



A Critical Examination of Plato's Moral Responsibility of Education and Its Implications for Nigerian Education

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ABSTRACT

Original Research Article

Considering the complexity of moral decadence prevalent in almost all facets of our national life, this research speculated how Plato's disquisition on education can be properly harnessed to revamp the Nigerian education system in order to birth men and women who can transmogrify the Nigerian society. Without prevarication, this task is imperative in view of the fact that our present education has faltered and could not raise morally conscious individuals. The problem remains that many products of education in Nigerian are bankrupt of sound moral ingredients necessary to transform the Nigerian society. Most teachers in Nigeria are morally depraved and as such cannot be a role model for students to emulate. Education in any society ought to be a perfect reflection of the values of the society. Hence, the researcher, using the four main philosophical methods – speculative, prescriptive, analytic and critical methods, examined several Platonic concepts of education, especially as it relates to educational practices in Nigeria. Some of the findings are that education should lead to character development, teachers or educators at all levels must be seekers of virtues, education must lead to critical thinking or reasoning, parents are contributors to the education of their children and to a large extent, must initiate the inculcation of moral values in the children by living exemplary life. Consequently, the study recommended among others that students should be allowed to adopt behavioral patterns of any role model of their choice, provided it conforms to socially acceptable standard, in order to produce recondite homo sapiens with sound minds in our society.

Keywords: Education, Morality, Responsibility.

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Introduction

Plato's view that morality is the responsibility of education has great significance for educational policies and practices in Nigeria. Most of the moral recommendations of Plato on education are directly and indirectly implied in the Nigerian National policy on Education (N.P.E). Some of his idealist's views incorporated into the basis of the Nigerian education system include: his recommendation that education should lead to sound moral living, character and moral development should be a pivotal goal of education; education should inculcate the knowledge of God, etc. it can be said that in Nigeria, the philosophy of education therefore, is based on these platonic lines of thoughts. For instance, in the first section of the policy document, it is stated that "Nigeria's philosophy of education therefore, is based on: (a) the

development of the individual into a sound and effective citizens..." (FRN, 2014:5). Developing sound mind in an individual is a function of morality which Plato supposes should be the responsibility of education. In the same vein, the National educational goals which derive from the philosophy include inter alia; the inculcation of the right type of value and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society. Nevertheless, the national educational goals which derive from the philosophy are mainly platonic, and are therefore:

- The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity;
- The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society;

- The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around;
- The acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical, social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live and contribute to the development of the society (FRN., 2014).

Additionally, the policy document equally highlights some idealist notions and values which instruction at all levels of education in the country should be inculcated. Accordingly, it is stipulated that the quality of instruction at all levels has to be oriented toward inculcating the following values:

- Respect for the worth and dignity of the individual;
- Faith in man's ability to make rational decision;
- Moral and spiritual principle in inter-personal;

All of these are mere reflection of Plato's moral disquisition on education, and are geared towards achieving the five main national goals of Nigeria which are:

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

Nevertheless, looking at the trend of things in the country, one can easily observe that there is a remarkable difference between 'what is' and 'what ought to be.' What is practically obtainable in the Nigerian society is quite different from the expected outcome of education as stipulated in the national policy on Education. The proceeds of education in our society today do not directly reflect the content and product of education as recommended in the nation's education policy document. Suffice it to say that the present state of affairs in Nigeria contradicts the expected results of education as prescribed by the National policy on Education. This is not unconnected with the fact that the country is gravely challenged by issues of moral and ethical decadence. Corruption in low and high places continues to be a cankerworm which has eaten deep into the very fabric of government and private sector establishments. Regrettably, the Transparency International has ranked Nigeria as the 10th most corrupt country in the world (Gamji, 2012). In almost all parts of the federation, cases of extra judicial killings orchestrated by bandits and trigger-happy policemen and soldiers abound. The most commonplace occurrences include cases of teenage pregnancies, sexual promiscuity and harassment. In the other parts of the country, baby making centre and clinics are frequently discovered to the consternation of the general public and the Nigerian security agents. In diverse places, ethno-religious and criminal violent clashes have continued to claim innocent lives including the destruction of hard-earned wealth and properties. All over the country, violent crimes such as kidnapping, armed robbery, and bombing of government own establishment show no sign of abating despite concerted efforts by the government to

tackle the challenges. In spite of the abundance of natural and human resources Nigeria is endowed with, poverty has continued to swallow greater percentage of the country's population beyond the capacity of available health care facilities and food supply.

In the light of the scale of these social ills prevalent in almost all facets of life in the country, there is still optimism that education or the school to be specific, can help to address some of these challenges by producing individuals who are high in moral and ethical values and standards. In this respect, this research seeks to analyze how the moral segment of Plato's philosophy of education has been effectively utilized in repositioning our education system towards producing morally and ethically sound minds.

Plato proposed that morality should be the task of education in any country. By that, every educational system ought to inculcate some sort of moral consciousness and soundness in the citizens of the state. However, in contemporary Nigerian society, immorality has become fully developed and a problem of the day that contemplating moral soundness in an individual has almost turned an illusion. Though, the products of our educational institution are supposed to be of sound mind in order to transform the Nigerian society, but the reverse has been the case over the years. The complexity of moral decadence obtainable in almost all facets of life in Nigeria is so bemoanable that speculating a common solution to the problem has almost become a mirage (Banda and Chibueze, 2014). The incessant killings by terrorists in the North, insurgency in the South-East and South-West, as well as militancy in the South-South are pointers to the fact of lack of moral ingredients in our education system this is true in the sense that many products of Nigerian education cannot even reflect the right placement of values and respect to the worth and dignity of the individual as required by the National policy on Education. Though the federal and state government over the years have come up with different measures and modalities to tackle these anomalies yet, it has persisted untamed till date. The spate of corruption and indiscipline during President Shehu Shagari administration of the second republic forced the Buhari - led military government to launch the war against indiscipline (WAI) programme in March 1984. Moreover, the upsurge of militancy in the Niger Delta (South-South) during the reign of chief Olusgun Obasanjo gave birth to the creations of Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in 2000, and later, the creation of Ministry of Niger Delta by President Umaru Musa Yar'dua of blessed memory on 10th September 2008. All these measures were part of the previous attempts made by successive governments of Nigeria to curb violence and moral decadence in the country in recent past, though, all to no avails.

Currently, similar problems of lack of moral consciousness and respect for the worth and dignity of the individual abound all over the country. Nonetheless, there is need to employ a

more proactive measure to address such moral ills. It is against this backdrop that this research was conducted to examine how Plato's moral view on education can be properly utilized to revamp the Nigerian education system in order to address the challenges of moral decadence in the Nigerian society.

Conceptualizing Education

From prehistoric to modern times, the concept of education has been a difficult and elusive term to define the reason for this situation is not unconnected to the fact that education has a very wide connotation. Hence, philosophers of various times have viewed education based on their own individual perspective, experience and prevailing social economic cum political circumstances giving birth to myriads of definitions against this backdrop Agarwal (2002) posits that the concept of education is like a diamond when seen from different color. Thus, O'Connor (1957) quoted in Nwafor (2016) defined education as a kind of training that takes place in schools and universities and other similar institutions. However, for Frankena in Doyle (1973), education is seen as the fostering and acquiring by appropriate methods of desirable dispositions, and that the dispositions are desirable disposition consist of a mastery of forms of thought and actions with their respective standards together with responsibility and autonomy. Frankena position implies that education has responsibility which cannot be divorced from morality.

Plato, the idealist philosopher, believed that morality which has to do with the "good", the good life and virtue is a responsibility which parents and teachers owe their children. As a matter of imperative this responsibility can be accomplished only through education. In antiquity, Plato is, apart from fragmentary ideas in Democritus, in Democritus, the first philosopher to form a tradition of specifically ethical theory (Annas, 2008).

In this regards, ethics which concerns itself with the need to act rightly and to live a good life, is prevalent in the work of Plato. For instance, throughout the dialogue, we find Plato's ethical thinking. Moral concerns are found in dialogues of different types. For example, book one of the Republic, is an early dialogue and is written as a traditional dialogue in which Socrates is represented in a fairly historical way, critically reacting to the moral views of others in the dialogue. In the Crito, Laches Euthyphro, Apology, to mention but a few. Ethical consideration equally dominates the dialogue.

Plato's moral reasoning begins from something everyone accepts. Most of Plato's effort in discussion of values is dedicated to fine-tuning our views about goodness and thus, about what things are good. Annas (2008) posits that for most, if not all, people go radically wrong in their views about what things are good and thus about how we shall actually succeed in becoming happy with this in mind, we

now ask "why does Plato take most people to be drastically wrong about goodness but not about happiness? The answer here lies in the notion of happiness which is how we have hitherto rendered *endaimonia* - being happy (Annas, 2008).

It is modest assertion to categorically state that morality brings about happiness. So, since everybody around the globe desires to be happy, so since everybody around the globe desires to be happy, happiness is a universal good which can be achieved by being moral. Based on this morality is the responsibility of all men. Meanwhile, since education is also another good, a universal good, and the primary responsibility of the society it is therefore pertinent for one to jostle both concepts. This leads to the idealists' view that morality is synonymous with education and the responsibility of education.

Plato sometimes claims that virtue is the only good thing (of all the other things) none of them is either good or evil, but of those two, wisdom is good and ignorance is evil (Annas, 2008). Thus, virtue will be sufficient for happiness in the laws (660e-661a) quoted in Annas, (2008) the only correct account says the Athenian, is the one that insist that the good man being temperate and just is happy and blessed, whether he is big and strong or small and weak, rich or poor, and thus, that even if he is richer than Midas but is unjust, he is miserable and lives wretchedly.

This view implies the nothing short of virtues should perfectly be regarded as good at all, irrespective of how pleasant, sweet or attractive it is to the commonsense the pursuit and attainment of virtues (morality) therefore, is every man's responsibility. Plato sees the morally minded person as being able to find proper balances and so lives a happy life.

The "Good" and the "Highest Good"

In idealist's view, the good is the all embracing moral cum metaphysical ideal object of which everything else is a projection into the specific imperfect world. Discussing the good primarily in an ethical context, Plato sees it as the action man ought to perform. If a man acts for the sake of something, this something is what he wills and seeks precisely as conducive to his good. The good is what will make him happy. This may be the useful or the pleasurable; but even the unpleasant, can be good if it is a remedy that cures diseases of the soul, such as injustice or intemperance. The good then is primarily a virtue of the soul, a kind of knowledge etc. Plato is aware that this does not fully solve the problem. Though, it seems reasonable that a man should be just and act justly, yet when such action is good in spite of all of its odd.

This requires a deeper notion of the good that makes the goodness of virtuous action a good in itself. In the symposium, Plato indicates that the ultimate principle is some nature that is absolute unity, harmony and perfect Again in the Republic he specifies that the unity of knowledge is

founded on the good, for the good is the author of all known things and is their very essence yet the good itself is not essence but transcend it in dignity and power.

On the highest good, Aristotle stated that every living or human made thing, including its parts, has a unique or characteristic function or activity that distinguishes it from all other things. The highest good of a thing according to him, consists of the good performance of its characteristic function, and the virtue or excellence of a thing consist of whatever traits or qualities which enable it to perform that function well (Duignan, 2019). Nonetheless, Uebersax (2019) classified the "highest good" into metaphysical and ethical. Metaphysically, Plato defines the highest good as what he sometimes called the one and which, within his system is somewhat the same as God. This is both the essence and source of all goodness all other good things merely reflect this ultimate goodness this fact is further buttressed by presenting the famous cave allegory of Socrates in the republic.

Looking at the ethical dimension of the highest good, Uebersax (2019) explained that in Greco Roman philosophy, ethics has been understood as the principle which human beings should seek to maximize. This he referred to as the ethical "summon Bonum" (the greatest good). Meanwhile, to the hedonist, pleasure might be greatest good while a stoic could say virtue is the highest good. But Aristotle was of the view that "life of contemplation" is the highest good for him the greatest virtue of man is reasoning and the greatest virtue of humans is reasoning, then, a life of contemplation would be the best life According to him firstly this activity is the best (since not only is reason the best life Accordingly to him firstly this activity is the best of knowable objects); and secondly it is the most continuous since we can do anything (Aristotle P. 47). However, Aristotle's position runs counter to Plato's view that virtue is the greatest human good. consequently, Plato posits that wisdom soundness of mind and righteousness are virtues and as such the greatest good it is hoped that if these virtues are well developed, our moral apparatus will be well tuned and accurate, to think clearly and make correct moral choices that will better our lives and society ultimately the "good" and the "highest good" are clearly, the task of education.

Education as a Moral Arbiter

Introspectively, Plato examined the issue of justice which according to him would come to limelight in the state if each member did his/her job judiciously. Plato believes that justice would be realized in the state if each citizen have knowledge of the good which according to him is like the sun that brightens the world he further opines that wrong action stems from lack of knowledge "that if a man discover what is right he would not act wickedly (immorally) (Banda & Chibueze, 2014). Circumlocutionally, Plato asserted that to identify knowledge of the good is not an easy task, but an intellectual task.

Banda and Chibueze (2014) highlighted that Plato's postulation is an indication that one must acquire certain types of knowledge before coming to terms with the knowledge of the good. On the other hand, Murkherjee Ramaswamy (2007) held that knowledge to Plato represented vision transcendence from the world of appearance to the world of realities. Generally, Plato plainly demonstrated that the responsibility of education inter-alia, is to inculcate virtuous habits of behaviour among the plurality of the citizen and to develop capacity in the learners.

Plato's Moral Pontification on Education *vis-a-vis* the Nigerian Education

Plato presumes that away from developing skills and critical thinking education is a moral venture he is of the view that educator ought to go after truth and virtue and by so doing guide those they have a responsibility to teach with such conviction one is obliged to raise a question; are the Nigerian educators or teacher indeed seekers of truth? Nigerian citizens are worried that the moral straightness of producers and product of education in the country is questionable. Banda and Chibueze (2014) cited some instances whereby the National Mirror Newspaper of Thursday, 9th May 2013 in her editorial column, lamented how teachers/invigilators were aiding examination malpractices in external examination council and Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination. One of such moral breaches led to the disengagement of 10 lecturers by the University of Benin in 2013. Similar incidence abounds across the federation where teachers and educator have engaged in immoral behaviours. It has been argued that a country where majority or a high number of her educators are morally unsound will have to contend with morally unsound minds (Banda & chibueze, 2014). Though Plato repeatedly insist that education is not the mere transmission of skills and knowledge but must lead to the development of understanding and reason, a country where her education system is dominated by immoral educator, low level academic attainment examination malpractices poor funding poor infrastructure, frequent strikes, among others, cannot produce sound minds.

Beyond much intellectual enquire Banda and Chibueze (2014) asserted that any society that uses immoral means to educate her children will no doubt have to contend with future corrupt leaders. this is the problem with Nigeria as a matter of necessity education in Nigeria needs to be over hauled and revamped to engage in the transmission of knowledge that leads to understanding and development of reason such knowledge for understanding should lead to the grasping of the principles that shape our lives and society. An individual that acquires that acquires this form of knowledge can hardly be sidetracked by subjectivism (Banda & Chibueze, 2014). Education for Plato should aim at establishing a nature in which goodness of character has been well and fully established (Republic, Bk3, 398-401).

Unequivocally, Plato was a pioneer philosopher of education to note that values are different from individual preferences, hence the goal of education is to develop valuable state of minds that are to influence their emotions, inclination and pleasures in fact this idealist's goal ought to have a lot of influence on our educational system. Unfortunately, the character of the product of our educational institution clearly demonstrates that our education has faltered in the inculcation of good character among Nigerians. Hence, the need to go back to the drawing board to re-examine the success of subject such as Christian Religious Studies, Civic education and other related subjects which are intended to impart moral values in the learners. like many other idealist, Plato strongly believes in the spiritual and moral dimension of education the national policy on education (NPE, 2013) contains many platonic lines of thought for example some of the values to inculcate in the learners are stated by Nwafor (2016) as follows moral and spiritual principle in interpersonal and human relations acquisition of competence necessary for self-reliance it is significant to point out that Plato's education does not lie in the school alone He expects parent to be morally responsible in the education of their children plato recommended the home as the starting point of children education under the tutelage of their parents. this was further elaborated by John Amos the 15th century idealist for the Moravian Bishop at infancy age 1-6 education is informal and centered primarily in the home; "the school of the mother's knee" (Nwafor, 2016). to this end parents should play important role in the educational development of the child this fact is reinforced by the great attention parent give the child in teaching the mother tongue in agreement with this view, Banda and Chibueze (2014) cautioned that no man should bring children in to the world, who is unwilling to persevere to the end in their nurture and education the World Bank (2010) reported that Nigeria has the highest number of school age children who are out of school in the world. Also report has it that about ten million children in many streets and towns across, Nigeria children who should be school receiving good education are seen hawking various items. Does this not spell catastrophe for the future country? If our answer is on the affirmative how then can we escape its ugly consequences if nothing is done to address the problem?

Influence of Plato's Idea of Education on Nigeria Education

the Nigerian Education can be referred to as a concatenation of various photocopies of Education this point is explained further by the fact that it borrowed so much from both western and European ideologies and philosophical schools of thought to enable the country to design her own philosophy of education. It is no gainsaying that, the ship of education in Nigeria is laden and weighed down with education and moral burden in the leadership and management of it. In Plato's view, this occurs when the leader who ought to be governed by the power of right reasoning

while demonstrating the value of wisdom gained through rigorous leadership education, allows the spirited and/or appetitive part of his soul to take preeminence (Ushie, 2020). One of the philosophical school from which Nigeria borrowed certain aspect of her educational theories and practices is idealism which was founded by Plato. Plato is regarded and revered as the father of idealism. According to Nwafor (2016), the following are the followings are the ways Plato's ideals of education influence the Nigerian education:

- 1) Intellectual development of the individual
- 2) Religious and moral instruction
- 3) Core curriculum
- 4) The role of the teacher
- 5) Self learning and Character development

Plato firmly believe in the spiritual and moral aspect of the individual. The Nigeria policy on education contains many Platonic or Idealist's line of thought. In this respect, some of the values inculcate in the learner have been stated as: "Moral and spiritual principles inter-personal and human relation" 'and acquisition of competencies necessary for self - reliance' (FRN, 2014:5). The idealist educational thought is also seen in the philosophy of Nigerian education which states that, "the formulation of ideals, their integration for national development, and the interaction of persons and ideas are all aspect of education". (Nwafor, 2016:114-115). Plato believes that the highest aim of education is the conception of true ideals. It is worthy of note that there could be no meaningful national development without the formulation of ideas and the interaction of persons and ideas (Nwafor, 2016). The same idealist line of thought is expressed in the Nigerian education policy document as clearly stated: education fosters the worth and development of the individual, for each individual's sake and for the general development of society (FRN, 2013). This takes into cognition the idealist position that the individual cannot be realized in isolation but in a macrosm.

On moral view the emphasis is on morality and character development as ingrained in primary education is premised on Plato's view of education of education. As noted earlier, Plato stressed that education should lead to sound moral and character development of individuals. One of the goals of primary education in Nigeria is to mold the character and develop sound attitudes and moral in the child. Though, these goals reflect Plato's moral expectation of education, yet, it cannot be stated how perfectly well it has been realized in Nigeria.

Influence of Plato's Moral view of Education on the Nigerian Curriculum of Education

The curriculum content of idealism is viewed in line with its epistemological position. Idealists generally hold that the most important thing in education at any level is to teach student to think (Nwafor, 2016). This is so because they

believe that the most important part of the human being is the mind; which must be nourished and developed. For this school of thought, thinking nourishes the mind which has the ability to create and to conceptualize. Some idealist commended subjects that are distinctly modern in tone. Nwafor (2016) stipulates that the subject includes history, mathematics, physics, biology, literature and art; grammar and psychology. Religions and moral instruction are also part of the curriculum content Plato commended. Today, these subjects have been taken as the basic course contents of the Nigerian curriculum of education.

It is significant to note that out of the numerous subjects that constitute the idealist' curriculum, only few actually inculcate sound moral and character development in children. They are religious and moral instruction which have metamorphosed in recent time to Christian religious studies, Islamic studies, civic education and so on. However, the Implementation of the moral content of the idealist curriculum in both universal Basic education (UBE) and senior secondary schools in Nigeria have remained a thug of war. This is partly as a result of shortage of trained manpower in the relevant discipline and lack of willingness by government to engage available trained teachers. With this ugly experience, the implementation of the idealists aspect of our education curriculum and the realization of morally sound in the country has remained a mirage. Even though religious approach to moral education has become acceptable way for inculcating moral Values of students in Nigerian schools, some scholars are of the views that religious approach to moral education is so misleading. For example, Tsoho (2021) posits that religious approach to moral education is so defective in teaching moral education in Nigerian schools, there is only one slot for two religious subject's (Islamic and religious studies). These two subjects he explained, gets only the junior secondary school level of learners (JSSI-III), after which they become active subject to offer at the senior secondary level's. This is also expressed by Nwaoma in the words:

It is classified as an optional subject, thus leaving the students depending on one biases or future carrier aspiration and for prospect to choose or neglect its offering. In most cases, only very few of the Senior Secondary School Students choose to offer it... the majority of the students are left out without religious and moral education during their last but critical years in Post Primary (2209:215).

Without prevarication, teaching moral education via the two major religious in Nigeria Christian religious, its citizens profess different religious which include Islamic Christian traditional religious (African traditional religious) and even paganism (Tsoho, 2021). Therefore, the very important question to ask is: which religion should commonly be adopted in teaching moral education in all Nigeria schools? Tsoho further argued that "the greatest misconception ingrained in religious approach to moral education is equating

morality with religious" (2021:214) as can be seen in the Nigerian education system. He equally stated that religious is different from morality and morality is independent of religion (Tsoho, 2021). How does religion influence the moral attitudes of Nigerian within and outside the country? Tsoho averred that a large number of Nigerians that were convicted on many immoral action profess one particular religion or the other (2021). For him it is not religion that is a necessary condition for the moral being of a person but the inner rational and moral conscience bestowed in the individual that fosters the moral disposition in social interaction. Plato's moral view of education was not necessitated by religious spirits but was prompted by inner rational and moral conscience. The moral content our education curriculum has yet to be divorced from the nexus of religious dogmas and indoctrination.

Effects of Plato's Moral Concept of Education on the Teacher and Teaching Methods in Nigerian School

It is obvious that Plato's curriculum is teacher-centered. The idealist school of thought makes the position of the teacher very important. The idealist believe that the teacher is a practical example of what the student should aspire to become.

In other words, he is a transmitter of a body of knowledge as well as an example of the ethical; a model to be emulated by students in both their intellectual and social lives. The teacher explain and implements the content of instruction or lesson without consideration of the student, because he has good knowledge of the subject and what society expects or desires. Plato equally posits that the teacher is more of an observer than a sole actor in the classroom environment this however, counteracts with a Nigeria school classroom that is greatly influenced and presided over by the teacher. The teacher most often over loads the student with knowledge from personal experience rather than elicit knowledge from them, and act as a facilitator he should inspire students to do critical thinking. More so, more critical scrutiny of plato's view of education would reveal some ideological flaws. For instance, platos supposition that teacher should treat students with equality and friendship does not apply to all learning education. This is because in any case where students take teachers friendliness for granted the situation effect could lead to lack of seriousness on the part of the student. After all, the teacher is seen as a friend who would always treat the learner congenially. On the other hand treating students with equality undermines the reality of the individual difference among learners. For instance, in a classroom where a good number of students are gifted children, rather than adopt individualized teaching method, it could be unreasonable and unfair to treat all the student equally considering the fact that presenting the same instructional content to all the class members at the same time could whittle the intellectual

development of the gifted ones which invariably is equal to unequal treatment of students in the same class. Again Plato's view of the teacher as a role model whose life ought to be the epistles that students read as pointed out by Nwafor (2016) does not enhance students aspiration to something better and greater in life this could lead to a sprawling staticism the implication is that progress along scientific and technological development as well as ideological innovation would be limited to what the teacher is or has taught the students. In the Nigeria society where teachers are treated and paid like menial job men and woman, and are continually being improvised due to poor monthly remuneration, modeling a primary or secondary school teacher is somewhat tantamount to aspiring for poverty. In some schools in River state for instance students are known to go to school cab and private luxurious vehicle while their teacher barely manage to arrive late on motor cycle or omnibus. In such case, is it rational for the rich student to model or pray to be like the poor teacher? Or should the reverse be the case, here the teacher should pray to be like his rich student? In this respect Plato's view of the teacher as role model is nothing short of a questionable truth. Teachers' ego and prestige should be bolstered by improved monthly remuneration to enable them live a life worthy of emulation by students.

Implications of Plato's Moral Concept of Education on the Learner and School Learning Environment in Nigeria

The use of the term learners as a synonym for students has grown in popularity among educators recent years, while the precise origin of this usage are likely impossible to determine the decision to use learner in place of students may be due to a couple of factors. The term learner underscores and reinforces the goal of the educator students learning can occur in the absence of teaching but teaching does not occur without some form of learning taking place (Educational Partners, 2014). Similarly, learner updates the concept of a student potentially distancing the term from the characteristic and connotation traditionally associated with the word student. Students learn in schools, they sit in classroom, they are taught by teacher they are recipients of taught knowledge, etc. However, if the goal is to update traditional conceptions and perceptions of students – for example, that they can learn both inside and outside the school or classroom, they can learn independently or from adults who are not classroom teachers, they can take more responsibility over what they learn and how they learn, they can be young children or older adults retiring to complete their education, etc., then, distancing the concept from preformed, limiting or outmoded associations could be useful (Education Partner, 2014).

Plato posits that the learner should be an active and not a passive participant in the teaching – learning process. The learner should be willing and able to respond and react to probing by the teacher. Since the mind is replete with ideas

from birth according to Plato, the role and aim of the teacher in the teaching –learning process is to illicit those ideas from the learners through probing questions. This has been referred to as the dialectical or Socratic method. In the Socratic method, teacher throws questions and observes the learner or student do more of the talking – explaining, describing, narrating etc. By implication, one can infer that the learner or student is a co-teacher in Plato's classroom environment. Though Plato is of the opinion that the student/learner should model the behavioural patterns of the teacher in terms of moral attributes and characteristics, both parties stand to benefit from the role and input of each other in the teaching-learning process. This idealist's notion is so cherishing in the sense that the teacher sometimes gain new knowledge or information from students' response or answers to questions in the classroom. However, Plato's expectation that the learners should become better persons by modeling their teachers can be misleading. This is so considering the fact that imbibing different behavioural traits from different teachers or role-models may cause the student personality crisis in the future.

Again, Plato emphasizes cognitive development of the learner, and stresses more bookishness. But lack of textbooks is a major factor that can impede intellectual development of students in schools adopting Plato's ideas. In Rivers State, for instance, students' active participation in CRS class for example, calls for them to have a copy of the Reversed Standard Version (RSV) of the Bible as recommended by the Federal Ministry of Education. This will enable them to read and compare the referenced passages with the teacher and also attempt teacher's probing questions with greater delight. But this idealist method recommended by Plato has been hampered by the inability of schools and stakeholders in education to provide prerequisite textbooks and other instructional aides and materials for the students. Government and stakeholders in education in the state should provide schools with well-equipped library and students should be granted easy access to them. This will enhance cognitive and intellectual growth of the students.

Nevertheless, Plato's view of the learner and emphasis on intellectual knowledge and development portrays the learner as an intellectual robot. The emphasis on the cognitive domain of education neglects the significance of the affective and psychomotor domains (Nwafor, 2016). This of course, neglects a large number of people who find its emphasis on cognitive development beyond their level or reach.

More so, Plato's stress on morality and character modeling by students from their teachers tends towards instilling conformity, subservience and docility on the learner. In this regards, Nwafor (2016) opined that the student may not develop his creative ability and could lack sense of self direction. Thus, the type of character education Plato offered students could force students to accept ready-made ideas or explanations without critical examination. This renders the

idealist's concept of loyalty harmful and questionable since the learners intellectual independence or freedom would be stifled (Nwafor, 20216). The learner should be allowed to exercise freedom of choice of behavior that befits his/her psychological make-up.

Conclusion

The Nigerian education system has not been successful enough, especially in graduating people who are morally sound. This fact is given impetus by considering the level of moral deterioration in the country. Suffice it to say that the society is in an urgent need of workable education system that can groom men and women who in spite of acquiring certain abilities are equally morally developed. With such individuals, our country can be positively transformed into a society where social cohesion, corporation, peace and security are the order of the day. In this respect, this discourse has demonstrated how Plato's doctrines of moral responsibility of education can resourcefully be utilized by the Nigerian education system in order to attain a balanced society.

Interestingly, it is quite significant to note that this study does not in any ramification flaunt Plato's moral disquisition on education as transcendental or ultimate truth. More often, Plato's concepts such as the good, virtue, justice, the soul etc., have continually been subjected to conceptual and linguistic criticism. His postulations on education are always being debated and scrutinized even though there is no dismissal to the staggering influence of his views. What is paramount in Plato's contemplation is how to achieve an ideal state – a society where social justice, harmony and cooperation are prevalent. In such a state, there cannot be subjectivism, and institutions of learning in such society has to mirror the values of the society. Plato's view on education has hitherto, remained a model and standard for education of different nations around the globe.

Recommendation

Based on the foregoing analysis, the researcher recommended the following:

1. The fact that students learn better when they participate is true. Giving learners opportunities to participate in the teaching-learning process enhances comprehension of subject matters. So, teachers in schools in Nigeria should act as facilitators and thereby inspire students with questions that would lead to developing critical thinking skill.
2. The government should improve the welfare standard and socio-economic relevance of teachers in the state in order to raise their social significance. This will in turn enable them to be duty and time conscious, and to live an exemplary life as a role model; for students to emulate. A hungry or impoverished teacher can rarely be admired or modeled by students. The study

suggested that teachers at the elementary and secondary schools should be well remunerated to booster their morale and economic relevance and to raise their social significance so that they can live a life worthy of emulation.

3. Students should adopt behavioural patterns of any role-model of their choice inasmuch as it confirms to acceptable social standard, not necessarily that of the teacher.
4. Government should improve the working and welfare condition of educators at all levels of our education system. This will help teachers to shun immoral practices such as extortion from students, examination malpractices, sexual harassment, admission racketeering and such like.
5. Government should increase its funding of the education sector to provide good library in both Basic and secondary schools in the country. Libraries richly equipped with recommended textbooks and academic materials in schools can give students quick access to information leading to cognitive and intellectual development.
6. Teachers should give intellectual task or assignments to students so as to develop reflective think ability in them.
7. The Nigerian education system should be repositioned to impart and develop good characters in learners. The teaching of morality or moral instruction should not be tied to one religious subjects or the other. Since religion is different from morality and morality is independent of religion, moral instruction whose aim is to impart and develop sound behavior in learners should be divorced from Christian religious studies and Islamic studies.
8. Individual difference should be taken into consideration when planning and implementing the curriculum.

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