



## **Education Of The Nigerian Child, Values And Conflict**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Man is a social being. He lives in group and is guided by the norms and values of the community in which he lives. These values are passed down through a system of education (formal or informal) which the child receives from adults in the community. Norms are rules within a group indicating how a member should or should not behave. Values on the other hand are the accepted principles or standards of a person or group. Norms exert important effects on behavior and is passed down from one generation to the next through education. However, norms change over time. Every tribe in Nigeria has its own values. These values influence the child's thoughts, feelings and actions in a positive way. They also moderate his conduct for the overall good of the society. The coming of the white man along with the imposition of his own system of education has eroded so much of the cherished norms and values of our ancestors. The influence this western value has on the Nigerian value is both positive and negative. Consequently the Nigerian child finds himself trapped in the middle of two conflicting values. The consequence of this is behavior that is partly a symptom of strain and partly a mechanism of adjustment to an unstable and constantly changing society.

**Keywords:** child, norms and values, education and training, incompatible interests, discipline

### **INTRODUCTION**

Education is paramount in the upbringing of a child. Through a system of education the child learns about his environment and how to fit in. Education is passed down through such institution as the home, school, religious bodies, government, private institutions, and the media.

According to Fajonyomic (2002) in Amali and Ojogbane (2004) Education and training of adolescents for social interaction and development begins at home. The home is the first institution to which the child is exposed, thus it is automatically the first to teach and train the child. In Nigeria, child rearing is taken seriously by parents, the extended family and the community at large (Amali and Ojogbane 2004). The act of discipline, obedience to authority, respect for elders, and respect for the law of the land are all values instilled into the child through the process of training. Traditional Nigerian values are thus passed on to the child through family and community traditions (Fafunwa 1975). By the time the child is of school age, he has learnt to differentiate between what is accepted and what is forbidding in his society.

In the average Nigerian home today children barely have the opportunity of learning from parents. This is because the child is separated from parents even before he learns to speak his first words. This separation is necessary to allow the mother resume work so as to contribute to family upbringing. Also many Nigerian families today live in towns, cities, and abroad cut off from their own communities. The result is a mixture of tribes and cultures (Achebe 2016). These cities according to Amali and Ojogbane (2004) gather a population with weakened family ties and the emergence of new social groups. Children are raised who hardly speak their native language and know nothing about family values, or community traditions. Consequently they have no respect for such.

### **The Concept of Education**

Education according to Adeyemo (1975) is the act of teaching and the training of the young. It is also defined as the process of preparing an individual, from birth and all through his life, for happy and useful

membership of the society in which he is born (UPE 1976). Mallum and Haggi (2000) define it as the process by which an individual acquires knowledge, attitudes, skills and values.

There are two types of education, formal and informal. The informal education is the type which goes on before one begins to attend school as well as after School hours. It provides the type of teaching and discipline that prepare children and youths for the kind of life they are to live. The child receives instructions on values, ethics, job skills, domestic chores, family life and moral training. Children also engage in recreational activities for physical and emotional development. The formal education takes place in school setting. Here the educational process is carefully planned, organized and carried out. Education here takes place in classrooms, lecture Halls, Laboratories, Libraries, Schools, Farms, Play-fields, gardens and workshops (UPE 1976). Education here aims at the all round development of the child with particular reference to job training. Formal education was brought into Nigeria by White men.

### **Values**

Values are defined as the ideals, customs, institutions of a society toward which the people of the group have an affective regard. They may be positive, as cleanliness, freedom, or education, or negative, as cruelty, crime, or blasphemy (Sydelle 2008) They are fundamental guiding principles for interpersonal relationship. Values influence the child's thoughts, feelings and actions in a positive way. They also moderate his conduct for the overalls good of the society. Values are acquired through a system of education, informal or formal institutions. Parents relay them to their children.

Nigerians attached great importance to family name. According to Nwabuisi (2000) every Nigerian works hard to promote his family name. Family in this sense includes not just the nuclear family but also the extended family. Among other values important to Nigerians according to Nwabuisi (2000) is the place of origin of the individual. This includes his village, town, and clan, ethnic or tribal group. The child is trained to maintain the dignity of this group and to have respect for elders, hard work, be morally upright, honest, hospitable, skillful, and productive.

### **Conflict**

Africa in general have been known to be a continent richly blessed with a culture and moral values that gets Africans conscious of exuding good attributes but over the years in Nigeria this moral values have been depleted and a loose of moral values followed suite (NairaLand).

Conflict arises when there is a battle between two opposing forces. It emphasizes the existence of incompatible interests, and the recognition of this fact by the parties involved (Baron and Byrne 2005). Conflicts may also fail to develop even though both sides have incompatible interests while in other cases conflicts may occur even through the two sides do not really have opposing interests. They may simply believe that these exist (Lawon and Shen 1998). Conflict arises from a relationship between two or more parties. Most people spend much of their daily lives interacting with others, remembering others; or making decisions about themselves, such as between what they feel like doing and what must be done. That they often must choose between what they and others need or want, the foundation is laid for conflict. (Lawson and Shen, 1998).

According to Nwabuisi (2000) the white man came to Nigeria with his government trade, religion, language and his total way of life. In other words, he brought his culture and his values. The Nigerian child totally imbibed the culture of the white man, his ways of life and value system inclusive.

The result of this is the defacement of Nigerian traditional values. It is now almost impossible to know where Nigerian values end and where the white man's values start. Nwabuisi (2000) recognizes that the influence of the white man's values on Nigerians have both negative and positive effects, though the negative effects seem to be over whelming. Ella (1992) saw the impact of Western education on Idoma traditional values as including "loosening of close knit family system with the resultant loss of corporate obligations, unrestricted autonomy, self interest as opposed to traditional self sacrifice and change from group or community to independent life in cities. These according to Ella (1992) form part of the Western transformation of our traditional values.

Separated from his mother and fathers at a very tender age, the child is sent to school and put in the custody of care givers. Consequently the child develops separation anxiety. Initially he is likely to cry and

protest to regain the mother this initial phase gives way to despair. If the care givers fail to meet his needs by not responding to his quest for attention the child develops a sense of mistrust, as opposed to a sense of trust when his needs are met (Erickson 1968 ). In order to meet the challenges of balancing family budget, Amali and Ojogbane (2004) stated that both parents leave children at, the mercy of house maids or care givers and go in search of daily bread. Under this situation, an important requirement for emulating discipline and values through close supervision by adult is lost. Indiscipline they say start at home but unfortunately indiscipline does not always end there.

Our modern way of life has turned our society into a very materialistic one. Consequently values have been misplaced. According to Anameze (1996) value conflicts afflict the Nigerian society. What most citizens claim to cherish are not in harmony with what they practice. In the National Policy on Education (2002) for instance they rank high in principle the role of education in National development, but in practice, they give pride of place to money and material wealth. Money, therefore, becomes the preferred mark of prestige and social recognition. This opens the door to examination malpractice with the aim of acquiring paper certificates in the hope of obtaining economically rewarding employment (Anameze 2002). Today examination malpractice or misconduct is observed in all our institutions of learning (Ojogbane 2016).

Truthfulness and honesty which were prized highly have given way to dishonesty and moral laxity. Dishonest people, adulterers, and people of dubious characters that were sanctioned and prohibited from taking tithes in church are now recommended and have become respected title holders.

Respect for human life is also lost as Nigerians now engage in human sacrifice to acquire wealth, doctors pursue their fees at the risk of human life, Teachers throw caution to the winds and sell examination questions to students, give scores in exchange for a fee or sexual gratification, while parents embrace exam malpractice just to see their kids pass exam (NairaLand 2016) Lawyers would defend a murderer so long as the right fee is paid, governors loot the state treasury, Army officers sell arms to bandits, cultism, sarned robbery, the list is unending. Corruption which has become the order of the day is now the norm of the Nigerian society.

The behavior and activity of the average Nigerian today is at complete variance with the aims of education as stated in the National Policy on Education. Socio-economic conditions initiated by Colonial capitalism with resultant migration to urban centers has prevailed upon Nigerians many social problems like prostitution, stealing, corruption, exam malpractice, cheating, amongst others. Our value system has been eroded and we have become victims of cultures not quite understood.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Nigerian child who is supposed to be the leader of tomorrow is at cross roads, not knowing which path to take. This state of confusion is as a result of the kind of Education and values impacted into him by the society and significant others who are believers of the adage “do as I say and not do as I do”.

On the one hand the child is made to understand through education received in schools, churches, mosques and relationship with others that as future leaders it is important that he should place his integrity above every other thing. On the other hand as he grows, the life style examples he receives from the same group of people who made him believe that integrity is important are nothing to write home about. This of course leads to conflict in the life of the Nigerian child. He stands between two forces and the stronger force, usually the negative appear to be more rewarding and have upper hand in the life of the child. The plight of the Nigerian child is a pathetic one and if nothing is urgently done to change his orientation positively, the child will end up continuing with the negative legacy that will be left for him by the present society and significant others. It is in response to this urgent need that the former minister of information and culture, late Prof. Dora Akunyili introduced the concept of rebranding of the Nigerian citizen. prior to this present president of Nigeria Alhaji Buhari during his former regime as Head of state of Nigeria introduced the war against indiscipline in time past, drastic measures such as 21 years imprisonment for exam malpractice, firing squad for drug trafficking and armed robbery have been taken. Rather than experiencing change, things appear to turn out for the worse. In our institutions today, we

have added to these problems, such behaviors as cultism, kidnapping, human trafficking, religious intolerance, Boko Haram insurgency, Fulani herds men invading villages, killing burning and looting. No doubt there is urgent need for intervention but the question is where do we go from here?

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

This paper thus recommends that

1. The education of the Nigerian child should of necessity be such that positive values are inculcated that as he becomes older and takes leadership position he will not deviate from those values.
2. Seminars, workshops should be regularly organized by Guidance counselors, Governmental and Non Governmental organizations for the general public on the effects of inculcating negative values and the future of the Nigerian child.
3. Group and family counseling should also be organized by counselors on the same subject.
4. Our leaders should lead by examples, and this includes leadership at home and in the government.

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