

Value Reorientation and Local Content Development through Counselling

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ABSTRACT

This paper focused on the need for value reorientation and local content development through counselling. Values were seen as attitudes, worth, rules, ideals, standards or qualities considered worthwhile and desirable. They are reputations, right and regulations which guide and propel the way people should do things and make right choices and decisions. Acculturation has brought about so many other practices that have corrupted the local cultural values. Many Nigerians have, therefore, lamented the perverse values of the present day Nigeria that has given it a bad reputation internationally. People like Akunyili and Ogbuagu have made clarion calls for attitudinal change about the unsatisfactory state of affairs in Nigeria like desire for wealth accumulation, desire for power, fraud, mediocrity, evil appetite, injustice and other practices like dressing pattern, lack of greetings and thanksgiving. It has been suggested that local content development using counselling could be a way of ameliorating the problem of bad values. By using client centred counselling and cognitive reconstruction techniques, individuals could have better self-understanding, develop positive self concept, think logically and act rationally irrespective of what they see in the society that are likely to influence them. The old values of our fore fathers that were relevant in our localities could be considered to replace our borrowed cultural values that have made us to become a people without roots.

1. INTRODUCTION

Values are referred to as ideals which guide, qualify or direct an individual's interaction with others, his general conduct and involvement in career (Career Resources, 2001). Ugodulunwa and Bahego (2007) asserted that values are traits and qualities that are considered worthwhile, given highest priorities which deeply help in driving forces in an individual. Values are standards or qualities considered worthwhile and desirable. They are reputations, right attitudes, worth, rules and regulations for the way people should do things and cut across: moral conducts, dressing codes, socialization and greeting, walking steps, sitting position and table manners. Man is a creature of choice; being a free moral agent. Every one, therefore, has the choice, to live right or wrong, to become enculturated or change his cultural values. The values of the olden day Nigerians have become adulterated through acculturation. Yet, some of these values are traditional values - principles or standards followed and revered by the people continuously from generation to generation.

Acculturation is seen by Microsoft Encarta (2009) as a process by which continuous contact between two or more distinct societies causes cultural change. This can happen in one of two ways. The beliefs and customs of the groups may merge almost equally and result in a single culture. More often, however, one society completely absorbs the cultural patterns of another through a process of selection and modification. This change often occurs because of political or military domination, which most African countries have experienced. Such domination and acculturation may cause considerable psychological disturbance and social unrest.

In Nigeria there have been clarion calls for attitudinal change, both at the Federal and State levels. Elechi's (2008) attitudinal change launched on 1st October, 2008 and Akunyili's (2009) 're-branding' launched on 17th March, 2009, are all indicators of an unsatisfactory state of affairs in Nigeria. Even at the international level the reputation of Nigeria is at stake, having been branded as a country where corruption, poverty and injustice reign; and recently rated as the 6th in kidnapping cases all over the world (Akunyili 2009). In Nigeria, as Ogbuagu (2007) lamented through his music, every sector of the economy shows evidence of corruption, mismanagement, poor attitude to work, mediocrity, irresponsibility, tribalism, nepotism and lack of consideration for the poor masses. The rich get richer as the poor get poorer due to extortion and their exclusion from the general sharing of the goods of the land; evidence of negative attitude and perverse values. There is a need for attitudinal change in Nigeria, but this must be brought about when there is value reorientation.

2. AREAS THAT NEED VALUE REORIENTATION

Desire for wealth accumulation, in place of desire for integrity: Many Nigerians have become so immersed with wealth acquisition and accumulation that their integrity does not matter to them. Writing on the need to revive agriculture in the South Eastern State of Nigeria Nwankpa (2004) lamented that the oil boom of the mid 1970s was the beginning of the food crises which led to the increasing food import in a country where arable land is plentiful. Continuing, Nwankpa observed that the disturbing aspect of this unenviable situation was not so much the absolute increase in total food import bill as the changing composition of the imported food items. Even food that grows in our land favourably are being imported – rice, maize, palm oil, groundnut oil and tomatoes. Nobody recognizes the dignity of labour, but the dignity in wealth accumulation. As Ogbuagu (2007) lamented, every sector of the economy shows evidence of corruption, mismanagement and poor attitude to work, thus bringing about lack of trust by the international community and investors.

Desire for power, in place of desire for honesty: The desire for power in Nigeria has led to so many dishonest behaviour patterns and practices. Election into offices in Nigeria has become ‘**selection**’. During campaigns Messiahs, visionary people, and God ‘sents’ are seen; but the moment they are voted in by election or selection they show their true colours. Their false promises of: food for all, education for all, electricity for all homes, wives for all, and houses for all turn to sealed lips for all – otherwise if anybody makes noise, eliminate him. Such leaders (Life-term aspirants) begin to use the people’s money for personal gain, carry out money to foreign countries, entertain visitors who do not add to the economic welfare of the country with millions of naira, use panels of inquiry to cover up crimes, yet money recovered from looters are never accounted for. Political thuggery using the youth as sandwiches become acceptable, because the youths are sent out of their careers and academic pursuits at the sight of little money, meant to entice them. In such situations morality and integrity lose their meaning and value in the hearts of people turn to apathy.

Fraud, in place of decency: Psychologists like Rogers (1961) maintain that normal all round developments leads to good mental health, which in itself can be influenced by the environment. This perspective sees mental health reflected in a person’s overall happiness with various domains of life, such as social relationships, work and community life. This is the reason why young people would rather prefer to engage in rebellious activities than be in school; if their experiences from the evil they see do not assist the development of a positive and realistic self concept.

Desire for mediocrity, in place of desire for honour: A study carried out by Ude (2008) on the role of Local Government Education Authority in ensuring quality control in Primary education revealed that mediocrity is no longer frowned at. His findings included that the provision of facilities were grossly inadequate, pupils in most cases were seen without books and writing materials, there were no workshops, seminars nor in-service training for teachers. Although there was supervision, the supervisors ended up in the office of the head teachers. The implication of the findings above is there will always be inefficiency and mediocrity in the society.

Evil appetite, in place of contentment: The biggest plastic industrialist (INNOSON), Chukwuma (2010) asserted “my interest is to make Nigerians believe in made in Nigeria products”. The implication of his assertion is that there is no contentment any more for Nigerians concerning indigenous products. Everything foreign is sought after, even when such products fade within a week of their purchase. There was a story about some Nigerian traders who traveled to Togo to buy some tin tomato pastes only to get home to discover that they were actually made in Nigeria and been exported by Nigerians.

Injustice, in place of desire for fair play: In their contribution on models of behaviour problems Ekoja and Amali (2004) observed that the idea of being-in-the-world as an existential psychology creates a problem for individuals. Being-in-the-world reflects the structure of meaningful relationships in which people must function. The major problem here is that many people have lost their world, as reflected in their alienation, estrangement from other human beings or from the natural world. In other words many people live in a world of make believe and so must put up appearance by hook or crook.

Other practices like dressing, greetings and thanksgiving have become so over-looked that the older generation is wondering what will happen when they exit this world. Dressing has been defined by the Oxford Learners dictionary (2009) as the act of putting on clothes; especially to cover one’s nakedness. The question is whether all dressing patterns cover people’s nakedness. When people prefer nakedness to being clothed, it is a rape on the values of the society. Admittedly, tastes vary and people do have a right to their opinions. But when it comes to how a person dresses; the person has to consider others who may be watching. Watchtower (2004) commented that dressing sends out a message; a statement to others. Clothing can whisper conscientiousness, stability, high moral standard; or it can ‘shout’ rebellion and discontent. Molestation and sexual abuse, in most cases, are often

the complaint of girls who adorn themselves with bizarre, outrageous, seductive, suggestive and undignifying attire.

Greeting in our society was a thing cherished by elders and everybody alike, but these days many people do not see the need to greet anybody. Some are not brought up with such cultural values, while others consider themselves too sophisticated to mind such minor things. Socializing with other people has become neglected. Even giving thanks or showing appreciation for what has been done for a person is taken for granted in this present day Nigeria

Good walking steps, sitting positions, table manners are all in the past now, as our modern generation has thrown all caution to the wind in what constitutes right values. Nothing matters anymore. Bad breeding, lack of training and carelessness on the part of parents, is just the summary of what has emerged at the end of everything.

3. VALUE REORIENTATION AND LOCAL CONTENT DEVELOPMENT USING COUNSELLING

Local content development involves finding out and allowing those things that are relevant to a particular locality and which are acceptable to them so that peace will reign. In carrying out local content development, a thorough study of the locality should be made to enhance re-orientation using the right and acceptable values. One way of reaching people through scientifically accepted skill, method or techniques is through counselling.

Nwachukwu (1996) viewed counselling as a relationship between a professionally trained competent counsellor and an individual seeking help in gaining greater self understanding and improved decision making and behaviour changing skills for problem resolution and developmental growth. People need counselling to have better self-understanding and improved decision making skills, values and perception with its concomitant ways of making choices.

Iwuama (2000) also observed that using the client centred counselling approach is very useful for those who have need for positive self-concept and self-awareness and hence value reorientation. Continuing, he maintained that with empathic support from the counsellor and with the necessary clues the client could be helped to explore and understand self from a better perspective, which could help him to develop a positive self-concept and take more rational decisions of life.

A counsellor could also be the one to help the client to re-orient his/her values and ways of perceiving things in order to make the right choices through cognitive restructuring.

Ellis (1976 p. 58-59) gave four ways of bringing about cognitive restructuring as:

1. uncovering a person's past and present illogical and irrational thinking by bringing them forcibly to attention or consciousness,
2. showing him how they are causing and maintaining his disturbance and unhappiness,
3. demonstrating exactly what the illogical links in the internalized sentences are, and
4. teaching him how to rethink, challenge, contradict and re-verbalize these and other similar sentences so that his internalized thoughts become more logical and efficient.

The implication of the above recommendations is that a lot of people have irrational belief system and illogical thinking that bring about perverse values. These thoughts need to be re-constructed and re-oriented for the individuals to see clearly and hence have better values. Again there is the need to counsel Nigerians that their future could be better, notwithstanding the present state of affairs that make many to cut corners. They need to be made to understand that they could be the change agents needed in value reorientation of the nation. They need to realize that the greater part of our happiness or misery depends on our dispositions, rational and logical reasoning and not our circumstances.

Furthermore, pastoral counselling could help people understand that the Bible promotes the highest values. When properly applied, spiritual values benefit us physically, emotionally and economically. The sound counsel, or advice, that is available in the bible is both practical and unequalled. The moral standards it advocates are unsurpassed. Its counsel is always beneficial and has stood the test of time. Spiritual values highlight long-range rewards, not short-term gratification; which is what leads people into various types of perverse values and criminal activities.

4. CONCLUSION

This paper has looked at the need for value reorientation and local content development through counselling. Values have been seen as ideals, standards or qualities considered worthwhile and desirable. They are reputations, right attitudes, worth, rules and regulations which guide and propel the way people should do things and make right choices and decisions. Many Nigerians have lamented about the perverse values of the present day Nigeria that has given it a bad reputation internationally. Such people like Akunyili and Ogbuagu have made clarion calls for attitudinal change about the unsatisfactory state of affairs in Nigeria. Some of the wrong values identified include: desire for wealth accumulation, desire for power, fraud, mediocrity, evil appetite, injustice and other things like dressing pattern, lack of greetings and thanksgiving.

It has been suggested that local content development, through the x-ray of what values that are desirable from the various locality is worth-while, and by using counselling the answer to ameliorating the problem of bad values could be achieved. By using client centred counselling and cognitive reconstruction techniques, individuals could have a better self-understanding, develop positive self concept, think logically and act rationally irrespective of what they see in the society. Personal integrity must over-ride the desire for wealth accumulation. Desire for honesty must over-ride the desire for power; while decency must replace fraud. Desire for honour must take over the desire for mediocrity, contentment for evil appetite and fair play for injustice.

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