



Ethics and Value for National Development: Implication for Counselling

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Abstract

Ethics are codes of conducts designed to guide professionals, protect clients, safeguard their autonomy as a profession as well as enhance the status of the profession in general, while values are the treasure of life, making humans wealthy and rich morally, socially and value wise. A life filled with values is a life of self-respect and dignity. The sole objective of counselling is to help individuals in making choices which will lead to lives which are individually satisfying and socially effective and function well in the society, hence, this paper which is a reviewed paper looked at the place of ethics and values in national development and the role which the counsellor can play in order to instil ethical values and morality in making a better citizen and how these can contribute to national development. After reviewing the works of other researchers, the author came to a conclusion that ethics and values are the virtue every Nigerian needs to contribute his or her quota to national development and this values and ethics can be done through the activities of counsellors. It was recommended among others that counselling services should be provided in every facet of our lives including churches, schools, homes etc to enable the original values and ethics which characterise societies be re-instated for sustainable national development.

Key words: Ethic, Value, morality, attitudinal change, value reorientation, National Development and Counselling.

Introduction:

Observations have been made severally concerning the development of Nigeria as a country. Since the return of Nigeria as a country to democratic regime, this transition period as compared to other world countries had witnessed the widening of the economic gap between developed and underdeveloped nations and a growing awareness on the part of the latter to bridge this gap. Underdeveloped nations had particularly pinned their hopes on industrialization, which had historically proved itself to be dependable means to achieve the supreme objective of economic development, namely to elevate the living standard of the people and to promote their social and economic well being. The developing countries had generally fared well in the field of industrial development and have been instrumental in accelerating the pace of industrialization of the country, (Gibson, 2004).

Human existence in every society is guided by some ethical and moral considerations, which guides human conducts; this makes them sensitive to the beauty of moral goodness and call for patriotism among citizens of any given nation or society. Nigeria, like any other society has its code of conducts which govern the behaviours of its citizens.

To be a happy member of Nigeria society, one must be ready to act in accordance with its code of conducts.

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The code of conducts of Nigeria society is the expected standard ways of behaviour which guarantees the survival of its society. It guides the roles which every member of the society has to play, to contribute to the betterment of its society for transformation and national development. Nigeria as a nation is suffering from a lot of character and attitudinal problems, where the image and personality of Nigerians are at stake globally. This has been attributed to the fact that most countries of the world see Nigerians as a morally bankrupt nation full of corruption and cannot be trusted by anybody for the purpose of integrity, character and engagements (Awoniyi, 2015).

However, the velocity of the social and ethical value decadence has become so mind-burgling that one may be tempted to join authors like Anagbogu, 2012; Arisi, (2013); Ogbodo (2014) in proclaiming that Nigeria is a movie. According to these authors “Nigeria is a movie; a saga in killing of people, kidnapping, arms Rubbery, Cultism, drugs abuse, examination malpractices, Boko Haram, abandoned projects, abandoned responsibilities, official and personal corruption, tribalism, nepotism and godfatherism, where the collective bargain of public goods are suppressed and undermine for the interests and promotion of personal aggrandisements against the good of the generality of Nigerians (Chirino-Klevans, 2014).

Ethics can be reflective of a culture, religion, the life cycle, state of an organization and other sets of belief system (Ikontonye, 2008). Therefore, ethics can be viewed differently at different times, occasion and situation and from different prisms of the counselor. Even the explicit nature of and seeming universal applicability of ethical standards, there is a universal cord, which transcends every tribe, race, creed and country. It is in the light of this that Ajagbawa, (2014) posited that values are mental processes that are both cognitive and emotional. Values combine cognitive representations such as concepts, goals, and beliefs with emotional attitudes that have positive or negative valence. For example, the values associated with life and death requires the cognitive concepts of life and death and the emotional attitudes that view life as positive and death as negative (Thagard, 2013).

Values are cognitive processes because the individual is enabled to make choices amongst an array of alternative actions when confronted with a dilemma/situation and at the same time emotional because those cognitive decisions are influenced by the intrinsic attractiveness or aversion which the brain associates with the current pattern of action. Emotions are guided by beliefs and beliefs are tuned by stored information and reactivation of forgotten memory. Values are both subjective and objective, with intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics. What one may view as positive value may be a negative value to another person. Despite all these, values are universal norms expected of individuals within a given society.

This suggests that the values and or interpretation or response of an individual to a particular situation must be contextualised within the emotional predisposition and experiential space of the individual (Wooden, 2003).

Every organization or society's values are judged by the behavior it rewards. Its core values and principles constitute the foundation and core guidance platform on how the organization or society behave, how decisions are made, what the organization or society is to its external audience, how they reward, how interpersonal relationships are defined, and what the organizations' intrinsic character should be (Ikontonye, 2008). ERC (2014a) observed that leadership is an embodiment of the organizational values and how the leadership react during (perceived) crises, how they allocate resources; their role modeling and coaching; what behavior they choose to reward and punish; and their hiring, retention, promotion, and dismissal of employees; the criteria they use for each; will define the values held by the organization (ERC, 2014). Values are a combination of beliefs, attitudes and norms on which behaviour and actions are embedded. The society's values determine how a person goes about conducting his civic responsibilities and the level of achievement on the nation's building process. It represents those criteria which are important to the person and which becomes the lever of performance and or behavior. Values are the key assumptions that underlie the questions a counsellor asks the client, what answers he expects or gets and what defines the very assumptions upon which the communication is seated between the two (Joann Harris-Bowlsbey, 2008).

However, BACP, (2014) observed that ethical values which individuals, societies and nations should strive to uphold include

- ❖ Respecting human rights and dignity
- ❖ Protecting the safety of citizens
- ❖ Enhancing the quality of professional knowledge and its application
- ❖ Fostering a sense of self that is meaningful to the person(s) concerned
- ❖ Increasing personal effectiveness
- ❖ Enhancing the quality of relationships between citizens
- ❖ Appreciating the variety of human experience and culture
- ❖ Striving for the fair and adequate provision of services to the citizens,
- ❖ Respect for constituted authority, laws and regulations
- ❖ Patriotism above self and for the nation and society
- ❖ Respecting civil obligations and civic responsibilities inside and outside the society or nation

Concept of Guidance and Counselling

Generally speaking, Guidance and Counselling is a helping profession, which helps the individuals solve their problems also showing the individual the way to handle his/her problems of life at both private, personal or at societal levels. It also helps the individual to understanding his/her strength and weaknesses.

Authors like ERC. (2014); Denga (2011); Ogbodo (2013) all agreed that Guidance is a process, developmental in nature, by which an individual is assisted to understand, accept and use his/her abilities, aptitudes, interest and attitudinal patterns in relation to his/her to separations. Guidance as an educational construct invoices those experiences that assist each client to understand him/herself, accept him/herself, and live effectively in his/her society. This is in addition to the client's experiences in the world of worth and the people found there.

However, Guidance can also be a programme or services to individuals based upon the need to each individual, an understanding of his/her immediate environment, the influence of environmental factors on the individual and the unique features of each school. Guidance is designed to help each individual, adjust to his/her environment, develop the ability to set realistic goals for himself/ herself and improve his/her education. As a process, Guidance is not a simple matter but involves a series of actions or progressive steps which move towards goals. As a service, we can isolate four major services, those of educational, vocational, personal and social guidance (Oginni, Ogunlusi and Ojodu, 2012).

Concept of Counselling

Counselling is a branch of Guidance and Counselling programme aims at giving help to "self" who is unhappy, confused or worried. It helps the individual to take a decision about changing bad attitude and behaviour to the acceptable ones. It is an advice given by a professional to an individual who is unhappy or confused. It gives help in form of advice or direction for improvement of one's life. It is difficult to think of a single definition of Counselling. This is because definitions of counselling depend on theoretical orientation. Counselling according to authors like Hodgson, (2001); Ikontonye (2008); Ogbodo, (2014), "is a learning oriented process, which occurs usually in an interactive relationship with the aim of helping a person learn more about themselves and to use such understanding to enable them become effective and patriotic members of society.

Counselling is a process by which the helper expresses care and concern towards the person with a problem and facilitates that person's personal growth and brings change through self-knowledge. Counselling is a relationship between a concerned person with a need. This relationship is usually person – to – person, although sometimes it may involve more than two people to understand and

clarify their views, and learn how to reach their “self” determined goals through meaningful, well informed choices and through the resolution of emotional or interpersonal problems.

Meanwhile, Anagbogy, (2010) Cited in Ogbodo (2013), defined counselling as a number of procedures used in assisting an individual in solving problems which arise in various aspects of his life or in assisting him to maximize his overall personal development so that the person could be more useful to the society in which he/she lives. The implication to the above definition is that the individual worker needs assistance in order to maximize his/her potential while at work and out work too. How then can counselling services contribute to nation building?

Developing our Nation

Counselling, practitioners agree is a part of guidance services rendered to individuals who need help, especially as to coping effectively under situations that are psychologically problematic. Most practitioners hold the views that the goal of counselling is fundamentally “to effect change in behaviour so that recipients may live a more productive and satisfying life in order to contribute to our National Development”, (Okobia and Okorodudu, 2004; Tonbra, 2013). In other words, the purpose of Counselling is to assist individuals to explore and understand themselves so that they can become self-directed individuals, (Okobia, 2004). Though Counselling, as implied above, helps and an individual to analyze him/herself by relating his capabilities, achievements, interests and mode of adjustment, to the new decision he has to make or he has made. Counselling does this by helping the counsellee to learn about him/herself and his psychological and social environments for the purpose of equipping him or her with the skills for coping with challenges and to adopt better ways of relating with the events of life, (Shertzer and stone 1976 in Ogbodo, 2013; Tonbra, 2013).

National Ethics and Values

Ethics is a systematic and critical analysis of morality, of the moral factors that guide human conduct in a particular society or practice. Ethics deals with the values, rules, duties and virtues of relevance to both human and ecosystem well-being, providing a critical and normative analysis of the moral issues at stake in that sector of human activities. When actual moral values, rules and duties are subjected to ethical analysis, their relation to basic human interests shared by people, regardless of their cultural, religious and tribal setting, is particularly important. Moral values may change, and moral reasoning asks whether the practices that are traditionally and factually legitimated by religion, law, tribe, ethnicity or politics are indeed worthy of recognition. Ethics is the system or code of morals of a particular philosophy, religion group, professions etc.

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The word “ethics” was derived from the Greek word “Ethos” which means the cherished ways of behaviours that is peculiar to a set of people, (Caine, Caine, McClintic and Klimek, 2008; Arisi, 2013).

Traditionally speaking, ethics deal with the problems of values as these concerns human conducts, good character and fulfilment of life and societies vary in their code of conducts.

Lawal, (2011) further posited that value in calculation is a training of question, explore, clarify and understand our own values, beliefs, attitudes, custom and Nation ethics. According to Federal Republic of Nigeria Constitution (1999), Nigerian national ethics shall be discipline, integrity, dignity of labour, social justices, religious tolerant, self-reliance and patriotism. Here lies the essence of the “Nigerian Declaration of Human Responsibilities” Launched by President Obabanjo in September, 1999, is a manifestation of the genuine effort to bridge the government and the governed. The declaration calls for civic and moral education as a subject for all citizens of our great country. Chirino-Klevans, (2014) held that judging from the use of ethical and moral prism, if Nigeria national development must be achieved, then, we must equip the youths with effective and functional ethical and moral values for:

- Respect for the rule of law:
- Respect for the honest endeavour:
- Respect for our national symbols;
- Respect for rights of every one;
- Eradication of corruption and promotion of peace, harmony and unity.
- Self respect in terms of meeting our civic obligations (payment of tax as at when due).
- Respect and proper use and management of properties and goods.
- Respect for equal opportunities for all citizens irrespective of who you are, where you come from, the religion you practice or ethnicity.
- Tolerance and team spirit, “patriotism above self and ethnicity”.

Meanwhile, the National policy on Education (1981) revised (2004) has listed noble values on which Nigeria education principles and practices should be built on, these values are the offshoot of the then five main national objectives which include:

- A free and democratic society;
- A just and egalitarian society;
- A united, strong and self-reliant nation
- A great and dynamic economy
- A land of bright and full of opportunities for all citizens.

A good number of values have been identified by the Nigerian declaration of Human Responsibilities based on the above National Policy on Education (2004), which the Nigerian Counsellors and teachers must pursue to inculcate of all levels of formal instruction.

Values are an important component of behaviour and should be considered if one is to understand the behaviour of people in the society. In other words, every society has its own set of values, which are meant to determine whether the actions of its citizens are considered desirable, or not, since what people value, they desire. This is why Igborbor, (1994) believes that values are what an individual, group of community holds to be right, true and desirable and that these values normally affect behaviour, attitudes, choice and goals. This implies that values are rational and states of the mind. In a similar vein, Ogbodo (2014) perceived values as representing reasons that guide peoples' action, values are stimuli that an individual respond as worthwhile or aforementioned definitions portray a values as those actions or objectives that are considered appropriate at a point in time; but it must be quickly pointed out that values are not inert but acquired or learned through experience and interaction with others. In other words, values enable the individual to determine how reasonable, right or true or appropriate his/her action, attitudes as well as his relationship with others are, (Ogbodo, 2014). Generally, it can be hypothesized that an individual does what he/she perceives to be right and desirable in his own estimations. In selecting goals, in choosing modes of behaviours, in resolving conflicts, each individual value what he/she wants, prefer or desire. Okobia et. al., (2004) opined that values are internalized guides to human behaviour and actions.

However, a typical Nigeria traditional society was in the past characterized by such values are obedience, respect for elders, dedication to duty, tolerance, honesty and acceptance of others feelings. People were respected not necessarily for wealth but age, wisdom and social standing in the society. The nation (Nigeria) is now characterized by such undesirable values as corruption, nepotism, bribery, conflicts, religious crises laziness, fraudulent practices, conflict over control of natural resources and ethnic chauvinism. The rising wave of corruption in high places, greed, religious, Boko Haram, kidnapping, killing here and there, ethnic conflicts, leaves one no one in doubt as to the extent of vulnerability citizens face every day of their lives. This is so because these negative values tend to provide an opportunity for the youths to learn and manifest all sorts of unethical behaviours with the dilemma of choosing appropriate or inappropriate values and in most cases; end up joining the band wagon since decision to do otherwise might even incur the wrath of the powers that be (Armstrong, 2005).

Sources of Ethical Values

Sources of values are self, parents, counsellors, teachers, peers, friends, elders, pastors, Imam. Different Religions expound values which are necessary for a good life. In the school, the regular curriculums present themselves as potential reservoirs of values.

Ethics and Values for National Development

Nigerian is a multi-national, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual society in which both larger and smaller groups compete for power and growth for national development. For Nigeria nation to achieve greatness, the following values must be well inculcated in the citizens.

Patriotism:

It means ability of a citizen to render selfless service to the cause and ideals of Nigerian and strong resistance against external influences that may undermine these causes and ideals. Okobia and Okorodudu, (2004) found that the spirit of patriotism is responsible for building a nation state characterized by egalitarianism. Social justice and political stability. A patriot will take public service or property as that of his own by not abusing or but using and maintaining the property as his own. A patriot shuns bribery and corruption, arson, violence, religious fanaticism, hooliganism and other social vices or actions that is retrogressive to the cause and ideals of our fatherland. It is observed that countries of the world such as the United State of America, Japan , Great Britain, France and Germany that have reached a level of development which we admire and, often refer to as worthy of emulation have been 'able to do this as a result of dedicated citizen and patriotic leadership (Okobia and Okorodudu, 2004).

Loyalty: To be loyal means to be true to one's friends, group and the nation, if a man wants to be respected among the gathering of right thinking members of the society, he must display a sense of loyalty. Disloyalty of an officer in the military attracts stiff penalty. This may result to dismissal of the affected individuals from service or other stiff penalties may be imposed on him. Loyalty is required for trust and harmonious relationship

Honesty: This is the act of being trustworthy, that is being above board. Honesty, they say, is the best policy. Honesty is consistent and rewarding. Honesty as a golden virtue is the emphasis. No midway exists between honesty and dishonesty; you are either honest or dishonest. When citizens of any country are honest with their government, the country grows from strength to strength, they pay their taxes and provide accurate data as bench mark for government to plan programmes and formulate policies that will bring the overall best of governance for all its citizens.

Thagard, (2013) further opined that honesty in governance and citizenship involves the individual and government giving in their best in their offices and work place, being responsive to duty and job schedule, arriving at work place on time and leaving workplace as when due. Doing the job for which we are employed to do, especially by avoiding truancy and laziness.

Dedication to Duty: It refers to the ability to carry out assignment given to us very well and to the best of our ability. Whatever works a dedicated citizen is called upon to do; he will see it as a challenge and ready to face it so as to achieve success. Dedication to duty is a priceless virtue, because if every individual is dedicated to his or her duty, there is bound to be national prosperity (Armstrong, 2005; Thagard, 2013).

Cleanliness: This is the act of being pure. Cleanliness, they say is next to Godliness. Personal hygiene is an essential rule of living a good and healthy life. It is only when we are healthy and agile that one can contribute meaningfully and positively to national development. Environmental sanitation should complement personal rules of hygiene. Apart from personal hygiene and environmental sanitation, one should also be clean in thoughts. A clean environment is national pride (Armstrong, 2005).

Obedience: All the religious groups in the society preach obedience to rules and constituted authorities. Obedience means one should always act in compliance with the expectation of the society.

Respect for elders and seniors: every Nigerian national group places emphasis on respect for elders and seniors. Even in the modern society, every young individual is expected to bow his head and should not stretch his hand to an elderly person when greeting. Every individual deserves some degree of respect. Apart from this, if an individual wants to be respected, he should endeavour to respect himself, because respect begets respect.

Frugality: this is an act of prudent management or economizing. A frugal individual is wise while a prodigal one is foolish. Frugality is the foundation of individual and group greatness. One should always have the concept of preparation for the "rainy day" at heart; it is possible for a frugal individual on meagre resources to live well off than his prosperous but extravagant counterpart. Nationals like individuals do display frugality in the allocation and use of resources (Agba and Umeh, 2010).

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Self-discipline: this means ability to perform a duty without being forced to do so or expect a reward for doing it. Self discipline is the cornerstone to individual's greatness and national prosperity. Self-discipline exercises restraints in his eating, drinking, and even talking habit.

Self – reliance: this means ability of an individual to perform an action without much assistance from others. That is the "ability to do it yourself as much as possible" (ERC. (2014b). A self reliant individual is a self sufficient individual. He is an assertive individual. Self-reliance should not be confused with self-dependence. Nobody could be self-dependent. Like individuals, nations also seek to be self-reliant. A self-reliant nation endeavours to develop using her human and natural resources.

Most powerful nations in the world achieve development as a result of protective devices. They made use of what they had to get what they wanted. As Nigerians, we should try to rely on our personal efforts to achieve. Over dependent usually breeds disappointment and frustration (Hodgson, 2001). Apart from the above values, other Salient virtues for national development include tolerances, Mutual love, mutual' cooperation, mutual understanding, faithfulness, patience and above all consideration for fellow country men and women.

Implications for Counselling

According to Denga (2011), the author explained values in terms of the quality of “being helpful or worthwhile or important”. It also sees values as “the moral or professional standard of behaviour principles. Values vary from one society to the other and from one time to the other. Thus, as people grow their understanding of their environment, so also their value systems change as to accommodate their new understanding of the environment. It is therefore imperative to see the role counselling can then play in instilling in the young minds the ethical values to contribute to national development. Since the counsellor’s role is very important in helping the individual identify and develop his potentials, counselling can then be used to teach children the basic essence of nation building through the development of ethical and moral codes which can promote the nation to successful development (Lawal and Abe, 2011).

During counselling sessions, counsellors can investigate the type of attitude counselees have towards national building viv a vis their ethical considerations, their moral values and then their willingness to change their attitude towards national development; Therefore the major roles counsellors can play in order to achieve ethical values for national development include:

- ❖ Organize seminars, workshops, retreat, conferences and workshops for young adults, especially those involved in social vices and teach them the value of ethics and morality, respect for constituted authorities, observance of civic responsibilities etc
- ❖ Counsellors can in collaboration with curriculum planners overhaul the entire school curriculum in the country by tailoring the curriculum to emphasize more on vocational and technological education and not just education for the purpose of acquiring it for white collar jobs.
- ❖ Counsellor's can donate their services in schools, churches, remind homes, internally displaced people's camp, etc, their major preoccupation is to campaign for ethical and value development for good citizenship
- ❖ Vocational and career counselling should also be carried out to assist our young ones in dilemma to choose the career for which their brain, aptitude and potentials can carry, not choosing courses because their parents or friends want them to do it.
- ❖ From time to time, counsellors should engage government and public office holders to gauge their ethical orientation; these can go a long way to change the attitude of most public office holders for the better.
- ❖ Assessment can be made of what public officers do in public offices, such reports should be openly displayed for public opinion and judgement of their office holders, but warning must be made that such reports should be as honest as possible with evidence readily available to support such objective reports to avoid legal encumbrances. It is true that counsellors can play a major role in ethical an attitudinal reorientation of citizen's belief systems and values towards national development.

Conclusion

The topic, Ethics and values for National Development and the role of the counsellors, this topic reflects the need for Counsellors, the government, the youth, as well as citizens to do ethical and value reorientation for national development. Nigerians is in dire need of change in perception attitude, values, morality and ethics to move our country forward, if this must be achieved, then the counsellor must be at the fore front of this change. This study therefore concluded that Nigeria is befallen with a lot of social vices, kidnapping at the Niger Delta region, bombing and violent killing in the northern region, armed robbery in the south eastern region, ritual killings and kidnapping in the south west, official corruption in government and public offices, godftherism, political thuggery and civil unrest among the populace, mostly as a result of unemployment and poverty. All these social vices must be stopped, for this to be, there is the urgent need for ethical and value reorientation, attitudinal change among others, who should be in a better position to do this?

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The role of the counsellor cannot be over emphasised. Therefore, the counsellors can develop programmes aimed at value reorientation, attitudinal change and imbue ment of ethical standards befitting of a country. For this to happen, it also depends on the strategies to be adopted by the counsellor, which should include: love, honesty, cooperation, integrity, truth, trust, responsibility, respects for individual differences, acceptance, tolerance, willingness to help and understanding to move Nigeria forward towards the needed transformation..

Recommendations

It is the duty of the Counsellors to ensure that values/ethics is taught and instilled in our youths especially at the early stage of their development based on the old age of ‘‘catching them young’’.

- a. It is the counsellor’s duty to advice the government to ensure that there are Counsellors in each Primary, Junior and Senior Secondary School.
- b. Counselling services units should be established at all the tertiary institutions.
- c. The Counsellors should permeate the government and emphasis the need to organize seminars for parents, teachers, Civil servants, policy makers; leadership training should be emphasized at this level and seminar for businessmen and women.
- d. The Counsellors should do groups and individual counselling for people on values and ethics for National Development.
- e. Counsellors irrespective of their institutions of operation must make it a point of duty to always extol the virtues of ethics and values in our Nigerian context.
- f. Parents and guardians should engage in the training of their words towards imbibing ethical values in their immediate environment.
- g. Governmental agencies and parastatals, NGOs and other agencies should make it a point of duty to earmark time and resources to further do this type of exercise.
- h. There should be enlightenment programmes in the form of seminars, lectures, teaching, symposia and workshop organized by government and non-governmental organizations through Counselling using mass media to educate people, different languages could be employed to communicate this values interpretation to the general public.

- b. Moral Education should be taught at all levels of our educational setting because Fufunwa (1994) cited in Ogbodo (2014) rightly emphasizes that character training is the corner-stone of Africa education.

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