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ON FREEDOMS IN EDUCATION: ANALYSIS OF CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL APPLICATION

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Abstract
Freedom implies a functioning state of the individual in which one or more of the forms of restraint operate or the individual enjoys a reasonable degree of exercise of freewill. Freedom is a desideratum in education because impartation and acquisition of knowledge in the quintessential form require exercise of freewill with responsibility in the mix because absolute freedom would involve chaos. In education, freedom receives consideration from four principal perspectives freedom for the child or learner; freedom for the teacher or the person who imparts knowledge; freedom for the parent or guardian of children; and freedom to enable anyone or group to set up education-oriented institutions. This paper reviews the concept of freedom in its broad perspectives and in the context of education and posited that one other dimension of freedom for the society should be given direct attention rather than being subsumed in the freedoms aforementioned. This is because from the sociological standpoint, the society has characteristics different from those of individuals and groups which comprise it and in any case, the corporate beneficiary in the education enterprise is the society.

Keywords: Education, Freedom, Students, Parents, Teachers, Society

Introduction
Freedom, the capacity of the individual or group of individuals to act or function with minimum restraint, is a critical concept in education and life in general. Despite its appeal however, freedom in its extreme as in a complete absence of restraint on individuals and groups would be detrimental to individuals, groups, and the general society. A review of the mounting problem of climate change which threatens human existence throws up the issue of decades of unrestrained use and abuse of the environment. It should be a source of worry

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that a pivotal country like the United States of America (USA) withdrew from the Paris Climate Agreement in 2020 during the first tenure of Donald Trump's presidency in the Office of President. Although President Joe Biden rejoined, Mr. Trump withdrew again in 2025 on assumption of office in his second term. The exit provides for unrestrained exploitation of fossil fuels and uncontrolled emissions into the atmosphere. Education by its nature requires freedom for it to flower for the person imparting knowledge (teacher), the person receiving knowledge (child/student), and the person who has the natural right over the child and would want to see the best for the child or learner (parent). These three forms of freedom are well documented and one dare say, controversial (Peters, 1980).

Education theory expounds the freedom of the three although a fourth has been introduced to freedom for anyone, within existing legal and policy frameworks to establish and run schools. One can however extend the concept to include a fifth entity which is both a beneficiary and a sponsor of education in society. A prima facie syllogistic argument would be that if the child, the teacher, and the parent have freedom, then the society has freedom given that the society is an agglomeration of the three dramatis personae the child, the teacher, and the parent. This argument can however not hold from three perspectives. First, from a sociological point of view, the society is an entity distinct in traits or characteristics from its components. The rights and obligations of society and by extension its freedoms and responsibilities should be different from those of its components. Second, man by nature has the penchant to extend their own freedom beyond tolerable limits which may hurt others in the process. This should remind us of the Hobbesian argument on the need for central authorities to control excesses of the human components of society and should give fillip to the argument for separate focus on freedom in education for the society. Third, from a limited analytical framework, education in a particular setting may not directly benefit every individual in a given society. The argument of proponents of education vouchers in the USA for instance must have viewed education as a personal issue. An individual who opts to remain an illiterate or has determined own incapacitation for formal schooling will not benefit from an education voucher. It is pertinent to bear in mind the conflict theory of education which discusses the role of education in social stratification (Mishra, 2013). To maintain the socio-economic strata in the society, those in control of the education enterprise the middle class and upper class - design and implement curricular to suit themselves. Those at the middle and upper classes design and implement curricular often to the detriment of the lower rungs. A collective should be in the position to make those at the lower levels to benefit more.

The Concept of Freedom

French philosopher and novelist, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) noted in Emile, the book which focused on education as quoted by Forbes (1999) that “Freedom is found in no form of government; it is in the heart of the free man. He takes it with him everywhere. The vile man takes his servitude everywhere. Epictetus writing in antiquity on the subject of freedom stated, We must not believe the many who say that only the free people should be educated, but we should believe the philosophers who say that only the educated are free. Education implies freedom of choice, and choice, in the opinion of existentialists, is central to human existence (Dreyfus, 2008). Two extremes of opinions from two revered statesmen on the issue of freedom and liberty are instructive. Vladimir Ilich Lenin (1870-1924), Russian revolutionary and first head of the Soviet Republic that championed the philosophy of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, stated in State and Revolution (1919) While the State exists, there can be no freedom. When there is freedom there will be no State (Oxford dictionary of

Quotations, 1996, p.417). Another statesman, Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882-1945), 32nd President of the United States of America (USA) stated in a message to Congress on January 6th 1941 as follows:

> We look to a world founded upon four essential freedoms. The first is freedom of speech and expression everywhere in the world. The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way everywhere in the world. The third is freedom from want everywhere in the world. The fourth is freedom from fear everywhere in the world (Oxford dictionary of Quotations, p.546).

It can be said that the first three are common sense expectations although freedom of worship may be objected to in some societies. It is the fourth that is not common place, and is becoming increasingly relevant and strident in a world terrorized by despots, religious extremists, hoodlums, robbers, self-styled militants, and self-styled freedom fighters. Omoregbe (2001) lists some perspectives of the concept of freedom and in particular the place of determinism in human freedom. Determinism in its various forms include: ethical determinism (acts of man determined by what is seen as good, as advocated by Socrates, Plato, and St. Thomas Aquinas); theological determinism (God has foreknowledge of man's action but man has freedom to act or not to, as proposed by St. Augustine; and, man is saved by grace and such grace is for the chosen, as presented by Martin Luther and John Calvin). Others are physical determinism (man is not free because he is material and his actions are determined by the physical laws of the universe, as canvassed by Thomas Hobbes, La Mettrie, and Paul von Holbach among others); psychological determinism (psychological factors such as instincts determine the acts of man, thus man is not free, a position taken by Sigmund Freud, Thomas Hobbes, and David Hume); historical determinism (historical events are determined by external forces outside the control of man, a position taken by Goerg Hegel, Karl Marx, among others); soft determinism (interplay of freedom and moral responsibility); and hard freedom (complete absence of human freedom).

Okoh (2003) defines freedom from a philosophical perspective as the ability of man to be able to direct and determine himself through thoughts and actions that are willfully chosen (p. 120). This definition highlights the place of reason and choice as central issues in freedom. The three freedoms in education as expounded by Peters (1980) have to do with application of the concept of freedom, particularly of choice, in education. Children cannot be allowed absolute freedom; as a matter of fact, Bantock (1965) emphatically and unabashedly declares that too much freedom is incompatible with education. However, Peters (1980) is against rules for the sake of rules, or as expressions of a teacher's love for power (p.195). The teacher is expected to enjoy freedom not only to hold opinion but to teach things worthwhile. However, such freedom has to be seen in the context of the good of the society. The parent, an active participant in the education enterprise, is expected to enjoy freedom mainly in the area of school choice.

Freedom and Existentialism

Existentialism is regarded as a movement or tendency rather than a school of thought (Dreyfus, 2007). The essential tenets are that man, as the Sophist Greek philosopher Protogoras asserted, is the measure of all things and thus the individual should be the focus of analysis with the core aspects being existence, freedom, and choice. In the context of the individual, freedom is the crux; freedom, with responsibility, is so important that it is identified with the very nature and existence of man. As Satire (1956) states in Being and

Nothingness as quoted by Omoregbe (2007) Freedom is identical with my existence (p.45). Jean-Paul Satire is regarded as the existentialist that wrote most on freedom. He noted that freedom is a basic condition of human existence and thus does not need to be proved. Although he asserted that man is condemned to be free, the freedom is anchored on responsibility which informs choices. The position of existentialists is important in education for all the parties that expect freedom in education: the child (Wokocha, 1993), reminds them to be ready for outcomes if they exercise their freedom to go on strike and in the process destroy property), for the teacher who has to function within legal limits and within rules of decency; and the parent who must know the bounds of freedom. A case in a secondary school in Lagos many years ago when a female students hair was forcibly cut by a teacher only for the teacher's hair to be forcibly cut by the girl's father illustrating a situation in which responsibility by all parties was jettisoned.

Freedom and Education

Roosevelts four freedoms said nothing about education although education is subsumed because an educated person is better positioned to extricate self from the bondage of want, fear, and inability to speak his mind or worship whatever he wishes. In education, three freedoms are generally discussed freedom for the learner or consumers of educational services, teachers as providers of educational services, and parents of the primary beneficiaries of education. Tabensky (2002) believes education should aim at freedom and in fact, education properly understood, is the practice of freedom. Education should be emancipatory in conceptualization and practice. He uses the positions of John Dewy, Paulo Freire, and Richard Rorty for his analysis. Metivier (2023) recognizes the three traditional freedoms in education and adds a fourth freedom of individuals to establish and run schools but the schools should conform to standards and regulations set by authorities. The four, Metivier (2023) holds, are presented in the Committee on Economic Social, and Cultural Rights General Comment 13. Article 23 of the Constitution of The Netherlands specifies the freedoms in education (de Groot, 2026). de Groot links freedoms with responsibility and includes school choice for children to conform to parents religious orientation and ideas of parents of what education of their children should be. Freedoms in education can be constrained by political interference, funding gaps, and cultural barriers. This is the position of Iorwuese (2025) in his analysis of the Nigerian situation. The three issues mentioned affect the freedom of the learner who deserves an optimum environment and facilities to learn. The parents are interested in public school education but cannot have it because of the poor quality of public schools. Freedom of teachers suffer because they must use approved curricular even in the face of deficiency in the curricular and available resources.

The Childs or Learners Freedom

Wokocha (1993) argues that students have rights and freedoms including freedom of expression and even to go on strike. He however reminds students that freedom has to go with responsibility and so declares A student who wishes to enjoy his rights within the school system must ensure that he has a duty of acting within the rules and regulations of the school" (p. 33). If a student decides to enjoy the freedom to participate in a strike and destroys school property, such students should "be at liberty to accept whatever constraints and sanctions the authorities in the school system deem necessary for the restoration and maintenance of order (p.31).

The Teachers Freedom

Teachers, particularly at the tertiary level are often embroiled in the controversy regarding academic freedom, a complex concept that envelopes such desires of faculty for freedom to teach what one wishes, freedom and security of tenure, and freedom to administer a university without external intervention including the freedom to determine curriculum. Standler (2000) writing on the subject Academic Freedom in the USA (2000) from a legal standpoint quotes the case of Regents of the University of California v. Bakke, 438 U.S. 265, 312 (1978) which listed academic freedom as who may teach, what may be taught, how it shall be taught, and who may be admitted to study in the case of institutional academic freedom. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP), an umbrella organization for teachers at the tertiary level has campaigned tirelessly for academic freedom including abrogation of student assessment of faculty that the body considers obnoxious and anti-academic freedom. The issue goes as far as being cited as being under the First Amendment to the US Constitution which deals with the right to free speech. In the landmark submission by Justice Brennan of the US Supreme Court in 1967, it was stated, "Our Nation is deeply committed to safeguarding academic freedom, which is of transcendent value to all of us and not merely to the teachers concerned. That freedom is therefore a special concern of the First Amendment, which does not tolerate laws that cast a pall of orthodoxy over the classroom" [Keyishian v. Board of Regents, 385 U.S. 589, 603 (1967)]. In spite of such strong and supportive arguments, the need to avoid absolute freedom is also noted. In the case of Kay v. Board of Education 18 N.Y.S.2d 821, 829 (1940) it was stated, Academic freedom does not mean academic license. It is the freedom to do good and not to teach evil. This was why the learned judge revoked the appointment of the revered Professor of philosophy, Bertrand Russell to the faculty of The City College of New York because someone challenged his appointment on the grounds of his immoral views. Incidentally the AAUP has since 1940 released and functioned within the Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure"with 1970 Interpretive Comments. This statement outlines the principles of academic freedom and tenure and the limits to both as indicated in the Statement on Professional Ethics adopted in 1966. In essence, there is also no absolute freedom for teachers but rather, freedom with responsibility. Unfortunately for educational institutions even in developed countries, quite a substantial portion of their funds come from public sources and the aphorism he that pays the piper dictates the tune considerably constrains freedom of action.

Peters (1980) discusses the theory with respect to the freedom of the teacher in the educational system. The teacher's freedom is anchored on the right to teach what the teacher likes and to air opinion no matter how heterodox. Quoting J. S. Mills essay On Liberty, truth progresses and takes root if it is allowed to be aired and disputed if need be. Terrence (190-159 BC), a Roman playwright is credited with the saying quot hominess, tot sententiae which translated means as many men, as many minds or opinions. At any point in time and in any circumstance, ten people discussing an issue are likely to hold ten different opinions; it is discussion that could lead to a resolution and possible adoption of a unified opinion that is subject to change with circumstance, time, and new opinions. If Polish scientist Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543) had accepted the Ptolemaic system that had lasted for 1,400 years, the earth would still have been held as the centre of the universe; if Galileo had not stood up against the dictates of the 1616 law that he should not canvass the Copernican theory of the universe, the astronomy of Johannes Kepler and the physics of Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein that revolutionized the world would not have developed. Education requires that those avowed to it speak up and canvass ideas that may be

heterodox; it is left for others to advance counter and valid arguments against an idea or opinion old or new.

The university (used in this paper as a generic term for higher education), is described by Moberly (1949) in Brubacher (1977) as a republic of scholars (p. 28). A university as the acme of the concept of higher education should by an a priori argument, thrive on freedom and autonomy for such are some of the necessary conditions for scholarship. Freedom and autonomy however have to be seen within the context of general laws, traditions, and policies of the government that rules over society in which the institutions form a part, for absolute freedom is not consistent with the good in society. The Iraqis once posted a sign in universities in the country (before the so-called democratic government of George W. Bush annexed the country): The freedom of opinion and expression is a guaranteed right to the entire academic society, under the rule that this does not interfere with student education (Safire, 2004). The interpretation, and who interprets, of interference with a student's education is however best left for conjecture.

Freedom and autonomy also must necessarily be subject to constraints such as material resources and human limitations, the former of which is never sufficient and commonly outside the control of the administrations of the institutions. This is why Brubacher (1979) states that The traditional autonomy of the higher learning is not, and perhaps never has been, absolute. In the first place, complete autonomy would require complete financial independence (p.28). Such independence is highly improbable even for private universities given the fact that they depend to a large extent on public infrastructure, public utilities, and publicly trained personnel as well as endowments and even direct assistance from taxpayer funds. Democracy in tertiary education is epitomized and often discussed under the complementary concepts of academic freedom and tenure. Writers in Nigeria including Wilson (2002), Jimba (2002), and Wokocha (2003) among others see autonomy as an embracing concept that covers the freedom of students and teachers to teach and to learn, as well as the freedom of the institutions to function without interference from persons and agencies outside the institutions. The concept has been a subject of trade disputes by the Academic Staff of Universities (ASUU), the Autonomy Bill of the Federal Government and at the academic level, the theme of national conferences. In the USA, academic freedom is regarded as a composite concept seen from two perspectives individual freedom and institutional freedom, the latter of which is interpreted as autonomy. Standler (2000) presents the two thus:

> Individual academic freedom, which protects an individual professor
> Institutional academic freedom, which protects universities from interference by government, a right that applies to the community of scholars rather than to individual faculty or lecturers.

Tenure is the second concept that is used in universities in many countries. It refers to the freedom expected for individual lecturers with respect to freedom of teaching and research and extra mural activities as well as a reasonable level of economic security to ensure optimum performance of professional duties. However it has more to do with security of employment including due process in severance. In discussing the concept of freedom in education, Okoh (2003) lists forms of freedom that include absolute freedom. He notes that this is the existentialists position, that man has absolute freedom defined primarily by ability to choose, in essence, freewill. The choice is however in the context of the corollary responsibility. Drefus (2006) submits that Freedom of choice entails commitment and responsibility. Because individuals are free to choose their own path, existentialists have

argued, they must accept the risk and responsibility of following their commitment wherever it leads. The concept of freedom and its relevance to education is summarized by Okoh (2003) with respect to teachers thus:

> The teacher is employed to transmit knowledge, skills and aptitudes, and choose between various alternatives to facilitate the learning process. Hence freedom and responsibility lie within these stipulated functions. If his activities as a teacher are hindered by external forces or constraints, then he is no longer free to pursue his career or develop his chosen profession. It is in this respect the teacher claims academic freedom (p. 122).

One would have wished for a follow up statement to remind teachers of the corollary, that is, responsibility, given the cases of abuse to which teachers are unfortunately associated. Academic freedom this paper holds, is best seen from the perspective of rational freedom, which Okoh (2003) sees as that which springs out of the censorship of the various alternative choices (p. 121). Academia is regarded as the epitome of scholarship and what should be the best in the society; freedom should therefore be exercised in accordance with reason where reason implies positive justification and orderly thought. The freedom to spend money in schools for instance, has to go along with accountability, for there is no moral justification for academics to criticize public officers that involve themselves in misapplication (unauthorized virement) and misappropriation of taxpayer money if the same applies in the schools. And the penchant of teachers to rally to the defence of erring teachers even in very obvious cases chips away at the moral platform of the group to ask for freedom and autonomy. Wokocha (2003) states:

> Because the current teachers unions which include ASUU, COEASU, and ASUP which can hardly discipline their members, public view of the vocation is poor. Some teachers if not most, actually go to ridiculous lengths to cover their colleagues who misbehave. There is therefore a strong need for a code of conduct for teachers if the vocation is to be professionalized (p. 25).

What needs to be distinguished and emphasized in the opinion of Peters (1980) is thought and action, that is, the difference between freedom of thought and freedom of action. A teacher can hold an opinion; however if such an opinion has the tendency to hurt the learner and ultimately the society, there is the need for constraint. In essence, expected of teachers is the principle of rational freedom which is freedom that intrinsically implies responsibility. This is where the distinction is made between teaching and indoctrination as well as teaching and conditioning. A learner is free in a learning situation if he or she is allowed to determine what to belief or accept and to make input into the process. Neither indoctrination nor conditioning permit freedom of thought and action for the learner and thus cannot be acceptable modes of imparting knowledge in a school setting. But freedom for teachers appears, in the case of Nigeria, to be the greatest flash point for conflict and constraint in education practice. It often arises from two angles the unwillingness of school proprietors to meet sometimes the most basic needs for education offering and second, misunderstanding of the scope of academic freedom and workers rights by personnel in the sector. Persistent closure of schools for short or long periods because of demands by teachers has undoubtedly negative impact on all the freedoms in the sector. If, as it appears, the Tinubu administration has contained the drive for sit-ins and shut downs particularly at the tertiary level, Nigerian education may be in for a brighter future.

Freedom for Parents

Freedom for parents in education refers primarily to the right to choose where their children and wards will be educated. It is obvious that they cannot go beyond that, else there could be chaos as individual differences, inclinations, and orientations would play out in a way that would create problems to the larger society particularly in a pluralistic society. One cannot imagine an educational system that would permit parents to determine content and methodology although they can influence the process of developing both. It is apparently the right of parents to determine content and methodology in some Moslem societies that has led to much of the chaos and stagnation some of them currently experience. School choice is a fairly contentious issue in some countries and in particular in the USA. One of the ways to ensure school choice is through provision of education vouchers to parents by the government. Houston (2007) has presented the pros and cons of the argument on education vouchers. Proponents argue that education is a private good and so should be controlled by parents; vouchers would make money available to parents and afford them choice, specifically so that they can move their children from poor quality schools to good quality schools; such competition would make public school administrations sit up and improve service delivery for the long term benefit of the society. Opponents of vouchers on the other hand argue that education is a public good and so should be controlled by government implying a de-emphasis on private education; vouchers would undermine public schools as parents remove their children; and when tax money is taken to private schools, accountability cannot be ascertained. The US House of Representatives passed a bill presented by Representative Ron Paul of Texas in 2001. The bill titled the Family Education Freedom Act was introduced by Hon. Ron Paul in the following words:

> By moving to restore the primacy of parents to education, the Family Education Freedom Act will not only improve America's education, it will restore a parent's right to choose how best to educate one's own child, a fundamental freedom that has been eroded by the increase in federal education expenditures and the corresponding decrease in the ability of parents to provide for their children's education out of their own pockets.

I call on all my colleagues to join me in allowing parents to devote more of their resources to their children's education and less to feed the wasteful Washington bureaucracy by supporting the Family Education Freedom Act (US Congress, 2001). There is also the group known as Citizens for Educational Freedom (CEF) that canvasses parents rights in education. CEF is a not-for-profit organization established in 1959 in St Louis, Missouri. The aim is to promote freedom of choice, justice, and quality in education for all in favour of parents. The organization campaigns for school choice, asks questions on how public funds to education are used and also campaigns for reduction in government regulation of schools (CEF, 2009). CEF lists educational freedom to include parental choice of accredited schools, equal treatment under the law for all families, fair competition among schools, taxpayer savings, and religious liberty In some countries of Europe and in particular Hungary, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Belgium, parents chose between private and public schools because there is no quality differential between the two. In Denmark there is public assistance to private schools (Patrinos, 2002). In such countries, the choice is more on location than on quality. One is not sure that there is any organized forum at the national level for parents in Nigeria that could influence school choice. Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) currently termed Parent-Staff Association (PSA) are localized to individual schools and thus have nothing to do with school choice or even an attempt to influence content and method.

Thoughts on Freedom for Society

Although Hobbes canvassed social contract between the governors and the governed and government should be everyone's business for everyone, Raadschelders (2020) argues that for centuries, government has been about a select few who guard their individual or select group interests to the detriment of the generality and submits, "…it is the people who are sovereign and government that serves the people Hence democratic governments do not stand above the people. Of course, this is political theory, and in practice money and power tend to concentrate in the hands of the few. (p 41). Above means that the most democratic government cannot be said to be representational. The government of the US mixes two models in governance the delegate and the trustee. In the former, elected persons are expected to speak and act the will of the electors. The latter assumes that the elected are wise representatives who apply their intellect, experience, goodwill, and knowledge of what the electors would prefer and act with minimum reliance on directives from the electors. Reality shows that for reasons of availability of critical information for decision making by electors, waste of time, and possibility of gridlock, what mostly operates in democratic frameworks is the trustee model.

Outside the political framework, the trustee model is the most dominant if not the sole system in the public service although it can be claimed that politicians determine the actions of public servants (while politicians are likely to claim guidance by public servants). In Nigeria a recent example confirms the preponderance of the trustee model. Apparently based on the near permanent upward trajectory of prices, the guardians of the summation examinations at the secondary school level requested for upward revision of prices for the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE). The Federal Government, through the Federal Ministry of Education authorized 84% increase in registration fees for the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and National Examinations Council (NECO) SSSCE. The move backfired because of absence of consultations with the primary stakeholders - the parents and guardians. Tolu-Kolawale and Dirisu (2026) note that a member of the opposition, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar and National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) protested against a signed and sealed decision. The Federal Government had to back down to initiate consultations. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) stayed out of the fray maybe because they are war weary and would want to hold onto the extant peaceful coexistence with the Federal Government.

A Fifth Freedom in Education

Peters (1980) did not look at freedom for the society as an independent freedom in education. The argument might be that if the individual enjoys freedom in education, the society as a collection of individuals enjoys freedom in education. But this is not the thesis of the founder of sociology, Emile Durkheim in his book The Rules of Sociological Method published in 1895. The father of Sociology held that groups have characteristics different from, and more in sum than the constituent parts. Durkheim anchored his argument on the concept of social facts which refers to structures, norms, and values in each society which transcend individuals and groups. Segal (2025) for instance has listed 24 states in the USA which have decided to sustain commitment to the Paris 2015 Climate Agreement despite withdrawal of the Federal Government of the country. Climate change is a social fact which transcends the predilections of a particular occupant of the White House at a point in time. Fashion trends, language, legal and cultural applications, currency, and related others are social facts. In essence, if societal characteristics and functioning are different from individual characteristics, the influences on the society should in general be different from the influences on the individuals. This supports the need for freedoms in education for the

society. Stoutland (1990) advances an argument based on philosophical individualism and in particular, ontological individualism and argues that, the reality of the self is independent of the reality of the society (p.107). Ontological individualists believe human beings are not socially constitutive which means individuals can be understood, and are outside what characterizes the society. A collectivist transposition would yield the argument that the society can be understood outside the reality or concept of the individual and component units.

If society is possessed of characteristics and functions independent of the individual, the society should, in education theory, have its set of freedoms. Several questions can be posed: does the society have the right or freedom to choose which type of education should be offered (as in liberal, vocational, comprehensive) to its constituents and should the dichotomy in offering with respect to public-private school be allowed? Should the society decide, as is purportedly common in Moslem countries, to allow Islamic principles to dominate curriculum and pedagogy? The same thing applies to Christianity where mission schools permit certain co-curricular activities and ban others. No rational person would canvass extreme freedom which translates to licence nor would anyone in the contemporary world consider a Hobbesian world to force government to breathe down the necks of individuals but societies as social facts should enjoy distinct freedoms. In any case debate should continue on the limits to society's freedom before it becomes repugnant to the generality and to reason. The freedoms due the society in education can be expressed in various ways as concepts, positions, values, and approaches regarded as best suited to specific countries and in fact, sub-sets for it would be wrong for instance to insist on the burqa in a predominantly non-Moslem geographical region in a dominantly secular country. Some examples of freedoms in education which can be regarded as due to the society are discussed hereunder.

Freedom to Determine and Institute a National Philosophy on Education – This refers to a country's understanding of the fundamentals of theory and practice of education which must be seen as an imperative and starting point in any educational enterprise and system. Okoh (2005) notes that a national philosophy of education should emphasize the uniqueness of each country's past, current experience, and hopes for the future. For Nigeria, he advocates a national philosophy of education which identifies and clarifies metaphysical questions germane to human existence, represents the epistemological assumptions of the people, their basic assumptions about values and goals of education based on the Nigerian traditional concept of man, the traditional concept of society, and the traditional concept of knowledge. He concludes, Nigeria needs a philosophy which is based on the best of her traditional past, viz, honesty, courage, discipline, right attitude to work, respect, and concern for others but geared towards her renaissance" (p.37). The need for emphasis on traditional philosophy of education is recognized by writers including Raegan (2001). In writing on traditional educational thought in Africa, he notes that the thought and practice of education are characterized not only by their concern for the good person, but also by the interweaving of social, economic, political, cultural, and educational threads into a common tapestry (p. 665). He goes further to state:

> Traditional education in much of Africa was social and communal in nature and was tied to everyday life Taken together, these educational goals present a very clear view of the characteristics of a good person for traditional African societies. Such an individual, in essence, would be honest,

> respectful, skilled, cooperative, and knowledgeable about the community (p.665).

It is pertinent to note the assertion of a good person, which is in a way different from the good life principle of education in traditional Greece. The good person evidently focuses on the individual not so much as man qua man but as man as a participant in the collective, that is, the society. This is apparently the basis of the statement of Section 1 subsection 3 (a) of the National Policy on Education that Education is an instrument for national development and social change. (FRN, 2013, p.1). The question which arises is whether any of the editions (1st, 1977; 2nd, 1981; 3rd, 1993/98; 4th, 2004; 5th, 2007; 6th, 2013) involved consultations with the primary stakeholder the society. Other than the 1st edition which emerged from the 1969 National Curriculum Conference, other editions are produced by Committees which work without input from the polity. And even in the case of the first Policy, which man on the street attends and makes contributions at an education-based conference? From 2012 the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) has handled reviews after it took over from the Nigerian Educational Research Council (NERC). Freedom to Determine Content although content is part of standards discussed above, an issue needs to be raised because of the trend in some societies to allow religion in particular to determine content in absolute terms without room for alternative views. An ultra-conservative orientation generates a situation in which some citizens are denied freedom to attend schools or forced to accept certain curricular and pedagogy. Education is about exposure of the individual to choices which presupposes that those given the opportunity to acquire it (and every citizen should be given the opportunity as a right) are rational beings and are endowed with the ability to choose what is right and what is wrong.

Freedom to Determine and Enforce Standards every human society is basically pluralistic even from the basic premise that every human being is different and a unique being. Pluralism however is seen in several other aspects including religion, beliefs, cultural practices, values, language, tribe, and even skin colour in some cases. Since education is about transmission of something worthwhile from one generation to another (Peters, 1968) including culture and value systems, it presupposes transmission of unique ways of each group to new generations. But in a pluralistic society, conflict is bound to arise as cultures and values which may be in diametric positions. The concomitant would be chaos which may generate a slippery slope condition. This issue bedevils nations with big religious, linguistic, and cultural groupings with minimum tendency towards compromises and understanding. Executing education by use of the national curriculum therefore becomes an imperative if such nations are to survive, grow, and achieve harmony. In effect, the society must have the freedom to determine standards for the entire educational system although some leeway has to be left for exercise of peculiar aspects of groups if such do not harm others. For instance, decent dressing for females is strictly enforced in dominant Moslem societies. As decent dressing cannot hurt any person of any religious group, enforcement of such in schools should be permitted.

In Nigeria government departments have been set up to determine standards by way of curricula content, pedagogy, and assessment. Some of these include the National Universities Commission for Universities; the National Commission for Colleges of Education for Colleges of Education; the National Board for Technical Education for Polytechnics and Monotechnics. For examinations at the lower levels, WAEC, NECO, and the National Business and Technical Examinations Board (NABTEB) are involved in the maintenance of standards. For periodic reviews of all aspects of education, there are agencies such as Nigerian

Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC, for syllabuses, National Policy on Education); National Board for Educational Management (NBEM, for examinations at the secondary level); National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NINLAN, for development of local languages); National Mathematical Centre (NMC, for development of content and teaching of mathematics); and National Teachers Institute (teacher preparation at the middle level by distance learning). Freedom of Society on School Choice choice of school by parents is a highly contentious issue in the USA but less so in some countries of Europe such as Finland, Denmark, Belgium, Sweden, and the Netherlands where quality of schools is the same irrespective of proprietorship. In the aforementioned countries of Europe, choice is more with respect to distance from family home than quality (Patrinos, 1999).

In the USA, education vouchers are available to parents to enable them chose schools where their children or wards should attend. However, it is the cost or price of education that finally determines where a child attends school although some Ivy League schools are known to offer admission to children from poor backgrounds based on certain criteria such as availability of scholarships. A problem arises in the matter of the conflict between the policy of government on egalitarianism and democracy operating in a capitalist system. While the official policy of government indicates equality in educational opportunities, the existence of private schools says something different. Parents and children of the capable are expected to have a freedom of choice since the political system is democratic.

Conclusion

Education, particularly in the formal sense and with respect to Western education thrives best where there is freedom for the participants. Three freedoms are usually discussed in education freedom for the child or learner, freedom for the teacher, and freedom for the parent. A fourth freedom which recognizes the right of individuals and groups to found and run schools within the law has gained currency. Given that the society sociologically is regarded as distinct from its human components, a fifth freedom of the society should be recognized. This includes the freedom to make inputs into the national philosophy of education, freedom to determine and enforce standards, freedom to influence content, and freedom on school choice. School choice however has to bear in mind the conflict between the needs of some individuals for quality although expensive schools and the collective need for egalitarianism.

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