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THE IMPORTANCE OF AXIOLOGY IN TEACHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper attempts to discuss the importance of axiology in teacher education in Nigeria. This is with the view to discuss axiology generally and axiology in teacher education in Nigeria. Specifically, it was found that axiology is that branch of philosophy which tries to evaluate the various bases or grounds of interests, choices, preferences, wants or desires. It was found that teacher education involves education of teachers for the acquisition of various levels of knowledge, understanding and disposition towards the development of the society. It was found that since values are concerned with choices and inter-human relationships for others, the teacher's responsibility is quite obvious and enormous. Axiology in teacher education in Nigeria was found not to be given due regard in content and also in terms of learning environment which in turn affects the quality of teacher education and the development of the society. It is therefore recommended that teachers should be very accommodative to recognise values especially in a multi-cultural setting like Nigeria. The learning environment should equally be drastically improved upon for teacher education and in turn, add to the quality of values in the society.

Key Words: Axiology, Values, Aesthetics, Teacher Education

Introduction

Axiology is the branch of philosophy which is concerned with the nature and scope of value. The word *axiology* is derived from two Greek words *axios*, which means value and *logos*, which means theory. Enoh (2014) asserts that axiology is broadly concerned with various criteria which underlie the choices we make or factors that affect our desires, interests, needs, likes or preferences. For example, why do we prefer to behave in one particular way or the other? Why do we like a particular car instead of another? Why do we prefer to read a particular course to another? Thus, axiology is that branch of phil

which tries to evaluate the various bases or grounds of interests, choices, preferences, wants or desires. Therefore, the issues of values have always been part of human experience. The Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration of the Fundamental Human Rights are predicated on certain values- the dignity and worth of the human person, equality before the law; the right to basic education, the right to freedom of speech, movement and assembly and so on (Wokocha, 1991). In fact, there is hardly any human interaction that cannot be traced to a value base either implicitly or explicitly. Values are standards of conduct, efficiency and worth, which the society approves, maintains and passes across to future generations.

Hence, it is not sufficient for a person to express a desire for something; the object desired has also to be worthy or to be desirable before we can say it is valuable. Consequently, the value-basis of any situation must be explored so as to direct and guide meaningful human actions. Here education is considered as the best example. Education involves a *process* that recognises the need for acquisition of valuable knowledge and understanding for desirable disposition of the individual towards the development of the society (Plato 427-347 BC; Frankena, 1973; Akinpelu, 1981; Akinpelu, 2005). This implies that education is the acquisition of *learning and character*; whereby *learning* would imply knowledge and understanding; *character* would imply desirable disposition and desirable attitude towards the development of the society. It follows that teacher education, which is the education of teachers, implies the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and desirable disposition for the development of teachers and the society. For any nation to progress (particularly Nigeria), it is very necessary to develop values in all citizens and to achieve this goal teacher plays a prominent role. Teachers are the players for knowing or having a better understanding of a nation. Value-based education is one of the major dimensions for building peace, tolerance, social conduct, justice and inter-cultural understanding.

Unfortunately in Nigeria, there are worrisome evidences of corruption in the larger society that constitute the real learning environment wherein the curriculum content of teacher education takes place (Awokoya, 1980). It means that the learning environment does not reflect the quality of good, balanced and specialised education that teachers in training at various levels and in various areas of specialisation should learn in Nigeria. Thus for good quality teacher education in Nigeria, the societal values and the environment within which the education takes place need to be drastically improve upon.

Concept of Value

Value in African societies means something that is useful, desirable and that which has some worth. The study of value and the discernment of its presence in actions, decisions and ends are the subject matter of axiology (Okape, 2010). The concept of value could be used as a noun or a verb. As a noun, it is sometimes used in abstract terms. In a more specific manner, value is used to represent things that are good and are of utility to the society. Here, it means something like cars, books, houses, cloths and so on. As an abstract noun, it designates the property of ~~things~~ being valuable. For instance, we might talk of things like happiness, beauty, pleasure, satisfaction and even the notion of God. Value in its real sense and according to Ozumba, is used as equivalence of worthiness or goodness, i.e. the desired good in which case evil is used or seen as having no value.

Hence, when value is used as a verb, it denotes certain mental act or attitude of valuation. In this regard, what happens is that it is seen in the light of an activity which is either an end in itself or a means to an end. For instance, the activity of making a portrait, an act of benevolence or intellectual activity geared towards the attainment of greater goal or



simply for the mental excitement that it provides. Okeke (2001) sees values as determinant of man and which influences his choices in life and that decides his behaviour. It is believed that values give guides and directions to man's behaviour. Carl (1969) equally views value as the tendency for a man to make a choice. It also means a selective orientation to make a choice that implies deep commitments which influence the priority of choices among possible alternatives in action. In consideration of values, certain questions emerge. Are values subjective or objective? Are they static or dynamic? Are values hierarchical?

In response to these questions of whether values are subjective or objective, it could be noted that certain types of values such as honesty, truth, hard work and so on exist independent of people and desire given to them. These are examples of objective values. However, when considering value as something that does not exist except in the interest of those who prefer and hold it, then it is subjective. In other words, the moment personal preference is attached to values, such values become subjective. On the issue of whether values are static or dynamic, Oladejo's (2000) study shows that values can be static, that is, unchanged, stationary, absolute and eternal. There has never been any society that does not value or cherish honesty, hard work and the likes. This is because such human conducts are good for everybody at anytime; past, present or future. On the other hand, some other people believe that values are relative and have no universal validity. In essence, what a particular society values much might not be valued in another society. Yoruba people in Nigeria for instance, value and attach importance to respect for elders while such might be different in another society.

Moreover, can value be ranked? This depends on one's personal philosophy. The idealists for instance take an objective approach of the concept. They maintain that values have independent existence outside of man's experiences. In this regard, certain values exist in the supersensory world and unless conscious efforts are made by man through reasoning, he cannot know them. This implies that any real educational value must have its existence independent of man's interest and or desires. To them, man does not create values, rather he discovers them. The pragmatists on the other hand hold the notion that hierarchy of values is not fixed as one activity could be as good as another, especially if it meets the urgent need of an individual and possesses instrumental value. Although, he is conscious of the values that society appreciates, it is believed that it is more important to test value empirically than to contemplate on them rationally. The belief is predicated on the assumption that all particular values are merely instrumental for the attainment of better values in life. Value is divided into two components--ethics and aesthetics.

Concept of Ethics

The term ethics comes from the Greek word *ethos* meaning customary. It means a customary way of acting, contrasted with historical or anthropological way of acting (Ozumba, 2001). It therefore involves judgements as to the right or wrong, virtuous or vicious, desirable or undesirable, approved or disapproved actions. For Enoh (2014) ethics is concerned with the correct principles of human conduct. It evaluates various theories of moral action and is further divided into three areas namely, normative ethics or moral philosophy, meta-ethics or critical ethics and descriptive ethics. He stresses further that moral philosophy is concerned with providing and justifying principles of right conduct and action. Its main concern is to examine what makes an action right or wrong? Critical ethics involves analyses of meaning of ethical terms, statements or judgements. It explains statements of normative ethics to enable us have a better understanding of what they mean. Descriptive ethics is concerned with moral beliefs and attitude which people hold and whether or not they are

universally held. It seeks to describe existing ethical beliefs and language or even provide detailed explanations to moral language (Enoh, 2014).

Based on ethical values, the principles for selecting educational content will be whatever is considered to be worthwhile to the society in which the school operates. Peter (1978) attempts to provide a proper ethical foundation for education in a democratic society. In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) reflects the role that education is expected to play in the country's developmental policy. Having a better understanding of the relevant moral and ethical issues will enable the teachers and others concerned with the educational system in Nigeria to be better informed, equipped and enlightened.

Aesthetic Value

Aesthetics, According to Akinsanya (2015), is derived from a Greek word *aestheticos* which means perception. Aesthetics is the philosophical study of art and of value judgements about art and of beauty. Akinpelu (1981) views aesthetics as the scientific and philosophical study of beauty especially as depicted in literature, fine arts and other related spheres that try to produce the elements of beauty and principles relating to its production, utilisation, appreciation and evaluation. It is concerned with the affective domain. How one feels, controls and knows is acted in behaviours but the way it is acted depends upon positive or negative feeling. However, when affective learning is positive, learner becomes constructive in his behaviour. A curriculum with high regard for the feelings of the learners enhances the realisation of the nations' such as Nigeria existing philosophy of education.

Teacher Education

The concept of teacher is rooted in the Greek word *sophist* meaning practical, one who is competent in grammar, writing and public discourse. The sophist provided an immense service by training people to present their ideas clearly and precisely. Thus, Teacher education can be regarded as the means through which practitioners in the teaching business are prepared towards meeting their expected roles. That is, it refers to the structures and institutions through which the would-be teachers are trained to teach. Ipaye (1996) asserts that teacher education is a process whereby the prospective teacher is provided with the opportunity to develop cognitive perspectives, affective dispositions and psychomotor competencies which will equip him with the qualities, capacities and capabilities for teaching. For any national development to take place there must be adequate supply of trained teachers since teachers are responsible directly or indirectly for the training of people needed for national development. We may seek to better understand Teacher Education by examining the following issues: Teaching Skills + Pedagogical theory + Professional skills.

Teaching Skills: include provision of training and practice in the different techniques, methods and approaches that would help the teachers to plan and give instruction, provide appropriate reinforcement and conduct effective assessment. It includes effective classroom management skills; preparation and use of instructional materials and communication skills.

Pedagogical Theory: includes the philosophical, sociological and psychological considerations that would enable the teachers to have a sound basis for practising the teaching skills in the classroom. This theory is stage-specific and is based on the needs and requirements that are characteristic of that stage.

Professional Skills: include the techniques, methods and approaches that would help teachers to grow in the profession and also work towards the growth of the profession. It includes skills such as counselling skills, interpersonal skills, computer skills, information retrieving and management skills and lifelong learning skills. The joining of teaching skills, pedagogical theory and professional skills would serve to instill the right knowledge, attitude and skills in teachers, thus promoting holistic development (Arora, 2002). One might not be surprised that teacher education is given great emphasis in educational planning in Nigeria. National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013: 56) has clearly articulated the aims and objectives of teacher education as follow:

- a. To produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system.
- b. To encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers.
- c. To help teachers fit into the social life of the community and society at large and to enhance their commitment to the national objectives.
- d. To provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to any changing situation.
- e. To enhance teacher's commitment to the teaching profession.

As good as these purposes of teacher education are, it can be observed that items (c) and (d) of the general objectives of teacher education refer to the enhancement of teachers' commitment to national objectives and to the teaching profession respectively. The national objectives referred to includes the inculcation of values like patriotism, hard work, democracy, equalitarianism and so on. The internalisation of all these is expected to be taught by teachers. However, no programme has ever been mounted for teachers in training on how these should be taught. Most teachers do not know in actual terms what these values connote. As a result of these most teachers have not been able to use these objectives to guide their thinking.

Axiology and Teacher Education in Nigeria

There is a strong nexus between axiology and teacher education. If it is accepted that axiology is synonymous with value and morality, then it can be argued that a child might not be able to imbibe the value of his society without one form of education or the other. Since values are concerned with choices and inter-human relationships for others, the teacher's responsibility is quite obvious and enormous. They should be very accommodative to recognise values other than their own, especially in a multi-cultural setting like Nigeria. The focus of axiology as related to man from the views of Rousseau is that the child is regarded as being naturally good and would develop along goodness if uninterfered with by adults (Akinpelu, 1984).

Rousseau is of the opinion that it is the nature of adults to use their position to dictate the kind of life that the child would live; and that, going by the nature of the child, he or she is innocent and would not do evil. The implication of Rousseau's idea on education seems to regard the child as not ready to be involved in any unethical acts and that the teachers in the education industry influence unethical behaviour of students. Moreover, the role of the teacher certainly implies the evidence to influence students, and since values are inherent in teaching, it seems unlikely that students would not be able to avoid the influence of teacher's value completely, even if teacher do not see it as part of their duty to set moral example. The

teacher can thus be seen as one of the most prominent figures for the cultivation of behaviour by learners in the society.

In conclusion with the above, the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013: 16) also states the types of values that instructional programme should be oriented towards, these include:

- a. Respect for the worth and dignity of the individuals.
- b. Faith in man's ability to make rational decisions.
- c. Moral and spiritual values in interpersonal and human relations.
- d. Shared responsibility for the common good of society.
- e. Respect for dignity of labour.
- f. Promotion of the emotional, physical and psychological health of all children.

Teachers are therefore expected to help learners to cultivate these values for the good of the society.

Importance of Axiology in Teacher Education

Education and moral values are inter-woven and cannot be separated. Therefore, to make a teacher to be complete educator, he or she should be academically, morally, psychologically and mentally sound. It is on this note that value considerations are of great significance in all areas of education: aims, contents, methods and materials. In addition, we often choose one educational values rather than another and our appreciation of various criteria of value in all ramifications is very important in order to enable us choose correctly. For example, the questions of educational aims and objectives fall under the theory of value. Hence, our educational aims stem out of the individual or public values or the other way round.

Axiology helps in the development of the personality of the teacher as a responsible person in the society, smart in appearance, social expression, mannerism, personal cleanliness. Moreover, he should display enthusiasm, fairness, friendliness, self-confidence and relevance when dealing with the learners. He helps in school evaluation, that is, teachers are to identify and assess the things that should be considered valuable in the educational process and the standard by which the learners should be evaluated.

Methods of teaching are also issues related to axiology because we are always conscious of the kind of attitude or states of mind we want to develop in learners and such considerations influence our methods. When critical thinking is adequately emphasised, these methods of teaching will be problem-solving rather than the teacher-centered. Axiology also helps in educational research, if all facts are considered as important in any research project; the researcher is therefore able to indentify facts that are considered worthwhile to be gathered considering the research problem at hand.

Implications of Axiology for Teacher Education in Nigeria

Values guide our decision as to what is good, true and right. Value-based education according to Tomar (2014) is a key dimension of building peace, tolerance, social conduct, justice and intercultural understanding. He stresses further that for the real progress of a nation, it is very important and necessary to develop values in all citizens and to achieve this goal, teachers should play an important role. Hence, to make a significant development in any

nation or society, such a nation or society has to look towards the teachers because they are the builders of the society and nation.

Consequently, a nation can hope to achieve sound development of the personality of a child by the teacher and the implication of this to teacher education is that the nation must train its teacher to the fullest and be motivated. It is universally true that the personality of a teacher has a corresponding relationship on the personality of his/her learners. This is because a teacher has the capacity to influence the students in their thoughts and personality and engage them in certain activities. The teacher should not impose ethical codes or standards of behaviour on the learners. This should arise from social situations and the learners evaluation of his/her own ways of behaviour. Thus, if the child is raised to understand how to relate well with other people, the understandings will open doors to many good possibilities.

The major problem of the present time is the deterioration of values in human beings. Corruption and other social vices are increasing daily in Nigeria and material acquisition has made many to be care less about maintaining socially acceptable values. The implication is misdirected educational tendency. Instead of developing a person as human being, the learner is directed towards the superficial level achievements. Education today tends towards profit-making business. It is designed generally for money making rather than promotion of virtues (Tomar, 2014).

There is shortage of well-trained and dedicated teachers. Moreover value-based curriculum and innovative teaching methods are not adequately pursued. The same can be stated about service oriented approach. Inadequate refresher programmes, scholarship for teachers and great burden of work for teachers are also visible all these need to be given attention, by the government and the people so that values in teacher education can be enhanced in Nigeria for better performance of teachers and realistic development of the society.

Conclusion

The importance of axiology in education and its implications for teacher education in Nigeria are considered in this study. The study is important because moral values are declining in Nigerian society and the teacher needs to play important roles in re-activating these values among the learners and in the society. However, the teacher himself needs to possess what he wants others to imbibe. Thus, the teacher needs to ensure that education in axiology including moral and ethical values.

In concluding this paper, the axiological implications on teacher education programme are discussed, whereby it is stated that there is need for the government and the people to work together and provide facilities and enabling environment for the enhancement of the sociological dimension of teacher education programme. The process would include cultivation of discipline, hard work, interest in other people's welfare, honesty, and related disposition in teacher education.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion, the following are therefore recommended

- (i) Teacher education should include education in moral and aesthetic values that will assist in the moral development relevant to the needs of the society.

- (ii) Moral values for the development of moral disposition should be pursued more in teacher education programme in Nigeria.
- (iii) Aesthetic values for the development of work of art should also be pursued more in teacher education programme in Nigeria.
- (iv) Corruption, indiscipline, fraud and self centredness should be reduced in Nigeria through great pursuit of moral knowledge in teacher education. But there is the need to provide enabling environment in the society. Hence, the Nigerian society should provide expected enabling environment.
- (v) Finally, the teacher should be adequately supply to schools and be given adequate emoluments and incentives for the education to thrive in Nigeria.

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