

Constraints In The Teaching Of Moral Instruction In Secondary Schools In Ebonyi State:
Implications For Moral Behaviour Of Students

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Abstract

The study is geared toward investigating constraints in the teaching of moral instruction; implications for moral behavior of secondary school students in Ebonyi State. Three research questions were posed to guide the study. Descriptive survey research design was used. The area of the study was Ebonyi State. The population of the study was 240 moral instruction teachers and principals drawn from 120 sampled schools out of 167 in the state. Purposive sampling technique was adopted in selection of one moral instructor and principals each from the 120 sampled schools. Structured questionnaire was the instruments for data collection. Mean and percentage were used to analyze data. Mean used to analyze research question 1 and 3 while percentage was used to analyze research question 2 only. The results showed that lack of commitment on the part of the instructors and management are constraints in the teaching of moral instruction, inadequate trained personnel is also a constrain to the teaching of moral instructions in schools and that they have negative implications on the moral behavior of the school pupils. The implication of the findings is that the methods of teaching moral instruction in schools are not adequate to deal with the rate of moral decadence in the society. Based on the findings recommendations were made on how to improve the teaching of moral instruction in schools so that it could achieve its desired objectives which include shaping moral behavior of school children. This however is the major contribution of the work.

Introduction

Moral refers to principles and beliefs involving right or wrong behaviour. The word moral could be used to connote code of conduct, custom, habit and rules of a group of people. Morality is a term involving a pursuit of good life. Moral could be viewed as actions and inactions which could guide man to relate with one another in a given society. Moral education or instruction is one of the operational subjects in Nigerian primary and secondary schools. It is a subject that deals with how we ought to live as moral beings in the society. Moral instruction therefore involves directing and guiding the students to learn the right conduct of the society for a smooth co-existence. According to Njoku (2012) moral instruction as a school subject could be described as values, norms and knowledge systematically selected and presented to learners to enable them function effectively in the society; while Okpara (2006) defined moral instruction as chains of organized knowledge which were derived from a given religion to help man achieve personal measure of insight into the system of the universe. Oxford advanced learners dictionary 6th edition viewed moral instruction as an intellectual way of presenting moral values to learners; or an attempt made by teachers to develop moral autonomy in a child through a systematic breeding of the mind.

Analyzing from the above view points moral instruction is a process of teaching and giving pieces of advice to another person on issues of moral. It could also mean doing things which are good and decent as well as abstaining from bad and indecent behaviours. Though morals can vary as much as there are people to teach them, hence moral actions are dependent upon situations and environment.

Moral instruction according to Ihuoma (1985) has the goal of assisting in developing compassionate and fair minded persons who can make positive contributions to the society as individuals and members of the group. The major aim of moral instruction is to train individual who would not only be educated, rational and sympathetic but also have sense of social responsibility and respect for others (Njoku, 2012).

Summarizing the objectives of moral instruction in building up moral behaviour of school children, Obinna (2006) observed that the major target of the subject is to transmit values of nation's heritage to the next generation while supporting the autonomous moral development of the students. The inclusion of moral instruction in the national curriculum was informed by the pervasiveness of moral crisis among the secondary school students. Moral instruction however is not an examinable subject but was essentially designed to inculcate moral values and norms into the lives of the learners. The above assertion according to Aguoba (2006) could be a causative factor in teachers' and students' lack of interest in the subject; thereby depriving the subject its place in imparting moral knowledge and leading them into undesirable behaviours. The role of an instructor of moral values and norms is to impart information through directing, counseling and commanding learners to acquire the knowledge. Njoku (2010) cited Nwachukwu (1995) who said that children learn the norms and values of their society through imitation, observation and instruction.

The students under study fall within the adolescent group between the age brackets of 12-18years. The behaviour of this group is usually not stable and they are vulnerable to crime because of their level of maturity. Azubuike (2011) observed that secondary school students exhibit high level of moral decadence which could be attributed to current approaches to the teaching of moral instruction in the schools. Imo and Eze (2009) highlighted that the methods of teaching moral instruction in schools are

not good enough to deal with the rate of moral decadence in the society. Various reports from mass media revealed that the increase in immoral acts is prevalence in the secondary schools. Abnormal behaviours such as examination malpractice, stealing/robbery, fighting/quarreling, dishonest, disobedient, damaging of school property to mention but a few are the order of the day in the schools in Ebony State.

Ernest (1991) in his studies observed that the problems of teaching moral instruction in secondary schools are complex. Expiating on the problems associated with the teaching Ernest mentioned among others lack of concrete instruction materials, lack of commitment by the management, inadequate provision and use of instructional materials while teaching the subject as major factors in the teaching of the subject in secondary schools. It is also a fact that apparent lack of qualified teachers could affect teaching and learning. These unqualified teachers do not make use of advanced methods and materials while teaching. Students on their part see moral instruction as not relevant hence it is not assessed in the terminal exams like other subjects or a prerequisite to any course of study in the tertiary institutions. More so, most students and teachers in secondary schools in Ebony State usually do not turn up to school on Thursday which is the officially mapped day for teaching the subject. However, Victor (2003) noted that the teaching of moral education be among the duties of parents, churches and schools. Victor further stated that the school has failed in this role of moral training, and parents are not always around to display those socially approved behaviour for their children to learn as a result of quest for means of livelihood. Also the quest for materialism has crept into the churches and disarmed sound moral teachings; thereby living the society in malady of immorality.

Presently there is a wide concern about the nation's moral predicament. This problem could be understood as emanating from uncritical adoption of values of the foreign cultures especially that of materialism, killing and sexual abuse both in the schools, political corridors and even in economic relations in the society. Ihuoma (1985) noted apparent inadequate concern on matters of morality among the school children as a major factor in moral failures of our society. Ihuoma emphasized that nowadays children are groomed to be intellectually giants and morally bankrupt, as such they grow to fill the vacuum with behaviours they learn from televisions, radio, magazines and peers.

However, the above statements seem like an illusion since there is an adverse moral crisis in the present day schools to the point that common rules and regulations of the schools are frequently violated without fear. Therefore this malady call for effective approaches to the teaching of moral instruction to enable it shapes the moral lives of the students.

Statement of the Problem

Moral instruction has been the major target of the early missionaries in establishing schools in Nigeria, but presently the quest for children moral training is loosing its credit in schools hence moral degeneracy is the order of the day. Likewise federal government of Nigeria in its education policies included moral instruction in the school curriculum because of its significance in building and shaping the behaviour of school pupils. In secondary schools in Ebony State in particular there have been a "Wanton" occurrences of social evil ranging from stealing, raping, bullying, fighting, disrespect just to mention a few. Scholars like Njoku (2012) apportion blame on teachers' pattern of teaching moral instruction in schools. Njoku observed that the subject is left in the hands of other over zealous subject teachers; who have little or no idea of the subject. It is against this background that the researcher sought to investigate the constraints in the

teaching of moral instruction in secondary schools in Ebonyi state and their implication in the moral behaviour of the students. The problem of this study put in a question form is: what are the constraint in the teaching of moral instruction and their implication for moral behaviour of secondary school students in Ebonyi State?

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to guide the study.

1. How does inadequate commitment a constraint in the teaching of moral instruction in secondary schools in Ebonyi?
2. How do inadequate trained personnel as constraint affect the teaching of moral instruction in secondary schools in Ebonyi?
3. What are the moral implications of inadequate teaching of moral instruction in the lives of secondary students in Ebonyi State?

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study includes all the 167 schools out of which 120 schools were sampled using simple random sampling techniques. Purposive sampling technique was adopted in selection of moral instructors one each from the sampled schools and 120 principals from all the sampled schools thereby making the target population to be 240. This was to ensure that only regular moral instructors were selected in the schools. Structured questionnaire was the instruments for data collection. The instrument was face validated so as to ensure its usability, relevance of items and clarity of sentence. The researcher administered the validated instrument to the sampled population. Multiple statistical tools were used for data analysis. Mean was used to analyze the data on research questions one and three while percentage was used to analyze data on research question two. Criterion mean of 2.50 was adopted as decision rule. Scores below 2.5 are interpreted rejected while scores within 2.5 and above are adjudged accepted.

Data presentation

Table 1: Mean scores of respondent on lack of commitment as a constraint in the teaching of moral instruction.

N= 240

S/N	Items	X	Remark
1	Allocation of the subject once in a week in school time table.	3.6	Agreed
2	Lack of sensitization on the value of the subject	2.8	Agreed
3	Lack of well defined curriculum	3.3	Agreed
4	Poor method of teaching the subject	2.6	Agreed
5	Poor teaching arrangement	2.8	Agreed
6	Moral instruction is seen as a mere attachment to the school curriculum hence it is not evaluated	3.6	Agreed
7	Lessons are not planed and as such objectives are not set	2.8	Agreed
8	Attendance to class is not check mated by the instructors	2.7	Agreed
9	Teaching are left in the hands of any teacher who can read and interpret the bible	3.0	Agreed
10	In my school moral instruction time is usually used for praying and fasting	3.3	Agreed
11	Inadequate qualified moral instructors in the school	2.7	Agreed

12	Poor supervision of the teaching of the subject	3.0	Agreed
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Grand mean 2.95

Table 1 shows that items 1-12 on lack of commitment a constraint in the teaching of moral instruction obtained mean scores above 2.50. The results with a grand mean of 2.95 indicate that the respondents agreed that lack of commitment is a constraint in the teaching of moral instruction.

Table 2: *Percentage responses on inadequate trained personnel as constrain in the teaching of moral instruction.*

N =240

S/N	Items	Responses	%
13	Does your school have moral instruction teachers	No	75%
14	Are your teacher's graduates of religion education	No	83%
15	Does your school have more than two teachers	No	75%
16	Does you school make use of instructors may be from churches	No	91%
17	Is the subject handled by teachers of other subjects	Yes	8%
18	Does the teacher set objectives of the lessons before delivery the lesson	No	100%
19	Does your teacher spell out what to teach weekly like in other subjects	No	100%
20	Is the teaching of moral instruction done class by class like in other subjects	No	95%
21	Is the teaching of the subject monitored by the head teacher	No	95%

The questionnaire items in table 2 show that the respondents agreed that inadequate trained personnel is a major constraint to the teaching of moral instruction. For instance items 13, 14, 15, 16,17, 18, 19 , 20 and 21 shows a percentage above 60% and only item 16 scores a low percentage of 8% indicating that the subject is usually handled by teachers who are not trained in the area; perhaps teachers of other subjects.

Table 3: *Mean response scores on the moral implications of inadequate teaching of moral instruction in the life of secondary schools students in Ebonyi State.*

N =240

S/N	Items	X	Remark
22	Truancy among the students	3.0	Agreed
23	Involvement in anti social behaviours such as cultism, stealing	3.6	Agreed
24	Lack of respect for human dignity and constituted authorities	3.8	Agreed
25	Aggressive behaviours such as fighting quarreling etc	2.9	Agreed
26	Poor moral and social habits and manners	3.1	Agreed
27	Non appreciation of societal common values such as love, honesty, fairness and obedience	3.0	Agreed
28	Inability to differentiate right from wrong	2.8	Agreed
29	Poor moral judgment and decision making required to deal with conflicts	2.9	Agreed
30	Nurturing individuals who do not appreciate and preserve the traditional culture	3.0	Agreed
31	Inability to develop right conscience	2.8	Agreed
32	Lack of self control	2.7	Agreed
33	Unable to overcome emotional imbalance	3.0	Agreed

Grand mean 3.05

Table 3 showcased a grand mean of 3.05 which falls above the criterion mean of 2.50. This implies that the respondents agreed that poor teaching of moral instruction in schools has implications on the moral behavior of the students.

Summary of the Findings

The findings of the study are summarized as follows:

- That lack of commitment on the part of the instructors and management is a major obstacle to the teaching of moral instruction in secondary schools in Ebonyi State.
- The study revealed that Inadequate trained personnel poses constraints in the teaching of moral instruction in secondary schools in Ebonyi State.
- The study revealed that Inadequate teaching of moral instruction in schools has contributed immensely to the prevalence of immoral behavior in our secondary schools.

Discussion

Results of the study in table 1 showed that the respondents agreed with the items in 1-12 on lack of commitment by the teachers and administrator are major constraints to effective teaching of moral instruction. This was evident in the results which emphasized the impact of teachers' commitment on the teaching and learning of moral instruction. The finding was understandable because most moral instruction teachers do not organize and spell out the objectives of the lesson, specify the schemes as well as do not sensitize the students on the value of the subject. Most often the teaching of the subject is not being supervised nor arranged according to class levels; hence the target objectives were not achieved. This is in line with Ernest (1991) and Nweze (2007) who postulates that students' lack of interest in the subject, teachers' lack of commitment and inadequate trained personnel constitute problems to the teaching of moral instruction. This means that students and teachers' interest are paramount to the teaching of the subject which will in turn help in moulding moral behavior of the students.

In line with the above, poor teaching of moral instruction in schools will jeopardize the future growth of students. Ihuoma (1985), Elam (1995) and Anyikwa (2002) observed that the essence of teaching moral instruction in school is to reinforce social virtues acquired at home so that children can apply them in schools and then society. However, the implication of teaching moral instruction in the schools is geared to develop in the student good moral behavior. When the teaching of moral instruction is neglected, moral decadence tends to grow more rapidly.

Educational Implications

The findings have implications for moral instructor and school administrator and government. The findings unveiled teachers' inadequate commitments to the teaching as a constraint. This means that if effort is made to increase instructors' commitment to their jobs; it would go along way in enhancing the moral behavior of the school children. It also has implication for the government to employ well trained personnel to teach the

subject so that it will achieve its aims and objectives in the life of the people. The findings of this study if strictly looked into will help in reshaping the moral behavior of the students which is the major goal moral instruction is geared to achieve.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The instructors should as a matter of urgency review their teaching methods, techniques and ensure that concrete objectives are drawn to impact the desired behavior in the lives of the students.
2. Moral instructors should utilize every opportunity and resources available in school to enhance their teaching style.
3. School management should show high level of commitment in ensuring that the instructor delivers their job and that appropriate methods and techniques needs to be adopted while teaching.
4. Adequate teaching and proper supervision of moral instruction classes will enhance the moral behavior of the school children.

Conclusions

Following the findings of the study, it could be concluded that instructors and administrators' commitment to the teaching of moral instruction in secondary schools would create impressive impact in the teaching of moral instruction. It also established that inadequate trained personnel affect the teaching of moral instruction thereby inhibiting the students from learning the desired moral behaviours. The instructors and administrators should endeavour to put interest in the teaching of the subject; adequate provision of well qualified/trained instructor to handle the subject as a positive change towards the subject will boost the moral behaviour of school children thus lead to value education that would transform future Nigerians and her society.

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