

CHARACTER TRANSFORMING EDUCATION: IMPERATIVE FOR THE REALISATION OF TRANSFORMATION AGENDA IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Various governments in Nigeria have made attempts to transform the nation but none has successfully taken her to the desire destination. Effort of the current government is also commendable. Though worthwhile, character reforming education for its success has been neglected, this implies a vicious circle. The challenges of greed, lack, disorderliness, insecurity, sentiments and corruption through education have not been properly addressed. Hence, this paper investigated how character transforming education can be a necessary tool for the realisation of transformation agenda. A self-developed questionnaire was given to and vetted by 4 senior and more experienced colleagues (lecturers). It was then randomly administered on two hundred formal character reforming educators in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Responses were analysed with analysis of variance statistics; and the two formulated hypotheses were retained. The paper recommends that character reforming or religious courses be made compulsory at the Primary and Secondary school levels to modify pupils' and students' character at early stage; government should appoint credible personnel to head strategic positions, organs and parastatals; combat corruption by punishing erring civil and political office holders to serve as deterrent.

Keywords: transformation, character, education

INTRODUCTION

There have been several attempts by various governments of Nigeria to transform the nation from: lack to plenty, disorderliness to orderliness, insecurity to secured country, greediness to contentment, corrupt nation to incorruptible nation, unemployment to better opportunities; and underdevelopment to developed economy. Some of these were Operation Feed the Nation which ends in more importation of food; Austerity Measures that brought much spending in public service; War Against Indiscipline that gave birth to several ethical and moral decadence in the country; Directorate of Mass Mobilisation for Social Justice and Economic Recovery (MAMSER) that was transform into much injustice in the society, oppression and economic enslavement; Independent Corrupt Practices and other related Offences Commission (ICPC), which triggered advanced free fraud, and sophisticated form of corruption; and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) that could not stop government officials from unabated looting of the treasuries.

Recently, attempts were made within the decade three administrations. President Olusegun Aremu Obasanjo's administration introduced NEEDS in 2004. This programme was to reform: government and institutions; the private sector; a social charter; and value re-orientation as key objectives. Out of these, the GSM Telecommunications from the private sector saw the light of the day but not full services provided by the operators in Nigeria. Similarly, the 7-point Agenda introduced by Late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's administration in 2007 was geared towards: Agriculture, Education, Energy, Infrastructure, Land Reforms, Security, and Wealth Creation and Poverty Alleviation for national development. This vision died with the initiator (it is on record in Nigeria that successive governments do not pursue the programmes and policies of their predecessors); and President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan introduced Re-Branding Programme which could not Re-Brand



anyone. It later metamorphosed into Transformation Agenda, a slogan of all sub-sectors. The question is, will this Transformation Agenda be different from other programmes and agendas of the past ones? The response to this question depends philosophically on who is benefiting from the government and who is being exploited. To a formal character reform educator, the agenda will follow the footpath of the past programmes and agendas because concerted effort of laying a solid foundation is still being neglected. The inability of the government to first and foremost transform the citizens through education that is geared towards good, better and acceptable character is being trivialized.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are to investigate the various ways character transforming education can be used to achieve transformation agenda in Nigeria; and find out the various ways the years of experience of character transforming educators can be used to realize it. Consequently, the following null hypotheses were formulated:

- Ho₁ There is no significant difference in the ways character transforming education can be used to achieve the transformation agenda in Nigeria.
- Ho₂ There is no significant difference among the respondents' years of experience on the various ways character transforming educators can be used to realise the transformation agenda

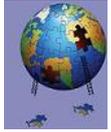
CONCEPTUAL DEFINITIONS / FRAMEWORK

In this discourse, conceptual definitions/framework of education, transformation, human nature, and character transforming education are briefly discussed for better comprehension.

Education

Education is popularly believed to be derived from Latin words, *educatum* meaning the act of "teaching" or "training"; or *educare* meaning "to bring up" or "to raise"; or *educere* meaning "to lead forth" or "to come out". Everyone has to be taught to do the right and behave in acceptable way for personal and societal developments. Therefore, education is the sharing and transfer of knowledge, the development of new knowledge based on learning and understanding that is desirable (Nduka, 2014). Education sector is no doubt crucial to the transformation of all other sectors. It is expected to create an enabling platform. Kolo (2011:10) observes that education is an avenue "where both teachers and students are involved with each other and equally with the curriculum through thinking and problem solving". It implies that an ideal educational environment provides opportunities for people to brainstorm, be trained to contribute meaningfully for the success of the society.

Education is the foundation of the development of any society. It is through it that knowledge is transferred. In affirmation, Salawu (2011:4) posits that "education, which is considered the bedrock of the development of Nigeria is no longer a private enterprise, but a huge government venture..." Similarly, Oyewale (2011:2) believes that "Nigerian cannot afford to toy with the education of her citizens because the wealth of a nation is a function of available human resources and not the abundance of natural resources". Natural resources are indeed to be used for the development of the people and the nation if properly harness by human resources. Nigeria has often boasted of her mineral resources that has been a source of corruption instead of development. Why? The required



reformed personnel to handle these mineral resources are yet to be transformed as a pre-requisite for transformation agenda.

Transformation

The present Transformation Agenda hopes to transform Nigeria into a developed nation; to the position of being at least the 20th Economy in the world by the year 2020. In year 2014, the nation hosted World Economic Summit to keep the hope alive. The key word is transformation that is given priority. What does it entails to transform? Transformation actually means a total departure from the unpleasant condition to a pleasant one. Hornby (2007:1572) defines transformation as “a complete change from something to or and into something”. To relate this to Nigerian situation, it implies departure from corruption that has been the bane of our development to ideal opportunities for progress and development.

Transformation agenda, as been converse, is become a political slogan and song. Meanwhile the preliminary result on this agenda according to Asobie (2011) reveals that bad governance is its greatest challenge. Nigeria’s inability to tackle most of the challenges, such as poverty, unemployment, insecurity, and the disheartening state of infrastructure has been largely attributed to bad governance. For transformation agenda to succeed, accountability, equity, fairness, openness and transparency must be put in place. Asobie rightly affirms that radical change of feeling, thinking and action has to take place first in the hearts and minds of men in order to witness a change in our institutions, laws, the environment, people’s circumstances and the likes.

There seem not to be clearly defined scope of the present transformation agenda. In the words of Daszko and Sheinberg (2005), there are three levels / theories of transformation. These are: traditional, transitional and transformational. The arrangement is from simple to hard. From their explanation, it can be deduced that traditional reformation is sort of incremental improvements; transitional reformation is movement from old to new; while transformational reformation is revolutionary or radical or complete overhaul. Nigerian government has not said which one of these they are pursuing. Of course, it will be a mistake to combine the three. However, leadership and management are necessary ingredients. To buttress this point, Osioma (2012) clarifies that transformational leadership refers to the ability to inspire and motivate followers to achieve results greater than originally contemplated, and for internal rewards. These leaders create the vision and are able to carry people along in the realisation of the vision. Osioma cautions that Nigeria’s transformational leader must be able to build virile teams that will work with him to transform the polity - not political lightweights nominated by godfathers being rewarded for political patronage.

Human nature

Humans are complex beings. They are logical and at the same time emotional. Human nature loves to play; predict and test how things work by the power of reasoning according to Velkley (2002); use verbal and non-verbal language for expression; acquire material things for personal; and have sex in private unlike other animals. These innate actions have to be properly checked and nurtured so that the individual can develop right attitude and behaviour in the society. The human nature must be trained, controlled, and monitored regularly by selves and others to ensure maximum output of endowed potentials. Delaney (2006) explains that humans can use their imaginations to create things and indulge in things that could be enjoyable and also those that are painful. Humans are insatiable which give rise to manipulated challenges in the world.



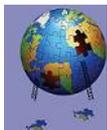
The psychoanalytic theory explains why most of the behaviour of those in position of resource control is self-seeking to the detriment of others. This pleasure principle according to psychoanalytic is mostly developed at the oral stage of human growth. It is a tendency of deriving pleasure by accumulating to the extent that people can even steal the resources belonging to their own families (Kolo, Bawa & Adisa, 2012). Where government is manned by such people, there can hardly be any transformation. Unfortunately, there is no machinery in place to prevent or stop pleasure seeking individuals from heading government organizations, parastatals and ministries, and even in the political arena where policies are being hatched. Since politics is made lucrative in Nigeria. Kolo, Bawa and Adisa argue that some people can kill to attain higher political status or pyramid. Why should an adult politician organize tugs to eliminate an opponent because he or she wants the position? Why should a normal mature and well brought up person wants to be a tug to kill and destroy other human beings? The answers to these questions can only be traced back to early child upbringing in the society. Lack of sublimation makes them openly aggressive and ready to transact that behaviour with little token offered by anybody. This is the more reason why character transforming education becomes imperative to curb this menace from the early stage.

Other important developments of human nature at later or adulthood are interest, attitude, intelligence and personality (Kolo, Bawa & Adisa, 2012). These indices are necessary for a transformation agenda. Government must be able to identify those who have interest, attitude, personality and intelligence to work for the transformation desired. The biggest problem with the government is appointing people based on political basis without due consideration to character profiles of the appointees. People placed in positions without corresponding personality, interest, intelligence and attitude will always work against the desire of the government. Closely related to these indices is honesty, which is a behavioural concept that can determine the success or otherwise of transformation agenda. Are there honest people in government that can manage the national material deposits and financial resources to achieve the transformation agenda? It will be a waste of energy when people of integrity are hardly found in places where resources for transformation are being channelled. The dishonest who are fortunate to be in government are hypocritically championing transformation agenda with their mouths not with hearts, minds and actions.

Character transforming education

Character transforming education is those teachings that are formally and informally given to positively influence the character of people especially those of children. Lickona (1991) defines character education as deliberate effort to help people understand, care about, and act upon core ethical values. From this definition, character transforming education is an education that disseminates morals, reverential fear for the ultimate (God) with promises of reward for obedience and honesty; and punishment for disobedience and dishonesty. This is in collaboration with that of talking and behaviour model (informal character reforming) according to acceptable conduct at home and the society. The combine effort of this two (formal and informal) can bring the desired change because the values of fairness, honesty and respect are common in both classroom and outside classroom environment.

In the school system, the goal of character education is to develop the pupils and students socially, mentally, spiritually and academically by injecting most cherished ethical and moral values that have been encapsulated in the curriculum. To ascertain the importance of formal character transforming education, one time president of United States of America was quoted as saying, 'to educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society'. In other words, education that does not transform the attitude of the people cannot transform the country. The experience will be that of



personal wealth accumulation. This can be seen in the salaries of our political office holders. The amount for constituency / ward development is imbued in the salary but is never used for the purpose. They see it a personal emolument. Besides, the take home monthly salary of a Nigerian Senator can pay not less than salaries of 230 graduates at sixty-five thousand naira per person.

Character reform education is for all irrespective of age and position. Working class adults can be taught through short term courses, retreats, and workshop. What is required is enabling political will and law for all to acquire the necessary education for becoming viable instrument of transformation agenda. Government that initiates the programme must endeavour to put certain things in place for them to succeed. Udemé (2012:1) says “government needs pragmatic approach to reposition the country for rapid transformation” The neglect of character reforming education has even created a defective approach in all programmes and agendas of government. In view of this, Omolewa (2007:7) observes that in all reforms, there is always a prime mover”. This prime mover is the character transforming educators.

METHODOLOGY

As an informal and formal character transforming educator, a closed and open ended questionnaire was developed with personal observation and insight from the reviewed literature. The constructed items of the instrument were vetted by four experts from Christian Religious Studies and Islamic Studies Sections, Departments of Arts and Social Science Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. It was then randomly administered on two hundred character reforming educators in Kaduna State. The respondents were teachers at Secondary, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education and Universities.

The researcher sampled 85 respondents from 31 Secondary Schools, 19 respondents from the 2 Polytechnics (Kaduna Polytechnic and Nuhu Bamali Polytechnic, Zaria), 64 respondents from the 2 Colleges of Education (Federal College of Education, Zaria; and College of Education, Kafancha), 32 respondents from the 2 Universities (Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; and Kaduna State University) to freely respond to the same instrument. Research Assistant were appointed and properly trained to administer and collect the instrument in the 2 Polytechnics, 2 Colleges of Education, and Kaduna State University. The researcher personally administered and collected that of 31 Secondary Schools and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

One hundred and eighty-six questionnaire were retrieved but only one hundred and seventy-two were finally used. Some were not returned, others were either not properly filled or and mutilated. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) of Analysis of Variance was used for the analysis of data collected. This tool compares the responses among and between the different categories of character reform educators (variables) in line with H_{01} and H_{02} . The two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 levels of significance.

Demographic characteristic

The demographic characteristic of the respondents is graphically presented in figures 1 and 2 (see appendices 1 and 2). Figure 1 in appendix 1 is the institutions of assignment of the respondents. Only



79 respondents from the thirty-one sampled Secondary School (Sec. Schl.). It is expected that character reforming courses or subjects such as Christian Religion Knowledge; and Islamic Religion Knowledge be made compulsory at this level. However, they have been relegated to elective status. In the Polytechnics (Poly.), less number of character transforming education takes place as it has least number (11) of participants. The two Colleges of Education (COE) have the higher representation (55) because they offered specialized courses in religious and traditional education. Similarly, the high number of university (Uni.) participants (28) from the two institutions was as a result of general related courses like Moral Philosophy and religious studies that are being taught in some universities in Nigeria. The emphasis is shifted to science and technology.

On the respondents' years of experience, figure 2 (appendix 2) shows that 63.37% of the total respondents had taught character reforming education between 1 to 15 years, 30.81% taught for 16 – 30 years, 5.23% taught for 31 – 45 years; and 0.59% taught for 46 years and above. However, the ranges of these years in the first place attest that almost all can be said to have acquired some average experience.

Result

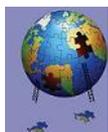
The result of Table 1 is used for the test of the two hypotheses.

Table 1: Using character reforming education for transformation agenda

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	teaching learners good virtues at the early stage	100	43	20	09
2	inculcate most cherished African traditional values in the learners	122	44	05	01
3	teaching and preaching to the learners and neighbours how to sublimate pleasure principle	104	47	13	08
4	commitment to teaching at all levels of our educational system	132	37	03	00
5	constant workshop, conference and seminars to brain-storm on contemporary issues	098	22	34	18
6	administering appropriate reformative and deterrent punishment for crimes committed	099	39	21	13
7	teaching learners and neighbour the need to respect other peoples' religious beliefs	128	10	31	03
8	praying for selves, others and those in authority	133	37	02	00
9	introducing compulsory relevant character reforming courses and programmes in the schools	057	32	52	31
10	teaching tolerance and peaceful co-existence in the schools and neighbourhood	151	11	08	02
11	contributing meaningfully in inter-religious dialogue without being sentimental	144	19	07	02
12	admonishing general public to be obedient to rules, regulations and laws of the land	151	19	01	01
13	admonishing general public to elect people with good tract records into political offices	154	17	01	00
14	teaching learners and neighbours to love one another	121	32	11	08

From the responses, the respondents agreed on the ways to transform the character of Nigerians. Behaviours of the people need to be changed before the introduction of any programme. They were of the view that teaching learners good virtues at the early stage would bring the expected outcome. The respondents also agreed that teaching and preaching to the learners and neighbours to sublimate pleasure principle that abounds in the lives of most Nigerians is imperative as Kolo, Bawa and Adisa (2012) pointed out.

The study reveals certain personal efforts to be carried out by the character reforming educators. These were commitment to duty of teaching at all levels of our educational system; attending constant workshop, conference and seminars to brain-storm on contemporary issues; administering appropriate reformative and deterrent punishment for crimes committed under their jurisdictions; contributing meaningfully in inter-religious dialogue without being sentimental or biased; and praying for selves, others and those in authority. These however need the support and motivation of government. For people to put their best in the service of their father land, their efforts have to be recognised by prompt promotion and realistic pay package among others to minimise temptations.



Character reforming educators are not limited to the classroom alone. They live among people that they influence on daily basis in their neighbourhoods. The results indicate that if encouraged, they will teach learners and neighbour the need to respect other peoples' religious beliefs; teach tolerance and peaceful co-existence in the schools and neighbourhoods; admonish general public to be obedient to rules, regulations and laws of the land or nation; admonish government and the people to elect people with good tract records into civil and political offices; and teach learners and neighbours to love one another. These measures are capable of transforming the lives of Nigerians when pursued vigorously.

One item (9) in the instrument shows a division in the opinions of the character reform educators. Those at the Secondary Schools and Colleges of Education do not see the need of introducing new courses beside the existing ones. Religious Knowledge and traditional courses are geared toward reforming their characters. Policy makers need only to upgrade them to compulsory status. Those who want new courses were from the Polytechnics and Universities. They saw the need to introduce character reforming courses because of the experienced moral decadence in the campuses.

Results of hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 says "there is no significant difference in the ways character transforming educators can be used to achieve transformation agenda in their schools". The result of this test is presented in Tables 2a and b.

Table 2a: One way analysis of variance on the achievement of transformation agenda

Variables	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7.757	3	2.586	.689	.560
Within Groups	630.539	168	3.753		
Total	638.297	171			

The result of Table 2a reveals that the calculated significant value of .560 is greater than the alpha ($P > 0.05$). This means that the null hypothesis can be retained. There was no significance difference in the various ways character transforming educators can be used to achieve transformation agenda in their schools. Strength of the degree of agreement is presented in Table 2b.

Table 2b: Gabriel post hoc test on the achievement of transformation agenda

(I) Institution	(J) Institution	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Secondary School	Polytechnic	-.22201	.57984	.999
	College of Education	-.05197	.33668	1.000
	University	-.64007	.45901	.612
Polytechnic	Secondary School	.22201	.57984	.999
	College of Education	.17004	.59544	1.000
	University	-.41806	.67223	.989
College of Education	Secondary School	.05197	.33668	1.000
	Polytechnic	-.17004	.59544	1.000
	University	-.58810	.47857	.753
University	Secondary School	.64007	.45901	.612
	Polytechnic	.41806	.67223	.989
	College of Education	.58810	.47857	.753

The result of Gabriel post hoc test of Table 2b explicitly reveals perfect agreement among and disagreement between the character reform educators in the four categories of institutions. The degree of agreement is correlated according to the courses available in the institutions.



Hypothesis 2 reads, “there is no significant difference among the years of experience of respondents on the various ways character transforming educators can be used to realise transformation agenda”. The result is presented in Tables 3a and b.

Table 3a: One way analysis of variance on the realisation of transformation agenda

Variables	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	13.274	3	4.425	1.347	.261
Within Groups	551.842	168	3.285		
Total	565.116	171			

The result of Table 3a shows that the calculated significant value is .261, which is above the alpha ($P > 0.05$). This means that the null hypothesis is retained. There are no significant differences in the various ways character transforming educators can be used to realise transformation agenda. However, the result did not show any difference between and among the variables. Consequently, Gabriel post hoc test was conducted to explain as shown in Table 3b.

Table 3b: Gabriel post hoc test on the realisation of transformation agenda by year of experience

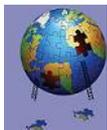
(I) Years of experience	(J) Years of experience	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
1 – 15 years	16 – 30 years	-.06647	.30330	1.000
	31 – 45 years	.09862	.66344	1.000
	46 years and above	-2.65138	1.29241	.063
16 – 30 years	1 – 15 years	.06647	.30330	1.000
	31 – 45 years	.16509	.68699	1.000
	46 years and above	-2.58491	1.30466	.102
31 – 45 years	1 – 15 years	-.09862	.66344	1.000
	16 – 30 years	-.16509	.68699	1.000
	46 years and above	-2.75000	1.43189	.237
46 years and above	1 – 15 years	2.65138	1.29241	.063
	16 – 30 years	2.58491	1.30466	.102
	31 – 45 years	2.75000	1.43189	.237

In determining the degree of agreement and disagreement, the result of Gabriel post hoc test of Table 3b depicts two things: one, that there is greater agreement among those in the first three categories; and less, between them and the last group which incidentally turns out to be just one person.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The role of character transforming education is very crucial to the realisation of the present transformation agenda. Professionally trained educators can transform the characters of the people beginning at the early stage through to adulthood. Therefore, they are viable and necessary tools that government can easily use to achieve this noble objective. consequently, the paper recommends that:

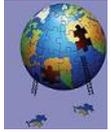
- 1 character reforming or and religious courses should be made compulsory at the Secondary school level to modify students’ character at early stage; and other relevant courses at tertiary institutions.
- 2 character transforming educators should be encouraged and motivated to discharge of their statutory responsibility without being fanatical. They should avail themselves of current dynamics of inculcating good moral and ethical values through active participation in conferences, workshops, retreats and the likes.



- 3 government should ensure that all political office holders and civil servants attend character reforming courses, or retreats, or workshops where they will be taught to do the right thing or be punished as they shall be closely monitored.
- 4 government should appoint credible personnel to head its parastatals, ministries, departments; and organs. She could consult or involve character transforming educators in the selection process.
- 5 the people should faithfully elect individuals with proven integrity to political offices without party, ethic, and religious sentiments as transformation agenda is a collective effort.

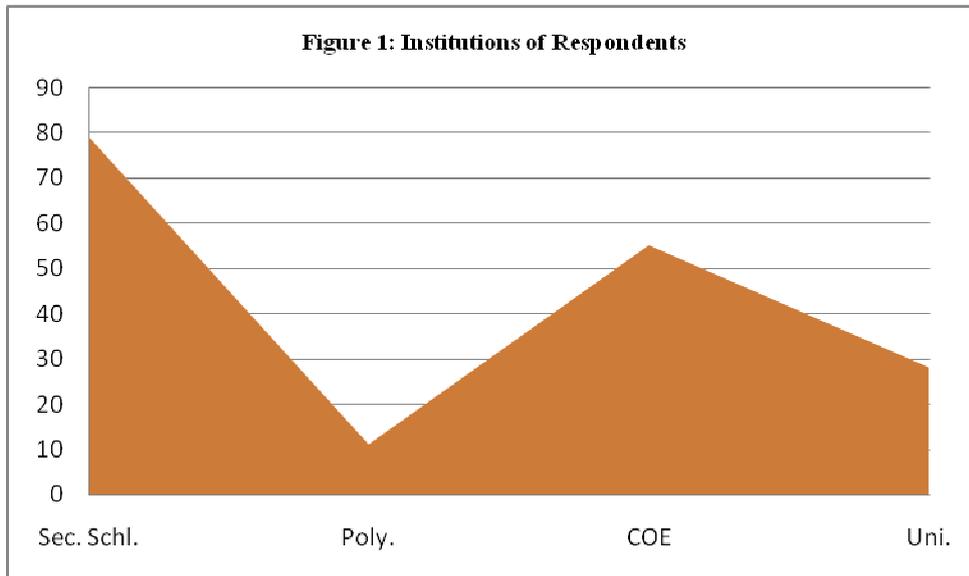
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LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1



Appendix 2

