

## **Teaching Culture at the Teacher Education Level for Transformation, Reformation and Value re-Orientation for National Development.**

**Louisa Oby Unugo**

Department of Social Studies  
Ebonyi state College of Education,  
Ikwo, Ebonyi State, Nigeria.  
**07032969511**  
**Obyunugo@Gmail.com**

&

**Onwuasuanya Sabina**

Department of Social Studies  
College of Education (Tech.) Umunze  
Anambra State

### **Abstract**

*The mere mention of culture puts some people off. These are people who believe that anything culture is mundane, devilish, fetish and are of poor religious value. Culture is seen as the totality of human's existence on earth including belief system, economic life, social, religious, educational, norms and values. Teaching culture in schools at different levels have always been there. This paper takes a critical look at teaching culture for its merits and demerits, whether it is for transformation and reformation in relation to the value reorientation and national development. For effective data collection, a questionnaire was prepared where people were required to indicate their preferences. The use of simple percentage was adopted in the analysis of the responses got. Oral interviews were equally conducted as the responses to the questionnaires could not throw enough light on the sought after, response. These forms a part of the data collection. It was found out that the teaching of culture for its value in teacher education.*

**Keywords: Transformation; Reformation; Value Orientation; National Development**

### **1. Introduction**

The teaching of culture at the teacher education level entails a lot as the teacher education level forms the foundation laying tap root. This level surely produces those who are to groom the populace. It is unfortunate that those who are to impact knowledge on others are not taught what they should transfer to others. This of course cannot be so without a cause.

The mere mention of culture puts some people off. There are people who hold the strong belief that anything "culture" spells doom. This on one hand is a very serious issue but on the other hand, it can be explained with a wave of the hand, regarding the overzealous converts, those mourners who weep more than the bereaved. What does this refer to? It refers to the mere fact that the word culture, especially in the African context means those practices, beliefs, morality and so on, that were in existence prior to the coming of the "foreigners" to Africa.

98-104

Chukwuezi (2004, p. 15), says, the coming of the Whiteman to the Igboland and Africa in general brought a lot of changes in the cultural life of Ndi Igbo. Ekpenyong (2003, p.94) as captured by Apakama (2009, p.101) suggest the fact that the Igbo have borrowed a lot from the “Whiteman” which could be organized into unique patterns of configuration. It is not the borrowing that is the main issue but the near or total replacement of people’s culture when it could be established that different cultures are from different people. (Anyanwu 2012, p.47). with the influence of foreign religion, some aspects of the African culture are labelled, satanic, mundane, devilish and backward. The question remains, can one actually claim a hundred percent truism based on real researches done on African culture or base the assertion on the reports of early visitors to the African nation? The bigger question still remains, what is culture? The answer(s) to this question will surely elicit more questions and answers on which one can base the argument whether African culture and other people’s culture.

If what culture means is ascertain, cleared and agreed on, then it could be determined whether the teaching of culture at the teacher education level can actually be useful in transformation, reformation, value re-orientation and the resultant national development. In a nutshell, why teach the student teacher, culture?

## **2. Conceptual Clarification**

### **2.1 Culture**

Culture is simply known as the totality of human’s existence. Ekpenyong (2003, pp.88-89) defines culture as “ that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, customs and all other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of the society. This simply means that culture is not one sided outlook on life. It could be noted that the moral aspect of culture depends on the people. Something may be seen as bad in one place and in another place; it could be over looked for example, mode of dressing. Some may see the African cultural/traditional mode of dressing as open while it is not so with the Africans.

*Culture as a noun means, the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively.* For example, 21<sup>st</sup> century culture. It could also refer to the ideas, customs and social behaviour of a particular people or society. For example “Afro-Caribbean culture”.

Definition of culture as recorded by Merriam-Webster online Dictionary notes that:  
*the beliefs, customs, arts, etc; of a particular society, group, place or time; a particular society that has its own beliefs, ways of life, art, etc; a way of thinking, behaving, or working that exists in a place or organisation (such as business)*

Wikipedia, 2017 an online dictionary equally notes that:  
*Culture is defined as the social behaviour and norms found in human societies culture is considered a central concept in anthropology, encompassing the range of phenomena that are transmitted through social learning in human societies.*

The above definition captures what the writers of this paper want to buttress; what culture is and what it can do. In which case, how culture can help in transforming the society is implied. This cannot be done by knowing what culture is, alone but by putting it into practice, the teacher is expected to do in the classroom and the society at large “teaches” this outside the classroom. The teaching of culture is very important considering its value in the

society. This is done through social learning and one will wonder how parents will react to its teaching in the classroom; with using planned lessons with proper objectives.

## 2.2 Transformation

*To transform simply means to change, the appearance or form of something in order to make it better.* Transformation on the other hand is a noun which means, a complete change in somebody or something. Mejiuni (2012, p.212) says “Education is the best asset a woman can have that cannot be stolen away even by her husband and it will help her to fend for herself and the family in future”. This is transformation in action. Bowther (1997) as Mejiuni records simply “says”.

*There is no doubt that one can point to many kinds of damage which religion have done, in time past, for example, spiritual terrorization of the subordination of women....religions remain now as they have been in the past the major resource for the transformation of life and the transformation of art..... p 13*

The above all refer to the transformation of the women folk. This paper looks at the transformation of the human for national development.

## Reformation

Reformation on the other hand is the art of improving or changing something for the better. The reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> century records the infusion of new ideas in religion in Europe that led to attempts to reform the Roman Catholic Church and the forming of protestant churches and that period of time when those changes were taking place (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 1999). There is a great relationship between transformation and reformation. Both concepts refer to a turning point in life. This is the aim of the teaching of culture at all levels.

## 2.3 Value Re-Orientation

Value re-orientation on the other hand is just a quest for an eye opener effect on the learner. What a learner, a pupil, a student, a community held as proper maybe exposed to them as the wrong idea. For example, the acquisition of wealth without work, get rich quick syndrome can be overfed in the minds of the present day child with the Igbo adage that says, Aka aja aja na-ebute onu mmanu mmanu - hard work brings food to the table.

*How the knowledge of culture and its teaching at all levels will help in transformation, reformation, value re-orientation and the resultant national development is the main focus of this paper.* This cannot be achieved without the help of answers elicited from others who are not a part of the writing but a part of the data collection.

Samuel Chila-Kaan (2016, p.49) states that the process of value re-orientation in Nigeria should start with the school system. While stating about counsellors in schools to allow the students to form acceptable values themselves.

- Respect for hard work, honesty, law and order, diligence and appreciate values as well as adapt and maintain acceptable societal values
- Honesty, good character, kindness, truthfulness, being humane, equality of opportunities, respect for elders, faith in the Supreme God, friendship, material love, humility, morality.

The Igbo have so many beliefs which are embedded in their culture. An aspect of their culture which portrays who they are, are found in their proverbs, idioms, folktales and oral literary practices. Some of the 98-104 that can be fallen back on include:

“Oku nna gunyere nwa ya n’aka anghi egbu ya” simply put, means, the naked fire that a father places in the palms of his child does not burn the child. The Igbo believe that their cultural values should be transmitted to their children for future use.

Another one sounds like the former one thus: “Nne ewu na ata ahihia nwa ya na-ele ya anya n’onu. Simply put thus: one learns through imitation. This includes the cultural practices of a people. “Nku a kpara n’okochi ka a na-anya n’udu mmiri, meaning the good things that are done (learnt) at the right time serves greater purposes in the future. Culture is not left out in this case as those learnt early in life go a long way later in life and can enhance national development. Catch them young is a maxim of the people.

### 3. Teacher Education And National Development

Teacher education simply means the training or learning to become a teacher, according to UNESCO 2005, teacher education “addressed environmental, social and economic contexts to create locally relevant and culturally appropriate teacher education programmes for both service teachers”. Teacher education generally includes.....elements viz:

- ❖ Improving the general educational background of the trainee teachers
- ❖ Increasing their knowledge and understanding of the subjects they are to teach
- ❖ Pedagogy and understanding of children and learning
- ❖ Development of practical skills and competences (UNESCO 2017)

Teacher education means policies, procedures and provisions designed to equip teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school and wider community. The professionals who engage in the activity are called teacher educator or teacher trainer. The writers belong to the traditional education and therefore believe that learning starts from the cradle to the grave. Education has no age limit and always stands out as a light in the dark tunnel of national development. As such culture should be an integral part of education which has no age limit.

Teacher education institutions should be able to do the following and more:

- ❖ Educate new features
- ❖ Provide professional development for practicing in service teachers by updating their knowledge and skills
- ❖ Create teacher education curricula
- ❖ Carry out research
- ❖ Contribute to text books
- ❖ Provide expert advice to local schools upon request
- ❖ Provide expert opinion to provincial and national ministries of education
- ❖ Educate and certify headmasters, principals and other school administrators
- ❖ Incorporate it into the G.S courses

### 4. Methodology

Oral questions and written questions for easy compilation were used. Respondents were asked questions whose answers were recorded by the writers. For the written questions only ten were used and the respondents were meant to tick whether they strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree or disagree. These answers were compiled and simple percentages were used. A total number of two hundred respondents were used. 180 persons for written and 20 for oral interviews.

Some of those questions sought to find out what culture is, what the relationship of culture and transformation is, likewise reformation, value re-orientation and national

development were to find out what aspect of national development that culture and its teaching and learning can be involved.

98-104

## 5. Data

The items above 1-7 received positive points for above negative points. Those in support were above 60% in all cases. For items 8-10, those who disagree are higher than those who agree. This simply means that culture, should be taught at all levels for transformation, reformation, value reorientation and the resultant national development.

### CONSTRUCTIVE/ANSWERABLE QUESTIONNAIRE TABLE

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Positive	Negative	Total
Item 1	Can culture be seen as the totality of activities on earth?	150	8 30	1 18
			3	7 0
Item 2	Can the teaching of culture bring about reformation of character?	140	7 40	2 18
			8	2 0
Item 3	Can the teaching of culture bring about transformation of character?	145	8 35	1 18
			1	9 0
Item 4	Can the teaching of culture bring about establishment of some sound moral	146	8 34	1 18
			1	9 0
Item 5	Can the teaching of culture result into orientation?	135	6 55	3 18
			9	1 0
Item 6	Does teaching the teacher culture prepare teacher for future sound teaching?	139	7 41	2 18
			7	3 0
Item 7	Can culture and its teaching at all levels bring about national development?	127	7 53	2 18
			1	9 0
Item 8	Is culture about fetish beliefs and hidden practices?	56	3 124	6 18
			1	9 0
Item 9	Should culture not be mentioned when talking about sound religious practices?	70	3 110	6 18
			9	1 0
Item 10	Should the teaching of culture at all levels be cancelled?	30	1 150	8 18
			7	3 0

## 6. Discussion Of Findings

In item 1 the questionnaire which states that: Can culture be seen as the totality of human's activities on earth?, the writers found out that the teaching of culture at the teacher education level is very necessary based on its usefulness in national development. 83% of the respondent were very affirmative in their responses that culture is the totality of human activities on earth while 17% were on the negative. Also in item 2: Can the teaching of culture bring about reformation of character? The author being a staff of a teacher education school, conducted interviews among teachers themselves and students at large. 78% of the respondents agreed that the teaching of culture bring about reformation of character whereas 22% disagreed that teaching of culture does not bring about reformation in character.

Moreso, item 3: sought to find out if the teaching of culture brings about transformation of character? The result of this finding from the respondents showed that 81% affirmed that the teaching of culture brings about transformation of character while 19% of other respondents think otherwise.

Item 4; asked if the teaching of culture can bring about the establishment of some sound moral values? Again, the result from this finding showed that 81% of respondents agree absolutely that the teaching of culture can bring about the establishment of some sound moral values needed for national development whereas 19% did not agree to culture as being a catalyst for establishment of sound moral value.

Furthermore, item 5; which states that: can the teaching of culture result into value re-orientation? Results obtained revealed that 69% of the respondents strongly affirmed that teaching culture can result in re-orientation for national development. Hence, 31% disagreed to it.

Item 6 of the questionnaire: showed that 77% agree that teaching will prepare the teacher for future sound teaching, while 23% did not agree. Also item 7; revealed that 71% of respondents believe that the teaching of culture at all levels can bring about national development whereas 29% think in the negative.

Again, item 8, 9 and 10 of the questionnaire all strongly indicate that culture is about fetish beliefs and hidden practices with 69% of respondents agreeing to this item. In questionnaire item 9, 61% of respondents indicated that culture should not be mentioned when talking about sound religious practices and in questionnaire item 10, 83% of respondents indicate that the teaching of culture at all levels should be cancelled. All these questionnaire items all point to the negative.

In oral cultures to which the Igbo belong, people don't learn from reading but from methods used through their oral traditions throughout the generations. Information can be transferred despite the fact that people cannot read and write. This can be seen as one of the flaws of culture and cultural practices. Its unwritten nature forces those in science who believe that anything that cannot be subjected to laboratory tasks cannot be trusted.

It could be said that culturally, relevant teaching is a pedagogy grounded in teacher's displaying cultural competence; skill at teaching in a cross-cultural or multi-cultural setting. They enable every student to relate the teaching to his/her cultural context by making education relevant through religious beliefs, spirituality and culturally relevant, and in this case, national development is assured. This could be achieved at the educational levels of life, as Baumgartner and Johnson Bailey 2008 noted 'they have experienced the implementation and discussions of culturally relevant teaching within a higher education environment.

## **7. Conclusion**

Education was, and still is a badge of superior status, literacy and schooling served and still serve the powerful classes; it is a symbol and justification of privilege and a safeguard for authority and self-interest. As noted by Aristotle, "The educated differ from the uneducated as the living differ from the dead". Culture and its teaching is a part of education for national development and should be promoted.

## **8. Recommendations**

The author recommend that the teaching of culture can be incorporated into such subjects as history, social studies, religion, economics, agriculture, music, fine arts, theatre arts, Igbo/Hausa/Yoruba, technical training, wood works, architecture, medicine, biological sciences etc- Thus, all aspects of culture should be taught for national development.

## References

- Anyanwu Ogechi E. (2009). *'Crime and punishment in pre-colonial Igbo society and the challenge of British Colonial Rule'* in *Between Tradition and Change: socio-political and Economic Transformation among the Igbo of Nigeria*.
- Nwanwa, A.O and Onwudiwe, E. (Eds). New jersey: Goldline and Jacobs publishing. P.47-73.
- Apakama, L.M. (2009). 'The Use of English in Egwu Onwa: a signal of Igbo Language Endangerment' in *AJOMAH, Alban journal of music and humanities*. Vol. 1, No. 1. Oct 2009. P.97-104.
- Baumgartner, L.M.; Johnson-Bailey, j. (2008). *'Fostering awareness of diversity and Multiculturalism in adult and higher education'*. *New Directions for Continuing Education* 120:45-53.
- Ekpenyong, S. (2003). *Element of sociology*. Ikong –lagos: 17 William street
- Hornby , A.S.(2003) *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English*. Sixth Edition. Sally Wehmeier(Ed). Toronto: Oxford University press.
- Mejumi, O. (2012). *Women and power: Education, Religion and Identity*. Ibadan: University press plc.
- Samuel Chila-Kaan (2016). 'Counselling for curbing corruption and enhancing value re-orientation in Nigeria', *In journal of national association of women in Colleges of education (JOWICE)* Vol.21.2016.Pp.47-51.
- UNESCO 2005 and 2017. [www.UNESCO.org/en/esd/network/4](http://www.UNESCO.org/en/esd/network/4). retrieved 22/01/2017.
- <https://www.merriam-webster.com/culture>. Retrieved 18/10/2017
- <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/culture>. Retrieved 18/10/2017