acquire knowledge and develop a rich understanding of concepts, principles, models, theories and skills. Education is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or your self-confidence. Education liberated individuals from ignorance, falsehood and superstition.

In this present age of science and technology when scientific knowledge has grown exponentially, technological innovations have progressed at a rapid pace, and the effects of science are clearly witnessed in all aspects of our lives. The British Science Council (2009) defined science as the pursuit and application of knowledge and understanding of the natural and social world following a systematic methodology based on evidence (Okereke, Onyekwena and Ejeabukwa, 2016).

Today, Nigeria required people who could think and have acquired necessary content knowledge and skills in science and technology in order to provide solution to personal, social and economic problems. It is clear that the greatest challenge among others that is probably facing Nigeria is that of survival in the midst of numerous challenges in an intensive competitive world, which is completely dominated by the greatest might of science and technology. Nigeria is a country endowed with huge natural resources, in spite of these endowment and emphasis in science and technology education of her citizens, the social status of a large percentage of her citizens is characterised by corruption and unemployment (Alkamu and Ngap, 2016).

A country can be self-sufficient and self-reliant only if she can tap her natural resources to produce finished products for her basic needs. Facts are there that, there is mass corruption in Nigeria; this is partly due to emphasis on theory than skill acquisition, which can lead to self-employment of the citizens where they cannot secure white collar job. Anything that has become a menace or a problem to humanity, development and progress of a nation needs to be quickly addressed so that it does not cause setback, retrogression and havoc to the socio-economic status of the society.

The fear of the economic meltdown all over the world and economic recession after corona-virus pandemic has direct or indirect bearing to Nigeria perhaps this will wake the government to properly fund science and technology education as this will enhance value education and reduction of unemployment and corruption in Nigeria.

Concept of Corruption

Corruption is a vice that can ravage the entire fabric of the society. It is one common household phenomenon mentioned with its presence everywhere from individual home to the last stratum of the society. Various definitions have been given to the concept of corruption. The World Bank (1998) defines corruption as the use of public office for private gain. The definition includes bribery and extortion, which involves at least two parties the givers and the receivers. Some public features do engage in fraud and embezzlement. It is also defined as an anti-social behaviour conferring improper benefits contrary to large and moral norms which also undermines the authority to improve the living condition of the people (Edame, 2001). Corruption also means any abuse of a position of trust in order to gain an undue advantage.

Corruption, without any doubt, is a socio-economic vice that seems to defy remedy in Nigeria. Perhaps, one can associate the slow speed of development and high rate of poverty to corruption between the rules and the ruled in Nigeria. Nigeria has not been able to make any appreciable progress in its quest to be among the top twenty developed economics in the world. Corruption is the major cause. The agencies that were set up by government to investigate and try financial crimes have their heads full with corruption. That is to say, corruption has taken over every of our dealing in Nigeria. The administration under President MuhammaduBuhari has made the issue of fighting corruption as one of its main agenda. The president himself made it clear “if we don’t fight corruption, corruption will kill us”, indeed, Nigeria national institutions have decayed. The covid-19 exposed the Nigerian health institutions that is ill-equipped and cannot match the modern day facilities which are technologically driven. Our roads are in bad shapes, thereby giving rise to frequent accidents and death. The rise of

terrorism, militancy, kidnapping, rape and other vices in the country could be traced to the government that has failed its citizens because of corruption in the high places. Liatu (2016) says, no country can forge ahead in a situation where bribery and corruption have been institutionalized. No nation can advance where citizens are dismissed as fools by their kith and kin, simply because they refused to loot, plunder and abuse public office and public confidence. Corruption indeed has an adverse effect on social and economic development of the country and ultimately slows down economic growth. This agrees with the position of Transparent International (TI) that corruption is undermining development in Sub-Sahara Africa. Nigerian government must be very sincere and serious on the fight against corruption by ensuring that every corrupt individual is brought to book. The Independent and Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) should be allowed to do their work without government intervention; this will go a long way in curbing corruption in Nigeria.

Value Education

Education and value are two inseparable concepts which count on each other, without education, value cannot be imbibed. For a citizen to acquire value, there must be one form of education or the other, informal or formal. The formal one is the type that takes place mostly in the school with an organized time-table and a well-structured curriculum to create awareness about the proper use of the environment. Also there is need for informal education to be driven from home front where the child is taught basic values. The expectation is that parents, teachers as well as all other stakeholders are involved in inculcating appropriate values that will help the learner to value his/her cultures, adhere to guiding principles and standards of the society (Ovrire, 2016).

Values are part of life right from the period of infancy to adulthood. Kalusi (2006) opines that values are the essence of society. Education is a value laden enterprise directed to positively impact on the society practicing it. Enu and Esu(2011). In Ovrire (2016) note that values are basic beliefs and attitude in a society whether of individuals or groups which are considered worthwhile and serve as a guide to choices and behaviours in our daily life. The National Orientation Agency (NOA, 2009) in Ovrire (2016) sees values therefore, as deep seated beliefs that influence people's actions and behaviours. It is therefore, essential that every individual, group and indeed, the entire nation must have core values which serve as the driving engines for growth and development. Bolarin (2005) identifies some dominant values which form the core values applied by a larger section of the Nigerian society to include the following: detesting laziness, dignity of labour, respect for parents/elders, hospitality, public spiritedness, respect for authority, hard work, respect for sanctity of life, honesty, cleanliness, sanitation and truthfulness. It is imperative to note that value vary from one society to another and are important to the ethical, psychological and sociological and environmental discourse because it affects every facet of human existence. Positive values are a necessity for the sustenance of the society (Okereke, Onyekwena and Ejeabukwa, 2016).

Enhancing Skills Acquisition in Science and Technology Education

Ile (2000) describe the skill acquisition process to include:

- Identification of investment opportunities;
- Choice of investment opportunities;
- Decision on the form of business enterprise;
- Factor combination;
- Business directionship;
- Risk bearing and

- Innovation.

All these can be acquired in science and technology education. The above skills and competencies will enable an individual seek and run an enterprise successfully. These skills are acquired through training that emphasized the acquisition and development of appropriate knowledge and skills that will enable an individual to maximize resources around him within limits of his capability (Ezenwenne, 2005 in (Alkamu and Ngap, 2016).

Challenges of Skill Acquisition in Science and Technology Education

There are various setbacks in acquiring skills in science and technology education:

- **Corruption:** Corrupt practices in Nigeria have numerous faces and are seen in almost every sector such as education. Corrupt practices are found in education at all levels from secondary to Universities. There are wide spreads of corruptions that affect the ability of the country and her citizen to enjoy personal security and development.
- **Improper funding:** Individuals at the head of institutions are been overtaken by the act of corrupt practices. The government on her part lacks the will power to fund science and technology education.

Funding of university education in Nigeria yearly budget of Nigerian government revelled lack of focus and insincerity to good and quality education the UNESCO recommendation of 26% of the total budgetary allocation to education sector as reflected is yet to see the light of the day. The impact of this neglect is the year in, year out of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASSU) Strike. Decline of quality of education associated erosion of integrity, high failure rates, lack of skilled persons required for driving the economic, social and political development of the country and the decline in international competitiveness of Nigerian education. The poor conditions of service in relation to remuneration, research facilities and opportunities; conferences attendance in Nigeria and overseas, training of junior technologist etc.

- **Lack of infrastructure:** Skill acquisition programmes are more of practical than theoretical skills; hence today learners are subjected to theories.
- **Lack of value education:** the desire for instant wealth has led many people to get involved in acts that are injurious to the society. People see skill acquisition as a waste of time.
- Lack of provision of well-funded, scientifically accurate and carefully designed education.
- Security issue in Nigeria has been worrisome for more than seven year now. Nigerian insecurity now lives in fear of uncertainty of death. A well governed state, should have a symbolise relationship between education, poor quality education for citizens, constitute a constraint on capacity for sustainable security in multifaceted dimensions in human security frame work.

The Way Forward

- **There is need for value re-orientation:** Attitudinal re-orientation has for long been recognized as the best way to address the myriad of social problems confronting the Nigerian society. The national orientation agency should go down to the basis to drive the process of a comprehensive programme of attitudinal transformation starting from the family, the school, institution, the traditional and religious bodies. According to Alapa (2016) opined that some years ago it would have been really appalling to hear of individuals stealing billions of naira, but that appear to be the norm today.
- **Emphasis should be placed on value education:** Value systems are those intrinsic attributes and characteristics which are innate in every person for the actualization and promotion of social order, cohesion and peaceful co-existence which are fundamental indices for growth and development in the society. Alapa (2016) opined that the Nigerian

society is characterized by high level of distrust and everybody has become a suspect of misplaced value.

- **There should be proper funding of science and technology education:** Science education involves the study of science in-depth and in addition, educational knowledge and concepts are learnt and verified. No country can be globally recognized without talking about its scientific advancements. Science education also equips teachers, learners and the society with knowledge, skills, equipment and freedom to perform noble task useful for improving socio-economic standard.
- Every individual education stakeholders has the responsibility of funding science education as it is one of several media through which society intends to transmit what it considers to be clear, worthwhile, helpful and valuable to the present and succeeding generations.
- Every science teacher should be re-oriented to teach cultural value while engaging students in the process of scientific inquiry. Also government can organize workshops for science teachers to sensitize them on their roles in fighting corruption.

Conclusion

If we don't fix our education, it means we are joking. Human resources is key. Today, lots of Nigerians are going out in droves that are brain drain. Our government must sit down with Academic Staff Union of Universities to solve the crises, if it entails borrowing let them do it. if we must come out of economic logjam the government must fund education the government must be urged to get her priority right.

Based on the available evidence from the study, it was concluded that the relevant science and technology education plays a significance role in promoting youth employment thereby reducing corruption practices. In order to further encourage the role played by the science teachers, government should step up workshops through which sensitization on curbing corruption in our society can be achieved. In the same vain, the relevant technology board should step up activities involving in-school and out-school training of youths in skills of their choice in order to create employment and reduce poverty and idleness.

The basic curriculum of the relevant science and technology education should be centred on value-orientation so as to encourage the appreciation of dignity of labour. Nigerian citizen who values hard work, self-actualization rather than dependency and who realize that one cannot have something from nothing. Skills acquisition in science and technology will create a Nigeria to belong and be grateful to inhabit. A Nigeria that promotes self-reliance, entrepreneurship, innovation, rewards hard work, protects its people and their property, and offers its children better prospects than those they may be tempted to seek elsewhere (Lydia and Mary, 2016).

Education is a key tool in combating poverty, promoting peace, social justice, human rights, democracy, cultural diversity and environmental awareness. Achieving peace, security through quality science education implies an active concept of peace and securities through values, life skill and knowledge in a spirit of quality, respect, empathy, understanding and mutual appreciation among individuals and groups in a nation. Science educational action for promoting the concepts of peace and security is seen in its content and training, educational resources and materials, school and university life, initiate straining for teachers, training for young people and adults. A culture of peace and security must take root in the classroom from an early age. It must be continued to be reflected in the curricular at all levels of education (Udeozo and Filshak, 2016).

Science education in its widest sense is a dynamic, long-term process; a life time experience. It means providing both children and adults with an understanding of and respect

for universal values and rights. It requires participation at all levels: family, schools, and places of work, playgrounds and the community, as well as the nation.

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