

EDUCATION FOR A BETTER NIGERIA: LESSONS FROM EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF PLATO AND ARISTOTLE

KENNETH MADU, Ph.D

Department of Educational Foundations
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria
ko.madu@unizik.edu.ng or kennethmadu4@gmail.com

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TIMOTHY EMEKA ASOGWA, Ph.D

Department of Educational Foundations
University of Nigeria, Nsukka
timothy.asogwa@unn.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

This work sought to examine Plato's and Aristotle's aims of education and lessons that can be drawn from them to foster effective education for a better Nigeria. Plato and Aristotle were the pioneers of Western education. They saw education as indispensable for the formation of the ideal state. Their educational ideas were meant to reconstruct the socio-political situation of Athens during their time. Their positive contributions in the field of education, especially their educational aims, have relevant lessons for Nigerian education, which can lead to a better Nigeria. For Plato and Aristotle, the aims of education were to develop the minds, bodies and souls of students, as well as equip them with the ability to develop their potentials. Such lessons can provide Nigeria the reason to educate and elect good leaders. Plato and Aristotle sought to develop a political system in which the leaders would be knowledgeable and virtuous. These are big lessons from Plato's and Aristotle's aims of education which can help Nigeria to produce less corrupt and happy citizens who can make the state better. Proper education of Nigerian military will help them to be highly spirited, patriotic and strong. The high unemployment rate in Nigerian will be reduced for technical and vocational training learnt from educational aims of Plato and Aristotle. The education of the artisans and the citizens according to their needs and talents conforms to vocational training, which fosters skill acquisition for useful living in the society. Hence, the advancement of Nigeria and its citizens.

Keywords: Education, Nigeria, Better Nigeria, Plato and Aristotle's Aims of Education.

Introduction

No doubt, education is a process that starts the very moment a person is born, and ends whenever he finally dies. It is so hydra-headed that it does not, like many other concepts, have a generally accepted definition. For the purpose of this study, education can be said to be the bedrock of any country's development. It is, according to Ekpenyong, Rosemary and Nkama (2013), a vital instrument which improves quality, shapes destiny, and transmogrifies man from what he is to what he hopes to become. Education produces persons who are intellectual and creative, innovative, progressive, patriotic, and of good character in every respect. Most importantly, the core of education as envisaged by Plato and Aristotle, is to produce moral people (Owan-Eno, 2021). On a positive note, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, FRN, (2014) posits that education is an instrument par excellence for effecting national development.

Therefore, any meaningful growth and development of any country ought to be preceded by a succinct educational plan. What is more, due to the indispensability of education, it has become a sine qua non for social realities of nations. It is, therefore, of phenomenal importance to any society that wants to make a positive change.

The needs and aspirations for the betterment of any nation can be enlivened if it takes cue from the educational aims of philosophers and their programs. Supporting the foregoing, Nwafor (2014) states that the philosophy of education and programs of a country are expected to touch every facet of societal needs and aspirations in terms of human and material resources for betterment. It is known that the betterment of any nation begins with its needs, human elements, which in turn develop the material resources. Buttressing this, Nwafor postulates that the betterment of the human resources of a nation cannot be devoid of education in its entirety. For this reason, every nation that has the advancement of its human and material resources as her greatest priority usually develops a blue-print of how it can go about achieving its goals and objectives. From the above postulation, one cannot but ask how Nigerian education system can draw a lesson from the educational aims of Plato and Aristotle for the betterment of its citizens? In an attempt to address this question, this paper will discuss education, Nigeria and her educational aims and goals, Plato's aims of education, Aristotle's aims of education, and lessons to be drawn from duo's aims of education for a better Nigeria.

Education

Education, as has been adumbrated somewhere in this work, is a multi-dimensional concept. It does not have a universally accepted definition. An etymological definition of the term has been attempted by some philosophers. They trace it to two opposite roots which originate from two opposing philosophical views. One view derives "education" from the Latin word "educere" which means "to lead out", or "to draw out". Following the tradition of Plato and other idealists, this group of philosophers, believes that the learner has innate ideas which only need to be drawn out, squeezed out, pulled out and expanded. The above proposition corroborates with Socrates' view that education is a midwife which helps people to bring out what is endowed in them by nature (Omogbe, 1991). The other opposing school of thought holds that education comes from the Latin word "educare" which means "to form" "to train". This group follows the tradition of John Locke and other realists which holds that the child's or the learner's mind is a "tabula rasa", that is, an erased or blank sheet on which to write. Hence, external objects make impressions on the mind and feed it with information and knowledge, (Owan-Eno, 2021). The later represents informal education which takes place at home and any other place, while the former represents formal education, which takes place in a defined place like school, university and the like, as a systematically planned and implemented venture. In view of the above, it can be deduced that education is a process of developing knowledge, ability, and virtue in learners in such a way that they can use all they have acquired to improve themselves and the society in which they live. Plato's and Aristotle's aims of education are in tandem with the former etymological definition of education given above, as deriving from "educere".

Nigeria and its Education Aims and Goals

Nigeria is a country in West Africa. What does Nigeria mean? According to Anowai and Raphael (2016), the term "Nigeria" was coined by Flora Shaw, a journalist who later married Lord Fredrick Lugard who suggested in an article that the several British Protectorates on the

Niger be collectively christened Niger Area, that is, Nigeria. The country, Nigeria, came into being in this present form in 1914 when the two British protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria were amalgamated by Sir Frederick Lugard. However, it is worthy of note that before the creation of Nigeria by the British lords, it was made up of numerous great kingdoms that maintained complex systems of government independent of contact with the West. Nigeria later gained her independence in 1960 from the British colonial government. The country as at today has thirty-six states and capitals, including Abuja, Nigeria's seat of power. It has 774 local government areas with more than two hundred and fifty ethnic groups. Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba are the major ethnic groups, (Njoku, 2000).

Nigerian Education: Aims and Goals

In 1969, Nigeria had a national curriculum conference that marked a turning point in its educational history. The conference under the aegis of the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), according to Nwafor (2014), was not only concerned with curriculum development, the objectives of education, among others, but has as its task the reviewing of the old national goals and identifying new ones. The conference did not ignore the function of education in preparing Nigerians for the task of living in the 21st century and beyond. The benefits of the conference remain indelible in the educational landscape of Nigeria. This is because it is from the totality of its recommendations that the nation's philosophy of education, among others, evolved. It also gave rise to subsequent seminars and conferences. However, Akinpelu (2005) had questioned the appropriateness and adequacy of what we call "Nigerian's Philosophy of Education." His argument is based on the fact that the participants of the various conferences imported "lock, stock and barrel" foreign philosophical ideas into the Nigerian educational system. Lending their voice on the foregoing, Madu and Onyebuchi (2019) state that the contents of the *National policy on education* (and its philosophy) could at best be described as mere objectives of the system. Some other critics' point of departure is that the mixed nature of Nigeria's philosophy of education makes implementation of the educational policy on which it is based relatively difficult and unrealistic (Nwafor, 2014).

Nevertheless, the *National Policy on Education* has undergone series of review since the first edition in 1977, such as in 1981, 1998 and 2004. It has also had different editions: 2008, 2013, and 2014. A critical observation shows that in each edition, some phenomenal ingredients of the documents are either lost or rendered incompatible, or inconsistent. For instance, the idea of "life-long education" was dropped from 1977 and 1981 edition. It was rather replaced with "Long life education", which formed the basis for the nation's educational policies in 2004 edition, thereby rendering it inconsistent and contradictory. More so, in the 2004 and pre-2004 editions, the idea of "education as an instrument par excellence for national development... is clear, but missing in post-2004 editions. Although inferred, it sounds like a deliberate deception. It is in view of these lapses that Nwafor (2014) states that Nigeria cannot boast of its own philosophy of education because it is yet to have a national ideology, which should form the basis for her national philosophy of anything we do as a nation. Buttressing the above assertion Akinpelu (2005) asserts that there is a considerable discontinuity, jarring inconsistency and disharmony, which Freeman-Butts has characterized as "educational disjunctivitis; a highly stiff educational system. These are some of the features of the Nigeria's philosophy of education. However, stating them as they are contained in the 2004 edition of

the *National policy on education* will be necessary. The four statements of belief are thus spelt out: “In Nigeria’s philosophy of education”, it is believed that:

- (a) education is an instrument for national development; this means that the formulation of ideas, its integration for national development, and the interaction of persons and ideas are all part of education;
- (b) education fosters the worth and development of the individuals, for each individual’s sake, and for the general development of the society;
- (c) every Nigerian child shall have a right to equal educational opportunities irrespective of any real or imagined disabilities each according to his or her ability; this informs inclusive education
- (d) there is need for functional education for the promotion of a progressive, united Nigeria; to this end, school programmes need to be relevant, practical and comprehensive; while interest and ability should be the driving force of the individual’s direction in education.

Although the *National Policy on Education* has remained a road-map for the practice of education in Nigeria and fundamental for its national development, some critical questions are necessary. If the formulators of these ideas are Nigerians, what forms the basis for formulation? Of what background, competence and inclination are the people that formulated them? Does a child whose social status has no access to education “have rights to equal educational opportunities”? What practical efforts are being made to translate the “need for a functional education for the promotion of a progressive, united Nigeria” into manifestation? What is more, what true efforts has the Nigerian government made to bridge the gap between theory and practice that has hindered the Nigerian child? Questions generated by Nigeria’s philosophy of education are not just unending but perpetual, unless urgent measures are applied to ameliorate the situation.

Be that as it may, far be it that Nigeria’s philosophy of education has not contributed to the wellbeing of the nation since its inception in 1977. At least, they came on board with the 6-3-3-4 (six years in primary school, three years in junior secondary school, three years in senior secondary school and four years in tertiary institution) system of education that had concomitant result of population explosion in student enrolment, especially at the primary school level, as the Universal Primary Education (U.P.E.) was equally introduced, although greeted with poor implementation. It led to the establishment of more post-primary and tertiary institutions with a view to developing “the individual into a sound and effective citizen”, (FRN, 2014)

Moving forward, another feat that is to the credit of Federal Government in its mass educational policy is the introduction of Universal Basic Education (U.B.E.). However, despite the huge pecuniary commitment and vigorous enlightenment campaigns, the U.B.E. seems to be a replica of the U.P.E., as schools are over-crowded with unanticipated student enrolment. Apart from lack of a conducive learning environment for teaching-learning process, there are the burdens of inadequate funding and dearth of qualified personnel.

Arguably, having seen education as “an instrument par excellence for effecting national development”, it is hoped that Nigeria can still achieve development through its five national goals:

- a. a free and democratic society;
 - b. a just and egalitarian society;
 - c. a united, strong and self-reliant nation;
 - d. a great and dynamic economy; and
 - e. a land full of bright opportunities for all its citizens;
- and its aims:
1. development of the individual into a morally sound, patriotic and effective citizen
 2. total integration of the individual into the immediate community, the Nigerian society and the world;
 3. provision of equal access to qualitative educational opportunities for all citizens at all levels of education within and outside the formal school system;
 4. inculcation of national consciousness, values and national unity; and
 5. development of appropriate skills, mental and physical social abilities and competencies to empower the individual to live in and contribute positively to the society (FGN, 2014).

It is also hoped that Nigeria will be a better country, if it can draw some lessons from the educational aims of Plato and his student, Aristotle, to which we now turn our attention.

Plato's Aim of Education

Plato lived between 428 to 348 BC in the city of Athens. He was a great philosopher and had a rich background. Plato, according to Okafor (2014), attended one of the best schools in Athens. Socrates, his teacher, had a great influence on him. Plato built a school in Athens and called it the Academy, where he stayed, taught and worked as a philosopher. Plato wrote books, some of which include the *The Republic* and *The Law*.

He was a rationalist and his theory of education stemmed from that background. Plato believed that true state of things lies in the world of forms. For him, the world of forms is intelligible realities of visible things, and that sensible things do not represent the object of true knowledge. He was the one who proposed the theory of innate ideas, where, according to Okafor (2014), certain ideas are inborn in the mind. Plato believed that the soul has pre-existed in the world of forms before its existence in this physical world of human experience. He stated that education deals with acquisition of knowledge which helps the mind to recollect and remember what it already knew in the world of forms prior to its existence in this world. In the conception of Omoregbe (1991), Plato's theory of knowledge showed that knowledge is virtue. As a result, to know good is to do good, while ignorance is the source of evil. That is to say that one cannot willingly do evil. Hence, education is enamored to lead the mind out of ignorance.

Moving forward, Plato, in categorizing knowledge, never agreed that anything sensual can be object of true knowledge. Anowai and Raphael (2016) posit that Plato saw opinion as the lowest level of knowledge. And in opinion is imagination and belief. However, imagination is lower than belief because the mind takes sensory impressions of sense perception as deceptive and, as a result, cannot be an object of true knowledge. Beyond the visible realm is thinking and intelligence or dialectics. For Plato, this is where the object of true knowledge resides. At this level, thinking is lower than intelligence, reason being that in thinking, the mind makes abstraction and rises above the sensible objects. The highest object of knowledge

is intelligence or dialectics. It is at this level that the art of abstract reasoning, looking beyond particulars and appearance, takes place. This level of knowledge can only be attained through education, according to Plato.

The aim of education for Plato is for the service of the state. Plato's view, according to Okafor (2014), is done not only by physical training but by intellectual, aesthetic and cultural elements. Much as the welfare of the state is paramount, education must cater for the happiness of the citizens. A happy citizen cannot but render a wholesome service to the state. Vo, Do and Bui (2016), posit that Plato proposed to achieve the foregoing through his ideal state, the Republic. In this state, the citizens are classified into three: the artisans or skilled craftsmen, the guardians or warriors and the rulers or the elites, who are also known as philosopher kings. Each of this group is to be educated according to its ability to carry out its task efficiently in the state. Okafor (2014) states that Plato, in educating the above groups of individuals, placed emphasis on the cultivation of virtue, because virtue has to win a compulsory victory. In the same line of thought, Vo, Do and Bui (2016) argue that Plato believed that there is justice in the state when each class is performing their functions according to its ability. More so, each class, apart from other subjects, must offer music as a subject because, apart from helping in physical training, it makes the soul reach a balance between emotion and reason.

The artisans are to be educated according to the need of each craft to provide goods and services as a vocation for the state. On the other hand, the guardians, which include men and women, are to be educated to defend the state from internal and external aggressions. Special training and provision are made for the guardians to ensure that they carry out their assignments efficiently. Vo et al. (2016) believe that the reason Plato allowed common ownership of property among guardians was to preserve their unity. The permanent individual family would be eradicated, and there would be a single family of guardians. Sexual relations would be restricted only to special marriage festivals. However, young men who have distinguished themselves in war and duties should be given more opportunities to sleep with women in order to breed stronger children. The children born to the guardians will be detached from their mothers and given to officers appointed to take care of them. The children will be brought up in a crèche in the care of nurses living in a special part of the city. Consequently, the elites or the philosopher kings are to be educated to pilot the affairs of the state. That is, to develop a political system in which leaders would be knowledgeable and good. In this regard, the elites are educated to acquire the highest level of knowledge (dialectics). Through the study of dialectics, they will be well grounded in abstract reasoning, knowing the vision of good and bad. No wonder Plato stated that a state will be good only when philosophers become kings and kings become philosophers (Okafor, 2014). According to Vo et al (2016), Plato's idea of education is designed mainly for the philosopher kings. It is expected that a person who is being prepared to rule should be in tune with the study of literature, music and elementary mathematics at the age of eighteen. Then, at the age of twenty, after a two-year period of military training, those who give the evidence of their competence and suitability would proceed to higher education and subsequent practical experiences. At the age of twenty, few that distinguished themselves would be selected to pursue an advanced course in mathematics. At age of thirty, a five-year course in dialectics and moral philosophy would begin. The next fifteen years would be spent gathering practical experiences through public service. Finally, at the age of fifty, the ablest men who reach the

highest level of knowledge, the vision of good, would then be ready for the task of governing the state.

Aristotle's Aim of Education

Aristotle (384-322 BC) was a great thinker, an encyclopedic brain of ancient Greek science and philosophy of Athenian extraction. He was a student of Plato. He was a philosopher and an educator par excellence. He brought out deep opinions about subjects, program contents, and the role of education nearly 2,500 years ago. He was a prolific writer. His book, *Politics* has positive factors and have been very important up to now (Vo, Do and Bui, 2016). He was a realist, and can be said to be the father of realism. For Okafor (2014), Aristotle believed that the things of human experience, the things in the material universe, exist in themselves. Their existence is real and objective. In other words, their existence is independent of the thinking subject or independent of the person who thinks or does not think about them.

The aim of education, according to Aristotle, is the welfare of the state whose ultimate goal is to provide for the greatest good for its citizens (Okafor, 2014). Corroborating this, Vo, Do and Bui (2016) state that Aristotle perceived the aim of education as bringing common benefits for people, so it must be homogeneous for all of them. For Aristotle, the aim of education is not only to head to humanitarian idealization but also as a supporter for humans, an enormously important condition for an individual to take part in the community. Therefore, the intendment of education is for all citizens. In other words, education aims at making the people happy, so that they can happily seek the welfare of the state. Clarifying the above point, Okafor (2014) states that Aristotle's views of happiness and mere pleasure were not the same. For him, happiness is attained not through sensual experience, but through the exercise of virtues. Since the intellectual characteristic of man is the basis for morality and virtue, it therefore implies that education must concern itself with the development and nurture of the intellect and training of the mind, as a means to happiness. Worthy of note is that Aristotle viewed the exercise of virtue as an activity in contemplation and, as a result, contemplation is an intellectual activity, and therefore an aim in education (Okafor, 2014). By implication, vocational education is downgraded, since the practical is regarded as inferior to the intellectual, and hence physical activity is subordinate to contemplative action. Aristotle preferred public education to private education. The idea is so that there will be homogeneity in the educational system for everyone.

Accordingly, education is the foundation for the sustainable and thriving development of the state. Vo, Do and Bui (2016) contend that Aristotle considered education as what equips humans with the ability to be awake to life, to shape the right track to the greatest advantage and generosity. This is because when a country has their citizens who are well-educated and moral, it should, of course, become better, and the political regime will be more stable. More so, the educational system that Aristotle aimed at was a permanent and a lifelong one. From this viewpoint, learning should not be confined to formal education years, but rather continue as an ongoing process. Setting out the curriculum, Aristotle (1999) suggests four subjects for teaching program: reading and writing, physical education, music and drawing. Aristotle, just like his teacher, Plato, believed that music is an important subject, not only for entertainment but also for using free time appropriately and also to reach a balance between emotion and reason. Therefore, music should be included in the educational system. Aristotle (1999) specified the subject of education broadly. It is through the means of education that citizens

gain enough competence to perform their rights and responsibilities and train their skills, experiences, and inured to become a person skillful in both conduct and service to the state. The talented citizens need educational training to become leaders-to-be, while the populace also needs education to live and act legally. Thus, citizens are educated to be able to attend activities that can develop the country and bring goodness to it. Furthermore, education is meant for all people for the purpose of creating excellent citizens. Hence, Aristotle affirmed that education is a national mission. Aristotle differs with Plato, his teacher, here.

Lessons that Nigerian Education can draw from Plato's and Aristotle's Aims of Education

Platonic and Aristotelian aims of education were crucial in actualizing the needs of the Athenians at that moment. Their economic and socio-political life were made manifest in these educational aims. Plato sought to develop a political system in which leaders would be knowledgeable and virtuous, while Aristotle advocates a homogeneous educational system for everyone for knowledge and virtue of both leaders and the citizens (Aristotle, 1999). He also emphasized the happiness of the citizens. Nigeria's educational system has lots of important lessons to take home here. One of the pivotal aims which serve as foundations for the national policy, upon which the philosophy of Nigerian educational aim hinges, is to create a free and democratic society. Nigeria's philosophy of education is based on democratic principles. That is, citizens should be educated to elect their leaders in a free, fair and responsible manner. Can one say that this is obtainable in Nigeria? The political and economic crises we have in the contemporary Nigeria is an indicator that Nigeria is yet to learn from that. The effect of that failure is enthrone people that were not elected into leadership positions, thereby ushering in bad leadership, which Achebe saw as the trouble with Nigeria, (Madu & Onyebuchi, 2019). Power-drunk politicians force themselves into government without proper elective processes. Even the election umpire often flagrantly disobeys their own rules just to accommodate such individuals for only-God-knows reason. If people, especially INEC officials, are educated properly, they would have done better, having been aware of the consequences. As a result, Nigerian leaders need to learn from Plato's and Aristotle's aims of education for a better democratic process to be fostered. They also need to be educated to inculcate virtue and morality and be humble enough to serve in order to be served, as Aristotle adumbrated (Vo, Do & Bui, 2016). This will help them to seek the common good and happiness of the people. It is only when the citizens are happy that they can contribute wholly to the welfare of the state.

Plato and Aristotle saw education in music and physical training as very essential subjects for all the citizens, but Plato emphasized the guardians to develop a character that is both gentle and high spirited and to make the soul reach a balance between emotion and reason. This would make them obey the law and preserve its ideals against corruption from pleasure, pains, fear and uncouth desires. Although this educational aim may have been seen in NYSC scheme, it is not enough because it is not rudimentary. From the foregoing, it is necessary for Nigerian soldiers to be educated in this regard so as to carry out their tasks efficiently without any form of meddlesomeness. What is more, they should not use their position as an advantage to exploit the masses. Thus, they should be educated in music especially, to strike a balance between emotion and reason in order to resist the attraction of going into government to control the affairs of the state which is not within their purview. This anomaly overtime in Nigeria, has brought about injustice, anarchy and various forms of corruption.

Contemporary Nigeria is still suffering the bad effects of military authoritarianism in their socio-political climate, and the anomaly seems to persist in contemporary Nigeria.

Plato's and Aristotle's educational aim of mass education according to individual capacity is good for Nigeria, as it would help each citizen to contribute to the need of the state. Each craft is necessary for the provision of goods and services for the state. This is instructive for Nigerian education, especially with regard to accomplishing the national goals upon which the philosophy of Nigerian education hinges. Hence, to achieve a united, strong and self-reliant nation, government should equip schools with proper infrastructural facilities necessary for practical training in different fields of learning. There is no other time that vocational education should be encouraged in schools than now. This is to enable students acquire skills for useful living, for their own development and that of the society. The foregoing idea is so much important to the citizens, especially now that white collar jobs are far from reach. It will help them to create jobs for themselves and for others as employers of labor. With vocational education in Nigeria, brain drain in form of "japa" will be a thing of the past, and over reliance on imported goods, technology, and dollarization of naira will be minimized. Nigerians will be able to produce to feed Nigerians and export to other countries, thereby boosting our foreign exchange. This will indeed give room for great and dynamic economy and make Nigeria a land full of bright opportunities for all its citizens.

Furthermore, Plato and Aristotle's aims of education have one thing in common – virtue! Plato preached virtue; Aristotle harped on virtue. This is completely different from Nigeria's educational system. The two great philosophers gave room for virtue, which allows for moral education that cultivates good life in people. Plato and Aristotle believed that no matter the level of education one may attain, if one does not have virtue, such education is otiose and vegetates. This idea seems to be lacking in Nigeria's educational system. That is why corruption, which seems to be fighting the citizens back, is prevalent in every nook and cranny of the society, most especially from the corridors of the high ranking educated officials and never escape from the lowest of the society. As a matter of urgency, moral education should be introduced in Nigeria's curriculum, especially from primary to tertiary institutions. In Aristotle's view, a special attention should be paid to education so that children can develop physically and morally (Aristotle, 1999).

Again, Nigeria's 6:3:3:4 or 9:3:4 system of education differs from the duo's aims of education. Plato devised different form of education for each class of citizen. For him, education of rulers stipulated that at the age of eighteen, a person who is being prepared to rule must study literature, music and elementary mathematics. For Aristotle, all citizens should be exposed to such education so as to produce happy citizens who will serve the state. After this, according to Plato, the person pursues a rigorous physical and military training for two years. At the age of twenty, few that distinguished themselves will be selected to pursue an advanced course in mathematics. At age of thirty, a five years course in dialectics and moral education would begin. Then, the next fifteen years would be spent gathering practical experience through public service. However, physical and military training is lacking in Nigeria's educational system for the citizens. In this regard, it should be introduced to Nigeria's educational system. Although such experience is seen in youth service, it is not enough. It ought to be included in the curriculum. This will help in balancing intellectual learning with physical fitness. Nigeria

will be a better country, if it can draw some lessons from the educational aims of Plato and his student, Aristotle.

Educational Aims of Plato and Aristotle for Education for a Better Nigeria

Defining the concept, “a better Nigeria”, is not easy to come by. However, attempt was made by defining the keyword, better. According to Elizabeth Walter (2019) better can be seen as a word that is comparative of good; it means, of higher standard, more suitable, pleasing of effective than other things or people. For Collins (2019) better can mean to improve, to have high standard of achievement and behavior of people. In the same line of thought, Charles Merriam (2019) states that better implies improved health or mental attitude, more attractive, favorable or commendable and improved in accuracy or performance. Hence, a better Nigeria can be seen as Nigeria that has jettisoned undesired condition, with improvement in health, attitude, and outlook, with concomitant commendation. This is because for any form of undesired condition to change to better, there is need to train the minds of the people through functional education. The target of the foregoing, according to Dewey, as reported in Miovska-Spaseva (2016), is to allow initiative, openness, enterprise, as well as developing capabilities for flexibility, adaptability and problem solving. Hence, a better Nigeria, simply put, can be seen as building better individuals. It is the first and greatest step towards building a better Nigeria. Accordingly, “The strength of a nation,” says Samuel Smiles, as reported by **Kramer** (2019), “depends on the character of the people”. When the people are developed, national development will definitely align. As a result, there is no better country without better citizens, and Nigeria is not an exception. By and large, a better Nigeria should be one with a change of attitude, that possess morality, impeccable in character, and care for the nation and its citizens without any form of bias. A better Nigeria is one where corruption does not reign supreme.

Educational ideas of Plato and Aristotle, despite spanning long distances of time and space far back, are still relevant to the present time, even in the midst of globalization and technological breakthroughs. Educating and training citizens is an extremely important mission to engage in, because education produces persons who are intellectual and creative. Most especially, the core of education is to produce moral citizens. As a result, education in virtue and lifestyle is one of the essential contents on which pupils’ and students’ attentions should be focused. Therefore, it is one of the responsibilities of education to see that the citizens, from whom leaders are elected, are well educated in virtues and modest lifestyle, thus leading to the rise of leaders who are aware of their responsibilities towards society. Leaders who are competent enough to imbibe requisite knowledge and shoulder responsibilities, who are prompt and active in utilizing opportunities for positive ends, and who are not corrupt. Such an atmosphere will reinforce Nigeria as united, strong and self-reliant nation, as contained in the *Nigerian policy on education*. Hence, virtue, as a key educational aim of both Plato and Aristotle, has to be an extremely urgent matter in Nigerian education system for a better Nigeria.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this work has examined Plato’s and Aristotle’s educational aims and their lessons for Nigerian educational goal for a better Nigeria. Plato’s and Aristotle’s aims of education are very important for the education of Nigeria, both the leaders and the led. Following Plato’s and Aristotle’s aims; Nigerian education must aim at the positively

transforming the entire citizenry of Nigeria. To achieve this, Nigerian education must be inclusive, and must be holistic, embracing the intellectual, physical, spiritual, moral and emotional aspects of every Nigerian. When a citizen has sufficient competence and virtue, he will certainly be able to serve the nation with patriotism in any cadre – as a leader or as a follower. If such a patriot becomes a political leader, say a president, he will definitely pilot the affairs of government in the right manner, and awaken other leaders to their roles and responsibilities for the common good of all the citizens. In this way, Nigeria education will significantly contribute in producing less corrupt leadership that ensures peaceful co-existence and drives development in all sectors in the country. With such ideal aims of education of Plato and Aristotle, Nigeria education system cannot but bring about a better Nigeria.

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