

REPOSITIONING ETHICS AND VALUE EDUCATION IN UNIVERSITIES FOR A
CORRUPTION FREE SOCIETY: PERCEPTION OF LECTURERS

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Abstract

This paper explores the need to reposition ethics in our university curriculum as a way of fighting corruption which has become endemic in the Nigerian society. This study sought to find out the perception of lecturers of universities for integrating ethics and value education into our higher education courses. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The instrument for data collection is a 15 item questionnaire administered on 210 lecturers. The data was analyzed using simple percentages while the hypotheses were tested at 0.5 level of significance. The results from the study showed that lecturers' perception on integrating ethical education into other aspects of the curriculum may not help to fight corruption. The implications of the findings includes the need to organize seminars for the lecturers to update them on the values of using ethics and value education to fight corruption. Recommendations were made.

Introduction

Corruption is certainly one of the greatest threats to national development the world over. In Nigeria, it has set the country back in several ways socially, economically, politically and even educationally. Recently Obi (2019) was cited in the Guardian newspaper editorial of 2nd September as saying that in Nigeria, corruption kills more than Malaria and HIV/Aids put together. This claim captures the gravity of the effects of corruption on the Nigerian society. Complaints against corruption are many and evidences abound. For decades, past military usurpers of power have all harped on the gravity of the dangers of corruption as a reason for overthrowing the governments of the time, with promises to make a change that never materialized. Even the present Head of state pledged to fight corruption to a standstill, in other to stop corruption from 'killing us.' There is abundant evidence that huge stolen resources of this country are stashed away in foreign banks while Nigerians grapple with poverty and has even graduated to the title 'poverty capital of the world.' But despite the fact that education has been badly battered by corruption, nations of the world still recourse to education to solve its societal problems including getting rid of corruption. FGN (2014) emphasizes that education is an instrument for national development, because education is the most important instrument of change. Any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an educational revolution (FGN 2014). Nigeria proposes to achieve the following national objectives as are stated in the national policy on education.

- a. A free and democratic society.
- b. A just and egalitarian society.
- c. A united, strong and self reliant nation.
- d. A great and dynamic economy.
- e. A land full of bright opportunities for all citizens.

If Nigeria will have a great and dynamic economy and a bright opportunity for all, then the education curriculum must be structured to be relevant and responsive to societal needs. Curriculum is designed to respond to the current and future needs of the learners and their societies. According to Emah (2009), 'a curriculum is responsive if it equips the learners to accommodate new developments in science and technology, and adjust to local and global challenges in social, political and economic demands that stare individuals and societies frontally on daily basis'. In today's Nigeria, getting rid of corruption is one of such needs.

Education is an essential for the survival of every human community. Education shapes every group the way it is both physically, morally and spiritually. Therefore whatever we want in our young ones should be emphasized in our educational curriculum. According to Olivia (2012), it is necessary for character formation for the young to be part of our new curriculum to accommodate new exigencies of the 21st century. Character training if emphasized in the curriculum will help Nigeria fight the scourge of corruption.

The menace of corruption is prominent among the social ills of the 21st century. Through education, the meaning and purpose of man in society is highlighted and people are empowered to gain more access to more and opportunities and resources and are able to contribute positively and meaningfully to the society. Ethical and value education is hereby advocated, and if properly implemented, will hopefully increase the value chain of our Nation Nigeria. In support of this point of view, (Ike 2017) observed that there is need for education reform in Nigeria. The agenda for education reform, for Ike, is priority for almost every country in the world, that is bedeviled by social ills. The educational sector is actually being challenged to proffer practical solutions for the challenges that face mankind at this time'(Ike,2017).

At this point one of the pressing needs of this country now is how to rid this country of the various vices such as are holding the country to ransom: bribery and corruption, nepotism, lack of integrity and accountability, among others. Corruption according to Usman, (2013) is any behavior that deviates from an established norm with regards to public trust. The united

nations global programmes against corruption(GPAC,2012) defines corruption as “abuse of power for private gains” while the world bank (2006) defined corruption as :the abuse of office for private gains. Public office is abused for private gains when an official accepts, solicits or extorts money or when agents actively offer bribes to circumvent public offices and or processes for competitive advantage or profit.

Corruption is a global phenomenon found in all countries, but evidence shows that it impoverishes the people, causes political strife, causes social unrest, economic decay, and diverts desperately needed funds for education, health care and other public services. It is a serious road block to economic development and national growth. World Bank (2010) states that corruption is the main cause of underdevelopment of Africa. It is part of the reason why united nations general assembly established the UN convention against corruption (UNCAC) in December 2005 which was ratified by 155 countries then of which Nigeria is among them.

It is pertinent to state that deficiency in integrity is even a worse form of corruption. Lack of integrity allows a man to be self serving rather than being patriotic and selfless in the service of the people he swore on oath to serve. Now if corruption is defined as dishonest or illegal behavior, especially of people in authority, we can now deduce that leaders may be the greatest culprit. Because of that this study focuses on the components of the curriculum for training undergraduates at the higher institutions. Specifically the universities train the next generation of leaders. According to Stuckleberger,(2017), higher education is actually leadership education

Higher education is regarded as leadership education for the simple reason that people who graduate at this level are automatically leaders and top management staff of any organization they work for. It therefore follows that the values and virtues taught and practiced in the universities heavily influence these future

leaders. That is why higher education certificates are said to be awarded in 'character and learning.' One wonders how much of the character training really goes on, in the universities aside the other components of the curriculum. Most universities have ethics as a general studies course of two credit units in one semester. GST 202: Moral Reasoning and Ethics (GOU, 2012). No other course on 'Ethics and Values' throughout the undergraduate programme. It is pertinent to point out that students treat general courses with kid's gloves. This near absence of ethics and value curriculum in universities may have significantly impacted on the moral and integrity deficiency of students who are soon to become leaders. Many students have been found guilty of examination misconduct, sorting for marks, cultism, drug abuse, killing their colleagues as well as thuggery and banditry. Many of our leaders have recruited university undergraduates as political thugs and 'trouble shooters.' Therefore many students pass out of universities without experiencing that expected desirable positive change in behavior with regards to ethical values orientation. Nobody gives what he does not have. So, when they graduate with academic certificates and academic excellence but without character, it is a sham. The consequences are the myriads of evils and corruption galore in the society.

For all these reasons and more the education system may need to expand and reposition ethical and value education for the benefit of our nation at large and our graduates in particular. Ethics according to Hornby (2010) has been defined as the moral principles that control or influence a person's behaviors in life, business or professions. Since education is the simple most important means of transforming a nation (FGN 2014) and curriculum is the process of organizing the content and activities, it follows then that curriculum review by National Universities Commission (NUC) should include more on ethics and value education in their academic benchmark.

The role of ethics and value education in curbing disruptive behavior cannot be overestimated. If this is ingrained into university undergraduates curriculum, the society would have started the process of rebuilding itself. A university should provide multi disciplinary and multi dimensional services to the communities. Ethical education is one of the multidimensional ways of reaching the future

leaders. Stuckleberger (2017) remarks that integrity is the most important capital of a person and of an institution. He maintains that ethical values-driven behavior is needed in all societies especially in a globalized world, where common values are needed since this world is highly interconnected and inter dependent, linked by trade, information and communication technologies. We need ethical cleansing so that Nigerians can move about in today's world without fear of embarrassment. The entire world needs a common set of values such as a sense of justice, fairness, honour, and peace and virtues such as respect and integrity all call for high moral values by Nigerians. Nigeria should rebuild itself. According to Ike,(2017) society can only rebuild itself through the younger generation. This will be possible through the education system. A university should provide multi disciplinary and multi dimensional services to the communities. A university is a 'knowledge and value provider' Simply put, education provides 'learning and character' and if it provides only one, it leads to the failure of the system. Ethics and value education should be given more prominence in our universities through integrating them into our general, faculty and departmental courses.

Statement of the problem

The rising wave of corruption and other criminal tendencies especially among the leaders in Nigeria has become a major source of concern in our society today. The ridiculous stories of serpents, monkeys and rats swallowing billions of money meant for the provision of essential services for the masses is terribly disturbing. The glaring electoral frauds that usher in unscrupulous elements into public offices with only one intention to defraud the government and run down the country are all there to show that the country is at the brink of collapse. Which is why Obi (2019) says that in Nigeria, corruption has killed more than HIV/AIDs put together. And the president of Nigeria screamed, "If we don't kill corruption, corruption will kill us" It becomes imperative that something must be done to save the country from total shut down. So how to save this country has taken the front burner in national discourse. Therefore the recourse to education whose primary concern is to teach the young the way to go. That is way education,

which is an agent of transformation can be used to rebuild the society. It is the view of this paper that ethic and value education be integrated in all courses in the universities so that undergraduates have it fully inculcated in their personality and character. This paper deems it necessary to explore the perceptions of lecturers in the university system about integrating more ethics and value education into our undergraduate coursework in the faculty and departments. It will also explore how far gender and years of experience can influences their perceptions.

Research Questions

1. What is the perception of university lecturers for integrating ethics and value education into undergraduate coursework as a way of enhancing character training?
2. To what extent does gender influence lecturer's perception of integrating ethical and value education into undergraduate coursework as a way of enhancing character training?
3. To what extent do years of experience influence the lecturers' perception of integrating ethical and value education into undergraduate coursework as a way of enhancing character training?

Hypothesis

HO 1. There is no significant difference between male and female lecturers perception of fostering character training through integrating ethics and value education into undergraduate coursework as a way of enhancing character training?

H02. There is no significant difference in lecturers' perception on integrating ethical and value-driven education into undergraduate coursework as a way of enhancing character training based on years of experience?

Method

The study used a survey design to determine lecturer's perception of repositioning ethics and value education in universities so as to enhance character training and foster the elimination of corruption in Nigeria. The area of study is Enugu Metropolis and only private universities were used. They are Godfrey Okoye University, Caritas University and Coal City University, all in Enugu metropolis. The population of the study consists of all the 744 lecturers comprising Senior Lecturers and higher ranking officers. 210 were purposively sampled (105 males and 105 females) to ensure that only those who are experienced will take part in the study. The major instrument for data collection was a 15 item structured questionnaire on Likert 4 point scale. The reliability of the instrument was established using Kuder-Richardson Formula (K-R) 20. The correlation coefficient of the instrument was 0.82. The research questions were answered using simple percentages while the hypotheses were tested at 0.5 level of significance using chi square.

Results

Research Question 1

1. What is the perception of university lecturers of integrating ethics and value education into undergraduate coursework as a way of enhancing character training?

Table 1: Percentage responses of lecturers' perception of integrating ethics and value education into undergraduate coursework as a way of enhancing character training?

Perception	No of Lecturers	Percentages
Positive	73	34.8
Negative	137	65.2

Total	210	100%
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The above table shows the nature of lecturers' perception of fostering character training by integrating ethics and value education into students' coursework. The result showed that 73 which is 34.8% of the lecturers had a positive perception while 137 or 65.2% showed a negative perception.

2. To what extent does gender influence lecturers' perception of integrating ethics and value education into undergraduate coursework as a way of enhancing character training?

Table 2: Percentage response of the influence of gender on lecturers' perception of integrating ethics and value education into undergraduate courses as a way of enhancing character training.

Gender	Positive	Negative	Total
Male	45 (21.4)	60 (28.6)	105(50)
Female	28 (13.4)	77(36.6)	105(50)
Total	73 (34.8)	137 (65.2)	210(100%)

The above table shows that 45 or 21.4% of male lecturers showed a positive perception while 28 or 13.4% of female lecturers showed a positive perception. A total of 137 or 65.2% of both male and female lecturers showed negative perception of integrating ethical and value education into students' coursework as a way of achieving character training to help fight corruption.s

Research Question 3

To what extent do years of experience influence lecturers' perception of integrating ethics and value education into undergraduate courses as a way of enhancing character training?

Table 3: Percentage responses of the influence of years of service on lecturers' perception of integrating ethics and value education into undergraduate courses as a way of enhancing character training?

Years of Exp	Perception		Total
	Positive	Negative	
5-10	11(5.3)	94(44.7)	105(50)
11+	62(29.5)	43(20.5)	105(50)
Total	73(34.8)	137(65.2)	210(100)

The above table shows that 11 or 5.3% lecturers with 5-10 years of experience showed a positive perception of using ethics and value education to increase character training while 62 or 29.5% with 11+ years also showed a positive perception. A total of 137 or 65.2% with 5 and 11+ years also showed a negative perception.

Hypothesis H0 1

There is no significant difference between male and female lecturers' perception of integrating ethics and value education into undergraduate coursework as a way of enhancing character training.

Table 4: Chi-square of the difference between male and female lecturers' perception of integrating ethical and value education into undergraduate coursework.

Gender	Positive	Negative	Total	X cal	X2 0.05	df	Decision
Male	45	60	105	63.84	3.84	1	significant
Female	28	77	105				
Total	73	137	210				

Since the $X^2_{cal}=63.7$ is greater than $X^2_{0.05}=3.84$ at degree of freedom 1, the null hypothesis is rejected. The conclusion is that there is significant difference between male and female lecturers' perception of integrating ethics and value education into undergraduate coursework as a way of enhancing character training.

Hypothesis Ho 2

There is no significant difference in lecturers' perception of integrating ethics and value education into undergraduate coursework as a way of enhancing character training based on years of experience.

Table 5: Chi-square test of influence of years of experience on lecturers' perception of integrating ethics and value education into undergraduate

coursework as a way of enhancing character training based on years of experience.

Years of Perception							
Experience	Positive	Negative	Total	X ² cal	X ² 0.05	df	Decision
5	11	94	105	57.2	3.84	1	significant
11+	62	43	105				
Total	73	137	210				

Since $X^2_{cal}=57.2$ is greater than $X^2_{0.05}=3.84$ at degree of freedom 1, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is significant difference in the lecturers' perception of increasing character training through ethics and value education.

Discussion

This study aimed to find out the perceptions of lecturers with regards to repositioning ethics and value education in higher educational institutions

Percentage responses showed lecturers' perception of integrating ethics and value education into undergraduate coursework as a way of enhancing character training for future leaders. Only 73 respondents which is 34% of respondents feel that more ethical and value driven items should be integrated into the curriculum of undergraduates in higher education. This does not agree with scholars like Ike (2017) who argued that academic education without moral backing will only produce "Moral crooks" The education system churns out unscrupulous people without conscience who run down institutions and organizations. If they are in government, they embezzle money meant for developmental projects and impoverish their communities. With such people corruption thrives. Their performances show that they got education in 'learning' but not in 'character'. Such people perpetrate evil activities such as bribery and corruption, lack of integrity, embezzlement. This shows that the 'character' foundation is weak, and needs to be strengthened. Therefore the need to reposition ethics and value education in higher education institutions because that is where most leaders are trained (Stuckleberger, 2017).

In Research Question2, the question sought to find out if gender has any influence on the lecturers' perception of using ethics and value education to foster character training. The responses from the lecturers showed that 45 or 21.4% of the males indicated a positive influence of value education, while 28 or 13.4% of their female counterparts also indicated a positive response to the question. In the same way the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the male and female was equally rejected. The Chi calculated $\chi^2_{cal} = 63.7$ is greater than the Chi value, $\chi^2_{0.05} = 3.84$ showing a significant difference in the male and female responses. This implies that the male lecturers were of the view that ethics and value education will foster character training. This observation is not only strange but interesting to know that the males were of the opinion that ethics and value education can foster character training. Reasons for the response could have been determined more by a personal interview, but this was not possible as it were. It is also important to note that the male opinion may be as a result of the women dominating the teaching job. They can combine

the attribute of a mother and a lecturer while teaching and this will go a long way in influencing the student's behaviour. The female folks can also integrate value education in most of the coursework they teach thereby making the undergraduates imbibe a sense of what is right and valuable in whatever they do. Articulating the sense of value will according to Kok-Siang Chon-yong & Shuhi,(2013) help to reduce emotional illiteracy which can lead to troubling consequences in interpersonal relationships.

Conclusion

The study investigated the lecturers' perception of integrating ethics and value education into the undergraduate curriculum. The study utilized the gender and experience variables. The results showed significant differences between the perceptions of the participants based on gender and years of experience. The lecturers did not agree that repositioning ethics and value driven education will help rid the country of corruption. This spells the need for greater awareness and orientation even for the lecturers so that they begin to see the need for an ethical revolution in our higher institutions. We need to fight corruption even inside the higher institutions . That should explain why we must have admission ethics, exam ethics, management ethics (Onyechere 2015) Other scholars like Kok-Saing, Chong-Young & Shuhui (2013) are of the opinion that ethics and value education have been used to teach character education by infusing it into the different school subjects. So it can be done with undergraduate course work.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

a). There is the need to create awareness for the lecturers through seminars and trainings where they will be taught how to integrate ethics and value education into school subjects, course work and other aspects of the curriculum.

b).It is necessary for the curriculum planners to come up with new ideas on how to teach ethics and value education and make them become very teachable as part of coursework as well as other school activities. Olivia (2012) advocates for a curriculum redesign to accommodate character education. The character component of our schoolwork in higher institutions should be emphasized, assessed and proportionately used in graduating our students to achieve a proper balance in ‘character and learning.’

c). To raise a generations of Nigerian leaders who will despise rather than tolerate or embrace corruption thus reducing the likelihood that corruption will remain embedded in the culture.

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