
**EDUCATION IN NIGERIA FOR VALUE
RE-ORIENTATION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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Abstract

The primary purpose of this paper is to highlight the impact of Nigeria's education system on value re-orientation and national development. Specifically, the paper interrogates the potential of education to impact value re-orientation and national development; the current status of the impact of education on value re-orientation and national development; the roles education should play in value re-orientation and national development; and how education can be used to achieve national re-orientation and development. This paper holds promise in providing an opportunity for rethinking the role and future of Nigeria's national education system in tandem with the realities of the nation's social, economic and developmental challenges.

Keywords: *Education in Nigeria; Value Re-orientation; National Development*

Introduction

Education is the defining factor in human life, as it is what distinguishes man from the lower animals. This explains why every society provides education in one form or another to socialise its young into its desired ways of life. Accordingly, as

obtains in all human societies, education is as old as human existence in Nigeria. In pre-colonial Nigeria, education, particularly through the apprenticeship system, was a powerful vehicle of equipping the child (in terms of skill, ethics, mores, customs, traditions and values) for effective participation in the society. What was, therefore, alien to Nigeria before colonisation is the Western form of education requiring going to school.

Western education in Nigeria eventually commenced with the establishment of the first primary school in 1842 in Badagry (Adesina, 2005). From that humble beginning, Western education has witnessed sporadic growth in level (primary, secondary and tertiary) and patronage (in terms of number of people accessing). Taiwo (1986) identified two of the major national objectives of education as:

- a. the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the society; and
- b. the acquisition of the right type of skills, abilities and competencies, both mental and physical, as equipment for the individual to live in his society (p.163).

Without doubt, therefore, in the thinking of the original designers, education in our nation should be the vehicle for engendering citizens with positive values, and imbued with appropriate skills for personal financial empowerment and for national development. Almost 175 years after its inception, it is certainly not out of place to assess how far these laudable objectives of education have been achieved in Nigeria. This, therefore, was the primary motive for engaging in this discourse - the need to interrogate the extent to which education has impacted value re-orientation and national development. Specifically the paper:

1. explores the potential of education to impact value re-orientation and national development;
2. highlights the current status of the impact of education on value re-orientation and national development;
3. provides explanations for the current status of education's impact on value re-orientation and national development; and

4. proffers strategies for repositioning education for value re-orientation and national development.

The need for this discourse, particularly in the context of the current national challenges, cannot be over-emphasised. In particular it is anticipated that issues raised in this paper can provide an opportunity for rethinking the role and future of Nigeria's national education system responsive to the realities of the nation's social, economic and developmental challenges.

The Potential of Education to Impact Value Re-orientation and National Development

In affirmation of the importance of education, the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations and now the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015), particularly SDG 4, identify quality education as critical for national development in all its ramifications. Education provides recipients skills for economic resources to enable them conquer poverty; as well as social skills for forging efficient relationships with other members of the society.

Prior to the advent of Western education in Nigeria, the apprenticeship education system empowered recipients for gainful employment and consequently, poverty eradication in the society. Similarly, Western or formal education has the potential to transform and empower individuals and, by extension, communities or societies (Nwogu, 2013). It propels the development of technical capacities needed for economic emancipation (Brasseur, 2016); and also enhances recipients' living standards. For instance, South Korea, which, in the 1960s, was classified as a very poor country, has currently been transformed into an economically powerful nation mainly by aggressively improving its education system (Brasseur, 2016). Similarly, Ghana reduced her national poverty rating by improving school attendance, among other things, from 2003-2008 (UNDP, 2015). That education can be a powerful tool for national transformation is therefore not in doubt. How then has education fared in impacting values reorientation and national development in Nigeria? This is the next question addressed in this paper.

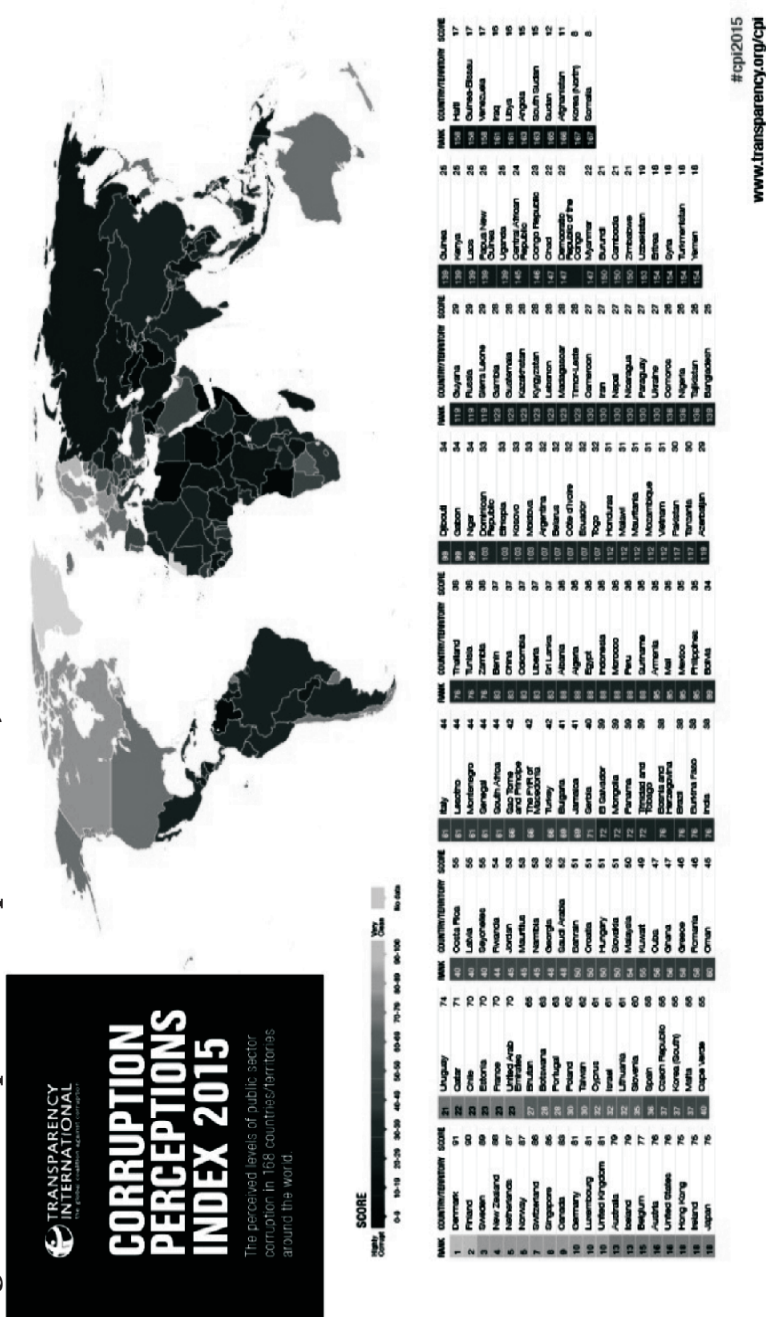
The Current Status of the Impact of Education on Value Re-orientation and National Development

Before the advent of Western education, Nigeria had a very vibrant system of traditional education in which the virtues of industry, integrity, honesty, transparency, contentment etc. were held in very high esteem (Fafunwa, 1974). Such virtues were considered so important aspects of the Nigerian culture that they were entrenched in the traditional religious liturgy, dance and drama, folklore, art and craft (Adewale, 1994). Indeed, the concept of ***omoluwabi – a person of good character in all ramifications***, was the pivot around which all attempts at educating the Nigerian child revolved (Fabamwo, 2012). The ultimate end of traditional educational endeavour was to foster good character in the individual and to make the child a useful member of the society.

With the advent of Western education in Nigeria, the development of sound values and moral character remained a cardinal national objective of education. It is in order to graphically impress sound values in the minds of Nigerian students, that most institutions adopt complementary slogans as their institutional mottos such as ‘Probitas Doctrina’ (In Character and Learning) ‘Scientia Probitas’ (Knowledge and Character), ‘In truth and indeed’, ‘No Sweat, No Sweet’ etc.

The import of positive value orientation for any nation’s development cannot be over emphasised. For instance, one internationally accepted indicator of value orientation is corruption, because of its profound implication for education standard, terrorism and development. Transparency International, the global coalition fighting against corruption, describes corruption as ‘a crime against society; and therefore undertakes annual survey of corruption perception levels across nations of the world (Figure 1). Out of the 167 countries on which the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) was computed in 2015, Nigeria occupied the 136th position with a CPI of 26; and 32nd position out of the 46 African countries, South of the Sahara, included in the survey.

Figure 1: Corruption Perception Index, 2015



Similarly, in 2016 , Nigeria was ranked the 136th out of 176 countries , with a CPI of 28; and described as one of the African countries (including Ghana, South Africa, Tanzania and Kenya) categorised as unable to improve their scores on the index (Transparency International, 2017).

That this is a valid assessment of the situation in Nigeria can hardly be contested. It is common knowledge that, in relation to character, some students of tertiary institutions are implicated in incessant cases of armed robberies, cattle rustling, militancy, kidnappings, terrorism, cybercrimes, cultism, examination malpractices etc. all of which generate heightened sense of insecurity among the citizenry. Similarly after graduation, many are involved in mind-boggling fraud and systematic looting of the nation's resources in government. Perhaps this partly explains why Nigerians are generally viewed with suspicion in other parts of the world. It is doubtful that further argument is required to conclude that education in Nigeria is yet to positively impact the citizens' values orientation to an appreciable degree. The story is not too different in relation to the current impact of education on national development as articulated next.

Education and National Development: Close to one hundred years after the establishment of the first primary school in 1842, the establishment of Yaba Higher College in 1932 marked the beginning of tertiary education in Nigeria. Nigeria's first university was established in January, 1948 and formally opened for business in October of the same year, with some 210 students (Adesina, 2005). From that period till date, the number of universities (not counting other tertiary institutions) in Nigeria has been increasing in leaps and bounds such that today, the country clearly has about the highest number of universities in Africa

In particular, tertiary education constitutes the backbone of any nation's development because it generates the human capital needed for the task of nation building (Alade, 2006 and World Bank, 1999). In relation to Nigeria, tertiary education is similarly relied upon for high level manpower training, inculcation of

proper values, development of intellectual capacity, acquisition of physical and intellectual skills and promotion of community service as anticipated in the National Policy of Education, (FGN, 2004). Consequently, Nigeria, like other countries in the world, invests heavily in tertiary education. For instance, to date, there are close to two hundred universities, apart from numerous polytechnics, Colleges of Education, schools of Agriculture, Aviation, Fisheries, etc. (National Universities Commission, 2012). However, beyond sheer quantity, quality is the defining issue in tertiary education. Recipients of qualitative tertiary education are expected to manifest abilities to respond to, and resolve, societal economic, technological, socio-political, moral and developmental challenges.

No doubt, tertiary institutions in Nigeria have produced large numbers of scientists, engineers, technicians, economists, politicians, etc. However, the nation is yet to derive appreciable benefit from the knowledge, skill and value bases of the recipients. There remains an apparent disconnect between the quality of knowledge acquired in the institutions and the skills required for resolving societal challenges (Qiang, 2003). For instance, products of Nigeria's tertiary institutions are rarely trusted with major construction works, or managing national economic resources etc. without recourse to imported technology. Consequently, regardless of their classes of degree, products of most of the nation's institutions are not rated at par with their counterparts in developed countries. They must first be subjected to re-training before absorption into the foreign labour market. Essentially therefore, the nation still largely depends on other countries for production and provision of her needs and still occupies the lower rung of the world-wide Human Development Index (HDI) ladder on such critical indicators of development as poverty level, environmental sustainability, gender inequality, education, health, population, economy and general well-being (UNDP, 2014). In 2016, 188 countries were rated on HDI and Nigeria ranked 152nd (Figure 2)

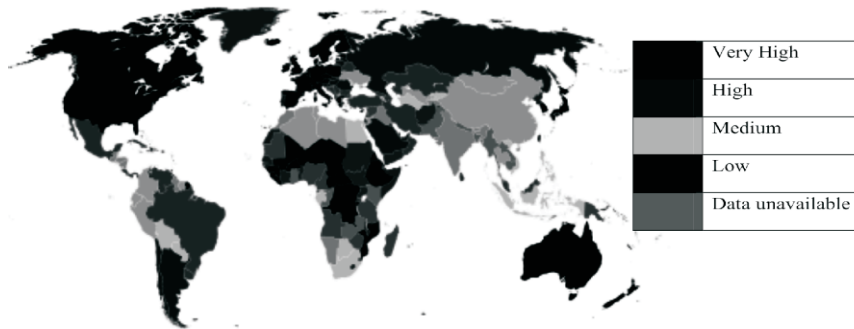


Figure 2: UN Human Development Index: 2016

Source: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2011/download/>

To what then can we attribute the currently low ability of education to impact value re-orientation and national development in Nigeria? A few of the major factors implicated is explored next.

Explanations for the Current Status of Education’s Impact on Value Re-Orientation and National Development

One plausible reason for the apparently low ability of education to impact value re-orientation and national development in Nigeria is the inability of higher education to produce adequate manpower with required knowledge, skills and values for effective nation building. The possible contributions of such factors as inadequate funding, examination malpractice, skewed staff- student ratio and brain drain to the observed wide disconnect between graduates’ knowledge and skills are well articulated and documented (Esenwa, 2010; Olasehinde-Williams, 2012). To this author’s mind, however, all such factors revolve around the fulcrum of quality (Figure 3)

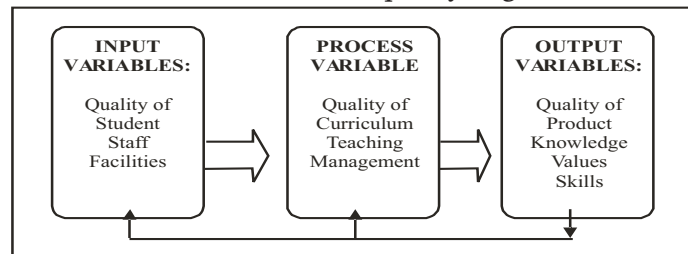


Figure3: Input and Process Determinants of Education Quality

Source: Olasehinde-Williams (2012)

Undoubtedly, two variables are critical to education quality: (i) input variables, in terms of student, staff and facilities; and (ii) process variables in terms of curriculum initiatives, teaching activities and management competencies as shown in Figure 3. It requires not much type or space to convince anyone that the degree of quality factored into each of the two variables will determine the quality of output or product of our education system (Okebukola, 2010; Olasehinde-Williams, 2012); and consequently, its potential to impact value re-orientation and national development. The consistently low rating of Nigeria on the global Competitiveness Index attests to the generally deficient quality of our education product (Table 1).

Table 1: The Global Competitiveness Index 2012- 2013

Country	Region	Position	Strong Factors
Switzerland	Europe	1 st	Efficient innovation; high quality scientific research institutions; strong collaboration between the academic and business sectors; and high company spending on R&D.
Singapore	Asia	2 nd	strong focus on education, which has translated into a steady improvement in the higher education and training pillar
Finland	Europe	3 rd	Well-functioning and highly transparent public institutions ; priority on primary and higher education and training.
Taiwan, China	Asia	13 th	solid educational performance ; sophisticated business sector which is inclined to innovate
China	Asia	29 th	Favourable macroeconomic situation ; high marks in basic education and increasing enrolment figures for higher education
South Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa	52 nd	Good scientific research institutions ; and strong collaboration between universities and the business sector in innovation
Rwanda	Sub-Saharan Africa	63 rd	strong and relatively well -functioning institutions, with very low levels of corruption; a capacity for innovation
Nigeria		115 th	Relatively large market

Source: www3.weforum.org/.../2012.../GCR_CountryHighlights_2012-13.pdf...

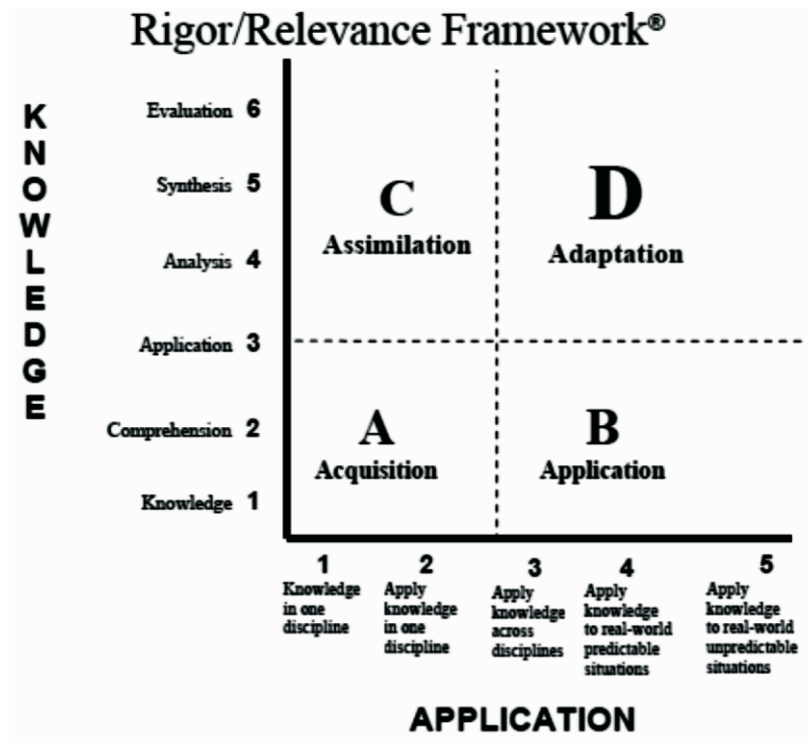
In 2012, 144 countries were rated along 12 core pillars of economic competitiveness of innovation, technological readiness, higher education and training, institutions, and goods market efficiency etc. by the World Economic Forum, and Nigeria ranked 115th (Schwab, 2013). By 2016, Nigeria's ranking had deteriorated to 127th position out of 138 countries (World Economic Forum, 2016). While countries high on the rating scored highly on most of the pillars, especially higher education, technological readiness, strong collaboration between universities and the business sector in innovation and in good scientific research institutes, Nigeria reportedly gave up a good showing only on Pillar 10 i.e. 'Large market size'

Obviously, the principal driver of competitiveness, which has worked well for developed nations, is prioritising tertiary education because of its potential to impact every other sector of the economy. How Nigeria can similarly achieve a significant refocusing of her tertiary education system so that education can begin to positively impact value re-orientation and national development is the kernel of this paper. Therefore, plausible options, in tandem with current national realities, are explored next.

Repositioning Education for Value Re-orientation and National Development.

Every nation determines its own response options with visible consequences for values re-orientation and national development. To this author's mind however, what is required the most is innovation- i.e. innovation in the capacity to identify and study successful models and then adapt them to suit the nation's specific needs. For instance, the world of work is changing very rapidly in response to the very rapid economic and technological changes in the world. Therefore, if tertiary education must produce graduates with potential for effective participation in today's real world, it must be responsive to the Rigor/Relevance Framework as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Academic Excellence Rigor/Relevance Framework



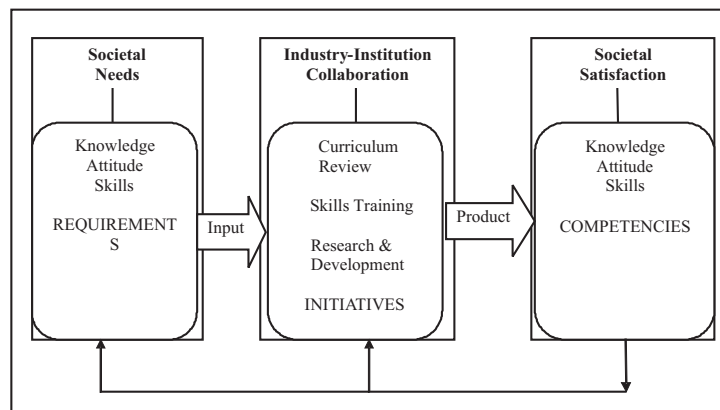
Source: Daggett (2005)

As shown in Figure 4, mere knowledge acquisition is not an efficient measure of academic excellence. Rather, recipients must manifest the capacity to apply and adapt acquired knowledge to real live situations. However, it is common knowledge that not many students are able to go beyond the level of knowledge acquisition and, at best, application to a single discipline. Rarely do we have graduates with capacity for knowledge application and adaptation to real world predictable and unpredictable situations.

To become the second of the seven most highly rated on the Competitiveness Index in the Sub-Saharan region, and 47th position in the world, South Africa, ensures strong collaboration between its universities and the business sector in innovation and has good scientific research institutions. Similarly, Rwanda,

occupies the 52nd position in the world and the 3rd in the Sub-Saharan region by putting in place strong and relatively well-functioning institutions, ensuring very low levels of corruption and demonstrating good capacity for innovation. It thus goes without saying that if Nigeria can similarly prioritise high quality education by investing in innovation, good collaboration with the business sector as well as in research and development, then products of her tertiary education will not only be relevant locally, they will also become able to compete with their counterparts globally. Accordingly it is argued in this paper that curriculum reforms, skills-training and research and development initiatives, in close partnership with the industry, are critical to re-positioning the nation's tertiary education. Figure 5 presents the conceptual framework for the proposed repositioning model sponsored in this paper.

Figure 5: The Centrality of Industry-Institution Collaboration in the Production of Graduates Fit for Societal Needs



Source: Olasehinde-Williams. O. (2013).

As shown by the bold arrows in Figure 5, repositioning tertiary education requires strong collaboration between the industry and the institutions in fashioning out three major inter-related innovation paths: curriculum review, skills-training as well as research and development initiatives which are responsive to the needs of the society (both locally and globally). This makes sense because, since the products of tertiary institutions ultimately power every sector of the national economy their quality, in terms of knowledge, attitude and skill competencies, will invariably determine the quality of the national socio-economic, technological and political advancement. Importantly, critical feedback from the society, as shown by the back arrows, provides opportunity for continuous review of the industry-institution collaboration which may, in turn, impact societal needs in a vicious cycle.

Beyond knowledge acquisition, products of educational institutions must also imbibe and manifest desirable attitudes to be efficient members of the society. That this virtue is low among products of our educational system is not a subject for debate in this paper. Rather, the thesis sponsored in the paper is that one important determinant of value re-orientation is exposure to, and interactions with, integrity-promoting environment. Consequently, to positively impact attitude and bring about value re-orientation, education must promote the fundamental values of integrity. All obligations and responsibilities in the education enterprise must be discharged with transparency, honesty, trust, fairness and respect. This is because unlike reflexes and instincts, high level human behaviours such as involved in value re-orientation typically derive from cognitive (perception) and affective (feelings) situational analysis as stressed in social-cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986 & Mischel, 1968). Students must thus be socialised to the culture of integrity through a well structured mentoring programme in which significant others (i.e. administration and staff) model appropriate professional and ethical standards such as provided by institutions which foster academic integrity (Olasehinde-Williams, 2006; 2007). Specific steps required to make education positively impact value re-orientation and national development are suggested next.

Recommendations

1. In the first place, the fact that stakeholders continually express reservations about the skill competencies of the generality of Nigerian graduates is suggestive of the need for us to evolve curriculum innovations. It will thus be important for the management of our institutions to arrange, in collaboration with captains of key industries, for a review of the current curricular to factor in such specific knowledge, skills and character as required for graduates to function effectively in the world of work. Particularly in response to emerging national and global challenges, provision would need to be made for developing students' capacity for knowledge and skills adaptation and application to new contexts, creative thinking, integrity, conflict resolution, IT compliance, multi-tasking, emotional intelligence, effective communication, problem solving, research initiatives etc. It will also be profitable to ensure that provision is made for multiple assessment modes to accommodate knowledge and skills measurements both of which should count in determination of completion quality.
2. If it is a statement of fact that no nation can have a quality of education higher than the quality of its teachers, then it will be very important to also repackage the training of student teachers. To a large extent, as of today, the quality of students admitted into many of our tertiary institutions cannot be vouched for partly because of the generally deficient teaching/learning that takes place in many secondary school classrooms, which feed the tertiary institutions (Adesina, 2005). Besides, it is currently possible for students to get admitted into faculties of education right after secondary education. To this author's mind, therefore, the current practice of a two-week observation and /or single-shot peer teaching prior a six-week teaching practice may not adequately make up for the current gap in the knowledge and pedagogical capability of many graduates of our faculties of education. It is thus here proposed that each faculty of education in the country adopts a secondary school as a demonstration school, to function as a form of teaching laboratory, where student

teachers can be exposed to the practical component of their training (for instance, through observation of demonstrations by their lecturers and established teachers as well as through acquisition of hands-on experiences in lesson note preparation, communication skills, teaching aids preparation and class management techniques) before being posted to schools for the traditional teaching practice.

More importantly, there may be the need to review the current teacher education curricular in faculties of education especially in respect of the proportions of cognate and pedagogical courses offered. This concern is borne out of a finding of a recent study by this author in collaboration with two others, which investigated subject content and pedagogical knowledge levels of English Language and Mathematics teachers in secondary schools in Kwara State. Teachers with B.Ed and B.Sc. Ed certificates lagged significantly behind teachers with B.Sc., BA and PGDE certificates on both measures (Olasehinde-Williams, Yahaya & Owolabi, 2017).

3. To a large extent, national development is dependent on quality of research output by tertiary institutions. Currently, however, not all researches/projects submitted by students/academics can be vouched for in terms of originality and quality; and it is doubtful if many have significant policy implications. Repositioning research culture in our tertiary institutions can be achieved by providing staff and students opportunities to engage in project designs, technology adaptation and evidence-based research with practical application for technological, scientific and educational advancement of the society.
4. Qualitative education cannot be assured without periodic Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), which enables objective assessment of extent of achievement of the learning objectives and profitability of the initiative. It will thus be important for institutions to develop a comprehensive M & E matrix along with implementation work plan-for its various programmes in collaboration with the industry.

5. In today's world of work, mere knowledge acquisition is not an efficient measure of academic excellence. Rather, recipients must manifest the capacity to apply and adapt acquired knowledge to real live situations. It will therefore be useful to evolve multiple assessment modes to accommodate knowledge and skills measurements (paper and pencil, projects, IT, Emotional Intelligence, Problem solving, Communication skills etc.) to determine students' completion quality in order to provide comprehensive assessment of student achievement.
6. Unlike learning of facts, attitude is basically acquired through observation and mentoring. It will, therefore, be important for every tertiary institution to develop and implement academic integrity policy. This is because institutions which uphold academic integrity help all stakeholders to understand and promote integrity in work ethics, in interpersonal relations and in reward and punishment procedures and consequently model desirable values to the students (Olasehinde-Williams, 2006; 2005).

Summary and Conclusion

As articulated in this paper, education is a veritable tool for effecting value re-orientation and national development. Apparently, however, Nigeria is yet to benefit from the full potential of education in this regard as the nation still lags behind in virtually every critical global efficiency rating. The good news is that Nigeria can still effect significant positive shift in her current ratings by re-positioning the nation's tertiary education system, in response to the current social realities. Specifically, if tertiary education curricular are reviewed to reflect the key competencies required of graduates of tertiary education in real world; if the practical components of our students' training are beefed up through experiential learning; and if institutions foster the culture of academic integrity in service delivery, in interpersonal relations and in reward and punishment systems, Nigeria would surely be on the right path to achieving value re-orientation and national development.

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