



Ethical culture: Nico's model for national re-orientation

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Abstract

The role of the National institute for cultural Orientation (NICO) has long been misunderstood, given the multifarious behavioral patterns of Nigerians at all sections of national life. Financial fraud, religious bigotry, ethnic biases, nepotism and political intolerance have culminated in querying the effectiveness and the very essence and continued existence of NICO and its sister agencies of government set up for the implementation of the cultural policy. There is need therefore to interrogate the over 25years of operations of the institute in arresting and refocusing the negative tendencies of Nigerians toward a healthy attitude for national development. Using Klukhohn and Strotbeck's value Orientation model on the nature of individuals and their propensity to change, the study qualitatively analyzes NICO's mandate and proposes a new model with performative ingredients to expand the operational focus for more impact and efficiency.

Keywords: Orientation, value orientation, cultural orientation and models

Introduction

It generally argued that culture is all permeating, incorporating the totality of a people's way of life. This notion though basic but popular has led to a lot of confusing interpretations of what really the concept entails. In Nigeria, the persistence of this misconception of the role of culture and its neglect as a key factor in policy formulation, planning and implementation for developmental purposes gave birth to the establishment of the National Institute for Cultural Orientation.

Decree 93 of 1993 as a joint initiative of the Nigerian Government and UNESCO established the National Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO) during the World Decade for Cultural Development (WDCD 1987- 1997). It was Nigeria's

national project for the decade designed as a platform for “energizing Nigeria’s cultural, educational, socio political and economic development policies through inter-agency, inter-sectorial and inter-disciplinary actions”. (Nico Manual, P2)

Though it was a joint venture of the Federal Government of Nigeria and UNESCO which gave it initial funding, it is imperative to note that the establishment of the Institute was long heralded by the cultural policy of Nigeria, 1988, which had advocated for its creation along with other agencies like the National Theater, National Troupe of Nigeria among others, to be set up by Government for the implementation of the cultural policy of Nigeria.

The main reason for the establishment of the National Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO) was therefore to primarily effect a sense of cultural direction or re direction for the nation to enable it meet the challenges of ‘social integration, national unity and national development’. Right from inception, it was anticipated that programmes of the Institute will be directed and focused toward this singular direction as the decree provides.

Objectives

The objectives for the establishment of the Institute are as follows:

- i. To serve as a focus for orientation in cultural matters for policy makers and other Government officials.
- ii. To promote, revive, develop and encourage Nigeria’s culture and history.
- iii. To carry out public enlightenment of the various facets of Nigerian culture, to effectively mobilize Nigerian’s towards a culture related life style.
- iv. Promote & develop relevant curricular aimed at integrating Nigeria’s culture into the educational system at all levels.
- v. Sponsor and undertake research into all aspects of Nigeria’s history and culture
- vi. Train cultural development officers who will interpret Nigeria culture into the Educational system at all levels to facilitate the practical application of Nigerian culture into everyday activity.
- vii. Develop cultural materials for promoting the cultural image of Nigeria nationally and internationally and to use them for the realization of the Nation’s cultural Diplomacy objectives. (NICO Decree no.93 of 1993)

From inception, the National Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO) had a dual mandate of Training and Orientation, which is supposed to be anchored upon its public enlightenment campaigns alongside its training and capacity building objective for the culture sector.

This study will however focus on the Institute’s Orientation mandate only. An attempt would be made to look at the Institute’s past, present and the future and what can be done to improve further operations. According to Akinade (2007) the concept of orientation generally is conceived as a

Guidance service' that hopes to assist individuals to adapt to new positions, places or persons. It is to help the individual cope better, faster and more comfortably to new experiences and help them to adjust to life (Akinade, 2007:84)

It must be stressed here, that the concept of orientation being advocated for here and for which the Institute was established, is that which is not only a guidance service, but one that is aimed at bringing a desirable attitudinal change among Nigerians as a means of re-engineering the whole essence of her nation hood. The 'Orientation' thus is intended to help Nigerians to think, feel or act Nigerian or in such a way that is culturally determined or acceptable.

The term could also be extended to cover the programmes, plans and concerns carried out by the Institute or that are expected to be carried out by the Institute as an organization in order to encourage Nigerians to imbibe not only our core cultural values but one that would bring about a desirable attitudinal change in them.

There has being a yawning gap to effect a desirable mental and behavioral change in our policy makers, public/private Institutions as well as the general public in terms of their perception of culture or even what constitutes culture. Perhaps this poor perception and the lack of understanding of the definite role it stands to play in the life of the nation is probably what has consistently led to it been given far lesser attention in terms of priority and even subvention by government.

Obafemi, aptly captures this when he noted that, Anyone who has been curiously interested in what went on in the cultural subsector, and in the parastatals in particular, would be familiar with the lip-service intendment of government in the existence, proper functioning and survival of culture as a viable cornerstone for the National development and economic growth in the country. (Obafemi, 2008, p3)

The glaring fact however still remains that despite copious provisions of the place of culture and its strategic importance and acknowledgement in the constitution, the legislative list and Acts of the National Assembly in providing definite roles and functions for specialized bodies like the National Institute for Cultural Orientation dealing with culture, when it came to budget allocation for the Ministry of culture and its parastatals, they received the poorest of allocations (Obafemi, in Perspectives on Cultural Administration in Nigeria. eds. by Obafemi and Ayakroma. 2011, p28). In his words" The Ministry of culture and its parastatals were perennially the poorest funded of all government establishments and agencies. Indeed, such was the disregard or plain undervaluation of the culture sector in National priorities. Culture was often treated as an appendage of other related or hardly related Ministries like Water Resources, Education and the Sciences. He gave example with a particular year when the Water Resources Ministry got 54 billion naira as annual appropriation while the entire Ministry of Culture with 14 Parastatals was given 1 billion naira - which was only partially released. (Obafemi, 2008, p7. 'Cultural Policy for

Nigeria: An Overview. A paper presented at the 2nd NICO Repositioning Workshop). It is perhaps against this backdrop of inadequate funding, lack of commitment by Government in dealing with culture parastatals like the National Institute for Cultural Orientation that the entire gamut of the operations and specifically the orientation mandate of the Institute can better be appraised

Review of the Orientation Mandate of Nico

As noted earlier, the orientation mandate of the Institute is very cardinal to the realization of the overall objectives in that while other culture agencies are engaged in talking, only the National Institute for Cultural orientation is supposed to be teaching, silently building capacity for the culture sector as well as addressing the psyche of Nigerians through its public enlightenment/ orientation mandate

Programmes and Activities

In its report for 2007, the Institute listed the following as some of its programmes and achievements in terms of orientation and re-orientation of the Nigerian populace.

1. Public Enlightenment/ Orientation Programmes and campaigns through lectures, conferences, exhibitions, seminars, workshops under different sub themes

- i. Seminar on perspectives in Nigerian Cultural Diplomacy
- ii. Conference on culture, peace and National Security
- iii. National seminar on culture and media
- iv. Public lecture on Multi Ethnic Nationalities of Nigeria and the problem of Governance
- v. National Seminar on culture and education for peace
- vi. Quarterly workshops on different themes.
- vii. Coordination of the world culture day for the ministry
- viii. National workshop on Nigerian Dress Culture

Most of these seminars and workshops were responses to prevailing circumstances in the country. The National seminar on Peace and National Security for example was in response to the challenges of insurgency and the general state of insecurity in the country. So also was the Seminar on the Nigerian Dress Culture meant to tackle the issue of indecent dressing prevalent among our youths and also to encourage Nigerians to dress Nigerian. It was expected to end with a legislation on the adoption of a 'dress Nigerian' day by all Nigerians. The National Seminar on the Culture of Peace was equally aimed at addressing the issue of peaceful co-existence and tolerance among Nigerians.

2. Roundtable Conference on Cultural Orientation (ARTCO) focusing on themes like culture of morality, Honesty and hard work and other core values, in different zones of the country. The outcome of the series of workshops organized under this category of programmes were supposed to form the nucleus for the public enlightenment campaigns of the Institute.

3. **Indigenous Language programmes**/week day and week end programmes focusing on the teaching and learning of Nigerian indigenous languages. Commenced in 2007 with teaching of 3 languages, about 15 Nigerian indigenous languages are now been taught in the different zones of the country. It is expected that more languages will be included in the not too distant future. Presently, the Institute is developing modules for the learning of these languages on television and on line.

4. **Language in the Barracks programmes** – targeting all army, military and Para military formations, aimed at revitalizing/sustaining Nigerian indigenous languages and to assist members of the armed forces in the discharge of their functions in their different formations

5 Quiz and Debates in indigenous languages

6. Launched a Servicom Unit

7. Establishment of a standing performance Troupe in some zonal offices. Presently the Institute has standing troupes in Abuja, Owerri, Minna and Lagos

8. Establishment of Cultural Orientation clubs in secondary schools, aimed at increasing awareness and appreciation of our cultural heritage among pupils in educational establishment and also to stimulate and rekindle the interest of the youths in aspects of our culture that are fast eroding to help instill and preserve them

9. Creation of a social network team on notable social media handles like *Twitter, Facebook, Instagram* and maintaining a vibrant website for the dissemination of information concerning the Institute and its activities

Evaluation of NICO's Orientation Efforts

The National Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO) has been in existence for over 25 years. A review of its Orientation Programmes above reveal that there has been a heavy emphasis on public lectures, seminars and workshops to the detriment of other orientation strategies and that the spacing and timing of most of these programmes have been sporadic, coming far in between each other, hence the minimal impact of the agency.

Experts have identified several techniques by which successful orientation of citizens can be done. Among these are:

A. Use of the mass media comprising the print i.e. newspapers, magazines, booklets, pamphlets, and other printed materials, electronic media, e.g., radio, Television and the Internet. These have powerful outreaches and influence which when properly deployed can make orientation and public enlightenment easy. A cursory look at the Institute's portfolio shows that it has not utilized this medium much. This can be probably attributed to the fact that it has been grossly underfunded so it has not been able to carry out most of its campaigns using the media. Programmes of the Institute like the Annual Round table on Cultural Orientation (ARTCO) whose outcomes were supposed to have been used for public campaigns and orientation on radio and television, only stopped at the publications of the proceedings without the next phase which was to be the public enlightenment campaign component through the use of radio and Television or the entire gamut of the mass media.

The Institute has attempted to broadcast some of its programmes on radio and Television, similar to what the Economic, Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent, Corrupt, Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) does, but this attempt has not been implemented due to paucity of fund. It is however imperative that for the orientation and public enlightenment mandate of the Institute to be successful and meaningful, all arms of the mass media must be effectively utilized to reach, propagate and enlighten the populace for better impact.

According to the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) sources, about 30 million Nigerians watch the NTA alone, given credence to the wide reach and impact that the Television can make.

Through the media be it print, electronic or the internet, Orientation messages can be disseminated, repeated and re-enforced for effective impact. The mass media and specially the internet makes it possible for messages to be shared in a matter of seconds. This feature therefore makes it an excellent tool for orientation, re orientation and public enlightenment. There are over 100million active internet users in Nigeria, especially the youths. The World Bank estimate puts the number at about 28.4% of the population in 2011. By December 2018, the Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) in its January 2019 agency reports puts the number of active internet users at more than 111.6 million (premiuntimesng.com 6/10/2019). This is too massive a target audience for the Institute to ignore in its orientation campaign.

B. Drama- this can be a very forceful method or way of teaching, orientation and re - orientation.

Drama has the ability to touch the conscience and psyche of a society, thereby changing perception. As Mandy Chen observes, one of the critical functions of drama is 'its ability to provide a means for a society to reflect upon itself and its beliefs, to enhance knowledge and stimulate social change (221). This no doubt stresses the importance of drama as a compelling instrument that would force society to reflect and see itself in a way no other instrument can do. For example, at the peak of the economic hardship in Nigeria, a short television drama skit titles "Andrew checking out" featured a popular television star, Enebeli Elebuwa, which was conceived as a campaign to check the massive brain drain in the late 80s. This dramatic piece made a lot of impact in pricking the conscience of Nigerians, thereby re-orienting them on the need to stay back in their country to develop it.

Ottete- Akpofure also notes that the link between drama and society has long been established in that drama of course is often seen as a reflection of life. In his words, drama is a mirror through which the people in any given society can actually see the reflected cultural image of all human activities, the essence and the vanities of life, and indeed , anything related to life.

The institute recognizes the huge potentials of drama as a tool for effective conscientization and mobilization hence its efforts in establishment of standing

drama troupes in some of its zonal offices where it has effectively utilized them for performances or the dramatization of some of its orientation messages. Typical examples were at the launching of its dress Nigerian campaign programmes, the launch of its indigenous language programmes and the language in the Barracks programmes, drama was effectively used to drive home the needs to dress Nigerian, dress decently and on the to speak our indigenous Nigerian languages.

Orientation Models and NICO's Mandate

Several models of orientation have been proposed by experts in different fields such as human resource management, behavior management, cultural and value orientations among others. Most of these models were designed to show how individuals' behavior can be swayed in order to improve their participation towards improved performance. Some of these models have also tried to show that virtually all societies face similar challenges when dealing with issues of both internal and external adaptations and that over time, societies have developed ways of handling issues using their culturally developed patterns which have gradually become attitudes that the people imbibe based on some stable values that they hold.

A knowledge of the basic characteristics of some of these models will assist us ascertain the orientation focus of the Institute. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, in their *Dimension of Value Orientation model*, observe all human societies face a number of universal problems which are universally known and that different cultures have different preferences among them. In this model, they suggested six ways which stand out as the basic characteristics of the theory that are suggestive of the different ways in which cultures would differ in terms of themes and ideas.

Characteristics of the Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's model

The characteristics of the Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's dimension of value orientation model are summarized below:

1. The nature of the individuals: whether they are good or evil or a combination of both and if that nature is capable of changing.
2. The relationship of people to their world: do the people dominate the world or do they work in harmony with the environment or vice versa. This refers to the people's inclination towards their immediate environment. It centers on feeling and disposition towards nature. While some people believe that humans should live in harmony with nature preserving and supporting it, others and perhaps a majority now see nature as their servant and supplier which must be subjugated by all means. This view allows society to plunder it without concern.
3. Are the members of the group supportive of one another or does the group exist to support the individuals? In other words the issue of individualism versus collectivism. This dimension refers to how people look at themselves and their relationship with others. Societies could either be individualist or collectivist societies.
4. Doing versus being: Is one's life all about doing and accomplishing or simply to enjoy one's life time in the world. This idea underlines what is the primary

mode of activity in a society. In some societies, there is a focus on being who you are rather than what you do. Other societies are more action oriented and status comes from what has been achieved rather than an ascribed status

5. Does the culture base its plans on existing customs and tradition drawn from the past or is it thinking in terms of creating a better future?

6. Does the culture view property and space as private or fundamentally communal belonging to all on equal basis? (www.yourceus.com/30/7/2019)

The central theme of this model is that the way culture views the different elements listed above will no doubt shape the worldview of the people within that culture. This knowledge is vital for the Institute in that the worldview of Nigerians in terms of who we are, what we are and our capabilities, our concept of nature, environment, our concept of individualism and sense of collectivism as well as our space orientation and time orientation is cardinal to any orientation strategy the institute may wish to adopt to enable it achieve success in its orientation mandate. Put differently, the Institute must know its audience, its target population and the perception of this population to enable it know the appropriate orientation strategy that would work or that would enable it make the desired impact.

Another model worth mentioning here is the orientation model for Team Members Behaviors (www.pmi.org 29/7/2019) propounded by Lico, Guiseppa as a Human Resource management tool to help team leaders, supervisors, managers, directors or chief executives of organizations identify the and weaknesses of team members and subordinates under their charge. The thrust of the theory are summarized below: The theory assumes that team leaders, having identified the traits and idiosyncrasies of subordinates under them, should use the information at their disposal in planning, developing and managing of these subordinates towards productive behavior in the actualization of a project.

The theory further argues that that team leaders should focus on managing a person's behavior rather than manage the persons themselves which is an almost impossible task, and it contends that team leaders or managers behavior and management style can change the behavior of team members and that the role of the team leader especially as it relates to project management is to ensure the optimum realization of the project in line with the organizational objectives.

Lico likens this theory to a compass that is inter connected. The ability of the team leader to identify each team members idiosyncrasies will determine the leader-subordinate relationship which he categorizes into four: the constructive, the cooperative, the polemic and the destructive. For each of these categories of staff, the model recommends choosing the appropriate management methods ranging from Management by objectives (MBO), Management by delegation (MbD), Management by exception (MbE) etc. as the need dictates.

The rationale for dwelling on this model is to show that the National Institute for Cultural Orientation which is like the team leader in this context must

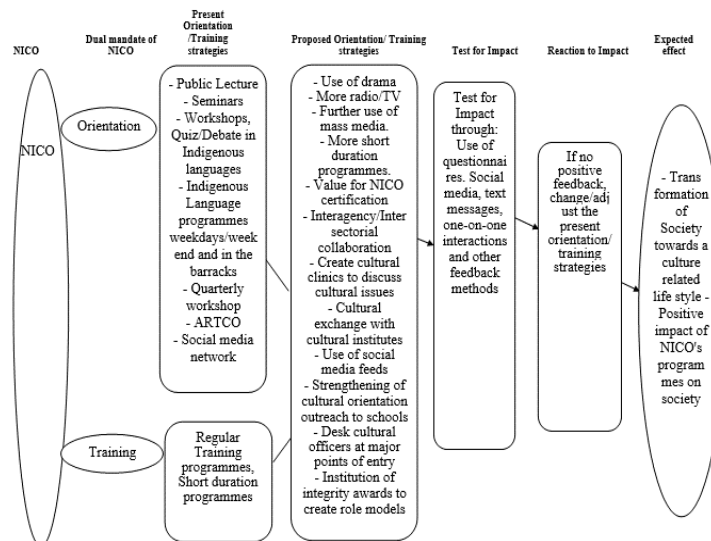
understand the complexities of its target audience when planning orientation strategies and just as the team leader will vary or change his management method to suit the personality and idiosyncrasies of its team members so also must the Institute be in position to identify the different segments of its audience and plan strategies that would effectively reach each of them. Its orientation programmes must be tailored to meet specific targets as well as each community needs. Even in terms of its staff and management relationships, responsibilities for orientation and other matters relating to the fulfilment of its mandate must be assigned in such a way that the right pegs are put in the right holes or hangers as the case may be.

In like manner, the National Institute of Cultural Orientation must recognize the importance of every member of the Nigerian population as being vital to the achievement of its orientation mandate and for whom it has to target its orientation concerns. In other words, the Institutes orientation must carry along with it the persons for whom the orientation is meant. The model advocates the need to exhibit flexibility by team leaders and the need to adapt their behavior as the occasion demands. The Institute must from time to time listen to the heartbeat of the nation, by obtaining feedbacks on some of its orientation programmes through assessment by periodic research and questionnaires and also endeavor to adopt orientation styles and methods that can change the attitude and behavior of the populace or be able to re-strategize its orientation and public enlightenment programmes in such a way that the needs of the population as well as the organizational objectives of the Institute are met. The reception of a feedback is vital to its completion of the communication loop when it comes to issues of orientation.

Recommendations

Having looked at the Institutes orientation efforts, some of their programmes and activities so far, it is expedient to recommend the following as strategies to further enhance the institutes' operations.

⊕ PROPOSED MODEL/STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVED OPERATION OF NICO



1. It is recommended that extensive use of drama be incorporated among the strategies of the Institute as a major component of its orientation campaigns since it possess the ability to impact heavily. There may be need for the Institute to commission from time to time drama sketches/skits to drive home its orientation mandate, this will encourage a change of attitudes of Nigerians toward better appreciation of leisure and relaxation which is most likely to have far reaching consequences on the general appreciation of theatre both as an art form and as therapy. As suggested by Akinade, Authors, columnists, cartoonist be commissioned by the Institute from time to time, to write plays, sketches, skits or scenes highlighting positive aspects of Nigerian culture in order to encourage their being imbibed by the populace. The institute must strengthen its drama troupes across the zones for effective dramatization and performance to drive home its orientation efforts maximally.

2. The Institute should take advantage of the digital opportunities provided by the media, the internet, social media feeds and other outlets that can impact massively far and wide. Presently, its efforts in this regard is very minimal.

3. Inter-agency, inter sectorial linkages should be explored and encouraged for better networking and outreach for the Institutes programmes and activities. Links with UNESCO, ministries of Internal Affairs, Education, immigration services, National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies are to be explored fully and strengthened, as they offer excellent opportunities for further outreach and also to enable them meet their objectives of curriculum review, cultural diplomacy, and also to achieve its cultural integration objective.

4. As it is with all forms of public enlightenment programmes or campaigns, it is the degree or frequency of the messages or campaigns that

would help to engrave the image of the Institute in the minds of the publics. It's thus imperative for the Institute to be seen and heard through the frequency and the solidity of their programmes.

5. A form of Private/Public Partnership (PPP) is being advocated here to augment Government efforts in the sponsorship of some of the Institute's programmes

6. Increased funding from Government is a sine qua non for the success of the Institutes programmes. This will allow for more programming, better publicity and advert of the Institute's programmes as well as to ensure a frequency of its programmes.

7. It is recommended that for impact, the institute's programmes should be spread throughout the year. There should be a mixture of special projects, programmes interspersed with the day today's operational programmes. The Institute programmes can be spread out thus: either monthly, quarterly, annually, biennially, triennially etc. to enable its impact to be felt.

The handbook on the establishment of the institute recommends that the programmes of the Institute should be spread out as follows –

Day to Day basis – Administrative management, research and documentation, library services, information services

Monthly - Lectures on concerns of NICO like culture and development, culture and diplomacy

Bi monthly - Training programmes

Quarterly - Training seminars, workshops

Half yearly - Inter – disciplinary, inter – sectorial, inter – agency, special study tour for selected group

Yearly - National seminar /conference on key NICO area of concern

Biennially - Exhibition of books, teaching aids, audio visual records, photographs etc. of case studies and aspects of the themes of NICO

Triennially – Sub – regional/international seminar/workshop or symposium on WDCD.

The hand book also recommends that programmes of the institute should be rotated around the states in order to promote grassroots awareness, participation and involvement. The spread of the programmes is good and if adhered to will ensure maximum impact of the orientation mandate of the Institute.

Conclusion

From the evaluation of the orientation efforts of the institute so far, it is evident that the institute may still need to do more in terms of planning and deliberately re planning of its programmes to enable it make the desired impact, taking into cognizance the target audience for which these programmes are intended.

The impact of drama as a tool for orientation and further re- orientation for the institute cannot be overemphasized. As a major tool for orientation, the institute may need to channel more resources and time towards the maximum utilization of the great potentials that the medium holds. Its drama troupes

across the zones can be strengthened and orientation programmes in the form of sketches, comedy skits etc. can be commissioned alongside NICO's regular programmes to help drive home some of the institute's orientation campaigns.

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