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## DILEMMA OF VALUE EDUCATION IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

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### **Abstract**

*This study examined the dilemma of value education in Nigerian multicultural society. It adopted a descriptive survey research design. The target population comprised Social Studies and civic education teachers, civil servants in North-central Nigeria, and Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The Sample size for this study is 383 respondents. This sample size is justified by the Research Advisor 2006 sample size table. The research made use of all six states in North Central Nigeria including FCT Abuja. In order to take care of the location and gender, a stratified simple random sampling technique was used to sample the respondents from each state. The instrument for data collection was titled "Questionnaire on Dilemmas of Value Education in a Multicultural Society: The Nigerian Experience (QDVEMCSNE) tailored towards answering the three research questions drawn to assist in achieving the objectives of this study. The content validity of the instrument was carried out through cross-examination and verification only on items that are relevant and validly constituted the contents of the questionnaire, the draft questionnaires were*

*given to experts in Social Studies and Educational Evaluation for scrutiny and the suggestions and recommendations were adhered to. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, simple percentages and mean. The Result showed that the dilemmas facing value education in the multicultural society of Nigeria include ethnocentrism, ethnic allegiance, systemic failure, religious intolerance, inconsistent government policies, etc. Based on the findings, the study recommended that the current curriculum content of value education need to be structured more in such emerging social problems as terrorism, religious intolerance, greed, and so on. Education policies reform of governments at all levels should de-emphasize ethnicity and religious affiliations.*

**Keywords:** Value education, Multicultural society, Ethnocentrism, National integration, Cultural diversity.

## **Introduction**

Value education has come to attract increasing attention among various educators at all levels of education in recent times. Over the past three decades, the objectives of value education have not been effectively achieved in our schools. Several educational reforms were implemented. However, educational policy reforms in Nigeria are determined by historical, social-political, economic and religious trends. Each policy reform has a discrete structure basic to mediate knowledge and skills required for effective citizenship development necessary for the continued existence of the groups (Sofadekan 2013; Bolaji, 2014). The value education curriculum in Nigeria has been subjected to a series of criticism and review. Recent research findings on the impact of value education for character development among Nigerian youths in secondary school revealed conflicts and confusion in their values (Falade, 2016). The state of value confusion among Nigerian youth negates the development of national values and values re-orientation.

Among the dilemmas facing National Values Education (NVE) Curriculum is the inconsistency of government educational policies

on National Value Education which has generated poor implementation of Social Studies, Civic Education and security education curricula. Falade (2016) asserted that there is a wide gap between the curriculum designers, school administrators and the teachers who are to implement the curriculum. Also, there was general criticism on merging of Religious Studies with Social Studies and Civic Education naming the subject as Religious and National Values (RNV). However, the Nigerian Daily Times Newspaper of 13th July 2017 captioned the title as 'CAN take protest to Nigerian Senate over new Curriculum'. Senate leadership and Minister of Education decided to stop the implementation of the Religious and National Value due to distortion observed in some RNV textbooks. Furthermore, other studies revealed that the removal of key concepts of value education from Social Studies has made teachers confused on logical presentation of values concepts in Social Studies. Adeyemi (2019) pointed out that the lack of competent teachers constitutes a serious problem to the attainment of the goals of the RNV curriculum. Furthermore, the National Policy on Education review of 1998 revealed that citizenship issues that have been part of integrated Social Studies philosophy for several years were severed from the 2004 version. Social Studies curriculum was targeted to develop effective citizenship and solve emerging social problems in Nigeria (Ogunyemi, 2006; 2010).

Federalism in Nigeria is built on a weak foundation right from the colonial period. That led to doubt on the efficacy of Civics Studies to solve problems created after the Nigerian Civic war of 1967-1970. In response to this, many reforms were introduced and implemented by Presidential Panels on Education by former President Obasanjo and Goodluck Jonathan to bring about values-reorientation of Nigerians. However, there is still a persistent problem of moral decadence and value degradation among Nigerians.

Nigeria is having problems with value structure. Ethno-cultural identity consciousness as among dilemma creating negative impact concerning the provision of a supportive environment, institutional and organizational cultures, resulted in ethnic allegiance and social instability. Other dilemmas facing value education include religious

intolerance, insecurity, systemic failure, unbalanced or uneven educational development across six geo-political zones, poverty, widespread ignorance, major cultural groups' domination of minority groups. Sadly, this gives room for lack of mutual understanding and mutual trust and resulted in mutual suspicion among various ethnic groups in the country. Nigeria is made up of diverse cultural groups with over 370 cultural groups and over 400 languages and dialects.

However, the Cultural plurality of the Nigerian State has been a major factor in the make-up of the policy formulation as well as shaping of the educational philosophy of the country. This has generated argument on the state of value education vis-vis nationalism in Nigeria State. The failure of the social system to sanitize such vices, like ethnic militancy, banditry, religious intolerance, political thuggery, political assassination, ethnic identity consciousness, corruption, impatience and other unpatriotic acts by Nigerians. Social Studies Curriculum in holistic form was targeted to solve emerging social problems but government policies over the past fifteen years deviated from these objectives. This led to the erosion of core values for the promotion of national unity and integration. There is a persistent increase in ethno-cultural awareness and the breakdown of family values. Nigerian youths do no longer promote National values but resulted in a state of anarchy as witnessed in ethno-political/religious crises in Nigeria. Among the crises include Ife-Modakeke ethno-political conflict in Osun State; Zango Kataf Kaduna Religious/Political Conflict; Konshisha/ Oju (Tiv/Igede) ethnic Political conflict in Benue State; Itsekiri/Urhobo/Ijaw ethnic/Political Conflict in Delta State; Biliri Kaltungo/Shongom religious conflict in Gombe State (Adedayo, 2012, as cited Odidah, 2009).

Scholars have identified several cultural variables responsible for the devastating value system. Abdullah (1985), Iyanda (1985) and Ocho (1984) in Solomon (2015) observed that cultural variables such as social values, morals, norms, knowledge, arts, customs and language are the fundamental principles of understanding of social identity and unity in a plural society. According to Mazur (2010) cited in Solomon (2015) asserted that

the logic of ethno-cultural diversity suggests that different traditional, social and cultural institutions and even religious belief systems pose serious dilemmas in conceptualization of unity among people from diverse cultures, beliefs and backgrounds than ever before, as there has been continuous competition for power and scarce resources among the diverse socio-cultural groups. The systemic failure of the social system has made institutions of family, religions, politico-cultural groups and schools not to be properly function. Sadly, civic values are deteriorating among the young learners in the Nigerian society due to quality of institutional strategies being employed by Social Studies teachers (Salawu, 2019).

The socio-economic and political sphere of Nigeria from independence in 1960 till date, have posed threats to social stability in the wave of rivalries and mutual suspicion than in peaceful, co-existence and promotion of National integration. Such values of tolerance, patriotism, love, sincerity, faithfulness, integrity and selflessness are gradually eroding in the country. Despite the National Anti-corruption Strategy (2017- 2021) Action Plan by Federal Ministry of Justice to have Nigeria free of Corruption for sustainable human development, corruption is persisting among ranks and files of Nigerians. The question that needs to answer is what are the strategies in National Value Education curriculum that promote effective value reorientation in Nigeria? There has been a series of debates on the issue of value reorientation by various scholars and critical analysis on the dilemmas facing value education in Nigeria. Also, many argued that coercing diverse ethnic-nationalities into federation called Nigeria led to ethnocentrism, polarization and frequent insurgency especially in North-Eastern part of Nigeria, despite the multicultural nature of the country.

Multiculturalism is the policy of maintaining a diversity of ethnic groups within a community. The American Heritage New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy sees Multiculturalism as the view that the various cultures in a society merit equal respect and scholarly interest. Collin's English Dictionary (2012 digital edition) defined it as the characteristics of a multicultural society and the policy or process whereby the distinctive identities of the cultural groups within such

a society are maintained or supported.

Given the nature of the multicultural structures in Nigeria, it is important to give the study theoretical backup. This study employs a functionalist perspective as the theoretical backup. The theory is credited to the ideas and literary works of August Comte (1788-1857) and Herbert Spencer (1820-1903). The theory was later popularized and refined through the works of Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) and Talcott Parsons (1902-1979). The functionalism theory is relevant to this study on premise that value system gives life to all the parts of human society. Just as the functionalists believe that society likened to the human body, which is made up of interrelated, interconnected and interdependent parts, the values system gives various social institutions of the society direction to enable undergoing integration and understanding of variables with the determination of harmonizing cultural values in diversity. Cultural elements in multicultural society need an effective value education system. Institutions such as religion, politics, economy, family function in an integrated manner for the survival and continuous maintenance of society. Functionalists believe that society grows with the acquisition of some functional prerequisites such as adaptation, goal, attainment, integration and pattern maintenance (Asuka, 1977).

Value Education in Social Studies curriculum is the major instrument for building the desirable values and attitudes, skills that drive and direct a society. However, fifty-seven years of teaching the subject could still not attain effective citizenship goals as evidenced in persistent ethno-cultural identity consciousness, inconsistent government policy on education, religion intolerance, and so on. A critical look at the 1998 and 2004 education policy reform versions revealed that citizenship issues and values which have been part of integrated Social Studies philosophy for over forty-one years was evidently severed from the latter (2004) version. This is why some scholars (Ogunyemi, 2010; 2011; Samuel, 2015) concluded that educational policy review was more of curriculum politics than a result of in-depth inferences based on research.

There are few researches conducted on the challenges facing value education in Nigeria, the dilemmas facing value education in

multicultural society of Nigeria calls for more empirical investigation. Such dilemmas include ethnocentrism, systematic failure, widespread ignorance, religious intolerance, poverty, and inconsistent government policy on education as earlier stated. Specifically, ethnocentrism and inconsistent federal government policies on curriculum review and implementation play major roles in the failure of value education in Nigeria. To this end, Umar and Abdullahi (2013) asserted that ethnic identity consciousness influences selfish competition for economic resources and political power-sharing among the diverse ethnic nationalities then social conflict will emerge to undermine the process of harmonizing cultural values in diversity. It will further aggravate acrimonious relationships between the ethnic groups and threaten state stability. While other scholars concluded that cultural diversity is a “double-edged sword” that can develop or under-develop and unite or dislocate a nation and as such attempt should be made to integrate cultural variables into national framework for unification and development (Solomon, 2015).

Studies by Ladan (2010) and Dowd (2014) showed that religious intolerance, politics and segregation induce conflict, hatred, distrust and misunderstanding among followers of different religions. Evidently, politicians usually use religion and ethnicity to further hit the polity, especially in policy formulation and during political party’s campaigns. This has affected the democratic culture of most Nigerians. Value education in Social Studies is the only tool that can sanitize the social system. Family values, cultural values, personal values, group values and national values are greatly severed by politicians and other stakeholders in order to manipulate political process. Dilemmas facing value education programme could be traced to the level of religious education program supported by government. Social Studies can encourage common teaching of all religions to reinforce value-based education and also teach religious tolerance and understanding to learners (Alerby, 2003) as cited in Salawu (2019). Hence, the study intends to critically look into dilemmas facing value education in the multicultural society of Nigeria.

### **Purpose the Study**

This study examined the dilemmas of value education in Nigerian multicultural society. The specific objectives are to:

- i. examine the dilemmas facing value education in a multicultural society in Nigeria;
- ii. find out the impact of dilemmas of value education affecting National integration and unity in a multicultural society of Nigeria; and
- iii. determine the best practices on how value education in Social Studies can promote national unity and integration in Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The study provided answers to the following questions:

- i. What are the dilemmas facing value education in a multicultural society of Nigeria?
- ii. What are the impacts of the dilemmas facing value education on National Unity and Integration in a multicultural society of Nigeria?
- iii. What are the best practices on how value education in Social Studies can promote national unity and integration?

### **Methods**

The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population of this study comprised of the Social Studies teachers, Civic Education teachers and civil servants in North-Central Nigeria. The Sample size for this study is 383 respondents. This sample size is justified by Research Advisor 2006 sample size table. The research made use of all the 6 states including FCT, Abuja. In order to take care of the location and gender, a stratified simple random sampling technique was used to sample the respondents from each state. The instrument for data collection was titled "Questionnaire on Dilemma of Value Education in a Multicultural Society: The Nigerian Experience (QDVEMCSNE) tailored towards answering the 3 research questions drawn to assist in achieving the objectives of



this study. The questionnaire was divided into 2 sections. Section A consist 5 questions which has to do with the demographic data of the respondents while section B consist 31 items which were tailored towards answering the 3 research questions. The study adopted the modified 4-point Likert rating scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The questionnaire was validated by 3 experts in the Social Studies and 1 expert in the field of measurement and evaluation and based on their observations, constructive criticisms and advice; some of the items were replaced while some were recast. A pilot test was conducted used test retest method. 20 respondents were used for the pilot test. The scores recorded for the two administrations were used to calculate the reliability coefficient of the instrument. The reliability correlation coefficient of 0.76 was obtained.

## **Results**

**Research Question 1:** What are the dilemmas facing value education in a multicultural society of Nigeria?

**Note:** The figures in parentheses are the percentages of respondents in Tables 1-3.

**Table 1: Dilemmas Facing Value Education in a Multicultural Society of Nigeria**

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remark
1	Ethnocentrism is among the dilemma facing effectiveness of value education	175 (46)	165 (43)	32 (8)	11 (3)	3.32	Agree
2	Ethnic allegiance is among the factor shaping in formulation and implementation of government policy on education	87 (23)	186 (49)	88 (23)	22 (6)	2.88	Agree
3	Systemic failure is affecting effectiveness of National Value Education in Nigeria.	273 (71)	99 (26)	0 (0)	11 (3)	3.66	Agree
4	Learning objectives of Value Education in Social Studies take adequate consideration of emerging social problems in Nigeria.	208 (54)	142 (37)	33 (9)	0 (0)	3.46	Agree
5	Religious intolerance is among factor responsible for failure of curriculum content in value education	109 (28)	186 (49)	55 (14)	33 (9)	2.97	Agree
6	Major ethnic groups domination is planted in the democratic process.	187 (49)	164 (43)	32 (8)	0 (0)	3.40	Agree
7	Minority groups in Nigeria lack trust in Political process.	230 (60)	98 (26)	11 (3)	44 (11)	3.34	Agree
8	Religious institutions programme is not properly coordinated in Nigeria.	197 (51)	121 (32)	43 (11)	22 (6)	3.29	Agree

**Table 1 (cont'd)**

9	Politicians usually use religion as an instrument in electioneering campaign	219 (57)	142 (37)	22 (6)	0 (0)	3.51	Agree
10	Ethnic nationalities are not emulating national values of patriotism, love, togetherness, tolerance, etc.	208 (54)	164 (43)	0 (0)	11 (3)	3.49	Agree
11	Curriculum contents of values education are not adequate for values reorientation	153 (40)	164 (43)	44 (11)	22 (6)	3.17	Agree
12	Ethnocentrism usually determines perception of Nigerians in policy formulation and decision making.	153 (40)	197 (51)	22 (6)	11 (3)	3.28	Agree
13	Ethno-centrism has continuously grown in Nigeria from 1966 till date.	187 (49)	174 (45)	11 (3)	11 (3)	3.40	Agree
14	Ethnic identity consciousness influences selfish competition for political power sharing among diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria.	252 (66)	131 (34)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.66	Agree
<b>Section Mean</b>						<b>3.34</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Source: Fieldwork, 2020

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of the responses of respondents on the dilemmas facing value education in a multicultural society of Nigeria. From the table, the mean responses of 3.32, 2.88, 3.66, 3.46, 2.97, 3.40, 3.34, 3.29, 3.51, 3.49, 3.17, 3.28, 3.40 and 3.66 for statements 6 to 19 respectively indicated that all the mean responses are within the mean range of agree

(2.50-4.00). Also, the combined percentages of 89, 72, 97, 91, 77, 92, 86, 83, 94, 97, 83, 91, 94 and 100 for strongly agree and agree for the same set of statements indicated that most of the respondents agreed with the statements. This implies that all the above list items are dilemmas facing value education in a multicultural society of Nigeria.

**Research Question 2:** What are the impacts of the dilemmas facing value education on National Unity and Integration in a multicultural society of Nigeria?

**Table 2: Analysis of the Impact of the Dilemmas on National Integration and Unity in a Multicultural Society of Nigeria**

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	Remark
15	The Dilemmas have weakened collective interest of Nigeria.	208 (54)	164 (43)	11 (3)	0 (0)	3.51	Agree
16	Inconsistent government educational policy has created negative institutional culture and faulty supportive environment	208 (54)	153 (40)	22 (6)	0 (0)	3.49	Agree
17	Democratic stability is threatened by interplay of ethno-cultural identity consciousness and religious intolerance among Nigerians.	175 (46)	175 (46)	22 (6)	11 (3)	3.34	Agree
18	Devastated value system has led to increasing social conflict and lack of trust	175 (46)	164 (43)	22 (6)	22 (6)	3.28	Agree
19	Religion intolerance has undermined inculcation of values such as tolerance, cooperation, patriotism, love, etc.	186 (49)	164 (43)	11 (3)	22 (6)	3.34	Agree

**Table 2 (cont'd)**

20	Erosion of family values has contributed negatively to social insecurity.	274 (72)	87 (23)	11 (3)	11 (6)	3.63	Agree
21	Ethnocentrism has made negative impact in Nigeria democratic culture.	219 (51)	131 (34)	33 (9)	0 (0)	3.49	Agree
22	Inadequate of funding of educational research has resulted to systemic failure	241 (63)	120 (31)	22 (6)	0 (0)	3.57	Agree
<b>Section Mean</b>						<b>3.46</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Source: Fieldwork, 2020

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics of the responses of respondents on the impacts of the dilemmas facing value education on National Unity and Integration in a multicultural society of Nigeria. From the table, the mean responses of 3.51, 3.49, 3.34, 3.28, 3.34, 3.63, 3.49 and 3.57 for statements 6 to 19 respectively indicated that all the mean responses are within the mean range of agree (2.50 – 4.00). Also, the combined percentages of 97, 94, 92, 92, 94, 95, 85 and 94 for strongly agree and agree for the same set of statements indicated that most of the respondents agreed with the statements. This implies that all the above list items are impacts of the dilemmas facing value education on National Unity and Integration in a multicultural society of Nigeria.

**Research Question 3:** What are the best practices on how value education in Social Studies can promote national unity and integration?

**Table 3: Descriptive Analysis on the Best Practices on How Value Education in Social Studies can Promote National Integration and Unity**

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	Remark
23	Democratic Values must be redirected for nation building.	252 (66)	109 (28)	11 (3)	11 (3)	3.57	Agree
24	Religious leaders should inculcate positive values of Cooperation, Tolerance, Love	340 (89)	43 (11)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.89	Agree
25	Nigeria would be great when citizens inculcate such spirit of forgiveness and mutual understanding.	329 (86)	43 (11)	0 (0)	11 (3)	3.80	Agree
26	Review of National Value Education is necessary in order to solve challenges of emerging social problems	296 (77)	87 (23)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.77	Agree
27	Current Curriculum content of National Value needs to be structure more in area of higher order of thinking skill.	263 (69)	98 (25)	22 (6)	0 (0)	3.63	Agree
28	Government Education policies should de-emphasize ethnic and religious affiliations	219 (57)	142 (37)	11 (3)	11 (3)	3.49	Agree
29	The quest for National unity is attainable when citizens focus on their similarities rather than differences	274 (72)	109 (28)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.72	Agree
30	Evaluation of teacher' personal values is necessary	296 (77)	87 (23)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.77	Agree

**Table 3 (cont'd)**

31	Corruption at all level of government is impacting negatively on National Integration	317 (83)	66 (17)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.83	Agree
<b>Section Mean</b>						<b>3.72</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Source: Fieldwork, 2020

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics of the responses of respondents on the best practices on how value education in Social Studies can promote national unity and integration. From the table, the mean responses of 3.57, 3.89, 3.80, 3.77, 3.63, 3.49, 3.72, 3.77 and 3.83 for statements 6 to 19 respectively indicated that all the mean responses are within the mean range of agree (2.50-4.00). Also, the combined percentages of 94, 100, 97, 100, 94, 94, 100, 100 and 100 for strongly agree and agree for the same set of statements indicated that most of the respondents agreed with the statements. This implies that all the above list items are best practices on how value education in Social Studies can promote national unity and integration.

### Discussions

The findings of the study indicated that majority of the respondents agreed that the dilemmas facing value education in a multicultural society of Nigeria include: Ethnocentrism, ethnic allegiance, systemic failure, religion intolerance, major ethnic groups domination in democratic process, minority groups lack trust in political process, improper coordination of religion institutions programmes and inadequate curriculum contents on value education. This result confirms assertion of Ladan (2010) and Dowd (2014) that ethnicity or religion alone cannot fuel conflict among Nigerians but misunderstanding and mistrust can arise only when it is manipulated for selfish reasons or when one is intolerant of others. Both maintained that religious intolerance, segregation induce conflict, hatred, distrust and misunderstanding among followers of different religions.

The results revealed that the impacts of the dilemmas facing value education on National Unity and Integration in a multicultural society of Nigeria include: Weakening of the collective interest of Nigeria; negative institutional culture and faulty supportive environment; threaten of democratic stability; increase social conflict and lack of trust; undermined the inculcation of values such as tolerance, cooperation, patriotism and love; and negative impact in Nigeria democratic culture. This is in agreement Ikwumelu (2015) opinion that planners of values education curriculum then are faced with the problems of identifying values character traits that will best equip the individual to take to his place in modern society. The objectives of value education should be such that the curriculum should recognize the tensions that are brought about by the conflicts between tradition and change. Finding further revealed the following as best practices on how value education in Social Studies can promote national unity and integration which include; Democratic Values must be redirected for nation-building; Religious leaders should inculcate positive values of cooperation, tolerance, love, and so on.

### **Conclusion**

The roles of value education in multicultural society include fostering the spirit of national consciousness, unity in diversity, tolerance and respect for the rights of others. Such objectives as they are embedded in Social Studies curriculum will provide solutions to such dilemmas identified in the study. Such intolerance, hatred, misunderstanding among different ethnic nationalities in Nigeria would be eradicated with the best practices in National Value Education. Social Studies curriculum was targeted to develop effective Citizenship and solve emerging social problems in Nigeria (Ogunyemi, 2006; 2010). Also, constant evaluation of Social Studies and Civic Education teachers' personal values needs to stakeholder's attention. The Social Studies curriculum needs to be reviewed in line with current emerging problems. Social Studies should be part of Senior Secondary school subjects naming it Social Studies and Civic Studies. Content Selections need to be further



expanded in the new curriculum. Such national values of tolerance, patriotism should be strengthened. Social Studies textbooks should be written by Social Studies experts not from other educators from Social Sciences. Furthermore, attitudinal change is required from all Nigerians.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, this study recommended that democratic values must be directed for nation-building. Current Curriculum content of value education needs to be structured more in such emerging social problems of terrorism, religious intolerance, greed, etc. Education policies reform of governments at all level should de-emphasized ethnicity and religious affiliations. Moreso, traditional leaders across the country need to be engaged by federal and state governments so that their challenges and agitations should be heard by government. Federal Government should ensure strict compliance with various empowerment programmes for Nigerian Youth. Religious institutions need to be regulated so those bad elements will not be given opportunities to hijack them and use them as an instrument to achieve their aims.

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