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THE INDISPENSABILITY OF CRITICAL THINKING AND MORAL-LEADERSHIP IN MANAGEMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Among the disheartening experiences in the management of higher education in Nigeria is a lack of critical thinking and moral leadership. Higher education in Nigeria has been characterised by gross neglect on the part of the government and their educational agencies. This has often triggered incessant strikes by various academic and non-teaching unions thereby leading to untold hardship on the part of lecturers, non-teaching staff, and students, and often resulting in the graduation of some of the students 'half-baked'. It is no longer news that some of the graduates from various institutions of higher learning in Nigeria can hardly make a correct statement devoid of error literally or colloquially. This paper, which employs the method of critical analysis, suggests that, in order to achieve the desired transformation in the education sector, all the stakeholders in education and various agencies of government, management, and leadership of higher institutions, and students themselves must acquaint themselves with critical thinking skills and good moral conduct. Some scholars have added their voices to the enhancement of educational management and leadership in Nigeria, but this study goes much further to show that without moral leadership that is symbolically embedded in critical thinking, Nigerian higher education will remain in 'limbo' in perpetuity. It is on that basis that this research suggests critireligiously-moral-leadership among the criteria that must be met by those that are appointed as administrators and stakeholders in the education sector in Nigeria either as ministers of education or heads of various higher institutions of learning and their collaborators.

KEY WORDS

Critical Thinking, Critireligiously-Moral-Leadership, Educational Management, Higher Education in Nigeria, and Moral-Leadership.



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INTRODUCTION

This study has philosophical, religious, and educational undertone, because while embarking on it, we had special consideration of our areas of specialisation namely: Philosophy, Religion and Human Relations, as well as Educational Management respectively. The major focus of our discourse is the inevitability of critical thinking and moral-leadership in administration of higher education in Nigeria. Education, perhaps, the most basic need for all peoples, is the greatest industry any nation must have and invest in for human development and advancement. According to Meyer (1976), the aim of education is to nurture the individual, to help, to realize the full potential that already exists inside him or her. There has always been a strand of educational thought which holds that ‘the strengthening of the child’s thinking should be the chief business of the schools and not just an incidental outcome’ (Lipman 2003). Quality education should show the way to students about what and how to learn with criticality and good moral behaviour. While students evaluate what they learn and their learning methods, they manifest their critical thinking abilities. If students are to function successfully in a highly technical society, then they must be equipped with lifelong learning and thinking skills necessary to acquire and process information in an ever changing world (Peters 2019) but not without good moral conduct. For us, any form of learning that is geared towards development that is devoid of morality is counterproductive. Again, for higher education to thrive in Nigeria, the administrators and their collaborators as well as non-teaching staff and students must be equipped with critical thinking skills and good moral behaviour.

For any nation to develop there is need for functional education. This could be the reason for the Nigerian government in her national policy on education document regarded education as an instrument per excellence for national development. But the question is how can education enable the society to develop in a situation where instability and insecurity are the other of the day? (Onwuka2013). We also ask: How can education thrive in an environment that is saturated by indiscipline, lack of integrity, incompetence and moral decadence?

Leadership and management of higher education in Nigeria has been construed as that characterised by lopsidedness in almost all of its segments. If one goes to the universities, polytechnics, colleges of education and other institutes of higher learning in Nigeria the case is almost the same. Chinua Achebe and a host of other scholars have identified the problem of Nigeria as lack of good leadership, and it seems that apart from the Nigerian economy that has crumbled, the other sector that is mostly affected is educational, especially within the segment of higher education. It is the position of this paper that until the style and culture of leadership of the educational sector at all levels, especially in the higher education in Nigeria becomes *critireligiously-moral-leadership*, where leaders lead religiously with critical thinking skills and good moral conduct, no meaningful transformation can be achieved in the educational sector.

Right from the 1980s Nigerians both scholars and those that are un-alphabetically oriented keep pointing at leadership as the major source of concern in the Nigerian educational system. Some of the managers of higher institutions of learning in Nigeria do their best to reposition the institutions entrusted to their care, but finds it impossible because some of the policies made by the ministry of education are against educational management and advancement. Little wonder Achebe (1981) argues: “the problem with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else”. Nigeria needs leaders who are critically minded and morally conscious. These critical thinkers and ethical leaders will ‘think outside the box’ and live exemplary in bringing out different strategies and find solutions to the decaying educational system in Nigeria. We need strategic thinkers and men and women of good conscience as leaders in our educational sector and various academic unions of higher education who will do things differently, and gain a different positive result and not uncritical, immoral and corrupt leaders who will be doing things the same way over and over again, and expecting a different result.

According to Greg (2021), “Educational management in Nigeria will know no good until we have leaders who are truly religious and moral”. Again, all academic staff and non-teaching staff unions of various higher institutions in Nigeria will never get the government do the right thing until they have leaders who will critically engage stakeholders like the Minister of Education, Minister of Labour and Employment, the

Accountant General of the Federation, etc. They must have the willpower to say no to the faces of these agents of the government and their unethical decisions and behaviours towards education in the nation. As it were, such leaders must not only be critically sound and do their work religiously, but also morally balanced so as to have the moral courage to say no when there is any attempt to mortgage their consciences. In all these, the place of morality and critical thinking remain inevitable. It has to be noted that though we are writing on the management of higher institutions, but students and non-teaching staff also need to be critical thinkers of good moral behaviours at their own level in order to gain holistic transformation and resuscitation of the educational sector in Nigeria.

Critical thinking enables students to properly select information, acting as a filter of sorts; it also encourages looking for the correct information in order to fully understand a phenomenon or process (Magrabi et al. 2018). This is important in preparing students as participants in democratic and civil societies (Barnett 2015) who will be able to expose fake news in the flow of information-in other words, deconstruct this fake 'knowledge' while also weakening the threat it poses. It should be noted that critical thinking competences are also associated with better graduate readiness to compete in a global society (Fong et al. 2017). Critical thinking is important in the field of innovation and in the research and development activities of the universities themselves, where new products and various solutions to economic, social and environmental problems are born (Council of the European Union 2018). Given the intense and abundant debates on critical thinking and its development in higher education as well as the inclusion of the term 'critical thinking' in regional and national education programming documents, it becomes clear that critical thinking is becoming increasingly important, with its role being highlighted in civic engagement, sustainable development, social justice and other civilization processes. In all these, we strongly hold that without moral rectitude everything crumbles, and so, the place of moral-leadership and critical thinking in the management of higher education in Nigeria remains sacrosanct.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

In order to ascertain clarity and precision in this study, it becomes necessary to clearly and elaborately clarify some of the concepts employed.

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is the objective analysis and evaluation of an issue in order to form a judgement. Critical thinking is the act of analysing facts, topics, or issues thoroughly (Akin 33). A critical thinker is not in haste in taking decisions and making conclusions about any issue or situation. A critical thinker systematically asks relevant thoughtful questions, gets feedback on the nature of the issue, problem, or situation and step by step analyse them before taking a stand or making a judgement. A systematic or critical thinker solves a problem by identifying the problem, making an inference from the problem identified, especially on why the problem exists and how it can be tackled, gets information or collect data through research, organise and sort data and findings, develop it in order to give solutions and analyse the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the solution, and goes further to identify ways to improve on the solution.

Also to be noted is that objectivity, context and getting the facts correctly are keys to critical thinking. As it were, "Being objective is a fundamental part of critical thinking. That means analyzing the problem without allowing personal bias, emotions or assumptions to influence how you think. A strong critical thinker will only analyze a problem based on the context and fact collected after conducting thorough and impartial research" (*Essential Critical Thinking Skills And How To Improve Them* <https://www.indeed.com> retrieved 8/5/2022). There are some essential critical thinking skills one necessarily has to acquaint oneself with as a leader or manager of higher education in Nigeria for maximum effectiveness. It is so because, critical thinking skills help one to deeply understand and effectively address situations based on facts and information available. Some of the critical thinking skills include, but not limited to the following:

a. Observation

Observational skills are the starting point of critical thinking. People who are observant easily sense and identify problems. Those skilled in observation are also capable of understanding why something might be a problem. At times, they are able to predict when a problem might occur before it happens based on their experiences. One can improve one's observation skills by step by step processing information and by paying closer attention to one's environment. One can improve one's observation skill through mindfulness and attentive listening. Administrators, non-teaching staff and students need observation skills to improve the quality of education in their domain.

b. Analysis

There is a need for analytic skill in the process of thinking critically. A critical thinker necessarily needs to have the ability to effectively analyse and evaluate situations, which involves grappling with the facts and information (data) about the problem to be solved. This can be made possible through conducting unbiased research, asking relevant questions about the data for clarity, objectivity and precision. One can enhance one's analytic skill by engaging oneself in new experiences, interpreting new ideas, data or information and making a sound judgement based on sound analysis. Good managers and students alike are always at home with analytic skill.

c. Inference

In systematic thinking, one primarily moves from the known to the unknown. Answers developed from inferences are often limited. However, making inference from already existing situations and experiences are essential qualities of a critical thinker. As a skill, inference involves drawing conclusions about information (data) one has gathered developing answers and drawing conclusion based on limited information and experiences. In this sense, a critical thinker can employ inductive method of reasoning that is, drawing conclusion from particular to general; or deductive reasoning that is, drawing conclusion from general to particular instances.

d. Communication

In order to effectively discuss problems, situations and issues with colleagues or stakeholders in any organisation, communication skill is a *condition sine qua non*. A critical thinker will improve his communication skill by engaging in and discussing diverse and even difficult issues; and by doing so, respecting other peoples' genuine opinions even when they are in conflict with his position.

e. Solving Problem

Before a critical thinker goes into solving a problem, he must first and foremost observe the problem, critically analyse it, makes inference and have the ability to communicate his findings effectively. It is important to note that, "Problem-solving or addressing a problem requires critical thinker to implement the best solution and understand whether or not the solution is working as it relates to the goal" (*Essential Critical Thinking Skills And How To Improve Them*<https://www.indeed.com> retrieved 8/5/2022). One can improve one's problem-solving skill by setting goals to acquire more industry within one's field of specialisation.

Problem-solving at work typically becomes easier if one has a strong understanding of industry-specific information. Observing how others solve their own problems can also give a clue to a critical thinker in asking relevant questions about the processes others employed in addressing their problems. It has to be clearly stated that just as there are numerous problems, there are so many critical thinking skills like meta cognitive skills, creativity, decision making, conceptual analysis and so forth.

Higher Education in Nigeria

Education system in Nigeria has been classified or categorized into pre-nursery, nursery, primary, post-primary (secondary) and tertiary (Green 2018). However, when we talk about higher education, we are referring to tertiary institutions which include universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education. In that sense, leaders of higher education in Nigeria are the Vice Chancellors of universities, Rectors of Polytechnics and Provosts of

Colleges of Education and the principal officers and the members of senate of their institutions. It is important to note that though seminaries and other religious institutions serve more of religious needs, it is very appropriate to include Major Seminaries among tertiary institutions and by so doing include Rectors of various major seminaries among the leaders and managers of higher education in Nigeria. It is rightly so because the major seminaries are affiliated to one university or the other within and outside Nigeria. Interestingly, at the graduation of their students, their affiliate universities, polytechnics and colleges of education award various degrees to the students from the institutes that are affiliated to them.

Education Management

Education management is a construct of two words namely: education and management. Education which could be formal, informal or semi-formal can be construed to be as old as humanity. The American pragmatic philosopher and social crusader John Dewey once defined education as a reconstruction of experience. Ukaeje (1979) defined education as a process, a product and as a discipline. Analysing Ukaeje's understanding of education, Okoh and Ibekwe (2013) write: He (Ukaeje) saw education as a process society establishes to assist the young to understand the heritage of the past, to participate productively in the society of the present, and to contribute to the future. In this context, education is seen as a process. By going through the process one acquires something new. It may be ordinary knowledge, it may be skill, it may be an attitude. Education in this sense means a product. Going by education as a product as illustrated above, one must not forget that education is a continuous process that starts from the cradle to the grave.

On the other hand, management is a person or persons who control business or similar organisations, take the major decisions in an establishment whether it is private or government owned. Within the context of this study, management can be referred to all those who make major decisions in the leadership and administration of higher education in Nigeria like the Vice Chancellors, Rectors, Provosts, and the principal officers of Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education, respectively and members of their Governing Councils. Education management, therefore, means individuals or group of persons who make key decisions in day to day administration of institutions of learning. In this wise, Deans of various Faculties and Colleges as well as Heads of Departments are part of leadership in higher education setting. They are members of the senate in their various institutes.

Moral-Leadership

Moral-leadership is a construct of two words namely, moral and leadership. Morality as it is applied and employed in this research is one and the same thing with ethical conduct. Morality is "The study of the concepts involved in practical reasoning: good, right, duty, obligation, virtue, freedom, rationality, choice" (*Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* 126). On the other hand, ethics derives from the Greek word *ethos* which means custom. As Pepe and Solomon (2021) put it, "ethics or moral philosophy is a branch of philosophy which deals with the rightness or wrongness of human behaviour. It concerns itself with the right or good to be done and wrong or evil to be avoided. It has to be noted that morality or ethics touches almost all fields of human endeavor like medical ethics, morality of a religion, educational ethics, etc."

Iroegbu (2005) defines leadership as "the responsibility of conducting a people or group towards the achievement of determined goal". In this paper, the goal expected of administrators of higher education is to ensure that students produced from the higher institutions in Nigeria will favourably compete with their counterparts across the globe in every field of study and in every facet of human endeavour. In the words of Maxwell (2016), "leadership starts with influence and builds from there, that is, everything rises and falls on leadership". What this implies is that right leadership is a necessary condition for higher education to thrive in Nigeria. The change that is being clamored for in the higher education sector in Nigeria must be characterised by leadership that is well versed not only in critical thinking but also in morality or good ethical conduct. In the words of Asuquo and Adelaja (2020), "...ethical leadership is the critical appropriation and embodiment of traditions that have shaped the character and shared meanings of a person. Ethical leaders, therefore, are leaders whose characters have been shaped by the wisdom, habits, and practices of particular traditions, often more than one, yet they tend to be identified with a particular cultural ethos and narratives." The kind of tradition imbibed by ethical leaders are tradition of forthrightness, honesty, probity, account ability and moral rectitude in discharging their duties both in private and public undertakings, where all activities are geared towards common

good. Moral or ethical leaders are reference points and so, serve as role models for future generations. Within the context of this study, ethical or moral leadership must be the starting and end point in achieving the higher education that Nigerians desire.

Critireligiously-Moral-Leadership

Religion and morality have to go hand in hand in any society where its citizens mean well for their common good (Abraham 72). *Critireligiously-moral-leadership* is leadership by critical thinkers who consciously and conscientiously lead with uprightness of heart, honesty, probity, accountability, and transparency - all geared towards common good. It is leadership by problem solvers and doers of good deeds who would sacrifice their personal interest and resources for the good of the system and for the well-being of the people they are serving. It means leadership by servant-leaders. Critireligiously-moral-leaders carry out responsibilities assigned to them religiously that is, very carefully, responsibly, consciously, conscientiously and consistently.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CRITICAL THINKING IN MANAGEMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

The importance of critical thinking in management and administration of higher education in Nigeria cannot be overemphasised. What critical thinking means according to Ezoem (2013) is "...dropping bias (breaking our usual habit of jumping to hasty conclusions based on partial information and interpretations rather than on facts so as to be able to question perceptions, preconceived ideas, and over-generalization). One of the aims of education should be developing students' thinking skills as well as motor skills, which is among the basic goals of contemporary approaches in education. Critical thinking is the ability to analyze information and experiences in an effective manner". It is educational goal or ideal that the efforts of the academic community must be directed toward critical thinking (European Commission 2016; Asia Society and OECD 2018). Critical thinking is also associated with critically thinking professionals who are able to build ... and successfully collaborate with others in solving problems, making risky decisions and contributing to the well-being of society (Hsu 2021). Critical thinking skills are considered not only to be competitive (European Commission 2020), but also ones that contribute to the development of a mature, thinking, independent, proactive, creative person who is able to adapt to a wide range of social, economic, political and other circumstances (Kumar and James 2015).

The Minister of education and other stakeholders in education at various ministries of the government, Vice Chancellors of Universities, Rectors of Polytechnics, Provosts of Colleges of Education and other administrators and leaders of various institutes of higher education in Nigeria necessarily have to be acquainted with critical thinking skills and be morally equipped for higher education in Nigeria to advance to the admiration of the whole world. They have to be strategic and critical thinkers with moral probity for any meaningful progress to be made in higher education in Nigeria. Therefore, "Critical thinking skills are essential in every industry at every career level, from entry level associates to top executives. Good critical thinkers can work both independently and with others to solve problems(*Essential Critical Thinking Skills And How To Improve Them*<https://www.indeed.com> retrieved 8/5/2022). Higher education studies are seen as an institutionalised space for the manifestation of critical thinking (Redding 2017). Its significance in higher education studies is emphasised for many reasons. Using the concept of critical thinking that emphasises higher cognitive skills as their basis, some authors (Fahim and Masouleh 2012; Bassham et al. 2013) interpreted the role of critical thinking in higher education as natural because higher education itself requires higher cognitive skills from a person. Other authors argue that critical thinking is associated with higher academic achievements because it not only helps to better understand, select and analyze information but also allows one to partake in discussions more aptly, reason logically (Stupnisky et al. 2008) and present evidence and facts, as well as generally contributing to more effective behaviour in overcoming obstacles or dealing with ordinary situations (Ghazivakili et al. 2014). Some of the gains of critical thinking can be further delineated as follows:

a. Capacity for Accurate Decision-Making

Often times, managers and leaders who are too emotional or have sycophants around them make hasty and wrong decisions because such decisions are not grounded in critical thinking. Applying critical thinking

helps stakeholders, managers and leaders of higher education to make decisions encapsulated in thoroughness, deep-thoughts and rationality. Critical and strategic thinking helps leaders of higher education to make decisions with sound reasoning and objectivity without emotional attachment and sentiments. It also helps administrators to act within a context, drawing conclusions and making decisions contextually, and so, avoiding hasty conclusions and over generalisations.

b. Competence and Professionalism

Administrators of higher education with critical thinking skills will be more competent in handling emergency situations with high level of capacity, proficiency, efficiency and professionalism. Criticality of thought improves and strengthens managers' and administrators' objective, unbiased, contextual positions in solving problems and also makes them always at home with improvising during emergencies, and often leads to creative and realistic resolution of tensions in the process of finding solution to problems.

c. Proper Perception of Challenges

It is said that 'cowards die many times before their death'. Critical thinker administrators are not easily swept off their feet because they put challenges and problems in their proper perspectives. Critical thinkers are more contemplative, self-reflective and focused. They only change their minds and positions in the light of new, superior and more logical positions. Critical thinkers often construe challenges as stepping stones to success and not problems as such.

d. Placing Critics and Sycophants in their Proper Domain

Critical thinking helps administrators, stakeholders, managers and leaders to place critics in their rightful position. Often, leaders not only in the educational sector but in diverse areas of human endeavor wrongly perceive all their critics as enemies and sycophants as friends. However, experience has shown that often the reverse is actually the case, because administrators who are really critical and strategic thinkers can gain lots of insight from critics of their administration. There are constructive critics with their constructive criticisms as well as destructive critics who advance their destructive criticisms. A critical thinker distinguishes between the two.

A manager and leader of higher education who is a critical thinker will gain some insight from both constructive and destructive criticisms from their critics and systematically work on those areas highlighted by their critics for efficiency and productivity. Conversely, a critical thinker administrator will perceive the danger from their 'o yes members', sycophants and praise singers who often run down their administration by not opening to the sight of managers what is going wrong with, and in their administration. Leaders who are critical thinkers will distance themselves from praise singers who literally block their vision from identifying what is going wrong in their administration. With critical thinking, an administrator will discover that praise singers are the real destroyers and setbacks of his administration, while critics, especially constructive ones, who spot-out for the administration problems to tackle are, indeed, true motivators and helpers of his administration.

e. Better Self-Awareness, Being Well-Informed, Logical and Happier

When Socrates advocated "man know thyself" for an unexamined life is not worth living, it was an invitation for systematic thinking and self-awareness. Being acquainted with the knowledge and skills of critical thinking will definitely help managers and stakeholders of higher education to be self-aware, well-informed, more logical and happier. Critical thinking helps leaders and administrators to better understand themselves, their motivations, their goals and their collaborators. Administrators who have the capacity to gain information to the most important parts of an organization and apply them to their lives can change their lives and promote personal growth and overall happiness of their organisation. Again, most critical thinkers are well-informed because they engage in research and findings and gain the most valuable knowledge, wisdom and insight in any given area of administration.

f. High Level of Information Utilisation

Information should be processed rather than memorised. Evaluation of information and their sources helps both management and students learn appropriate procedures for locating and utilizing credible information. Thinking critically about the wide range of accessible information and determining what is trustworthy also assists students in learning acceptable and appropriate ways to utilize good judgment and make responsible decisions (McCollister&Saylor 2010).

g. Better Facilitation and Systematisation of Thoughts

To engage students in critical thinking, it is important that the educator serves as a facilitator to allow for discussion and encourage a freer thought process, as well as model an understanding that thinking critically does not always conclude with a right answer, but sometimes ends in more questions or differing evaluations of the topic (Halx&Reybold 2005). The Leader's role as facilitator encourages students of all ages to explore and use a peer-review process. This process helps students learn appropriate responses to conflicting evaluations and opinions (Tsai, Chen, Chang, & Chang 2013).

h. Helps Managers and Students in Adaptation and Utilisation of Technology

Critical thinking helps both managers, non-teaching staff as well as students in adaptation and utilisation of technology in education, and provide better options to enhance teaching and learning. Having students create a good knowledge about the subject content they are studying, the management needs some good technological skills to enhance their level of productivity. Hess & Gong (2014) advocate that, shifts occur in teacher-student roles during learning that support deeper thinking. Observation during instruction should note a move from teacher-directed to student-directed learning. Critical thinking skills can be integrated in any subject. The development of critical thinking skills is not only applicable to core subjects such as reading, mathematics, language arts, science, and social studies but can be developed in all subjects.

i. Creative Thinking

Critical thinking is sometimes referred to as 'critic-creative thinking'. Thinking critically and thinking creatively can be seen as the same but undoubtedly there are basic differences between the two. Creativity is a process of making or producing something, while criticality is a process of assessing or judging situations, events, etc. This skill will assist the management and leadership of higher education to understand the creative skills of their students in terms of critical thinking. Creativity is known as a skill which can be found in every human and at different stages of human life whether it is latent or manifest. The continuation, improvement, and level of creativity differ from person to person. Creativity has various features: flexibility, multiple thinking, sensitivity to environment, being always awake and interested in new situations, rationalisation, thinking and treating matters easily and quickly, originality of thought and ideas, reaching to different results.

THE GAINS OF MORAL-LEADERSHIP IN ADMINISTRATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

The benefits of moral-leadership in management and administration of higher education in Nigeria cannot be overestimated. Having delineated on the importance of critical thinking in advancement of higher education in Nigeria, we strongly hold that, without a deep-seated morality, the administrators, non-teaching staff and even students may have the best critical thinking skills without employing them for the well-being of the entire system. A corrupt administrator with the best knowledge of critical thinking skills is as good as a failure, because love for money and personal gains will not allow him employ and apply those best critical thinking skills for maximum effectiveness in educational management and leadership. Some of the gains of moral-leadership in management and administration of higher education in Nigeria include, but not limited to the following:

a. Honest and Transparent Management of Public Funds

It is no longer news that Nigeria is among the nations on top of the list of corrupt nations across the globe. Uzoigwe and Chukwuma-Offor (2021) had earlier argued that, "...a sense of duty, goodwill, moral law, justice and fairness should be embraced by all Nigerians as a way of tackling this hydra-headed monster called corruption in the nation". Without moral-leaders with the above qualities corruption will continue. Morality or ethics cannot be divorced from leadership if leadership is expected to be at the service of the people and not at the personal gains of leaders and peril of the led. Honest and transparent management of public funds meant for the development of the institutions is one of the outstanding gains of having a moral or an ethical leadership. It is also no longer news that in some institutions of higher learning across Africa, especially in Nigeria, some administrators are so corrupt that they literally loot the treasury of the institutions leaving escalated debts for their successors (Lawrence 5). At times, their successors spend half of their tenure settling debts deliberately left by their predecessors. It is only in an administration where there is an honest and transparent management of public funds that serving the people with altruism and nobility of character becomes a culture.

b. Probity

Moral-leaders make probity their watchword in their various areas of administration. Probity, honesty, accountability and transparency work hand in hand in an administration where leaders are ethical and God-fearing. Probity is the quality of being honest and worthy of trust. A leader whose characterisation, among other things, is probity is simply trustworthy. One of the essential benefits of having a moral-leader as an administrator of higher institution of learning is that he is trustworthy and proximately or remotely inculcates same in his followers. Conversely, Peters (2019) holds that, "An institution of higher or lower education where there is no trustworthy administrator will likely produce more of half-backed graduates who are also themselves untrustworthy; who find sorting and all forms of sharp practices fashionable".

c. Integrity and Good Character

It has been proved beyond reasonable doubt that one cannot separate integrity from good character. No wonder, William (2020), argues that one cannot find a man or woman of integrity without a good character. Integrity is the ability or capacity to be consistent with a certain moral way of life that is generally acceptable by the people even in the face of challenges and vicissitudes of life. Why character is qualified in this context is that one can either be a person of good or bad character. Therefore, it is practically impossible to see an administrator who has good character that is not a man or woman of integrity. Asuquo and Adelaja (2020) capture it well when they argue that, "A leader who leads with integrity is one who acts within a morally defined limit or boundaries and model the same for his followers".

d. Adherence to the Basic Moral Principles

Moral theology, philosophy and morality of religion seem to be integrally in an unending agreement on the basic moral principles namely: (i) always obey a certain conscience (ii) when you are in doubt do not act (iii) do good and avoid evil. Moral or ethical administrators lead with a certain and good conscience. They hardly act or take decisions in haste, rather they always make room for consultations even in emergency situations; because they are ever conscious of the fact that they are servants to God and humanity and will give account of their stewardship to the Ultimate Being at the end of time. Moral or ethical leaders lead with the basic moral principles and inculcate same to their followers through their actions because it is said that action speaks louder than words.

e. Discharge of Duties Religiously and Effectively

When one discharges one's duties religiously, it then implies that one does that carefully, consciously and conscientiously (Abraham 11). Every duty that is assigned to a moral-leader is not only carried out religiously but done with the aim of achieving efficiency and productivity. And all will be geared towards human interest characterised by common good. This must have prompted Wiredu (1995) to assert that, "morality is what promotes human interest within a community of persons" and the practical entailment thereof is what he called *sympathetic impartiality*. It then implies that having ethical administrators is a sure way of

having leaders who are not only sympathetic but impartial in their discharge of duties because they do it critically, religiously, and morally with the aim of achieving the good of all.

CONCLUSION

Critical thinking and moral-leadership are the two most essential indices in advancement of higher education in Nigeria. The development of critical thinking must be recognised as a systematic process, and all the participants in the process form an integral part of higher education management and leadership. Critical thinking is no doubt necessary in every field of life, but especially for professionals that occupy leadership positions today and the students who are the leaders of tomorrow. For administrators, teachers, counsellors, students and also non-teaching staff to be able to implement critical thinking into their classrooms and offices, they must first be committed to critical thinking and its philosophy and first and foremost live good moral life. It is so because one does not give what one does not have. Critical thinking for school administrators validates the importance of constructive thinking and the creation of a school-wide critical thinking culture. Successful classroom cultures for thinking critically and creatively and living with moral rectitude can result in improved teachers' and students' performance and increase the overall achievement of both the administration and the institutions at large. Thoughtful and deeper learning depend on students' ability to think for themselves, but before they achieve this, they need managers who will show the way by good example.

We therefore strongly hold that for higher education in Nigeria to thrive, critical thinking skills and moral-leadership must be placed side by side. Both must complement each other because a moral leader without critical thinking skills will definitely perform within the specifications of his duty, but can not 'think outside the box'. It is even worse to have a critical thinker who is immoral in leadership and management of higher education because lopsidedness and corruption will be the hallmark of the system. In such a situation, both the students and the administrators will be competing on who will be more corrupt than the other. And so, the place of critical thinking and moral-leadership in advancement of higher education in Nigeria remains indispensable. That is why we advocate for *critireligiously-moral-leadership* as a way of repositioning higher education in Nigeria to the admiration of all and sundry.

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