

ROLE OF ACADEMICS IN RESTORING SOCIAL ORDER IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Nigerian tertiary institution has witnessed so many social vices and disorders that range from moral decadence, truancy, examination malpractice, cultism, rape, kidnapping, ritual killings, armed robbery, terrorism, intimidation, vandalization among others; of which has become a nightmare in the society. Hence, the role of academics in restoring social order in tertiary institution in Nigeria has often been a matter of serious concern to government, stakeholders and the general public at large. A survey research design was used for the study. The views of three hundred (300) academics from 6 out of 11 public and private tertiary institutions in Enugu State were randomly selected using simple random sampling technique of balloting without replacement. The instrument for data collection was a self-developed ten (10) item questionnaire designed by the researcher and validated by 3 experts. A four - point (4) scale of 'Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) was used to measure the responses of the respondents to indicate their degree of approval or disapproval to the questionnaire items which consisted of various statements pertaining to the subject matter. The data generated through the questionnaire were statistically analyzed using weighted mean. The findings of the study revealed that the greatest social problems in Nigerian tertiary institutions which must be tackled is that of breakdown in morals, ethical values and social responsibility to citizens at large. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommended basic compulsory and free formal education for all Nigerian citizens, as the illiterate and ignorant populace are invariably the easiest victims of social evil manipulation; inculcation of the culture of human dignity and human right and adequate payment of public servants to enable them to take care of their responsibilities both at home, schools and elsewhere.

There are lots of evil bedeviling our tertiary institutions today; which littered the pages of our national dailies. The falcon can no longer heed the falconer's voice, which made things fall apart. Nigerian tertiary institutions can be said to be living in the Hobbesian state of nature where life is harsh, nasty and short. What is obtainable is the survival of the fittest where everybody wants to eke a living either by hook or crook.

No one can claim to be safe in any part of the country because of this conspicuous high rate of social disorder (Ekechukwu, 2013). Omoyibo and Akpomera (2011) opined that since independence, Nigerian tertiary institutions have witnessed crises and social disorders which include: poverty, prostitution, crime, corruption, drug addiction and trafficking, theft, rape, kidnapping and hostage-taking, ethno-religious conflicts, terrorism to mention but a few. Some of these evils are closely inter-related and have the cause and effect influence over one another. Unfortunately, there is a wide spread lack of commitment to ethical value and excellence in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Akinyemi (2012) noted that one of the greatest social and economic problems in Nigerian tertiary institutions which must be tackled is that of breakdown in morals, ethical values and social responsibility among its citizens. According to him, these have resulted to low educational performance and made the attainment of educational goals difficult. Academics can make a difference in inculcating moral values in their students as they are role models to be emulated. According to Ukeje (2000), 'If you want an honest society, you teach honesty in the schools.' The academics roles therefore goes beyond facilitating intellectual development to including preparing students for life, making them agents of social transformation, orderliness and growth. This is in line with the nation's educational goals as enshrined in the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2014) which states: the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity; the inculcation of the type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society; the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around; the acquisition and appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competences as an arsenal for the individual to live and contribute to the development of the society. Hence, the study is designed to focus on role of academics in restoring social order in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

It is a well known fact that Nigerian tertiary institutions are faced with so many social vices of which ethical values have degenerated to a questionable state. This is the biggest threat to attainment of quality educational standard in Nigeria. But the expectation of academics becoming an instrument for tackling unethical values and restoring social orders is a very demanding one. It is a task that requires that academics become intentional and reflective in their classroom responsibilities and in their conduct outside of the classroom. Moral development mainly transpires in relationships, especially when children want to imitate and be guided by other children and adults they respect. Academics don't choose whether they want to influence children's characters but are obliged to influencing moral attitudes and capacities of those people. There is a yawning gap in the roles performed by academics in restoring ethical/social values and their role in cognitive teaching in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. These challenges have become a socio-political, economic and educational discourse among scholars and academics. To address these challenges, the problem of the study is aptly

posed in a question form, what are the roles of academics ought to play in restoring social order in tertiary institutions in Nigeria?

Research Questions

The main purpose of this study was to x-ray roles of academics in restoring social orders in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Specifically, one research question was formulated to guide the study which sought:

- To find out the roles academics ought to play in restoring social order in tertiary institutions in Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

- There is no significant difference on the roles academics ought to play and what obtains, in restoring social order in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Significance of the Study

- The findings of the study when utilized will help government, academic community, general public and students to know the roles academics ought to play in restoring social order in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The research work will also serve as a data bank for future researchers on the topic or in related ones.

Review of Related Literature

Concept of Academics

Academic can be used as a noun or an adjective; as a noun, it means an educator who works at a college or university; someone who educates young people. He is a person who instructs to provide the teaching-learning process; assumes various capacities as educator, instructor, tutor, lecturer, and counselor. He is the mainstay or prime mover of the educational system (Ekechukwu, 2013). According to Akinyemi (2012), academics is a teacher or scholar in a university or other institute of higher education; a member of an institution of learning.

Concept of Social order

Social order can be said to mean the situation of relatively peace, tranquility, orderliness and progress in the society. It may mean also absence of violence, indiscipline, corruption and lawlessness in the societal institutions (Ajaegbo, 2010). From sociological perspective, it can be said to mean the conservation, maintenance and enforcement of the 'normal' ways of relating and behaving in a society. In a social order, individuals within a society mingle, interact and live together within unique and stable arrangements of institutions. Ayobami (2013) defined it as the distinctive, stable arrangement of institutions whereby human beings in a society interact and live

together. According to Wikipedia encyclopedia, it is a relatively persistent system of institutions, patterns of interactions and customs, capable of continually reproducing at least those conditions essential for its own existence. Eme and Onyishi (2011) defined social order as the way in which a society is organized along with certain rules and standards that are set forth in order to maintain that organization.

Role of the Academics

Academics assume a wide range of roles to ensure social order and values among student in different tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Whether these roles are assigned formally or shared informally, they build the entire school's character capacity as they serve as leaders for the students (Rowland, 2005). Academics of social order must continually endeavour to guide their students in their reflections on ways to ensure social order and in engaging in dialogue. Since the questions raised in the contemporary world about social disorders are complex, academics must be able to pinpoint the corresponding tensions, values and norms and use care when handling such issues within and outside class (Enoh, 2005). According to Mohammed (2001), academics should never lose sight of the fact that they act as role models to their students in ensuring that social order is maintained in tertiary institutions. This entails a heavy burden of responsibility. Whatever they do in the school, whether good or bad, is liable to be copied by the young learners. It is necessary for the academics to cultivate good social, moral habits and exemplary behaviour. Ukeje (2000) observed that academics are the ones that make or mar the growth of any nation through education and child training in institutions of learning. Academics, therefore, have role to play in the development of the nation, especially in bringing up leaders and intellectuals of tomorrow, who will sustain the nation's development. They occupy a strategic position in helping the young ones to realize his dreams (Ajaegbo, 2010).

Academics professional Stance: Academics show professional judgment imbued with objectivity and impartiality in order to foster students' reflection on social order and values. They imbibe attitudes of open-mindedness, responsibility and enthusiasm or whole-heartedness. They continuously engage in self-appraisal and development (Rowland, 2005). Academics' attitudes must be imbued with curiosity, questioning and discernment, showing respect for each person's identity when dealing with students' ways of seeing, thinking or acting within the social consent (Ajaegbo, 2010). Throughout the learning process, academics help students go from simply expressing their opinions to clarifying and analyzing points of view in order to assess whether they are relevant and coherent. In this way, academics help students develop a critical sense that will enable them to understand that not all opinions have the same worth. In this context, academics do not have a monopoly on right answers; rather they use the art of questioning in order to encourage their students to learn to think for themselves. According to Ayobami (2013), academics strive to create an environment conducive to authentic dialogue between members of the community of learners that make up a class

in order to encourage students recognition of others and pursuit of the common good. To do this, academics must encourage students to put into place conditions that are conducive to dialogue and help them master the tools required for developing and maintaining right social order (Dow, 2013.) Lastly, they avoid coming to hasty conclusions.

Pedagogical interventions: According to Oyetunde (2013) for the teacher to effectively carry out some roles in ensuring ethical values, two broad approaches are suggested: (a) reducing unethical social orders; (b) developing ethical social behavior and codes of ethical conduct. On the aspect of reducing unethical social orders, three (3) stage approaches are suggested which includes:

(I). **Strict Sanctions:** This process calls for the imposition of severe and appropriate sanctions on students that breach social orders. These sanctions must be prompt and sufficiently strong to act as deterrent to other prospective offenders. If people are not punished for offences committed, it tends to encourage other people with weak morals to emulate perpetrators of unethical conducts (Eme and Onyishi, 2011).

(ii) **Moral Suasion:** This approach calls for the launching of massive propaganda and campaign calling for disciplined behaviour and practices of sound social and moral values. This should be championed by individual organisations, governments and its agencies, churches and mosques. This calls for serious moral evangelism on a higher scale than what is presently in place. They should address this deadly disease of moral decadence and social disorder in Nigerian tertiary institution. The dangers inherent in perpetration of unethical conducts and social disorder should be highlighted and emphasized.

(iii) **Reward of Excellence or Outstanding Ethical Behaviour:** In situations where an individual exhibit outstanding act of disciplined behaviour he/she should be rewarded in status and in kind. Such gesture on the part of appropriate authorities, institutions or individuals will motivate others to maintaining social order.

In respect to developing ethical social behavior and codes of ethical conduct, it is a deep rooted

approach to change the perception, values and orientation of the society in general. Three broad

approaches are equally suggested, namely (a) General development of ethical behavior in

individuals and groups. (b) Developing ethical codes for various professionals and adhering to

such codes. (c) Revitalizing the culture of excellence.

(a) **General development of ethical behaviour in individuals and groups:** This calls for massive education, training and development in Schools, Colleges, Polytechnics and Universities. At the primary and secondary school levels, a subject such as Moral Instruction should be made a compulsory subject. It is here being suggested that it should even be made one of the compulsory subjects at the school

certificate level. In colleges of education, polytechnics and Universities, Ethics and right social order should be made a compulsory sub-course cutting across all the various disciplines. It is through it that knowledge is transferred. Education also kills the plight of disease, ignorance, superstition, fear and consequently poverty (Ekechukwu, 2013).

(b) **Development of ethical codes for various professionals and adhering to such codes:** It is worthy to note that professional bodies e.g. medicine, accountancy, engineering, law, etc have ethical codes of conduct and right social standard. (Oyetunde, 2013).

(c) **Revitalising the Culture of Excellence:** This calls for the restoration of African traditional values. Africa had a culture of excellence which modernization and civilization had robbed off our social fabric. This would mean that private and public schools would have to create in their members a sense of total belonging. According to Akinyemi (2012) African personality should be appropriate to borrow from the Japanese experience in a number of ways. These include: Building an organizational culture that support excellence; Establishing ethical standard based on culture founded on ethical principles and sound values which will be force for excellence; Having strategic and articulated human resources – through the process of selection, placement and training (Enoh, 2005); Building a spirit of high performance into culture – by inspiring people to do their best; Having shared values by employees and managers which will be the core of excellence (Lawal, 2002).

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. This study therefore described in a systematic manner the role of academics in restoring social order in tertiary institution in Nigeria. This study was carried out in Enugu State. The choice of the area was due to the perceived high prevalence rate of social disorder observers in the area. The population for the study consisted of the entire eleven (11) public and private tertiary institutions in Enugu State. The sample comprised three hundred (300) academics from six (6) out of eleven (11) public and private tertiary institutions in Enugu State based on 2014/2015 academic year, which was drawn using simple random sampling technique of balloting without replacement. This ensured that the sample has equal chances of being selected. Instrument for data collection was a structured ten (10) item questionnaire designed by the researcher and validated by three experts drawn from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Reliability was established by administering the test instrument on respondents in Anambra State which has similar social disorder with the area of the study. The results obtained were closely related.

The researcher administered three hundred (300) questionnaires to the academics in both public and private tertiary institution in Enugu State through face-to-face contact, with the help of a trained research assistant. All the questionnaires administered were collected as the respondents complied with the instructions. The data collected were

organized and computed based on the research questions, using summative rating scale otherwise called 'weighted mean.' The mean values of the four responses were determined by dividing the summation of the frequency of responses with the summation of the scale used.

Mean values (X) = $\frac{\sum fx}{\sum x}$

Where fx= total sum of scores,

x= total number of rating scales,

$x=4+3+2+1=10$

$x=10/4=2.50$

Therefore a mean = or > 2.50 is in agreement for the questionnaire items while the mean values < 2.50 shows disagreement. Descriptive statistical tools were employed in the analysis and the data were analyzed using mean.

Data Analysis and Results:

Research Question:

- To find out the roles academics ought to play in restoring social order in tertiary institutions in Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean Scores on the Roles Academics ought to play in Restoring Social Order in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria.

S/N	Item description	X	Decision
1.	Rewarding Excellence (in character & in learning)	3.30	Agree
2.	Non involvement of academics and students in examination malpractice & other corrupt practices.	3.11	Agree
3.	Use of strict sanctions/ penalties to defaulters of school set rules.	3.21	Agree
4.	Regular supervision and evaluation of teaching/ learning and moral standard in schools.	2.90	Agree
5.	Being a role model	3.47	Agree
6.	Inculcation of respect and regard for social order, culture of human dignity and human right and value system	3.39	Agree
7.	Ensuring the availability of qualified, professional experienced and dedicated guidance and counselors and teachers.	2.81	Agree
8.	Inculcation of discipline and hard work among staffs and students within & outside the school.	3.31	Agree
9.	Strengthening security networks & moral enforcement team in school	3.53	Agree
10.	Involving all stakeholders in decision making & giving everyone sense of belonging	3.15	Agree

Discussion of the Result

The data in the table above showed that the respondents agreed that items 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9 and 10 are the key roles which academics should played in restoring social order in tertiary institutions in Enugu State, Nigeria. This is because there mean scores were above the mean value of 2.50. This implies that to ensure the restoration of social order in tertiary institutions in Nigeria, academics should rewarding excellence (in character & in learning), ensure non involvement of people and students in examination malpractice & other corrupt practices; ensuring the use of strict sanctions/ penalties to defaulters of school set rules; ensuring regular supervision and evaluation of teaching/ learning and moral standard in schools (Omoyibo and Akpomera, 2011).

Furthermore, academics should ensure that they are role model to be emulated; ensure the inculcation of respect and regard for social order, culture of human dignity and human right and value system; ensuring the availability of qualified, professional experienced and dedicated guidance and counselors and teachers; ensure the inculcation of discipline and hard work among staffs and students within & outside the school;

strengthening security networks & moral enforcement team in school; and finally ensuring the involving all stakeholders in decision making & giving everyone sense of belonging (Oyetunde, 2013).

Conclusion

In this study, attempts have been made to highlight some major gaps in restoring social order in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Since education brings a positive change in the life of individuals, it should not be taken for granted. Academics (one of the education agent) should ensure that social order is strictly adhered to. Academics must devise ways to create an enabling environment so that students in tertiary institution can induce, analyze and learn between right and the wrong. In doing so, they can help students identify emotions and issues; then express and manage them. Based on the challenges encountered with social disorder in tertiary institutions in Nigeria, programs and policies that can salvage our collective dilemma should be deliberated on instead of the fruitless disposition of lamentation. This way we can redeem and salvage what is left from our endangered education system; particularly in restoring social order in tertiary institution in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

For proper restoration of social order in tertiary institutions in Nigeria, the following recommendations are made;

- Government should endeavour to allocate adequate funds to the education sector;
- Academics and students activities should be regularly evaluated and supervised;
- The existing educational disciplinary measures and policies guiding tertiary institutions should be subjected to scrutiny to rid it of any defects;
- There should be strict implementation and compliance to educational policies and laws in all tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
- All the resources for implementation of social order in tertiary institutions should be identified and provided by the government and other stakeholders;
- Ensuring that tertiary institutions are manned by only qualified, professionally trained guidance and counselors and staff;
- Academics that are found wanting should be demoted, suspended, punished, while the defaulted students should be suspended or expelled from school;

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