

REIMAGING SIGMUND FREUD'S PSYCHO-ANALYSIS IN RE-CULTIVATING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: MORAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT: *Every evidence from available literature suggests a high level of academic dishonesty in our learning institutions especially among students. Part of the reasons for this could be as a result of the fact that authorities concerned tend to relax the rules/laws against such malpractices and letting perpetrators to go unpunished. The paper also looked into the meaning of academic integrity, its forms and ways or strategies to promote or bring back academic integrity to our educational institutions, hence the caption "reimaging"*

KEYWORDS: recultivating; reimaging; academic integrity

INTRODUCTION

Issues about man, his behaviour and direction of activities have engaged human thoughts since the early ages. The behaviour of man had been the subject matter of psychology as it raised basic questions on how and why of human behaviour. Values provide the individual the basis upon which he organises his social life in particular and his existence in general. Values create norms and set moral standards which are rules for behaviour. Moral values are what the society considers good, desirable and proper or even bad, undesirable and improper. Thus, a framework of values enables the individual and society to make easily habitual responses in moment of life (Adejo, 2007). The fundamental framework within which values thrive is the culture of the society which guarantees a general set of objectives for its members who could then develop personal goals and ambitions for self-actualization. Within the framework members of the society could identify what is normal or abnormal in the behaviour of a person. Some indicators of normal and desirable behaviour may include healthy perception of reality, ability to exercise voluntary control over behaviour, self-knowledge, self-esteem, ability to form healthy relationship, ability to channel energy to productive activities, tolerance to frustration and sense of direction and purpose.

Normal or abnormal behaviour may however be the product of the social institutions available to the individual at one time or the other in the society. Moral values of any society have to do with those things in human character, conduct and social relations as enshrined in Freud's (1938) psycho analytic conflicts or id, ego and superego which are adjudged as good or bad, right or wrong, or as conforming to the aspirations and desires of the society. The prevailing values of any society to a greater extent determine the socio-economic development of that society. It therefore follows that moral value as a system in any society is the sum total of the socio-economic and cultural ideas cherished and up held by members of that society.

The Nigerian society appears to be a highly religious one going by the numerous structures of churches and mosques scattered in various towns and cities. These centres are places where religious principles are used for the promotion of high moral and ethical values among the citizens, for example, the Christian faith preaches honesty, contentment and handwork to its adherents where reference is made to the ten Commandments. One painful issue of concern notwithstanding the prevalent deep level of religiousity is that of high incidence of cheating among students of secondary and tertiary institutions of learning. Among the students, violations of academic integrity codes is still high as reflected in high figures of reported cases of malpractices in public and other examinations (Nenty, 2001) According to him, this is the most important threat to the integrity of results of educational achievement. This cankerworm is prevalent in every part of the Nigerian society, whereas, characters education or moral education has been incorporated into the Nigerian school curriculum right from inception. The emphasis is predicated on the conviction that a sound formation is likely to be used as a proactive measure to forestall many of the adult malpractices like corruption, election rigging or fraud, examination cheating etc. The importance of creating a moral culture during the schooling years cannot be over emphasized. The teaching of such virtues as diligence, respect for law, honesty, respect for constituted authority, love for hard work, love for fellow men, respect for other peoples' right, the fear of God etc. is to prepare the individual for a healthy, desirable and acceptable adult life devoid of any malpractices and social or moral infringement.

Academic integrity has been conceptualized by many authors/writers, for example, Fulton (2001) saw academic integrity as that high level of honesty and morality in conducting business in academics. Centre for academic Integrity (AI) at Duke University (USA) described academic integrity as an important component of the educational system which focuses on five areas, namely honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility if the observation of Nenty (2001) is anything to go by. Many students these days no longer wish to engage themselves in any rigorous or serious academic work as experience has revealed. Thus academic integrity is a term used to refer to doing one's work (whether as an academic staff or student) with sincerity without infraction on basic ethical or moral standard which could make one be found guilty of academic dishonesty. With regard to students' academic works, serious infringement is being committed across institutions. For example, Onuka and Obialo (2003) reported that examination malpractice is on the increase despite all the efforts being taken to dissuade students from engaging in it. In the same vein, Ojerinde (2004) reported cheating and other forms of examination malpractice by candidates at the Nigeria's senior school certificate Examination (SSCE). Nowadays, there is hardly any public examination in Nigeria under taken by students that results of all the candidates involved are released all at the same time. It has almost become a norm that some portion or fraction of the results is withheld ostensibly for reasons attributable to one form of malpractice or another. Academic integrity from students' side would mean attending classes regularly and punctually, participating fully in all required academic activities, completing assignments/projects or practicals/practicum without necessarily presenting another person's idea, avoiding plagiarism, impersonation, non-obstruction of school activities within authorized engagements etc.

Forms of Academic Integrity

Students' (SAI) has earlier been described as doing one's work honourably without going against the academic integrity codes such as proper research work (rather than duplicating others work or

plagiarism); participating fully in group assignment rather than have one's name appear among the group without making any contribution, being sincere and honest in class work, test or examination rather than cheating through different means, working diligently to obtain data rather than fabrication of ghost data; attending classes regularly rather than engaging in absenteeism and truancy, when students do their work without any respect for honour or ethical and moral standards guarding academic activities, it tantamounts to academic dishonesty which is antithetical to quality scholarship and good conduct with serious consequences on development of corruption tendencies and destruction or bastardization of the country's image internationally. This fact is supported by Fulton (2001) when he observed that tolerance of academic dishonesty diminishes the intellectual and moral capital required by society for its common development and progress.

It is also common knowledge that examination officials often aid the perpetration of academic fraud. Some officials engaged to supervise or invigilate examinations have destroyed their reputation by condoning cheating in examination halls/venues. They look the other way when such acts are taking place and mostly, when it involves their relations. There are instances where academic staff have detected that some of their students have plagiarized other peoples' work without taking any appropriate corrective measures. In other instances, reported cases never saw the light of the day in the hands of the authorities concerned. These acts do nothing but encourage others who were not hitherto involved in cheating to join the "gang". The causes of academic erosion are mostly indiscipline manifesting itself in laziness and immorality. No one needs "pocket science" to know that most students today are lazy. They find it difficult studying their books while desiring to achieve success without tears. Gone are the days when students adopt such measures as Kola nut chewing, soaking feet in a bucket of water all in attempt to keep awake to read/study. Again, most students cannot discipline themselves, they want to maximally gratify their fleshly desires at the expense of their academics, they engage in watching movies, games, arguments on outcome of European football league, fun fare without considering the time wasted. Majority have lost focus and only invest their time with opposite sex. They do not attend classes but go in pairs as they roam the streets and in most cases end up in hotels/motels at the expense of studying. The role of parents cannot be completely ignored as some are known to have forced their children into programmes that they do not have the ability or interest in. For such individuals to make it, they tend to cut concerns in the form of engaging in academic dishonesty or diminished academic integrity practices. Some believe they can get away with violations of integrity codes. The result is that such students have their values reduced and it is this diminishing value that will be carried into the larger society where they would mix-up with other and extend the sordid ways of carrying on their scholarship to those in work places.

Promotion of Academic Integrity

The Nigerian culture places high emphasis on healthy moral character development. This is one of the reasons why there are laws guarding various academic activities as regulated by various bodies like Nigerian Universities commission (NUC), National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), National Board for Technical Colleges (NBTC) State Ministries of Education (SME) etc. Some tertiary institutions go a step further to produce and give "student hand book" to students at both undergraduate and post graduate levels. The handbook provides students with information that is sufficient to enable them do their class work without any infringement on the academic integrity code.

Issues related to academic dishonesty have to be dealt with using the existing academic integrity codes and laws. For instance, widespread cheating by students as well as aiding/abetting cheating by examination officials is still rampant (Ojerinde, 2004) in Nigeria's Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) because the existing laws such as the Act 33 of 1999 Examination malpractice Act is not being vigorously enforced. When both students and teachers escape punishment for dishonesty the morale of the honest ones becomes dampened and they may want to join the bandwagon trail/trend. Great psychologist like J. B. Watson of behavioural psychology believes that behaviour acquired during the formative years is likely to be the same to be embraced later on while working. This could be the main reason why reports of fraud and other acts of corruption are heard of people in high places of authority in the larger society. If the culture of integrity in all aspects of life had been nurtured to maturity in these people during the formative years such bad behaviour would not have been carried into the larger society.

All humans, especially the child learns very fast. Most of the behaviour if she acquires are not necessarily through instructions, but through Albert Bandura's observational learning or imitation learning. Children have role models, and if a role model is rewarded for good behaviour, the child is likely to follow the footsteps of such a role model. The emphasis here is that those charged with management/running the academic industry must imbibe the culture of being good role models. The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of our educational system is the role of the school, teachers and significant others. Since the learning process mostly takes place in school, then teachers are the right people to inculcate in the students these values and attitude with respect to academic integrity.

Conducive classroom environment helps the students affective expressions as well as teacher/students relationship. When students are relaxed, positive emotions tend to develop. The school and teachers should exercise proper care on the activities of the students. They should provide physical, social and mental facilities so that the students will be emotionally disposed to healthy and effective learning. Teachers are therefore required to create a sense of warmth, love, belonging, acceptance that is the (principles of Abraham Maslow's (1963 needs theory) in the minds of the students. This will guarantee reassurance and confidence build up in them.

CONCLUSION

The need for re-cultivating academic integrity in our school system cannot be overemphasized. The present generation of students needs to be given proper orientation and with the inculcation of good moral training, attitudes and values. This could be achieved through involvement of the students in open discussion on moral issues. With proper value and moral orientation, impulses towards immoral, attitude and unacceptable behaviour would be suppressed in the society. This has implications for the teacher in particular and other enlightened members of the society.

Secondly, the promotion of academic integrity is an important reimagining that every stakeholder in the business of education should give very serious attention. Although it has not been given very serious tackle in most institutions of learning, it could be promoted when every little manifestation of dishonesty in the school system is frowned at and given instant deserving punishment. When

these are put into practice, students will be aware of the need for honesty, hard work and genuiness in scholarship, which is what academic integrity is all about.

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