Values-based Business Education for Empowerment, Self-Reliance and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study centered on values-based business education for empowerment, self-reliance and poverty reduction in Nigeria. The study identified 30 critical values business education students need to possess. 192 questionnaire items were constructed after careful review of literature (Njoku, 2007 and Living Values Education, 2013) and administered them to 170 year I to 4 business education students, College of Education, and 22 lecturers of College of Education, Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria. All the respondents completed and returned their questionnaire. One research question, "what are the values required by business education students for empowerment, self-reliance and poverty
reduction in Nigeria?**"** was answered using mean and standard deviation. One hypothesis, "Lecturers and students do not differ significantly in their views regarding values required for empowerment, self-reliance and poverty reduction in Nigeria" was tested using t-test statistics. It was found that students need to possess these identified values in order to be empowered for self-reliance, and poverty reduction in Nigeria. It was recommended, among others, that all the identified values be learned along-side business education subjects so that business education graduates will not only imbibe these values but also exhibit those values in real life situations

Keywords: *values-based business education; empowerment; self-reliance; poverty reduction*

1. Background of the Study

In Nigeria today, it is very obvious that poverty is a constant factor. Poverty exists in multi-dimensional scales. This is because the economy is not growing as fast as expected. Graduates from universities, especially business education graduates are jobless. While few jobs are being created, business education graduates do not fit into such available few
jobs due to the absence of needed values-based skills and. This situation seems to be getting worse as Nigeria daily witnesses disruption of economic and social life of the people by militants, kidnappers and religious fundamentalists.

Business Education as a discipline is structured through its course offerings to inculcate into the students traits of resourcefulness, endurance, and innovativeness. Furthermore, the challenges of embedding these identified values into the teaching process lies squarely within the purview of business education. Business education teacher may then ask: how do we accomplish the teaching of values or character education to our students? The answer is to apply teaching strategies that best meet the objective at hand using consensus building, cooperative learning, conflict resolution and service learning. At the same time, business educators should act as role models, practice respect continually in an interpersonal atmosphere and together with the University authority, ensure that the classroom climate is conducive, caring and civil. The argument, on the other hand, is not that values be taught to business education students separately rather it should be incorporated into the traditional business education subjects adopting the following approaches as suggested by Superka, Ahrens and Hedstrom (1996):

1. Inculcation (having students incorporate the standards and norms of his/her relevant group or society primarily through modeling, rewards, and sanctions)
2. Moral development (having students move through the stages of moral reasoning based on higher sets of values, using primarily discussions of moral dilemmas.)
3. Analysis (helping students use a rational, scientific investigation to decide issues of values and ethics, often using case studies.)

4. Values clarification (helping students identify their own and others' values, often with role playing games or simulations as well as discussions and self-analysis.)
5. Action learning (using values classification or/and other approaches, providing students with opportunities to put values into practice with social action.)

If business education subjects are delivered using the above identified approaches and in the values-based atmosphere, the learners will be sufficiently stimulated through receiving information and internal reflection to be capable of exploring values in the real world. At the end, the students would be transformed having been equipped with personal, social and emotional skills and interpersonal communication skills which will enable them transfer what has been learnt into values-based behaviours in real life.

Value means to be worthy or highly priced; the quality of being useful or important. Njoku (2007) mentioned many of these values and states that for any group of people or society, their values are those things they consider as important in life. Living Values Education (2013), listed twelve values of great importance. These are: peace, respect, cooperation, freedom, happiness, humility, love, responsibility, simplicity, tolerance and unity. These values according to the document are needed for development of the individual and the world around him. It therefore implies that the development of the individual has a close link with that of the nation. Whatever action taken to inculcate these values in the mindset of business education students in order to influence their norms, interests and belief towards worthwhile goals is a right step in the right direction. Such worthwhile goals would affect their thoughts, actions, habits, characters and indeed their destiny as youth and help to take their minds away from restiveness and curb the social maladies aforementioned.

Narayan (2002) defined empowerment as the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable, institutions that affect their lives. Similarly, Wikiinvest (2013) described empowerment as an attitudinal, structural and cultural, process whereby people gain ability, authority, and agency to make decision and implement change in their own lives and the lives of other people. To be self-reliant is to rely on one's own capabilities, judgment, or resources; to be independent. Self-reliance is essential for job success, establishment and efficient management of personal business. These traits can be acquired by students when the identified values formed the bases of their character. Corruption has distorted the value system of Nigeria. According to the National Commission (2004) corruption and the abuse of positions and privileges have long been features of Nigeria's economic and political landscape. Systemic corruption and low levels of transparency and accountability have been major sources of development failure in Nigeria. Corruption not with-standing, a fast growing nation like Nigeria is expected to have youths that are likely to be poor as a result of age and dependency. This is made worse when those of school age cannot afford the cost of education. Similarly, the educated ones find no job due largely to the slow or non-growing economy with a high rate of inflation. Furthermore, since the Nigerian traditional system accepts the burden of childhood dependence, certain marriage practices, extended relationships, widowhood related problems and old age dependence, poverty vulnerability is expected to persist. is therefore, not surprising that Nigeria is passionately committed to partner with the United Nations in the realization of its Millennium Development Goals by 2015.These goals became the link-chain in Nigeria's on-going initiatives and processes under the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS).For the Millennium Goals to be achieved the youth must be empowered through tackling social exclusion and job generation to improve incomes, housing, healthcare, education and security. But these imperatives are not achievable
without inculcating into the students these critical values.

2. Problem of the Study

Values affect attitudes and behaviour. It is for this reason that nations inculcate in youths the virtues of patriotism, discipline, honesty, integrity and selfless service since the youths are believed to be the leaders of tomorrow. But in Nigeria these important values seem to have been eroded. The Nigeria society is at the crossroads. A society that does not frown at wealth acquired by all means is in danger of extinction. Corruption is rife in Nigeria because values are placed on money over other desirable attributes such as these identified values. Misplaced values are the cause of rising crime wave (kidnapping, robbery and terrorism), fallen standard of education, unemployment and extreme poverty. According to the National Planning Commission (2004) in 1999 an estimated 99 per cent of Nigerians had income of less than $1 a day while over 75 per cent of employable youths have no jobs, nor have things changed for the better. Therefore, the problem of this study is to reveal how values-based business education can empower students to be self-reliant and reduce poverty in Nigeria.

3. Research Question

What are the values required by business education students for empowerment, self-reliance and poverty reduction in Nigeria?

4. Research Hypothesis

Lecturers and students do not differ significantly in their views regarding values required for empowerment, self-reliance and poverty reduction in Nigeria.

5. Methodology

Descriptive survey design was adopted since the study was concerned with collecting data from a population in order to explore their opinions (Best and Khan, 1992; Ali, 1996).The population of the study consisted of 192 respondents made up as follows: 170 year 1 to 4 students of business education, Kwara State University, Malete and all the 22 lecturers, College of Education of the same university. It is believed that students and lecturers of business education being members of the society should understand very clearly the identified values in the society. The entire population was studied without sampling because the population was manageable.

6. Instrumentation

The questionnaire was the instrument used. It was developed after a careful review of previous studies and discussions with colleagues who understand the Nigerian value system. The questionnaire was of a structured undisguised format. All items in the questionnaire were stated in a 5-point Likert format ranging from Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Undecided=3, Disagree =2 and Strongly Disagree=1.It was validated by colleagues from Kwara State University, Malete. The questionnaire contained a total of thirty items. A total of 192 copies of the questionnaire were administered with the help of two research assistants and all the questionnaire items were retrieved.

7. Techniques for Date Analysis

Data obtained were analyzed with the mean and standard deviation to answer the research question while the t-test statistics was employed to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. A mean value of 3.50 and above indicated respondents' agreement with an item while a mean value of 3.49 and below indicated respondents' disagreement with an item. A calculated t-value that is equal or greater than the table value was considered significant and the null hypothesis rejected while a calculated t-value that is less than the table value was considered non-significant and the null hypothesis not rejected.

8. Data Analysis and Results

Table 1: Respondents' Views on Values Needed for Empowering the Youth for Sustainable Development

S/no	Items	Strongly Agree		Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	σ	Decision
1	Handwork/industry	128	42	22	-	-	4.5	0.7		Agreed
2	Honesty	102	39	30	15	6	4.1	1.1		Agreed
3	Uprightness	90	35	25	21	21	3.8	1.4		Agreed
4	Justice	82	57	27	26	-	4.0	1.1		Agreed
5	Charity	111	30	11	10	-	4.1	0.7		Agreed
6	Decent Dressing	77	15	80	20	-	3.8	1.1		Agreed
7	Integrity	141	30	11	10	-	4.6	0.8		Agreed
8	Patience	121	61	10	-	-	4.6	0.6		Agreed
9	Tolerance	53	63	60	6	10	3.7	1.1		Agreed
10	Accountability	133	53	6	-	-	4.6	0.7		Agreed
11	Responsibility	113	83	3	3	1	4.5	0.6		Agreed
12	Respect	102	165	10	10	7	3.7	0.7		Agreed
13	Love	192	-	-	-	-	5.0	0.0		Agreed

 14 Appreciation 66 100 20 6 - 4.2 0.7 Agreed 15 Cleanliness 82 110 - - - 4.4 0.5 Agreed 16 Punctuality 126 39 19 8 - 4.5 0.8 Agreed 17 Cooperation 21 146 18 7 - 3.9 0.6 Agreed 18 Commitment 139 33 11 7 2 4.6 0.8 Agreed 19 Reality 130 31 11 11 9 4.4 1.1 Agreed 20 Humility 109 76 7 - - 4.5 0.6 Agreed 21 Self-discipline 110 45 37 - - 4.4 0.8 Agreed 22 Sexual Purity 41 69 75 7 - 3.8 0.8 Agreed 23 Modesty 69 100 23 - - 4.2 0.6 Agreed 24 Compassion 82 81 11 12 6 4.2 1.0 Agreed 25 Assistance 144 48 - - - 4.8 0.4 Agreed 26 Peace 78 72 30 12 - 4.1 0.9 Agreed 27 Freedom 155 29 8 - - 4.8 0.5 Agreed 28 Happiness 192 - - - - 5.0 0.0 Agreed 29 Simplicity 141 21 28 2 - 4.6 0.8 Agree 30 Unity 111 30 37 14 - 4.2 1.0 Agree

Result in table 1 showed that all the items have mean values well over 3.50 which is our stipulated positive decision rule. Twenty-four items stand out with mean scores of well over 4.0. This is an indication that the society holds these values in high esteem. This view was supported by the finding of Njoku (2007) which placed these values at a premium level for any nation that hopes to survive. The standard deviation ranged between 0.0 and 1.4 which indicated low variability in the opinion of the respondents.

Table 2: T-test Result of Effects of Status (Lecturers and Students) on Their Views Regarding Values Needed for Student Empowerment, Self-reliance and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria

Status	Number	σ	Mean	Degree of Freedom	t-cal	t-crit.	Level of significance	decision
Lecturers	22	.60	3.69					
Students	170	.72	4.01	190	1.71	1.98	0.05	Accept

Table 2 showed that the calculated t-value of 1.71 is less than the table value of 1.98.This indicated the acceptance of the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the mean opinions of lecturers and students regarding the values business education students needed to possess to be empowered for self-reliance and poverty reduction in Nigeria.

9. Discussion

The study was an attempt to ascertain very necessary values business education students needed to possess to be empowered for self-reliance and poverty reduction in Nigeria. The need for the students to imbibe the right values which will enable them to be gainfully engaged is clearly seen in the views of the respondents as all the values were accepted as critical by all the respondents. The striking similarity of opinions of lecturers and students is an indication of the acceptance of the values by the society. This is in conformity with NEEDS (2004) which anchors its policy on the restoration of those fundamental values for Nigeria to move forward. However, the reality is that the values exhibited by the students are at variance with those they claim to be worthy of possessing. While the respondents accepted decent dressing, sexual purity, and integrity, for examples, as critical values needed to be possessed, indecent dressing, sexual promiscuity and cultism are the order of the day in various campuses in Nigeria. Perhaps the parents are not alive to their responsibility of inculcating desirable values in their children. Another reason why the students seem not to portray accepted values may have to do with the fact that our universities are hardly values-based institutions. We have the curriculum, the teachers and facilities, albeit, all in half-measures. Teaching in our universities is neither inspirational nor student-centred. Business education cannot imbue planned learning experiences or scaffold students to imbibe desired values when schools are closed most part of the year due to strikes; when Muslim fundamentalists are bombing schools; when facilities are inadequate; and teachers ill-prepared. Yet, according to Tillman (2002), a student-centred learning requires environment in which relationships are based on trust, caring and respect naturally enhance motivation, creativity, and affective and cognitive development. Supporting the need for

values-based schools and values-based curriculum, Lovat (2009) stated that students become more academically diligent, the school assumes a calmer, more peaceful ambience, better student-teacher relationship are forged, student and teacher wellbeing improves and parents are more engaged with the school. This makes it imperative for teachers of business education to aim at inculcating into the students values identified in this study. This is in line with the view of Oborah (2006) as he maintained that values are critical to the survival of the Nigerian nation and borders on the various national life, ranging from the individual, governments, institutions, and business organizations.

10. Conclusion

It is evident that the business education students need to possess the identified values from this study. The lecturers and students are unanimous in their opinion that these values are very important even though the values depicted by the students are at variance with the attitudes they portray. It is for this reason that unemployment is high, corruption is rife and poverty is severe justifying the need for values-based teaching and values-based schools so that graduates of business education would be empowered to be self-reliant, help in poverty reduction and sustainable development in Nigeria.

11. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations are made:

1. All the identified values should be learned along-side business education subjects so that students will not only imbibe these values but also exhibit those values in real life situations.
2. The universities should be institutions exuding values-based atmosphere which draws students to higher level of moral development
3. A reward system needs to be put in place by the universities so as to encourage students to work hard, to be honest and display integrity at all times.
4. Universities should ensure that staff and students benefit from respectful and caring interactions in the teaching and learning process.
5. The Federal Government of Nigeria owes it as a duty to secure live and property so that the required values-based environment in our universities would be engendered.

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