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A Publication of
The Department of Physical and Health Education

MAIDEN EDITION

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Jos Journal of Physical and Health Education

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Jos Journal of Physical and Health Education

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FOREWORD

I am delighted to introduce the maiden volume of Jos Journal of Physical and Health Education a publication of the Department of Physical and Health Education, Faculty of Education, University of Jos. The publication of the journal has come as a pleasant surprise and as an evidence of the hard-work and commitment of the Head of Department supported by a strong team of united academic staff.

This maiden volume consists of seventeen (17) articles. Fourteen (14) of the articles are research reports while only three are position papers. This is a strong indication of the high quality of the journal. The journal is a research report oriented journal and reports studies done in Nigeria on various Physical, Health and Educational issues that scholars and the public will find highly relevant and educative for practical utility in daily living.


Another positive unique quality of this journal is the tendency for co-authorship and collaborative research. This gives the articles in this maiden volume an interdisciplinary flare and the utility of information in the articles in the journal will cut across disciplines. Therefore, from whatever discipline one is coming from one will find articles that address issues related to your area of specialization ranging from the sciences to education. In the first study, Olaitan and colleagues investigated awareness of patients' Bill of Rights, which many of us are not also aware that such a bill exist and may not be making use of the bills when we have been treated poorly by health personnel in hospitals. Other articles that may interest the public include awareness of cervical cancer risk factors, perception of budgetary allocation on sports performance, perceived difficult topics in mathematics and perception of drug use and drug abuse among Secondary School Students. The problem of low enrolment in physical and Health Education is one of the articles that investigated factors that contribute to low enrolment in Physical and Health Education among secondary school students.

This study found factors responsible for low enrolment in Physical and Health Education similar to what we find in enrolment in some disciplines with similar problems.

The instances cited are just to buttress the fact of the quality and relevance of the articles to school learning and daily living in general.

As a Faculty, we celebrate the floating of this journal and I urge the Department to keep up the publication with high standard as well as quality research and position papers of international reputation.

Congratulation to the Department of Physical and Health Education for this great achievement within the short period of your existence. Please keep up the publication of the journal in the Department.



Prof. Mary P. Haggai
Dean of Education

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A PHILOSOPHICAL EXAMINATION OF THE STANDARD OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examines some discussion about the standard of education in Nigeria by some highly placed Nigerians, including: General Yakubu Gowon (rtd.), (a former Nigerian Head of State), Dr. Goodluck Jonathan (a former Nigerian President), Professor Mrs. Rufai (a former Minister of Education), Professor Jide Osuntokun, and President Muhammad Buhari (the current Nigerian president). The examination of the discussion of these highly placed Nigerians about the standard of education in Nigeria is with the view to critically consider their assertions and thereby make recommendations. The examination of their various discussion and assertions is done using philosophical analysis that includes logical, linguistic, expository and critical analyses. That is, the method of research in this study is philosophical analysis. The study uses philosophical analysis that entails logical, linguistic, expository and critical analyses to clarify the various assertions of the various highly placed Nigerians and thereby arrive at sound conclusions whereby recommendations are made. It was found that the standard of education in Nigeria was very impressive in pre-independence and early post-independence era (up till 1970's) and that the standard of education has not been very impressive subsequently because of unconducive societal environment. It is therefore recommended that Nigeria should promote conducive socio-economic and political environment to promote education of high standard.

Keywords: Standard of education, highly placed Nigerians, philosophical analysis.

Introduction

In recent times there has been some discussion by some highly placed Nigerians on the standard of education in Nigeria. The discussion appears to indicate that the standard of education in Nigeria is declining; and that the government, the teachers, the learners, the parents, and the general public need to work hard towards making the standard good. In addition the discussion also indicates that the standard had been very impressive in the pre-independence era and in the early post-independence era up till the 1970's (Gowon, 2011a:36; Gowon, 2011b:36; Osuntokun, 2010:19; Ibeku, 2010:25; Jonathan, 2010a:49; Rufai, 2011:41; Ojijeogu, 2016:21, 22; Buhari, 2015:31, 32).

The various discussion by the aforementioned highly placed Nigerians (Gowon, Jonathan, Rufai, Osuntokun, and Buhari) should therefore give concern to the government, academics, learners, parents, and the general public; such as to warrant pursuing the correction of the declining standard. But in order to pursue the correction of the declining standard realistically, there is the need to know what the previous standard was, and the details of the standard.

It is in this connection that this paper would be interested in examining the details of what has been referred to as the previously impressive standard of education in Nigeria. This is to be clear as to why it is referred to as impressive standard. Moreover the paper would be interested in finding out why subsequent standard of education has been referred to by the highly placed Nigerians as unimpressive. Afterwards the paper would be interested in clarifying what constitute impressive standard of education, compared to what the highly placed Nigerians regard as impressive standard of education in Nigeria and thereby make recommendations towards the improvement of the standard of education in Nigerian.

Research Method

This study employs philosophical research method which features philosophical analysis. This is because the study is done in philosophical perspective. The assertions of the various highly placed Nigerians about the standard of education in Nigeria would be examined using logical, linguistic, expository and critical analyses in the perspective of philosophical analysis. This would help in processing the various assertions through various dimensions of clarification (logical, linguistic, expository and critical) whereby sound conclusions could be arrived at and valid recommendations made.

Discussion of the Standard of Education in Nigeria in the Pre-independence and Post-independence Era up till 1970's by some Highly Placed Nigerians.

Discussion of the standard of education in Nigeria in the pre-independence and post-independence era up till 1970's by some highly placed Nigerians (including Osuntokun 2010:19; Gowon 2011a:36; Gowon 2011b:36; Jonathan 2010a:49; Rufai 2011:41; Ojijeogu et al 2016:21, 22) was such that the standard was very impressive. According to them the standard of education featured committed teachers, and committed learners who performed very well in internal and external examinations. The moral disposition of both the teachers and the learners was highly impressive. The academic abilities were also to be reckoned with. The teachers were well grounded in their various disciplines and the learners made good efforts to cultivate the dispositions expected of them in their various fields of study (arts, social sciences, and the sciences) (Gowon, 2011a:36; Gowon, 2011b:36; Osuntokun, 2010:19).

The university teachers had academic freedom to conduct their studies, there was university autonomy, and the laboratories were well equipped. The institutions were well funded, the

university teachers were well paid too (these induced commitment to work and prevented distraction of attention) (Osuntokun 2010:19; Okorafor 2010:25).

University undergraduates could study in universities abroad under the exchange programme that existed among Nigerian universities and reputable universities abroad (particularly in Britain and the United States of America). The exchange programme was such that Nigerian undergraduates were given due placement at the various levels of their various programmes of study abroad, without any discrimination as regards the quality of education that the Nigerian undergraduates had received previously (Osuntokun, 2010:19). Moreover, the products of Nigerian universities performed very well in their various walks of life, both within and outside Nigeria

The primary school pupils and the secondary school students also demonstrated good morals and good intellectual disposition in their schooling. They did so well to the extent that they could communicate fluently in private and official interactions. The secondary school students passed impressively in the General Certificate in Education (GCE) examinations (Gowon, 2011a: 36; Gowon, 2011b: 36; Osuntokun 2010:19; Babalola, 2011:42).

Some of the secondary school products even went further to sit for the Cambridge University Matriculation Examinations and did very well. Some further went on to pursue private degree studies and qualified with Bachelor's degrees in various disciplines in the University of London (Babalola, 2011:42).

It follows that in the pre-independence era and the post-independence era, particularly up till 1970's, the standard of educational institutions in Nigeria could be said to be very impressive. The institutions, the facilities, the funding, the teachers, the learners, their performance, and the performance of the products in the society for the development of the society (both within and outside Nigeria) were very impressive. At this point mention should be made that the educational performance was such that the socio-economic and political performance was also impressive. There was relative peace and progress in the Nigerian socio-economic milieu. This had effect on the value of Nigerian currency. At that time, the naira and the dollar were virtually at par. Moreover, at that time there was full employment for Nigerians within the country because of the relative peace and progress in the socio-economic milieu. Furthermore many foreigners (particularly from Britain and United States of America) came over to work in Nigeria, and they were gainfully employed. Thus the idea of globalisation (that entails equitable recognition of people and their assets) was manifested in the Nigerian socio-economic milieu (Osuntokun, 2010:19; Gowon, 2011a:36; Gowon, 2011b:36).

Based on the above mentioned features, it can be concluded that the standard of education in Nigeria in the pre-independence era and the early post-independence era (up till 1970's),

was very impressive. But it can be seen that the Nigerian society constituted enabling environment for the nurturing of the impressive standard of education. The societal leaders, parents and teachers behaved relatively impressively and the learners simply followed suit.

The Standard of Education in Nigeria Subsequently

This part of the paper would examine the standard of education in Nigeria from the 1980's, as discussed by highly placed Nigerians mentioned above. (See for instance: Osuntokun 2010:19; Gowon 2011a:36; Gowon 2011b:36; Jonathan 2010a:49; Jonathan 2010b:4; Rufai 2011:41). In their various discussion, the highly placed Nigerians stated that the standard of education in Nigeria subsequently has been declining and there is urgent need for reversing the trend. At all levels of education in the country the teachers and the learners need to be more committed to work.

Some of the details of the discussion include divided attention on the part of the teachers who sometimes combine their teaching with part-time business ventures (Gowon 2011a:36; Gowon 2011b:36); incessant industrial actions (strike actions) by lecturers; poor performance of learners in public examinations (for instance in West African School Certificate Examinations WASSE and National Examination Council Examinations NECO – in the last few years) (Gowon 2011a:36; Gowon 2011b:36). The government has not been exonerated from blame by the highly placed Nigerians. They stated that the government needs to spend more money to fund education at all levels; the government needs to provide more infrastructure; pay good salaries to teachers at all levels; the government needs to encourage researches at the tertiary institutions by giving lecturers more incentives in terms of building of laboratories and promoting academic freedom; the government needs to discourage fraud and corruption in academic institutions (Rufai 2011: 41); the government needs to punish cultism and other criminal vices in educational institutions (Rufai 2011: 41; Gowon 2011a: 36; Gowon 2011b: 36).

Moreover they stated that the government needs to encourage the establishment of more educational institutions to be able to cope more with students admission problems. The government also needs to establish more universities in this connection (Jonathan, 2010a:49). Furthermore the parents are not excluded from blame by the highly placed Nigerians concerning the poor standard of education in Nigeria subsequently. They need to discourage examination malpractices which some of them encourage their wards to engage in (Gowon 2011a: 36; Gowon 2011b: 36).

Finally the general public is blamed for pursuing crass materialism at the expense of pursuing development of character and learning; all of which have negative effect on the learning environment of teachers and learners in Nigerian educational institutions (Gowon 2011:36; Awuzie 2010:60,61; Mimiko 2010:42).

The areas of blame mentioned above do not indicate that education in Nigeria subsequently is totally unimpressive; because there are some cases of good performance at all levels of education in the country. For instance, some students at the secondary school level perform very well at national and international examinations and competitions (For example Doregos Private Academy, Ipaja, Lagos; School for Gifted Children, Gwagwalada, Abuja; and Homat Group of Schools, Ikorodu, Lagos; performed very well in the 2011 Abuja Science Festival, in preparation for Intel/International Science and Engineering Fair holding in Los Angeles, USA, in May 2012 (see Bello-Osagie 2011: 21, 22). In addition, about 25% of Secondary School students in the country performed brilliantly in West African School Certificate Examinations between 2005 to 2010, although this is on a general level unimpressive).

Moreover a few universities in Nigeria have been performing fairly well at World-wide Webometric ranking of universities; although their performance is such that none of them ranks among the first 500 universities in the world as late as at 2010; and none of them ranks among the first 50 universities in Africa as late as at 2010 (Jonathan 2010a:49).

It follows that the details of the discussion of some highly placed Nigerians about the standard of education in Nigeria after the 1970's indicate that the standard of education in Nigeria has been declining, and there is urgent need to reverse the trend.

The Need to take Corrective Measures

The discussion about the declining standard of education in Nigeria from 1980's, as can be gathered from the discussion of some leading Nigerians indicate that there is need to correct the declining trend. The leading Nigerians considered above have some suggestions for the correction of the declining trend. Some of their suggestions include the following. The government should fund education more at all levels; the government should provide more infrastructures; and encourage university autonomy and academic freedom (Gowon 2011a: 36; Gowon 2011b: 36; Awuzie 2010: 60, 61; Osuntokun 2010: 19; Jonathan 2010a: 4; Buhari, 2015: 32, 33). The government should encourage development of character and learning in our educational institutions by punishing cultism, fraud, and encouraging scholarship and enquiry (Rufai 2011: 41; Gowon 2011a: 36; Gowon 2011b: 36; Mimiko 2010: 42; Ojijeogu et al, 2016: 21, 22; Buhari, 2015: 31, 32). The government should build more educational institutions at all levels to encourage admission of a good number of prospective learners (Jonathan 2010a:49; Rufai 2011:41; Ojijeogu et al, 2016:21, 22; Buhari, 2015:31, 32). The government should build more laboratories to encourage research, and the government should pay teachers at all levels impressively to encourage impressive delivery (Osuntokun 2010: 19; Awuzie 2010: 60, 61; Ojijeogu et al, 2016: 21, 22; Buhari, 2015: 31, 32). Finally the parents and the public at large should promote conducive socio-economic and political environment that would engender fairness, honesty, accountability, good moral standard and learning, such that Nigerian educational environment would automatically benefit from

the enabling environment of the larger society (Gowon 2011a:36; Gowon 2011b:36; Mimiko 2011:42; Awuzie 2010:60, 61; Ojijeogu et al, 2016:21, 22; Buhari, 2015:31, 32).

A Critical View of the Discussion of Some Highly Placed Nigerians about the Standard of Education in Nigeria

This part of the paper will take only very concise critical view of the discussion of the highly placed Nigerians about the standard of education in Nigeria; particularly about the standard of education in Nigeria after the 1970's. The various discussion of the highly placed Nigerians featured above about the standard of education in Nigeria show that the standard had been very good before independence and shortly after independence (up till 1970's); and that it has declined after the 1970's. The performance of teachers as professionals and the performance of learners as pupils and students have been seen to indicate less commitment to desired results in terms of educational and national development.

The performance of parents and of the larger society have also been seen to fall short of expectation as a result of encouragement of examination malpractices by some parents and encouragement of the pursuit of crass materialism by a large number of Nigerians; instead of pursuit of character and learning. The government has also been seen to contribute to the declining standard because of the existence of declining moral ethos in the society and large scale corruption which the government could have struggled to reduce drastically (Buhari, 2015: 31, 32).

The trend of the performance of the various stakeholders in education in Nigeria over the years (from pre-independence to the present) as discussed by the highly placed Nigerians appears to be the truth of the case; as teachers, learners, parents, the general public and government actually performed better at the pre-independence and early independence era than now. The level of morality in the socio-political milieu was higher then, than now, so also was the economic performance, and academic recognition granted Nigerian educational institutions nationally and internationally. Gradually morality and accountability in the socio-political environment started to decline and these affect the standard of education in the Nigerian educational institutions. The decline in morality and accountability also affect international recognition of our economic processes to the extent that the equitable exchange rate of naira to the dollar then (₦1.00 to \$1.00) gradually becomes inequitable i.e (₦305.00 to \$1.00) (Buhari, 2016:2, 3, 45).

Summarily therefore, the whole society needs to be more conscious of social ethos like morality, accountability, equity, fairness, respect for professional standards; and shun vices like corruption and materialism, if the standard of education in Nigeria must improve towards the development of learning and character for national development.

The Concept of Education and the Implications for Nigeria

Education warrants teaching, learning, contents (disposition) and method. That is, education features the teaching of worthwhile content (disposition) by the teacher to the learner through a normally acceptable method (Akinpelu 1984: 174-203; Frankena, 1973: 21). This is to suggest that the teacher who is the custodian of knowledge in the society is expected to teach worthwhile values, skills and dispositions to learners in the society in morally acceptable manner for the development of the individual and the society at large. Where education in the society does the aforementioned it is education indeed. Where it does less it does not perform according to the hallmark of education. So where the process of education in a society does not help consistently in the development of individuals and the society in terms of cultivation of learning and character it needs to be overhauled such that the process and the product could feature the hallmark of education indeed (Akinpelu 1984:174-203; 221-230).

The implications for Nigeria (based on the discussion of the highly placed Nigerians) include the following: Nigerian education needs to display more commitment to the hallmark of education. The teachers need to be more committed, the learners also need to be more committed, the content needs to be more realistic and developmental, the method also needs to be more morally acceptable. It follows that the larger society that serves as the enabling environment for the educational institutions need to demonstrate more commitment to the desire to have the educational institutions pursue the hallmark of education. This the larger society could do by promoting moral rectitude and desire for all-round development rather than promote materialism and largely corrupt tendencies at the expense of cultured behaviour. This assertion is attested to, by the incumbent President of Nigeria (Buhari, 2015:31, 32).

Conclusion

This paper has examined various discussion on the standard of education in Nigeria by some highly placed Nigerians; and it has concluded that the various discussion indicate that the standard of education in Nigeria is declining. It has also examined philosophically the concept of education and its implications for Nigeria to clarify the veracity of the various discussions whereby sound conclusion and recommendations could be made. It was found that the concept of education warrants pursuit of teaching of worthwhile content (disposition) to learners through morally acceptable method. (Frankena, 1973: 21; Akinpelu, 1984: 174-203). Thereby it is ascertained that the manifestation of various immoral values, and socio-economic problems in the Nigerian educational and socio-political institutions give indication that the standard of education in Nigeria is declining

Recommendations

Based on the various discussion of the leading Nigerians on the standard of education in Nigeria, and the philosophical analysis of their discussion which goes as far as to the

philosophical analysis of the concept of education, it can be seen that education in Nigerian has not been pursuing the hallmark of education well enough for some years now (i.e after 1970's). The values in the education are such that Nigeria is still unable to demonstrate high level of moral disposition and the socio-economic performance is still unimpressive. All these are indications that the standard of education is not good enough. Thus it is recommended that the larger society gives the educational institutions greater incentives to perform well by demonstrating better moral disposition, accountability, and desire for all-round development; all of which would help the educational institutions to perform better as microcosm of the larger society. This is to suggest that it is the larger society that would provide the enabling environment for the educational institutions to perform well.

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Professor U. Awuzie was the national president of Academic Staff Union of Nigerian Universities (ASUU) at that time. It was in this capacity that he discussed the observation of National Executive Council of university academics in Nigeria, about the state of education in the country and the need to improve upon the situation.

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Afe Babalola is the founder of Afe Babalola University, one of the recently established private universities in Nigeria (established on January 4, 2010).

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Muhammad Buhari is the current president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

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General Yakubu Gowon (rtd.) was the Nigerian Military Head of State from 1966 to 1972.

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Professor Olufemi Mimiko was the Vice Chancellor of Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, at that time In the interview he granted to Olayinka Oyeboode of the Nation Newspapers he discussed the need to build a University Centre for the study of corruption with the intention to study the problem of corruption in the Nigerian society that disturbs the societal progress.

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