THE RELEVANCE OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES ON THE QUALITY OF NIGERIAN TERTIARY EDUCATION

UMAR MOHAMMED KANI

UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

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THE RELEVANCE OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES ON THE QUALITY OF NIGERIAN TERTIARY EDUCATION

by

UMAR MOHAMMED KANI

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KERELEVANAN PRINSIP ETIKA TERHADAP KUALITI PENDIDIKAN TINGGI NIGERIA

ABSTRAK

Tujuan utama kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji masalah kualiti dalam pendidikan tinggi Nigeria dalam konteks etika. Kajian ini dipandu oleh teori pragmatism dan utilitarianism, dan teori-teori berkaitan supaya cadangan-cadangan dari sudut etika dapat dikemukakan. Untuk tujuan penambahbaikan kajian ini bertitik tolak daripada pandangan pemegang taruh dan masyarakat umum bahawa kualiti pendidikan tinggi di Nigeria telah menurun dan tiada penyelidikan menyeluruh dari sudut etika telah dilakukan dalam masalah tersebut. Sebagai satu kajian falsafah yang turut mengambil kira pendekatan empirikal, kaedah inkuiri falsafah dan kaedah kualitatif digunakan dalam kajian ini. Kaedah inkuiri falsafah digunakan bagi memperolehi pandangan menyeluruh tentang konsep utama tajuk dan teori yang menyokong kajian. Kaedah kualitatif digunakan untuk pengumpulan dan analisis data. Aspek-aspek dalam inkuiri falsafah digunakan sekali lagi dalam membincangkan hasil kajian. Temu bual separa berstruktur dijalankan untuk seramai 22 orang peserta yang dipilih secara purposif daripada 11 buah agensi dan institusi kerajaan yang mewakili sistem pendidikan tinggi Nigeria. Selain itu, analisis dokumen melengkapkan temu bual mendalam tersebut untuk pengumpulan data. Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan gabungan rangka kerja analisis tematik Braun dan Clarke, positivisme Silverman dan interpretivisme Miles dan Huberman, di mana tema-tema yang dikategorikan melalui subtema, diperoleh menggunakan sintesis ketiga-tiga model tersebut. Hasil kajian mendedahkan bahawa jurang antara penyediaan dokumen dengan amalan, konflik, dan deformalisasi adalah isu semasa berkaitan etika dalam

sistem, yang boleh menyebabkan kesukaran yang boleh dielakkan dalam modus operandi pengajian tinggi di Nigeria. Selain itu, kualiti pendidikan tinggi Nigeria adalah di bawah tahap normatif yang diharapkan oleh masyarakat Nigeria berdasarkan kayu ukur kesesuaiannya dengan tujuan pendidikan. Tema berkaitan yang dikatakan sebagai faktor penyebab kemerosotan kualiti termasuklah rasuah, kegagalan sistem, kawalan kemasukan, penginstitusian dan politik. Semua ini dikaitkan dengan ketiadaan tindakan daripada pihak berkepentingan. Kajian ini juga mencadangkan bahawa faktor-faktor yang menghalang kepada kualiti dapat dielakkan, berbanding dengan apa yang dirangka dalam dokumen-dokumen rasmi kerajaan. Dapatan kajian ini menunjukkan kerajaan adalah bertanggungjawab atas tindakan atau ketiadaan tindakan yang membawa kepada masalah yang dibangkitkan dalam kajian ini, serta langkah-langkah penambahbaikan yang perlu diambil dan dipantau. Diperhatikan juga bahawa cara tindakan beretika dapat meningkatkan kualiti yang lemah dengan memperbaiki kesalahan-kesalahan yang menghalangnya. Tugas pembaharuan ini memerlukan kajian semula dasar dan kempen intensif untuk perubahan sikap dan atau menyerap nilai-nilai positif baharu untuk perancangan kerajaan dengan menggunakan reorientasi kekuatan atau kesopanan atau kedua-duanya.

THE RELEVANCE OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES ON THE QUALITY OF NIGERIAN TERTIARY EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

The central purpose of this study is investigating the problem of quality in Nigerian tertiary education within the context of ethics, guided by pragmatism and utilitarianism, to theorise associated factors and offer suggestions from ethical perspectives for improvement. It followed from the perception of stakeholders and general public that quality of Nigeria's tertiary education has declined and the problem has not been holistically researched from the ethical viewpoint. Being a philosophical study through empirical approach, philosophical and qualitative methods were employed. Philosophical inquiry was applied for comprehensive view of key concepts of the topic and theories that underpinned the study while qualitative method was used for data collection and analysis. Aspects of the philosophical method were applied again in discussion of the findings. Semi-structured interviews were administered to 22 purposively selected participants from 11 governmental agencies and institutions that represent Nigeria's tertiary education system. In addition, document analysis supplemented the in-depth interviews as instruments for data collection. The data was analysed using a combination of thematic analysis framework of Braun and Clarke, positivism of Silverman and interpretivism of Miles and Huberman, in which categorised themes constituted by subthemes were derived using synthesis of the three models. Findings revealed that gap between document provisions and practice, conflict, and deformalisation are topical issues of ethical concern in the system which caused preventable difficulties in the modus operandi. Also the quality of Nigeria's tertiary education is below the normative level expected by Nigerian society based on

fitness for purpose yardstick. Themes as factors declared to have caused the quality decline are corruption, general system malfunction, admission manoeuvres, institutionalisation and politicisation, all linked to voluntary action or inaction of relevant stakeholders. The study also suggested that the factors that inhibit the quality are avoidable, against the operational guidelines provided by official documents of the government. The findings of the study also implicate that government is responsible, for its actions and inactions that bred the problem in question, also improvement steps would have to be initiated and supervised by it. However, the problem might have been exaggerated given that the country still survives on the strength of its tertiary education. By implication, it was observed and recommended that government should employ ethical means to improve the weakened quality by mending the improprieties that impede it. The reform task requires policy review and intensive campaign for attitudinal change and or imbibing new positive values to be orchestrated by government using force or courteous reorientation or both.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Education being a lifetime process and worthwhile investment is a universal tool for general wellbeing. Tertiary education is the top stage of formal education at which specialised skills are usually formed, so its quality determines development potentials of a country. Nigeria like every other country considers education as instrument for all-round development, particularly relying on tertiary education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013), quality of which is crucial. This study aimed at investigating the problem of quality in Nigeria's tertiary education from the perspective of ethics with prescription for enhancement. Meaning that the study was carried out within the context of ethics only, and findings were used to prescribe a guide that can help to address the problem so that Nigeria's tertiary education can effectively serve its purpose and compete with other systems in the world in terms of efficiency and reliability. The study intended not to only investigate and analyse the problem, rather come up with suggestions as well for solution, hence guided by principles of pragmatism and utilitarianism.

Education as the medium with which man faces realities of life with options of choice, change and manipulation stands unique in every society and will continue to be. It is obvious that education is the bedrock of development in every human society including Nigeria, but decline in quality of its tertiary education is bemoaned. This broad problem of quality in tertiary education ignited this study, for scientific investigation but through ethical viewpoint. If ethics would be a great concern in various sectors as health, business, aviation and security, then, it ought to be more in

education for its great deal in sustaining the societal values and representing the society in producing the needed intellectuals at all times. More so, education and ethics are complementary to each other and symmetrically reciprocal in many ways (Adewole, 1989).

The application of ethics cuts across all human endeavours including education which principally advances the world of today, becoming in agreement with the effects of the precious commodity. However education is defined, its defining characteristics necessarily call for inculcating a kind of attitude or ability in individuals, virtue of a sort. Logically therefore, education may not compromise integrating ethics into it, to rightly attain the virtue it aspires to foster (Peters, 1959). Being the sector that requires moderation and discipline for continuous and sustainable output, education could be the area that needs ethics most in the view of polishing *'how should a person do what'* carpeting government, policy makers, institutions' authorities, educators, students, parents and the general society. This includes moral judgement of actions and or inactions in the terminals of education provision process.

As Prisacariu and Shah (2016) argue, the ethical behaviour of all stakeholders of an educational system is much depended upon by quality of the education. In an implicative tune, quality of education should be defined by ethics and moral values. This assertion calls for incorporating ethics into the body of research that define quality assurance in education, especially tertiary education that is depended upon for all-round development. This position relates the quality with specific factors in education at a systemic level which among other things include accountability, autonomy of higher educational institutions, marketisation in higher education, academic integrity and attitudes (Bok, 2009).

Even without stressing deeper, the ethical values of every institution are visible in its products, because they must manifest the elements of the values components as what they passed through. A military personnel exhibits military attitudes simply because he is trained as such. In him must be visible the professional ethics of his constituency which would clearly indicate the type of moral training he passed through. There is less possibility of having an immoral product of a morally sound institution, and part of the morality is diligence in duty which results from the very beginning. Along this line, Davies and Ellison (1995) insist that even students' truancy in school affects the quality of education. Largely because it interrupts the flow of the academic activities and mixes in the minds of the students the knowledge they ought to acquire and the resultant rubbish of their handiwork. More so, respect, authority of teachers, trust and discipline would be at the low ebb, which must influence the whole achievement to the end.

It could stand criticism regarding quality of education in its relation to ethics that millennia and centuries of the past saw a happy result in education, quality wise, and that was connected with the strict observance of ethics. Noel (1997) makes reference to classical and subsequent periods particularly the Middle Ages and beyond when morality was integrated in all the affairs of school, with ethics as a general subject. He appreciates the quality then, which was a product of the robust system. The ethics he cherishes in this context may not be compatible with the refined phenomena, because prescribing ethical principles and values for the society to follow is equally an issue to do with human freedom. It sounds ethically questionable, unless if individuality is justifiably ruled out in favour of altruism on the ground of the common good. Values are relative, depending on certain variables, mostly society-based. Yet, this would not deter the causal fact from being what it is claimed to be.

Loveluck (1995) holds that quality should be placed at the centre of purposeful affairs of higher educational institutions, but the hope is facing a lot of threats from various angles with more severe catastrophe in the future. He further puts that quality in education especially at tertiary level may be related to ethical properties for the expected result to be achieved, because they reliably make quality to happen. Quality may never be free of values, it has to be sought by choice. Quality ought to be moral, not be amoral. There are evident similarities in this case as it deals with relative but universal human values regardless of time and place. It does not matter when or where it applies, the bottom line is argument for involvement of certain factors including ethics in the quality of education especially at tertiary level. More specifically, ethics could be among the many determinants associated to quality in tertiary education, which has not been exhausted by researchers. In this vein, Scott (2004) has a similar opinion, in which case, he asserts that disregard to ethical principles in education poses danger to quality. In essence, for quality to be established in education, associated considerations have to be put in place.

According to Chapman and Lindner (2016), the threat posed by militating factors to quality of tertiary education like corruption of any type sends a belief that success is not forthcoming from hard work and merit but through smart and devious shortcut. In this case, students will ordinarily not waste time to work hard but rather source the material or any other means to make their way, hence graduate without commensurate substance. If things like this happen in tertiary educational institutions, certainly, quality would not in any way be secured. Integrity justifies the status of an institution academically and ethically, and these are what employers want in every candidate. Even the wider society being the receiver of tertiary institutions graduates counts much on academic and ethical integrity.

Education and ethics ought to be compatible, where each becomes part and help in the realisation of the other. Ethical issues are inevitable in educational enterprise as they affect every single point in the process, and therefore lacking or weakening them directly means lacking or weakening the craved substance, the achievement dimension of education for productivity in all facets. Though the subjects of education differ with levels, yet, tertiary education is always a sector of the system of education in general. Ethical issues associated with lower levels of education may not be same with the ones obtainable at tertiary level, but the implications could be similar in effect.

It was reported that less attention is given to ethics among the factors being investigated (Ezekwesili, 2016). This has left a gap in addressing the problem in question because the attributable factors have not been fully explored, and therefore need to be investigated. According to her (Ezekwesili, 2016), the material provisions cannot be the only requisites for quality education at whatever level, the context of ethics too must be practically integrated to a reasonable degree for the system to function satisfactorily. Makers of achievement in the tertiary education enterprise too ought to work along the ethical direction especially considering the status of the country in the world regarding corruption (being one of the interests of ethics), ranking 136th out of the 176 countries surveyed in 2016 (Transparency, 2017).

The communique of Annual National Conference of the Philosophy of Education Association of Nigeria (PEAN, 2016) captures the need to see the problem of education beyond just facilities, funding and adequacy of (academically) qualified teachers. If at all there is any commitment towards ensuring quality education, all stakeholders ought not to ignore ethics among other factors, especially at tertiary level. Ruwa (2011) calls it a fact that government, researchers, collaborating bodies and

almost all stakeholders in Nigeria's tertiary education pay less attention to ethics for which a dilemma erupts regarding quality. Impliedly, ethics is one of the criteria that determine quality of the tertiary education but allegedly relegated, probably because its worth and sensitivity are not noted. Whatever can help improve the quality of the tertiary education has to be given adequate attention so that the graduates being produced can take the country to the envisaged height of development. Therefore, the researcher perceived it pertinent to face the problem through ethics for adequate examination with the view of offering a roadmap for addressing it.

Throughout Nigeria's National Policy on Education (2013), there is emphasis that education shall inculcate the 'aspects' of ethics in the citizens, but surprisingly not insisting that ethics should be incorporated in the process of education as an enterprise. This may be inadequacy in the quest for quality of tertiary education because the non-inclusion of ethical considerations in the process has the potential of weakening its quality, possibly if not given due regard. In fact, there is less possibility of education that is attained through non-ethical process to produce ethics at the end which the National Policy on Education sees as companion of quality for the common good. Absence of ethical considerations in the tertiary education system that produces the 'experts' will likely negate their performance because quality may be affected by ethical deficiency. This hypothetical proposition is what this study investigated. It is rational to take into cognisance what good ethics can do in the running of tertiary education for its appeal to competence and morality which are cardinal requirements in every profession.

1.1   Background of the Study

The tertiary education department of the Federal Ministry of Education (2015) makes quality the adjective of the type of education expected to deliver through tertiary institutions in the country. This would build the required competence in the graduates to compete with their counterparts worldwide. But the modalities of arriving at the said ambitious destination is what seems not viable if seen from the point of potentials in terms of the process effectiveness and necessary apparatus, hence the weak confidence. The creation of the department of tertiary education in the federal ministry of education was largely due to pressing demands of the tertiary institutions stretching the mandate of their regulatory agencies. It is praiseworthy that tertiary education is given an additional attention, but the effort is being confronted by impediments with greater magnitude of effects.

Need for specialisation and intellectual independence necessitated the creation of more tertiary institutions to take care of the demands in tertiary education, clearly defined by the National Policy on Education (Federal republic of Nigeria, 2013) as post-secondary school education provided at tertiary institutions. Tertiary institutions are higher educational institutions of varying types: universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, monotechnics and specialised institutions/innovation enterprise institutions. From the condensed names, the institutions fall in to different categories, ownership, purpose and function. Each category has a supervisory agency under federal ministry of education regulating all the institutions in terms of curriculum, structure, organisation, staffing, facilities, processes, admission and graduation requirements, certification, accreditation and quality assurance. This is regardless of the institutions' being owned by federal government, states' governments or private bodies.

The inter-university centres are considered in the category of universities, while the specialised institutes are in the category of monotechnics. All universities and inter-university centres are being supervised by National Universities Commission (NUC); colleges of education are being supervised by National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE); while polytechnics, monotechnics and specialised institutions/innovation enterprise institutions are being supervised by National Board for Technical Education (NBTE). In peculiar cases, some state owned specialised institutions are supervised and regulated by relevant ministries. However, the supervisory agencies are under the control of, and report to the federal ministry of education (Federal Ministry of Education, 2015).

Every community, of whatever purpose, has a sort of at least norms that appeal for smooth operation and maximisation of achieving the set objectives. So it is in the case of tertiary educational institutions that have a big task of producing experts to be absorbed into the various sectors of the nation's system. Thus, the demand for quality in the prime commodity, tertiary education, which could be the major consideration as regards end product. Irrespective of the level of education, its ability to serve the purpose for its venture primarily lies in quality, as that would be the tool for determining success or otherwise. Every concerned party would rationally expect it to worth its cost by serving its purpose. On this account, quality is a great concern in the tertiary education into which Nigerian government invests much with the hope that it will in return give the needed output. At least, the equivalence of the investment in terms of knowledge, competence and skills. Besides, tertiary education was declared a responsibility of government, private individuals and other bodies to join hands in making it great so the country can depend on it for all aspirations and goals.

The aim has always been achieving the national objectives which can hardly

be attained beyond the level and quality of the education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). It would be absurd to expect formidable and sustainable development of any kind in any sector with poor education system while most of the world nations became what they are today through quality of their education. It is therefore unlikely for a country with 'sound' education to lurk behind its counterparts in the same capacity although so many factors are instrumental to a certain degree. However, development of any country in today's world is basically proportional to quality of its education.

Reports (Saint, Hartnett & Strassner 2003; World Bank 2004; International Organisation for Migration, 2014) show that the general problem of education in Nigeria is a result of many factors, but emphasis is given mostly on teachers' qualification, curriculum, human and material resources, facilities and funding. Academic conferences being held in Nigeria especially on education usually have 'quality' in the main themes with specification on one problem or the other within the circle of education.

The federal government's 2017 budget was seriously challenged by critics (Oyedeji, 2016) for earmarking only 6% to education as against the 26% benchmark of UNESCO. The budgetary allocation to education sector as a whole was 7% in 2018 (Azeezat, 2017) and 7.05% in 2019 (Ameh & Aluko, 2018), out of which tertiary education sub-sector was settled. This shortfall among others may continue to affect the quality of the education, though there are other sources at various levels from the same government and donor organisations in different names. Indeed, funding is paramount for staffing, research, facilities and all other material requirements, but ethics is equally required to maintain orderliness in the system as an ideal human society that has a justifiable set of objectives for a justified purpose.

The quality of education in general relates largely to the values of the system as a whole, which involves the government, policy makers, institutions, educators, administrators, students, partners and the society.

1.2   Background of Nigerian Setting and Education System

Below is the description of Nigerian state as a political setting, formation and structure of its educational system. Despite the role of colonialism in both, indigeneous factors and some coincidental antecedents influenced the happenings to the present.

1.2.1   The Picture of Nigerian State

Nigeria, the most populous nation in Africa lies in West African sub-Saharan region bounded by Cameroon and Lake Chad by the east, Niger republic by the north, Benin Republic by the west and Atlantic ocean by the south. It is at the eastern end of West Africa, surrounded by francophone countries. The name "Nigeria" was coined by Flora Shaw purportedly from two words, namely 'Niger' and 'Area', the former being a popular river in West Africa that passed through many countries. Jaide (2009) though, holds a contrary view that 'Niger' is a Latin name for blacks not river. Abdul'Azeez (2003) notes that the etymology depicts a land around the area of the great river Niger. There is certainly no counter on the giver of the name and the root words, as there is equally no evidence for other meaning of 'Niger' besides the very popular conclusion that it stands for the mentioned river which originated from Timbuktu.

Despite the occupation of British colonial masters and Christian missionaries for quite a long time, the name Nigeria was made officially known in 1914 as a single political entity under Britain after the amalgamation of the then two protectorates,

Northern and Southern Nigeria (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). Entirely different people in terms of religion, tribe, language, weather, civilisation, aspiration, philosophy, and all other attributes with the exception of the only 'black Africans' ideology. This 'mistake' of amalgamation as perceived by public figures and the generality of citizens (Natufe, 2014) was the genesis of all ethnic and religious conflicts the country has been experiencing since its independence in 1960, also the basis of all judgments and decisions.

Nigeria occupies a landmass of 924,000 square kilometres (FRN, 2013) with 33% arable land (Shu'arah, 2010) and an estimated population of one hundred and eighty two million (182,000,000) according to National Population Commission (2016). Mangrove swampland, Atlantic coast, rain forests, guinea savannah, Sudan savannah, Sahel savannah characterised by desert, grasslands, hills, rocks, mountains and plateaus are found in different parts of the nation. Generally, every part is experiencing the normal routine of four seasons (spring, summer, autumn and winter) in a year with rainy months non-uniformly between the months of February and October.

The country is so blessed with all sorts of agricultural and natural resources but largely depends on oil as the major source of income and economic strength, with Naira as the monetary unit. The national flag is 'green white green' in proportional vertical arrangement denoting 'agriculture peace agriculture' respectively. Nigeria is being considered among developing countries. English is the official language and medium of instruction in all formal schools at all levels, but has over five hundred indigenous languages and ethnic groups of significant number (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013).

Currently in operation is democratic presidential system of government with bicameral legislature, embarked upon since 1999 after sixteen years of military rule. The country operates federal structure in three tiers of government, currently having the federal (capital in Abuja), thirty six (36) states, and, seven hundred and seventy four (774) local government areas. The states and local governments are also shared by six geo-political zones, North-West, North-East, North-Central, South-West, South-South and South-East.

So diverse in all respects, Nigeria recognises only two religious beliefs, Islam and Christianity. There is also a significant number of adherents to various traditional religions and atheism. Recognising the said religions does not change the country from secular, but rather, the religions are officially 'taken note of' in terms of freedom of practice and respecting their interest to a certain degree in running the affairs of the country. Prayers are offered at official functions, work free days are declared during the religions' festivities, government officials freely and officially attend religious functions, state and local governments also support the dominant religions in their areas. However, government gets involved in diplomatic matters for both religions when it comes to international affairs like pilgrimage.

1.2.2 History of Education in Nigeria

Western education is not up to two hundred years old in Nigeria, not even the coastal areas where the conveyers of it had first contact with and lived in for decades before taking it up to the northern region in later times. The usual characteristic of inconsistency of historians is interestingly absent in the advent of education in Nigeria, even the renown work of Fafunwa (1995) that tells much on the subject found it much softer regarding criticism on the advent and spread of education in the country, though

being non-witness in all he says he had to depend on other sources which are also prone to fallibility.

Western education was first introduced into Nigeria singularly by Christian missionaries in the nineteenth century from Europe and carried on their mission alongside colonial masters who would later become advance party of the missionaries, guide and protectors. The missionaries went to the country with the sole intention of spreading their faith but had to proactively establish schools to teach their targets so as to be literate and consequently be able to read the Bible, all other purposes and benefits are just fortuitous. Their first points of contact were the coastal areas of the southern part of the country since they could arrive with less or no difficulty as they used waterways, so the missionary schools and what they offered were unhesitatingly accepted and pursued with full force (Fafunwa, 1995). Up in the north, especially the Muslim-dominated areas, the story was entirely different because the people were enlightened and for almost one thousand years earlier had Islamic education in addition to their long religious and commercial relationship with Arabs from North Africa and Middle East.

For the south, the western education brought by Christian missionaries was a new development. They happily embraced new education for the good while for the Muslim north it was vehemently rejected as a tool for apostasy considering the carrier and purpose. Besides, the very existing education was adequately serving the all-important purpose of this life and preparing individuals for the one after death. Eventually, the north started to enroll into the western schools long after the British-Nigerian government took over the responsibility of educating the citizens in a secular form, though concurrently together with the missionary schools, under certain

circumstances and jealousy that the south went far ahead the north, the situation that created the wide gap that could not yet be bridged.

So it went, in British system with few schools in the country funded by the British colonial government, with only two tertiary institutions till independence in 1960 after which a National Curriculum Conference was convened in 1969 to redesign the education to have a Nigerian outlook and taste so as to be more relevant indigenous. The conference was attended by a cross-section of Nigerians in representation from all sectors (Adaralegbe, 1972). The participants of the conference brainstormed exhaustively leading to holding a seminar of experts in 1973 which gave birth to a document called the National Policy on Education (NPE). This document spelt out all policies regarding Nigerian education system, including philosophy, goals, stages, structure, process, funding, planning, administration, partnership, support, quality assurance and distributed roles of stakeholders. The document was revised five times in 1981, 1998, 2004, 2007 and 2013 in response to emerging national demands and social changes.

1.2.3   Nigeria's Philosophy of Education

Nigeria's philosophy of education is stated clearly in the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). It reads:

a. Development of the individual into a morally sound, patriotic and effective citizen;

b. Total integration of the individual into the immediate community, the Nigerian society and the world;

c. Provision of equal access to qualitative educational opportunities for all citizens at all levels of education, within and outside the formal school system;

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d. Inculcation of national consciousness, values and national unity; and

e. Development of appropriate skills, mental, physical and social abilities and competencies to empower the individual to live in and contribute positively to the society. (pp. 1-2)

By the document, producing the above type of individual citizens is a possibility through the education system, based on the belief that:

a. Education is an instrument for national development and social change;

b. Education is vital for the promotion of a progressive and united Nigeria;

c. Education maximises the creative potentials and skills of the individual for self-fulfilment and general development of the society;

d. Education is compulsory and a right of every Nigerian irrespective of gender, social status, religion, colour, ethnic background and any peculiar individual challenges; and

e. Education is to be qualitative, comprehensive, functional and relevant to the needs of the society. (p.1)

The ultimate aim is achieving the five main national goals as stated in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, thus building of:

i. a free and democratic society;

ii. a just and egalitarian society;

iii. united, strong and self-reliant nation;

iv. a great and dynamic economy; and

v. a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens.

The set national objectives drive the motive of the country, and education is regarded as the 'instrument par excellence' with which they can be achieved. In

essence, education is held as the only tool with which the country wants to achieve its set objectives. This is why, education is targeted to be pursued with the support of government from formal and non-formal settings appreciating the fact that every type is relevant (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). The goals of education in Nigeria are clearly stated, condensed as making the country what it aspires to be in all dimensions through the agency of sound citizenry to be made with education as the tool.

What Nigeria holds as education in the general term is all that is required by the Nigerian society in every citizen to be sound in character, knowledge, skills and productivity for his personal and general societal development in all aspects. Fafunwa (1995) who was opportune to be a minister of education in Nigeria defines education in the Nigerian context as *"the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of positive value to the society in which he lives"* (p.1). Though his definition sidelines elderly persons, yet, it encompasses both task and achievement dimensions of education. On this basis, education in Nigeria is basically categorised into traditional, Islamic and western.

Table 1.1

Categories of education in Nigeria

Traditional Education	Islamic Education	Western Education
Traditional education, alternatively called African indigenous education which has been in force throughout the history of human existence in Africa. It is informal, primarily transmitting the sociocultural norms and values of the society.	The education that came with the spread of Islam to Nigeria, mainly concerned with inculcating religious virtues for spiritual excellence and intellectual development. It is mostly non-formal, but not resistant to structural changes.	Called western education for its root from the Western world and in western style, brought to Nigeria by Christian missionaries in 19th century, but taken over by British colonial masters. It is strictly formal, as it is in the rest of the world.

Traditional education predates the two systems of education, because it is as old as the people's history. Islamic education is as old on the Nigerian soil as the advent of the religion in the country, heavily embraced by Muslims even after the advent of the modern one. Western education is the formal and modern, brought by Christian missionaries from the west, with the same structure and content as rest of the world. Against this background, the Nigerian government in its policy, recognises the three classes of education for consumption and job opportunities, for which they receive unequal support from the government (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013).

1.2.4 Structure of Nigerian Education

Education in Nigeria, formally provided by the government, is structured in the system today called 10-3-4, which is an amended replica of the previous 6-3-3-4.

| Six years of Primary school education | → | Three years of Junior secondary School education | → | Three years of Senior secondary School education | → | Four years of Tertiary education |
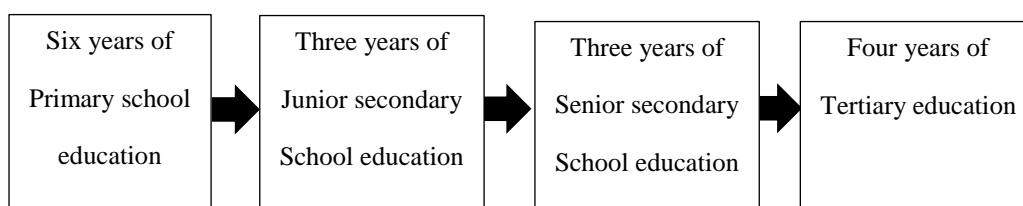
Figure 1.1. The 6-3-3-4 structure (old system)

| Ten year basic education: One year of pre-primary education, Six years of primary education (lower basic) Three years of upper basic education (junior secondary education | → | Three years of secondary education | → | Four years of tertiary education |
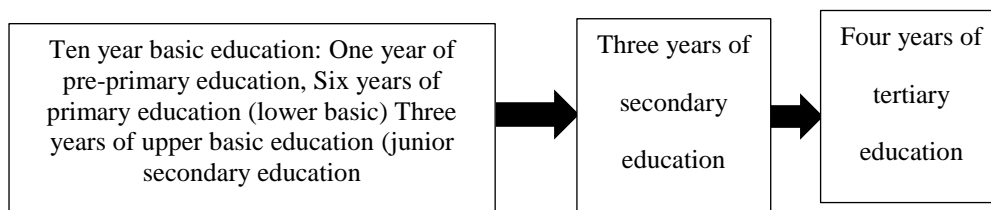
Figure 1.2. The 10-3-4 structure (current system)

The first two stages in the former structure are merged in the latter, but maintaining almost same content and mission, with addition of one year programme attached. The interpretation is this; 10-year basic education (1-year pre-primary, 6-

year lower basic education at primary school and 3-year basic education at junior secondary school); then 3-year post-basic education at senior secondary school; and 4-year tertiary education at tertiary institutions.(Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). The system is named as such just for convenience, but not strictly as such because the tertiary education is not 4 years flat, the programmes vary in duration ranging from one to seven years.

Education in Nigeria is strictly controlled by the state, but collaboratively funded by governments, society and non-governmental organisations within and outside the country.

1.3   Statement of the Problem

There are quality issues with Nigeria's tertiary education, and all efforts to improve it fail, probably because ethical principles were not addressed, hence this study. Ideally, Nigeria should by virtue of its education be what it aspires to be as enshrined in the National Policy on Education. Having singled out education as the dependable instrument for achieving the stated national goals of development, the education ought to be effectively reliable and strong enough to shape the citizens' thoughts and capabilities for the all-important purpose.

Despite the purposeful efforts which cover many areas like policy, funding, curriculum, infrastructure, method and philosophy, the current situation is still bad (Onwuka & Onwuka, 2016). It is bemoaned that the quality of Nigerian education especially in public schools has gone down, and it still goes with no sign of sooner recuperation (Kazeem & Ige, 2010). Regrettably, tertiary education is not an exception which is expected to provide specialisation in every area of study to rely on, so as to have the needed effective manpower for every sector. This situation is visibly seen in

the products of the tertiary institutions, and, in the inefficient services they render and resultant effects on all systems in the country (Bello, 2010). In fact, quality of education has never improved even for once in the history of Nigeria. It has continuously been declining, the fact that raised voices of Nigerians in different platforms like print and electronic media with a single aim of solving the problem (Onwuka & Onwuka, 2016; Usman, 2016).

To further highlight the extent of the problem, Enemuo and Mbaji (2016) conclude that graduates only pass out from their tertiary institutions with certificates to fetch them job, but their performance is not impressive. The tertiary institutions today only produce mass graduates with empty stuff, contaminating the labour market and rendering the Nigerian society the ultimate loser by their incompetence as they lack the needed skills to enable them to work professionally in different sectors. According to Muhammad (2017), the decline in the quality of Nigeria's tertiary education has reached the extent that hardly a day or week passes without a newspaper headline or scholarly article authored by experts voicing out the problem. It is found to be too alarming because the hope for betterment is currently diminishing by the day.

The research gap that prompted this study is the less exploration of ethics in relation to quality of Nigerian tertiary education. Researchers in the area of quality of Nigerian education in general, and tertiary education in particular, concentrate more on associated aspects other than ethics (Yusuf, 2012). This could be the reason why most of government's attempts of reforming the system are directed towards non-ethical approaches, and probably why there is still no positive result. If all other issues of the education system are addressed but ethics ignored, quality may not be achieved. As the former Nigeria's minister of education, Ezekwesili (2016) rationally opines, ethical gap is among the many spoilers of quality of education in Nigeria, not the

widespread notion that holds funding as the major problem. This same view is being held by Prisacariu and Shah (2016) and Ruwa (2011) who describe ethics as the area less researched in quality of tertiary education, but must be given adequate attention to ensure the craved quality. These scholarly claims call for dedicated study into the ethical properties as they relate to quality of the Nigeria's tertiary education, hence this study.

All available sources show no single research conducted that approached the problem of quality in Nigeria's tertiary education squarely from the perspective of ethics. The motive of this research is therefore filling the gap, which is investigating the problem of quality of Nigeria's tertiary education from ethical perspective, with the view of coming up with realistic ethical suggestions for improvement.

1.4   Research Objectives

This study has the condensed purpose of investigating the problem of quality in tertiary education in Nigeria from the context of ethics, so that pragmatic guidelines for solution can plausibly be offered for effective improvement of the system. The overall purpose also stretches to facilitate the forming of ethical persons in the tertiary education enterprise and help reduce moral infringements within tertiary institutions. The study aimed at the following specific objectives:

1. To identify the ethical issues with Nigeria's tertiary education.

2. To explore the normative quality in Nigeria's tertiary education.

3. To find out the factors to which the current quality state of Nigeria's tertiary education could be attributed.

4. To explore how ethics relates with the factors attributed to the current quality state of Nigeria's tertiary education.

5. To offer ethical guidelines that can enhance the quality of Nigeria's tertiary education.

1.5 Research Questions

After the successful completion of this research, it should be able to answer the following questions:

1. What ethical issues are with Nigeria's tertiary education?

2. What is the normative quality of Nigeria's tertiary education?

3. What factors could be attributed to the current quality state of Nigeria's tertiary education?

4. How is ethics related with the factors attributed to the current quality state of Nigeria's tertiary education?

5. How can ethical speculations prescribe for the enhancement of quality in Nigeria's tertiary education?

1.6 Scope and Limitation

This research was delimited to using aspects of ethics only in approaching the problem of quality in Nigeria's tertiary education. It examined the problems associated with quality of Nigeria's tertiary education, but strictly in the context of ethics. However, the discussion in the latter part of the thesis is not deeper and thorough on ethics, rather, superficial but essential. Only attributes of ethics in the associated

factors were of interest to this study. The problem of quality in Nigeria's tertiary education could be attributed to so many factors as explored, but only ethical elements the study examined. The scope of the research is tertiary education in Nigeria which is provided by tertiary educational institutions, and particularly quality issue, approached using properties of ethics. After investigating the nature of the problem, suggestions from the same ethical point of view were offered which followed from the research findings.

The study has some limitations. The system is uniform according to determined procedures and policy documents though, but still, the challenges faced by the researcher may yield a credible scepticism. However, the researcher did the possible best to overcome the difficulties and maximise accuracy. One of the major troubles encountered was the stress suffered by the researcher before getting the interview granted despite duly observing the bureaucratic and ethical protocols, possibly due to apprehension of consequences for revealing information that may not please government and fear of blackmail in which personalities often get trapped. In spite of all assurance of absolute confidentiality and fulfilment of formal requirements for the interview in the research sites, the researcher had to have multiple trips and changed the conventional recording pattern for the safest one to the interviewees although it fortunately paved way for instant member check. It might also not be unconnected with some organisational policies of restricting information given outside for preservation of some values, which perhaps, limited the data provided.

The interview which was the primary instrument for gathering data depended on the participants who were susceptible to certain human factors. Although trusted based on their status, designation and experience, yet, the human factors as bias, dishonesty, fear and anxiety may not be ruled out with certainty. As rational beings

with passion and sentiments, the interviewees could probably hide some truth, twist some facts or exercise excesses for any reason. These factors among others are likely to have influenced the data collected, though the researcher's confidence was adequate to push for continuation of the exercise. While granting the interview, the participants might have decided to reveal only what would please them, their employer or government in general. They might have also decided to exaggerate in their responses to suit a certain interest. No one is sure of what follows after exposing weaknesses of government or the system, particularly the institutions they represent, so there is possibility of them concealing some valuable facts to save their neck.

Confidentiality culture is in every organisation at different degrees of intensity, on types of documents and other resource materials. On this note, documents analysed as secondary and supplementary instrument for data gathering might also be limited by class of public access. Some sensitive documents carrying classified information or cases of reference were likely denied in order to dodge anticipated leak of absurdities and violation of the organisations' privacy policy. Nevertheless, the researcher had to unavoidably rely on the information obtained from the interviewees and available documents because they were the only available sources even though trusted.

Generalisation of implication with certainty is therefore denied because there is no certainty that other important facts to influence decision do not exist. Generalisation could be inhibited by researcher's inability to visit all tertiary institutions in the country but resorted to visit through representation of ministry and regulatory agencies in addition to the few selected institutions. The fact that uniform operational system is being practiced could be enough to warrant coverage adequacy but there may be trivial issues at individual institutions or regional levels that could change the general findings.

1.7   Significance of the Study

Some benefits would hopefully be come from this study. Its significance would impact the essentials of ethics as they relate to quality of tertiary education in Nigeria. This is largely due to the fact that it could be a pathway to developing ethical features in stakeholders and processes in tertiary education, to respond to ethical inadequacies in the mode of operation and institutions.

To academia, this study could be a contribution to the body of knowledge as others are, especially that the area is not much researched. It may therefore serve the purpose of paving a way towards questioning systems of education at tertiary level from the contextual angle of ethics. In other words, the study may lay a foundation to upcoming academic investigations that ethics as a perspective is worth exploring in critiquing quality of tertiary education anywhere in the world for its relevance. However, it does not entail absence of limitation, but it does suggest a thread of applicability. If accreditation, ranking and other quality assurance mechanisms can be relied upon for judgement, the tools and indicators employed in doing so may equally require ethical diagnosis for completeness.

It also adds to the number of available literature in the areas of tertiary education, ethics and quality as supplement. Interested readers may find it useful and view the study as a stepping stone in areas of ethical issues and quality in Nigerian tertiary education. So also pragmatism and utilitarianism and their application in addressing a problem as such. Subsequent researchers in the same or similar area may find it a foundation upon which to base further research and build supportive or counter argument.

Being an investigative inquiry into the problem of quality in Nigeria's tertiary education, particularly approaching it through the lens of ethics, it would initially serve as a response to the most pressing issues in the tertiary education sector of Nigeria. In particular, Nigerian government and general society would have a piece of research work that complements similar efforts from other perspectives related to the central theme, for that quality of tertiary education has been a major theme for discourse and inquiries using varieties of approaches and tools. Angles like policy, curriculum, methods, funding, infrastructure and facilities have been studied on the surface towards the issue of quality, but this study would supplement by looking at another side, so has the tendency of making a contribution towards addressing Nigeria's tertiary educational major problem, quality. Perhaps, government may find it useful.

As the expectation of Nigerians on tertiary education stretches to work satisfaction to compete with international community, the burden is on government, administrators, educators and the general society. All of them are active stakeholders. As such, this study examined their role in the associated factors with quality of tertiary education. Resultantly, it may serve the guiding purpose of identifying who has what ethical inadequacy and how to make redress. This is how it ought to be, especially that the country is rated among the developing nations in the world, its educational system should at least be commensurate with its economic status. Among the significance of the study is facilitating this goal for the common good.

As in the submission of Looker and Lim (2013), university education, and indeed the generality of tertiary education is directly and wholly aligned to employment. What this study targets is improving the quality of Nigeria's tertiary education by giving a contributory portion through academic investigation. If the tertiary education is transformed for the better in terms of quality, the graduates as