

PHILOSOPHICAL IMPLICATION OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION IN THE HUMAN PERSON'S SOCIETY

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Abstract

Human persons' society generally and that of the Nigerian person particularly is fraught with so many ills. Education is believed to be one of the measures to tackle most of these societal ills, being that it is believed to be the soul of the society. Unfortunately, education as the soul of the society lacks morality, criticality and other rational tools that are necessary for making policies that will aid education in correcting the societal challenges; since it is regarded as the custodian of societal morality. The reason is that educational administrators and managers have been condemned for being excessively quantitative and too specialized, and also overlooking critical and ethical issues, thus, the placement of interest when making educational policies on production and in particular jobs without asking if such policies will benefit or harm the society. It has resulted in so many vices and loopholes discovered in our educational institutions which invariably have led to so many negative effects in the society. Based upon the forgoing that this paper sought to analytically examine how philosophy can be applied in educational administration to see how it helps administrators to become more efficient in making the inevitable ethical decision to ensure that our education meets up with the global standard in building a better society for the human person.

Key words: Philosophy, educational administration and human person

Introduction

Indeed, one cannot talk of the development and progress of any society without recourse to education. That is the reason education is referred to as the bottom rock of every sustainable development. However, for education to achieve this feat there is need for good educational policies to be made in order to guide the

teachers and educational personnel to the right part. These policies also have to be tailored towards and formulated in line with the overall philosophy and goals of a particular society that it is meant to serve. Michaud (2015: p. 75) upholds; all policy is grounded in some philosophical notion, whether it be in regards to the purpose of education, obligations to students, or the best interest of a nation. As such, philosophy remains essential in educational administration and leadership. Ekanem & Ekefre (2014) affirms that:

A nation's policy on education is the government's way of attaining that aspect of the national goals which can be achieved through the instrumentality of education. No policy on education, however, can be formulated without the primary identification of the overall philosophy and goals of the nation (501).

Ekenem's assertion indicates that a nation's education policy is the hub around which all her developmental plans revolve, and all these educational policies are carried out in line with the national philosophy and goals. The formulation of the policy however is not meant for everybody but for the educational administrators who are groomed in the act of management and control of the educational institutions in order to ensure that the government desire in building a progressive and prosperous society through the instrumentality of education is achieved.

Unfortunately, educational administrators put every other thing into consideration while planning for the educational policies and give little or no attention to philosophy, which ordinarily should have formed the substratum upon which other policies should stand in order for it to have meaning and for objectives of government to be achieved. The reason for the neglect of philosophy by educational administrators and policy makers is because of the inherent fallacy in the contemporary educational system. The society and basic educations trains people to be good workers and good followers who seek job and the primary purpose for studying is to get a job. Michaud (2015), corroborates: "philosophy to most people is just a mysterious word that brings to mind images of white beards and mysticism and contemporary society seems to have little reason to value a field devoted to ideas rather than production" (p. 74). Moreover, the neglect of philosophy by educational administrators has cost educational systems of the basic values and criticality that are needed in building a formidable institution, leading to decadence in our various institutions of learning which has in turn manifested in our society that unavoidably depends

on education for its development and sanity. It is consequent upon the misnomer as expressed above that this paper wishes to analytically examine the Philosophical implication of Educational administration in the human person's society to ensure that normalcy is restored.

Administration without Philosophy

Plato did mention that unless philosophers are rulers there will be difficulty in the attainment of a better or perfect society. Popkin and Stroll (1993) citing Plato aptly puts it thus:

Until philosophers are kings, or the kings and princes of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy, and political greatness and wisdom meet in one...then and only will this our state have a possibility of life and behold the light of the day (p. 192)

The implication of the above assertion is that those that are to steer the affairs of the society should be groomed properly in philosophy. Among those who steer the affairs of the society are educational administrators whose duties and responsibilities, among other things, are to make policies for education which feeds manpower to other sectors of the society. Unfortunately, educational administration has given little or no consideration to the study of philosophy like they have given to other areas. Consequently, educational administration according to Medhe (n.d.):

has been reprimanded for inadequacies in the leadership, decision making and moral behavior of ... managers. The quantitative and investigative introduction in ... college curricula and the resulting absence of humanities-based courses have been identified as reasons. The essential cause, however, lies in the philosophy of ... education and research which shapes the curricula, teaching systems, and, eventually the graduates' capacity to handle different administrative positions.

The neglect of philosophy by educational administration has led to decadence in our various institutions of learning which invariably has caused so much decadence in our society as can be clearly observed; considering the fact that no nation grows above her level of education. By implication, when the educational system of a nation is bad there is no how other systems will not be bad. Evil in the educational system of any nation is like cancer which if not curbed early enough will not hesitate to affect and eventually destroy other sectors; being the hub around which other sectors depends on for growth through the manpower it

continuously provides for the development of the human society. Little wonder Plato emphasized that leaders and administrators should be well educated in order to know good and evil. He believes that what one learns through good education is how to do good and avoid evil. Plato (1998) avers:

That's what education should be... the art of orientation. Educators should devise the simplest and most effective methods of turning minds around. It shouldn't be the art of implanting sight in the organ, but should proceed on the understanding that the organ already has the capacity, but is improperly aligned and isn't facing the right way (*Rep. IX. 518d*).

Plato (1998) went on to say that education is virtue and ignorance is vice, that when one knows the good, he can never do evil. Michaud (2015) further explains:

education is not just a matter, though, of making sure that the citizen knows how to perform a particular job—of greater importance to Plato was that their education helps prevent them from taking advantage of their power. This prevention, in part, takes place *through the development of a flourishing morality*. Plato wrote, "The object of education is to teach us to love what is beautiful" (*Rep. III.403*). Thus, those who are sufficiently well-educated love beauty, and, thereby, love justice. Without this education, though, the basic tendency of humans to be violent and greedy may dominate the individual (p. 76).

Therefore, discarding of philosophy in educational administration has made our society to be filled with educated men and women without morality; individuals that place material possession above their conscience leading to a warped society. As Nietzsche concludes, with surprising alacrity for a highly educated young man, that knowledge is useful only insofar as it serves life; it should not be esteemed for its own sake, which if it was so, then knowledge threatens and weakens man's creativity (Skeini, 2020). The social evil emanating from the negligence of philosophy by educational administration made Michaud (2015) to opine that:

We need evidence to combat policy that is based on poor philosophy *before it is enacted*; thus, we need philosophy. We need a means by which to combat prevailing social beliefs (philosophies) that have become entrenched, warped, or misunderstood, and thus, again we

need philosophy. If we really wish to enact policy that benefits students, and stop policy that harms them, we must address more than policy, we must change the way students, parents, politicians, and society as a whole *think* about policy – in other words, we must do *philosophy*. Otherwise, we as a society will continue to move from initiative to initiative, policy to policy, heedlessly, considering only their potential benefits to society without reflecting on the grounding principles and the notions from which they emerge. It is therefore the onus of educational administrators and leaders to delve deeply into the philosophy of the past and the present in order to effectively guide us into a future of informed governance by benevolent and thoughtful persons (p. 87).

Educational administration without philosophy has led to poor education policy formulation in our society. Our educational administrators always build our policies without the necessary foundation. The foundation upon which every educational policy ought to stand in order to be solid is philosophy because there is no how an administrator or a policy maker in education can successfully do without it. Micahud (2015) observes, "If one wishes to develop policy, take action, and *lead*, then one must know *why* one does what one does. The way we think about education, its purpose, worth and merit are all philosophical issues" (p. 75).

Furthermore, educational administration divorced of philosophy has led to a situation whereby after a long period of learning, the person coming out of the modern university is not at all in touch with the subject of morality. Moreover, the person is well versed in the technologies of energy and materials and is dedicating the total life for increasing amenities, which ultimately lead to environmental pollution and global destruction. The present human being is well versed in the concepts of profit and loss and is a master of business administration. Everybody wants to improve the personal amenities even through corruption. Corruption has become a spontaneous global phenomenon. Metals undergo corrosion and the human beings undergo the process of corruption (Swami, 2016). All these decadence and corruption resulted due to the distancing of our educational administration from philosophy. One will at this point wonder little why we have in our society the seven deadly sin of Gandhi which are: wealth without work, pleasure without conscience, knowledge without character, commerce without ethics, science without humanity, religion

without sacrifice and politics without principle (Gandhi cited in Covey, 1990: pp. 87-93).

The Resultant Effect of Educational Administration without Philosophy in our Educational Institutions

The absence of interest in philosophy by educational administration is linked to poor service delivery and other social vices in our educational institutions. Historically, the mission of education has been to develop in the young both the intellectual and the moral virtues. Concern for the moral virtues, such as honesty, responsibility, and respect for others, is the domain of (philosophy) moral education (Ryan, 2020). Moral education which is part of philosophy, then, refers to helping individuals acquire those virtues or moral habits that will help them individually live good lives and at the same time become productive, contributing members of their communities. In this view, moral education does contribute not only to the students as individuals, but also to the social cohesion of a community (Ryan, 2020). Philosophy helps an individual to know the good, to desire the good, and to do the good.

Unfortunately, philosophy having been kept in abeyance in the course of educational administration has resulted to vices in our institutions of learning which has been a serious source of worries to the government, families and society at large for some time now. Our educational institution as we speak is replete with men and women with low critical reasoning and no moral standard hence, untoward behavior and practices witnessed at all levels of our educational system. Our educational system is besieged with educational corruption which depicts the extent the academic elites, the staff personnel and students get involved in illegal and immoral practices; all of which contravenes the rules and regulations governing the institutions, which if philosophy is well taught ought not to be violated. Agbo (2018) describes educational corruption as:

the abandonment of expected standards of behaviour by staff and students' personnel as well as other educational authorities in and outside our tertiary institutions with the aim of getting undeserved advantages in the form of personal or material gains. The abandonment of expected standards of behaviour, to a large extent, indicates absence of moral behaviour, poor ethical orientations, degradation of an individual's ethical sense (p.2)

Philosophy would have ordinarily helped in forming the educational policies that will be morally based hence, telling administrators that teachers and staff should be hired with good character as a criterion; it would have made the teachers to know that not only should character be stressed to students but also their own characters are on display; it could have made coaches know that athletics should be seen through the lens of sportsmanship rather than winning and losing; and it could have made students know that their efforts and difficulties, their successes and disappointments are all part of a larger process, the formation of their characters (Ryan, 2020). Character and morality is really needed in our educational institutions because our educational institutions remain the birthing ground of future leaders and professionals that would determine the destiny of our nation in the near future. But on the contrary vices and corruption have enveloped them; hence, depreciating the quality of our education in particular and the society generally.

The corruption and decadence in Nigeria's educational institutions are multi-faceted. When corruption is mentioned what many usually have in mind is monetary inducement. The corruption and decadence in our educational system is more than taking or giving of bribes, in terms of monetary demands and rewards. The term is far wider than what we imagine it to be (Muktar, 2016). According to Okobi (1997) the following forms of corruption are common in most tertiary institutions in Nigeria: examination malpractice, admission racketeering, hostel profiteering, extortion of the students, abuse of office, sorting, forgery of certificates and statements of results, sexual harassment and immorality, embezzlement of funds, godfatherism, corruption in recruitment and promotion of staff and placing government's or management's machinery at the disposal of a particular student to win election during students' politics in the campus. Others include: writing a good remark (confidential report) for a student (or a staff) who does not deserve it, contracts inflation and variation, lobbying to be posted to juicy departments, lobbying to be put in juicy committees, lobbying to be given more courses and larger classes, sycophancy, favouritism, bribery, absenteeism, truancy, poor attitude to work, padding of salaries, making "gifts" to persons in authority so as to take some personal advantages, violation of rules and policies for personal gains; kickbacks, nepotism (giving unfair advantages to your relatives, friends, political benefactors if you are in a position of authority or power), etc (Agbo, 2018: p.6).

The cancerous spread of corruption in tertiary institutions in Nigeria has far reaching consequences on these institutions as well as the nation. Agbo (2018) agrees, "Corruption is capable of sapping the development potentials of not only the institutions but the entire nation. Specifically, corruption in the education sector has the potential of eclipsing any meaningful educational policies and programmes (p. 6). More so, as Acho (2012) opines, it stunts pertinent variables necessary for educational development, including multiplier effects, by rendering impotent the very structures, institutions and human resources that are designed to facilitate growth. Institutionalized educational corruption increases administrative costs, losses in the revenue of these institutions, results in goal displacement as the institutions' goals are replaced with the personal benefits of some persons (Agbo, 2018: p. 6). Educational corruption in tertiary institutions in our society affects standard of education in that it has adverse effects on the manner in which educational practices are run and practiced; it reduces standards and quality of education in the society as illiterate graduates are produced.

The foregoing is the price we have to pay for trying to divorce philosophy from educational administrators and policy makers in the course of their learning. However, turning to philosophy as was done in the days of yore will go a long way in remedying the situation.

Philosophy in Educational Administration

Considering the bad effect in our educational systems and society from the neglect of philosophy, it is high time educational administrators re-adopt and reintegrates philosophy in the course of their study because it will go a long way in remedying our educational system that is on the brink, due to absence of critical reasoning and moral impress which are domiciled in philosophy. Bailin & Young (1990) affirm:

Educators (educational administrators) should themselves be educated persons and philosophy constitutes an important part of the intellectual heritage of such persons if we view human beings as inquirers who seek to understand and to make meaning, then philosophy can be seen as chronicling such inquiry. And if one of the roles of the educator is to promote inquiry, then philosophy is an appropriate grounding.

Michaud (2015) observes; these benefits, such as improved critical thinking, flexible problem solving, and inquiry-based learning are benefits that may not be

limited to philosophy itself. Moreover, in an age in which practicality rules, it has become essential that one demonstrate concrete examples when justifying the worth of a thing which the knowledge of philosophy assists. Since, it has been proven that philosophical knowledge is the most critical skills that are required in administrative and management responsibilities (Medhe, n.d.).

Again, there is no gainsaying that philosophical knowledge is very relevant to every administrative career, most especially that of educational administration. This is because the incorporation of philosophy in the administrative courses aids administrators and policy makers in making informed decisions, developing effective staff and students' motivation skills and devising unique administrative skills that will help in the smooth and effective running of the educational system. The problem with our educational system in the most recent past and even now is that in making educational policies our administrators and policy makers concentrate in preparing the students to get a job or teach them the skills they require in life to survive. Some also, make the purpose of education seem only the teaching of the "3Rs," which are Reading, wRiting and aRithmetic (Ekanem & Ekefre, 2014: p. 501). However, philosophers do not see these as the primary goal of education. To them the purpose of education transcends the 3Rs, education for them should touch the moral, affective, psychomotor and cognitive domains. All these areas philosophers believe must be affected and put into consideration in formulating educational policies for the good of the systems and society as a whole. Ekanem and Ekefre (2014) substantiate:

The importance of philosophy to education is that it defines the purpose and focus of an educational institution. It becomes a part of its mission statement that in turn defines what subject are taught, how they are taught, how institution are administered or managed and the values that are derivable from what are taught both implicitly and explicitly through the process of administration.

The purpose of education as viewed by philosophers is basically that it is the reproduction of a culture. This takes diverse forms, because in a conservative state or environment, it just implies the maintenance of the status quo, while in a liberal system it implies the teaching of values and more that are not presently part of the culture but are considered desirable. The general implication here is that the values taught are usually that of those that control the

schools, which include the church, communities and the government (501).

So, if education is to fulfill its purpose of catering for some aspects of human needs in the society, it is imperative that it must embrace philosophy; as philosophy is imbued with morality and education without morality is detrimental to the society. Rousseau (n.d.) talking about education without philosophy laments, "Since learned men began to appear among us, good men have disappeared." What Rousseau meant here is the fact that the education of those "learned men" was devoid of morality, due to lack of philosophy and morality in the education of these "learned men", their education was not beneficial to mankind since it could not fulfill the purpose of catering for the needs of human nature (Ekanem, 2013).

Furthermore, education being the mind of the society needs philosophy to help it think deep. The onus now lies on the educational administrators to do this thinking when forming the policies that will guide the development of the society. Thus, being the case educational administrators should ensure that they are abreast with the tenets of philosophy of their people to ensure that the goal of education is achieved. Ekanem and Ekefre (2014) corroborate:

Education is to the nation what the mind is to the body. It is clear that a mind that is sick will be handicapped to coordinate and direct bodily activities. This provides us the basis to argue that education is the most significant complex of social-control mechanism or tools that promotes national development. As the engine room of national development, it is imperative that education must be established or founded on a good philosophy. This is so because philosophy involves thinking deeply about something. So, thinking here implies thinking deeply about education. (p. 504)

So education is considered to be worthwhile when the educated think well and critically implement what they have learnt for the betterment of the society. They will be able to do so when philosophy has gotten a better hold of them. Ekanem and Ekefre (2014) agree:

Education can be considered a good education when it is able to implant in those being educated to think deeply about all that they learn, and be able to explore the big questions, and ensure that all the parts they learn fit perfectly together to offer explanation about

the world. Philosophy inspires reasoning about reason, and it assist to improve one's reasoning as it makes it possible to be clear, relevant broad, deep, accurate and consistent. Philosophy involves reasoning about what is right and wrong. It is also about reasoning about what constitute knowledge. It is on the basis of this that logic, ethics, epistemology and aesthetics are fundamental topics of philosophy that should be taught to all students so that they can learn to think deeply, relevantly and consistently. It is only philosophy that can challenge us to think outside the box, which is something most people cannot do without assistance.

The above quotation implies that as a mode of inquiry and also a discipline philosophy if employ in the course of educational administration will enrich administrators and policy makers with the capacity of reflection and rational decision making and ensure the good of educational system and society as a whole. Snauwaert (2012) opines, "Philosophy will play this fundamental role through the provision of frameworks for the understanding and generation of ideas, methods of aids, the cultivation of capacity of reflection and rational discourse" (77).

Finally, administration generally is centrally concerned with value and if such is the case, then educational administration should be more involved with value in order to build a moral human person that will live in an orderly society. In order to achieve this philosophy is needed by educational administrators and educational policy makers in order to assist them clarify concepts, uncover and scrutinize assumptions, and examine the cogency of arguments (Bailin & Young, 1990). And in unmasking the values and assumptions hidden behind authoritative-sounding pronouncements, philosophy can counter the tendency to view educational policy and practice as simply a question of the application of technique, showing that questions can be raised not only about means to ends, but about ends themselves. One might view as one goal of philosophy to arrive at better justified policy and practice, and the search for justification may well lead to new and different policies and practices (Bailin & Young, 1990). Thus, the effects of philosophy on educational administrations can be real and palpable.

Conclusion

If there is one thing philosophy is highly interested in, it is the human person. In other to produce a better human person, philosophy has always laid emphasis on

education and administration to do so. This paper believes that through education that human mind will be illuminated and an illuminated mind is capable of directing others and society a right. And to direct others to do the right thing is leadership or administration entails. It is through philosophy that the human mind can be thoroughly educated to achieve this goal of leading others, hence the interest of philosophy in educational administration.

More so, since it is the educational administrators that make policies and regulations for education it is imperative that they are well groomed in philosophy. This is because one cannot lead or make serious and proper policy without critical reasoning; administration implies an orderly way of thinking, in that it describes in operational terms what is to be done, how it is to be done and how one knows what they have done. Thus, educational administration is a method of operation and a sound educational administration should result in an orderly integration of education and the society which this paper believes that philosophy will go a long way in aiding it to achieve, considering the fact that philosophy is the study of thought, how one thinks, and why one learns. To integrate philosophy as a serious part of educational administration is to study how people best learn, the foundations of thought in our society and societies that came before us. By learning how previous people and societies thought, we see how our world's societies, norms, and structures came to be and know their errors and reason on the best way to improve on them through improved policies that educational administration is inclined to do.

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