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Exploration of Aristotle's Theory of Hylomorphism: Implications for Nigerian Education System

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ABSTRACT

In view of the dualistic nature of human being which has made it necessary for all levels of education to develop both the physical (matter) and metaphysical (form) aspects of the individual, this research speculates how Aristotle's theory of hylomorphism can be properly harnessed to remodel the Nigerian education system in order to produce men and women who can transform the Nigerian society. Without equivocation, this responsibility is necessary, considering the fact that our present education appears to have wandered and faltered, and have not completely refined most of its comers especially, with balanced knowledge of human personality. The problem remained that many products of education in Nigeria are bankrupt of sound knowledge of their hylomorphic reality necessary to live a balance life and transform the Nigerian society. Education in any society ought to address the hylomorphic nature of individuals in that society as recommended in Aristotle's theory of hylomorphism. Hence, the study used four main philosophical methods – speculative, prescriptive, analytic and critical methods to examine several Aristotelian concepts of education, especially as it relates to educational practices in Nigeria. Some of the findings are that, education should lead to comprehension of human nature, teachers or educators at all levels must be seekers of true knowledge of the form, educational engagements should take cognizance of the hylomorphic aspects of the individual, education must lead to physical and spiritual growth and balance of its comers. Teachers should ensure relative balance between practical and theoretical aspects of the content of instruction. Consequently, the study recommended among others, the emphasis on school rules, uniforms and discipline as an all-round practice at all levels of education in the country. More so, Nigerian curriculum development should ensure that academic concepts are grounded in practical reality. Finally, educational institutions in Nigeria should adopt and encourage integrated learning. This approach should be central to the realization of the goals of the 9-3-4 system of education in Nigeria as well as the proposed 12-4 system of education.

Introduction

"It was Matthieu Queloz who said, we did not make the ideas we live by; they are, for the most part, ideas we inherited, unthinkingly growing into patterns of thought cultivated by others, with little sense of why just these ways of seeing, valuing, and reasoning should have gained hold in the first place (Queloze, 2021). For him, some ideas, like that of water, may be so plainly useful for creatures like us as to appear inevitable. But many of our most venerable ideas such as form, matter, truth, knowledge, or justice–are highly abstract, and their practical value for us is elusive. Why did these 'highest concepts', these 'last wisps of smoke at the evaporating end of reality' as Nietzsche in Queloze (2021) called them, ever become so important to us? What is the essence of considering or speculating about such concepts? Moreover, what would one lose if one came short of them?

Aristotle's view of form within matter which later became known as hylomorphism has some answers to these questions. His postulation which unites Plato's division of mere matter and idealized Form, has great significance for education in Nigeria. Form which is seldom defined as idea has raised great intellectual contention between Aristotle and his intellectual forebear Plato. The argument over the underlying nature of ideas was opened by Plato whose exposition of his theory of form which recurs

and accumulates over the course of his many dialogues—appropriates and adds a new sense to the Greek word for things that are seen (re. εἶδος) that highlights those elements of perception which are encountered without material or objective reference available to the eyes. As this argument was disseminated, the word idea began to take on connotations that would be more familiarly associated with the term today. In the fifth book of his *Republic*, Plato defines philosophy as the love of this formal (as opposed to visual) way of seeing (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 2025).

The Wikipedia (2026) has stated that, Plato propagated the idea that perceived but immaterial objects of awareness constitute a realm of deathless forms or ideas from which the material world emanates. It also indicates that Aristotle challenged Plato in this area, positing that the phenomenal world of ideas arises as mental composites of remembered observations. Though it is out of place to apply these terms to thinkers from antiquity, it elucidates such diatribe between Aristotle and Plato especially if Plato is viewed as an idealist and Aristotle an empiricist.

The disagreement between empiricism and idealism generally characterizes the dynamism of the argument over the theory of ideas up to the present. This schism in theory has never been resolved to the satisfaction of thinkers from both sides of the disagreement and is represented today in the split between form and matter and the relation of one to the other. The hylomorphic notion that natural objects are best conceived as composites of matter and form, where form explains what makes a particular object the object that it is, has been receiving fresh attention in some quarters of contemporary philosophy. Meanwhile, Charles (2023) observes that hylomorphism remains a neglected topic in many philosophy departments, and its genealogy is seldom considered.

Demystification of Concepts

There are some concepts that underlie this study that need to be clarified within the context of this work. This will enable us to have a clear understanding of this discourse. The concepts for our analysis here include: education, exploration, form, matter and hylomorphism.

What is Education?

The term education has been said to defy universal comprehensive definition. This is because, scholars view it from the point of view of their discipline (Nwafor, 2016). What education is has various dimensions, as it has not been possible to provide a universal definition of education. Fafunwa (1974) defines education as the process by which a young child or adult develops the abilities and other behavioural forms which are of positive or acceptable value to the society in which he lives.

The sociologist views education as a societal affair, which perpetuates and reinforces societal homogeneity of fixing in the child from the earliest stage the essential virtues and values which collective life demands (Durkheim, 1950; Nwafor, 2016). However, Plato, the idealist philosopher, views education as a moral venture saddled with the responsibility of inculcating morality, moral values and judgment in the learners (N.d). To conceptualize the contention, it is imperative to consider other scholarly views on education. Amanchukwu (2011) posits that education is an investment in human capital and that quality education benefits the individual, society and the world at large. Education is also defined as a process of developing and transmitting the culture of a people from generation to generation and as an organized and systematic body of knowledge (Isioma&Osaat, 2021). Education breeds intellectual, economic, social and political development of individuals and society. Thus, any person who has passed through the labyrinths of education can reflect the attributes of morality. This supposition is in line with the position of Isioma and Osaat (2011). In the same vein, Osaat (2010) defines education as the process of preparing an individual for the good life, the acquisition of knowledge or power, when one claims that knowledge is power (Osaat, 2010). These explications portray education as ivory tower, a quintessential property any meaningful individual should possess.

But quite unfortunately, the reverse appears to be the case in the Nigerian society where even the more educated leaders – for instance, governors and senators are the most morally bereaved, leaving the youth distorted and confused on the true meaning and relevance of education. Hence, many Nigerian youths today, believe that education is a scam – for example, yahoo boys make lots of money online and they become richer quicker than other young men who have spent much of their time studying one course or the other in the university.This is a divergent position which runs counter to the once acclaimed excellent expectation of education by Aristotle, and a host of other philosophical scholars. Nevertheless, many people still see it as a universal practice or phenomenal engagement in all societies at all stages of

human development. For them, Education signifies the processes of human learning by which knowledge is imparted, valuable skills developed and faculties trained (Aminigo& Douglas, 2007). There are five main types of education which could yield different benefit to different individuals at different times and climes. These are: formal education, informal education, non-formal education, traditional education, and adult education. Time and space may not allow for discussions on each of them.

The Concept of Exploration

Education is related to exploration, though in most cases; whenever the word 'exploration' is used, the first thing that comes to the mind of the hearer is crude oil exploration and exploitation. This is no doubt, unpreposterous, as many Nigerians are used to hearing such word in the oil sector. It is therefore, relevant to clarify the meaning of exploration especially, as used within the context of this research work.

Exploration is not limited to geological activity like oil discovery, but just an aspect of it. Etymologically, the word, exploration was first recorded in 1535–45; from *Latin explōrātiōn-*, stem of *explōrātiō* examination, from *explōrāt(us*), meaning searched out, or examined, (Dictionary.com). In Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, exploration is defined as the process of exploring, an activity which has some expectation of discovery. Organized exploration is largely a human activity, but exploratory activity is common to most organisms capable of directed locomotion and the ability to learn, and has been described in, amongst others, social insects foraging behaviour, where feedback from returning individuals affects the activity of other members of the group.

Operationally, exploration could be defined as the action of examining thoroughly; investigation, scrutiny, study; an instance of this. Every educational endeavour such as teaching, learning, and research involves exploration of one concept, idea, phenomenal or the other. Exploration takes place more in the classroom than elsewhere . This is so because all activities of the teacher and learners in a typical classroom situation, are exploratory in nature. For instance, a teacher presenting a lesson on Table Manner, takes time to examine the different habits that constitute good and bad table manners before even addressing the students. In the same vein, the learners equally examine their attitude whether it adapts to the recommended table manners especially while having their lunch at school. More so, the head teacher who examines students' dress code and the supervisor who checks the school diaries and registers on official visit, are not far from engaging in exploration. Thus, exploration is part and parcel of the education system. Nonetheless, in research, exploration is done in the form of investigation, testing, examination, inquisition etc. Against this backdrop, the title of this paper can be operationalized to mean an investigation or examination of Aristotle's theory of hylomorphism and its implications for education in Nigeria.

Nigerian Education System

Exposure to modern education, it is presumed, makes pupils see things in a broader perspective beyond the narrow horizons of a tribal, religious or linguistic community. This is why various government of Nigeria, at both Federal and State levels, see education as social institution for furthering national integration and development (Nwogu, 2001). But the question is; to what extent has education really enhanced national integration and development in Nigeria? When one considers the increasing rate of out of school children and university dropouts among other issues in the country, one would quickly understand that education is not the only means to achieve development and national integration. Nevertheless, the significance of education for national development and integration cannot be discarded with a mere wave of hand. Education in Nigeria at various times and different levels has been the responsibility of both the federal and state governments.

Meanwhile, prior to independence, the different regions in Nigeria used to shoulder the responsibility of education in their own jurisdiction. For instance, in Western Nigeria, the Action Group (A.G.) led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo gave education, among others, the highest priority. Hence, he urged Chief S.O. Awokoya, the then minister of Education, and who was a participant at Cambridge conference to implement as much as possible the recommendations of the conference (Nwafor, 2016). This resulted in the kick starting and practice of free and universal primary education (U.P.E) in the west in January 1955. Two years later, the same scheme was launched in the East in spite of initial logistical problems which Nwafor (2016) identified as inadequate staff strength, inadequate preparation period, and infrastructural facilities. He also observed that in the North, the situation was quite different as

attention was focused on the development of education and adult literacy campaigns. He further posits that the North took their time and focused on qualitative rather than quantitative education.

However, after independence, Nigerian education system took a regular shape following the Federal government bid to equalize educational opportunities in the country. This unification agendum started in 1976 when the then military government under the headship of Olusegun Obasanjo launched the Universal Primary Education (U.P.E) scheme. In 1999, the ship of education in Nigeria transited from Universal Primary Education (U.P.E) to Universal Basic Education (U.B.E.) under the democratic leadership of the same Olusegun Obasanjo. Recently, the Federal government appears to be carrying more responsibility of education than the states, yet both play vital roles in the planning, provision and implementation of educational objectives of the country.

Education in Nigeria is more of a public enterprise that has witnessed government complete and dynamic intervention and active participation (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1981). It is the view ofthe formulated education policy in Nigeria to use education as a vehicle in achieving national development. Education being an instrument of change in Nigeria has been in a process of evolution through series of historical developments (Amaghionyeodiwe & Osinubi, 2006). Before 1984, the structure of Nigeria's education system according to Amaghionyeodiwe and Osinubi (2006) was 6 years of primary school, 5 to 7 years of post primary School, (Secondary School, Teacher Training College and sixth form in High school) and 4 to 6 years of tertiary education (College of Education, Polytechnic, College of Technology and University). From 1985, the structure that emerged can be classified thus,

Pre-primary or kindergarten education: 2 - 3 years for the children of ages 3 to5 years;

The Primary School - which is of 6 years period for children of ages 6 to 11yrs;

Post primary education : 6 years duration but divided into two halves:

3 years of Junior Secondary School and

3years of Senior Secondary School.

Tertiary education level: This takes up to 4 to 6 years. This was called the 6-3-3-4 system (Anyanwu et al,1999). Since the inception of the Obasanjo led administration in1999, the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Scheme was launched in 1999.The specific targets of the scheme are, total eradication of illiteracy by the year 2010, and increase in adult literacy rate from 57% to 70%by 2003 (FRN,2000).

Nevertheless, it is obvious that while the UBE scheme was highfalutin and gorgeous as it was, the objectives or specific targets of it as recommended by her educational policies are yet to be achieved. This is apparent considering the increasing pace of illiteracy among adult and youth of our time. Nigerian's educational experiences can be examined in phases, from pre-colonial to post-independence period. Nwafor (2024) describes the different phases of Nigeria's educational experience as follows:

Phase 1: Period of Indigenous (Traditional) Education;

Phase II: Era of Colonial Educational Expansion;

Phase III: The Era of Regionalization of Education;

Phase IV: Formulation of National Policy on Education; and

Phase V: Period of Educational Thoughts of Some Early Educated Nigerian.

For want of time and space, these different phases will not be discussed in detail in this work in order to avoid maintain consistent focus on the subject matter of this piece of research endeavour.

Concept of Form, Matter and Hylomorphism

The terms form and matter describe a basic duality in all existence, between the essence or whatness of a thing (form) and the stuff that the thing is made of (matter) (New World Encyclopedia, 2023). That such a duality exists is widely held, but the definitions of form and matter have differed throughout the history of philosophy; hence a precise definition of each will differ depending on the specific philosophical system. The conception of the structure or essence of a thing as contrasted with its matter has been a subject of deep philosophical reflection since the time of Plato.

The concept of Forms or Ideas is a philosophical theory, or world-view, ascribed to Plato, that the physical world is not as real or true as timeless, absolute, unchangeable ideas. According to this presupposition, ideas in this sense, often capitalized and translated as Ideas or Forms, are the non-physical essences of all things, of which objects and matter in the physical world are merely imitations (Audi, 2011). Saylor (N.d) explains that the Forms are expounded in Plato's dialogues and general

speech, in that every object or quality in reality has a form: dogs, human beings, mountains, colours, courage, love, and goodness. Form answers the question, What is that?. For Plato, forms, such as beauty, are more real than any objects that imitate them. Though the forms are timeless and unchanging, physical things are in a constant change of existence. Plato illustrates that these Forms are the essences of various objects: they are that without which a thing would not be the kind of thing it is.

Plato posits that a Form is *aspatial* (transcendent to space) and *atemporal* (transcendent to time). For him, atemporal means that it does not exist within any time period, rather it provides the formal basis for time. Form therefore, formally gives a firm theoretical basis for beginning, persisting and ending. It is neither eternal in the sense of existing forever, nor mortal, of limited duration. It exists transcendent to time altogether. Again, Plato opines that Forms are aspatial in that they have no spatial dimensions, and thus no orientation in space, nor do they even (like the point) have a location. They are non-physical, but they are not in the mind. Forms are extra-mental, i.e., real in the strictest sense of the word. A Form is an objective blueprint of perfection. The Forms are perfect and unchanging representations of objects and qualities.

On the contrary, Kant views form as the *apriori* (unempirical, prior to or independent of experience; contrasted with a posteriori - empirical) aspect of experience. For him, we are presented with phenomenological 'matter' which has no meaning until the mind imposes some form upon it (Audi, 2011). Form, from the Greek word, Morphe, refers to the essential characteristics, properties, and qualities that define an individual substance. It is what makes an entity what it is and gives it its identity. Form represents the specific nature or essence of a thing, and it is often associated with its function and purpose. For example, in the case of a human being, the form includes properties such as rationality, the capacity for language, and the ability to engage in moral reasoning (Curiel, 2023). Collins (2024) states that in the philosophy of Plato, form is an ideal archetype existing independently of those individuals which fall under it, supposedly explaining their common properties and serving as the only objects of true knowledge as opposed to the mere opinion obtainable of matters of fact. Plato believed that forms exist alone (without matter) in the world of ideas. Through them, material beings acquired their shapes. Aristotle rejected his master's position and went on to advance a new line of thought that unified both form and matter in same entity.

What then is matter? It is difficult to give a perfect definition of matter without reference to the lead ideas of the father of Realism. From a philosophical viewpoint, the term matter is used to distinguish the material aspects of the universe from those of the spirit (Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 2023). Matter has been described as the underlying material or substance that provides the potential for an entity to take on a particular form. Matter is considered as the stuff or substrate that receives and actualizes the form. In the example of a human being, matter would refer to the physical body, the organic tissues, and the material constituents that enable a person to embody the human form.

As already stated, the distinction between form and matter first became explicit with Aristotle. Encyclopedia.com (2019) defines matter as the element of which things are made, an intrinsic determinable principle whose opposite (and correlative) is form. As a type of substance, matter is opposed also to spirit. The term is defined differently in the various philosophical traditions and, even as employed by scholastic philosophers, it has acquired a wide range of meanings in logic, epistemology, psychology, and ethics. Matter is said to be the oldest of all philosophical concepts. When man first began to speculate about the world in which he lived and his own place in it, he tended to use concrete terms and images from everyday experience (Encyclopedia.com, 2019).

Hylomorphism and Education in Nigeria

Hylomorphism on the other hand, is the doctrine, first taught by Aristotle, that concrete substance consists of form in matter (Audi, 2011). The Merriam-Webster.Com Dictionary (2024) defines it as a doctrine that corporeal beings consist of a combination of Aristotelian forms and primordial matter. Hylomorphism is the brainchild of classical realism. All two concepts came from the same root. Aristotle, the father of classical realism also doubles as the founder and proponent of hylomorphism. This of course, has great bearing on Nigerian educational outlook. Knight cited in Nwafor (2016) held that the basis of the realist's assumption is that the objects of our senses exist in their own right quite independently of their being known by a mind. In other words, the central idea behind realism is based on the fact that reality, knowledge and values exist independent of the human mind. (Ozmon & Craver

in Nwafor, 2016). Hylomorphism, like realism holds that matter is real. Aristotle who propounded this theory argued that there is a relationship between science and philosophy. Aristotle's hylomorphic view made no little impact on education in Nigeria. For example, he is of the view that a good education is the one which ensures harmony and balance of soul and body. This hylomorphic view is indubitably implied in the Nigerian National Policy on Education. In this respect, it was lucidly emphasized that the quality of instruction at all levels of education shall be oriented towards inculcating inter alias, moral and spiritual principles in inter-personal and human relations (F.R.N, 2013). Inculcating moral and spiritual values falls nothing short of a good education according to Aristotle's hylomorphic doctrine, the one which ensures harmony and balance of both soul and body (Nwafor, 2016).

There is no doubt whatsoever, that the main idea behind Aristotle's view on education is about fulfilling human hylomorphic potential and creating active citizenship. Critical look at Aristotle's theory of education reveals that there is very little or no provision for the development of the spiritual aspect of the individual. Audi (2011) observes that Aristotle's position is so secular and carnal that it almost undermines the significance or relevance of developing the second aspect of the hylomorphic entity that is immutable, immaterial and eternal. Aristotle, in general, treated education as the centre of human blossoming. For him, it is not only important, because it provides opportunities to develop virtues, to empower the citizenry, but it is also a pathway to the attainment of excellence and a good life. Consequently, Aristotle posits that education is the fundamental process through which human beings become fully ennobled (Yoopery,2023). However, Aristotle did not take into consideration the fact that human beings cannot be fully ennobled without the unity of the two main aspects which constitute his hylomorphic reality. Only when there is a balance between the material (matter) and immaterial (form) aspects of the individual and their development can human beings become fully ennobled.

There are two main aims of education according to Aristotle. These have been identified by Nwafor (2016) as goodness and intellectual development. Aristotle's view on education can as well be comprehended in his insights into education. Yoopery (2023) explains that Aristotle, the ancient Greek philosopher, had many insights into education. Here are some quotes attributed to him regarding education:

1. Education is the best provision for old age.
2. The roots of education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet.
3. It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it.
4. Those who know, do. Those that understand, teach.
5. Education is an ornament in prosperity and a refuge in adversity.
6. The educated differ from the uneducated as much as the living from the dead.
7. All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth.
8. The aim of the wise is not to secure pleasure, but to avoid pain.
9. The more you know, the more you realize you don't know.
10. Excellence is never an accident. It is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, and intelligent execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives – choice, not chance, determines your destiny. (Yoopery, 2016:34).

In What Ways Does Aristotle's Idea of Hylomorphism Influence the Nigeria's Education System?

Unlike Plato, who separated the "ideal" world from the "material" world, Aristotle argued that form and matter are inseparable. In the Nigerian context, this translates to an educational philosophy where theory (Form) must be unified with practical application (Matter). Some of the key influences of Aristotle's Form and Matter are stated as follows:

Integration of Vocational and Academic Learning: The 6-3-3-4 system was designed to bridge the gap between "thinking" and "doing". By introducing technical and vocational subjects in secondary schools, the system treats the student's potential (Matter) as something that must be shaped by specific skills and purpose (Form) to achieve self-reliance.

Realism and Science Education: As the father of Realism, Aristotle's emphasis on studying the material world directly informs Nigeria's focus on the natural sciences and laboratory-based learning. The goal is to understand the "Form" of laws and principles by observing and manipulating "Matter".

The Development of "Potency" into "Actuality": Aristotle viewed education as a process of helping a child realize their inherent potential. This is reflected in the National Policy on Education, which aims to equip students with the "mental and physical abilities" necessary for national development.

General Studies (GNS) in Tertiary Institutions: Nigerian universities require General Studies courses to ensure students do not become "narrow specialists" (pure matter) but well-rounded citizens with a broad intellectual framework (Form). This aligns with Aristotle's belief that knowledge should be ethical and systematic rather than fragmented.

Character and Virtue Ethics: Aristotle's belief that "virtue is a habit" has influenced the inclusion of Civic Education and moral instructions in the curriculum. Education is seen as the "Form" that shapes the raw "Matter" of human behavior into a responsible citizen.

A brief analysis of the influence of Aristotle's concepts on Nigerian education

Aristotelian Concept	Nigerian Educational Application
Hylomorphism (Unity of Form/Matter)	Combining academic theory with practical/vocational training.
Potentiality to Actuality	Identifying and developing individual talents for self-reliance.
Realism	Focus on empirical sciences and environmental observation.
Virtue Ethics	Civic education and moral philosophy integrated into core curricula.

How Has Aristotle's Doctrine of Dualism Affected Nigeria's Education?

Aristotle's influence on the Nigerian education system is primarily seen in his Realism and Hylomorphism (the unity of Form and Matter), which often acts as a corrective or "practical dualism" compared to Plato's strict separation of the two. In Nigeria, this philosophical "dualism"—the distinction between the mind/intellect and the body/practical skills—has shaped the educational system in the following ways:

1. The Separation of Academic and Technical Paths: The most visible effect is the structural "dualism" in the 6-3-3-4 system. The system intentionally splits students after Junior Secondary School into Academic (Grammar) and Technical/Vocational schools. Aristotelian Logic also, has direct influence on the nation's educational system. This mirrors his distinction between "intellectual pursuit" for citizens and "vocational" training for practical labour. While the goal is to develop both "mind and body," in practice, it often creates a social divide where academic degrees are valued over technical skills.

2. "Sound Mind in a Sound Body": Nigeria's National Policy on Education adopts Aristotle's belief that education must address the whole person. (International Journal of Scientific Research in Education). For instance, the mandatory inclusion of Physical Education and sports in Nigerian schools reflects the Aristotelian idea that the "Matter" (the body) must be healthy for the "Form" (the mind) to function optimally.

3. Moral Habituation versus Intellectual Reasoning

Aristotle's "Dualism" also appears in how Nigeria approaches character building. Following Aristotle, Nigerian education emphasizes Civic Education and moral instructions not just as abstract theories (Forms) but as "habits" (Matter) to be practiced daily. The emphasis on school rules, uniforms, and assembly drills is a practical application of Aristotle's belief that the physical body must be disciplined to allow the intellect to thrive.

4. The Theory-Practice Gap

It is argued that a "negative dualism" exists in Nigeria, where there is a sharp disconnect between the Form (Theory) - high-level abstract knowledge taught in universities, and Matter (Practice) - the actual technical and industrial needs of the country. Such gap is what current reforms, like the move toward Competency-Based Education, try to bridge by reuniting Aristotelian "potentiality" with "actuality"

How Has Aristotle's Concept of Hylomorphism Influenced Curriculum Development of Nigerian Education?

Curriculum here refers to the courses offered by Nigerian educational institution: a set of courses constituting an area of specialization. Nigerian curriculum of education has much to do with the epistemology of hylomorphism. This is so because the cornerstone of Nigerian curriculum of education is built on the foundation of realism which shares common genealogical boundary and ideological background with hylomorphism. Salient influence of hylomorphism on curriculum of education in Nigeria can be seen in the objectives of education in Nigeria targeted at achieving mental and physical objectives as well as division of course work into practical (hyle – matter) and theoretical (morphe – form) units. In the Nigerian curriculum, hylomorphism is expressed through the following key developments:

1. The Integration of Theory (Form) and Practice (Matter)

Aristotle argued that "Form" does not exist separately from "Matter." Nigerian curriculum development applies this by ensuring that academic concepts (the "Form" or theory) are grounded in practical reality (the "Matter" or physical application). Scientific and Technical subjects like Agriculture, Home Economics, and Basic Technology are structured so that students do not just learn the "Form" of the subject (definitions and laws) but also engage with the "Matter" (farming, cooking, or building). In this regard, the 6-3-3-4 and 9-3-4 system specifically includes technical and vocational tracks to ensure that intellectual development is inseparable from skill acquisition.

2. Education as the "Actualization" of Potential

For Aristotle, "Matter" is pure potential that "Form" brings to life. Nigerian education policies view the student as the "Matter" (latent potential) and the curriculum as the "Form" that shapes them into a useful citizen. The curriculum aims to move students from potentiality (untrained youth) to actuality (self-reliant professionals) through specific educational "stamping" or training. Education for Aristotle should inculcate national development. This is seen as the "Form" that organizes human resources ("Matter") for the sake of national efficiency and economic growth.

3. Moral and Intellectual "Hylomorphism"

Nigerian curriculum development treats character (Matter) and knowledge (Form) as a single unit. Following Aristotle's belief that virtue is a habit, the Civic Education curriculum emphasizes that being a "good citizen" is not just about knowing the laws (Form) but acting them out through daily habits (Matter). At the tertiary level, mandatory GNS courses are intended to provide a broad intellectual "Form" to the "Matter" of specialized professional training, ensuring that doctors or engineers are also well-rounded, ethical individuals.

4. Categorization of Learning Stages

Hylomorphism suggests that complex "Forms" can only be built upon solid "Matter." This has influenced the tiered structure of Nigerian education: Primary education provides the foundational "Matter" (literacy and numeracy), which acts as the substrate for more complex "Forms" (specialized subjects) introduced in secondary and tertiary levels.

In What Ways Has Aristotle's Concept of hylomorphism Influenced the Learner and Learning Environment in Nigerian Schools?

The place of hylomorphism in the process of teaching and learning cannot be over-emphasized in Nigerian schools. Aristotle, the founder and proponent of the idea of form and matter residing in the same substance, holds strongly to the factual cum evidence-based comprehension of the universe. For him, a better understanding of the world would require an understanding of the facts and the ways of ordering and classifying knowledge. Hence, he is of the view that psychology has a great influence on the teacher and teaching method (Nwafor, 2016). It is more likely that Aristotle popularized some common hylomorphic phrases applied today in teaching. Such principles as "teaching from the known to the unknown", "from the simple to the complex" and so on are Aristotle's pedagogical footprint on the field of education. Thus, Nwafor (2016) noted that, for the realists, "the unknown" lays foundation for knowing what was not known earlier. In fact, he insisted that the unknown makes it easier to understand "the known". For him, the simple idea which the learner knows makes it easier for him to combine it with the complex ideas when they are introduced.

Aristotle also emphasizes critical thinking aided by observation and experimentation. In other words, since realism emphasizes reality in contrast to abstraction, it canvasses the method of teaching by direct observation. Consequently, they hold that the most effective method of teaching the child is to

make him see what is being taught than mere talking about it. In the same vein, Whitehead in Nwafor (2016) reminds the teacher that "in the Garden of Eden, Adam saw animals before he named them; but quite contrarily, in the traditional system, children named the animals before they saw them" (p.127). This, according to Nwafor, seems quite ironical.

Furthermore, the promotion of lecture teaching method is the product of the direct effect of Aristotle's concept of form and matter. Lecture method confers on the teacher absolute authority and control of the learning situation. The teacher in this context determines what society expects from the school system.

The implication is that he organizes and systematizes the expectation (form) in such a way that they are seen as facts (matter) about our world. It is only when this is done that they could transmit the knowledge about the facts which are contained in the culture of the society. To achieve such objective, modern pedagogical practice takes learners physiological, psychological and metaphysical conditions into consideration during planning and delivering of instructional content. This pedagogical practice recognizes the hylomorphic reality of human as composed of both Form and matter. Many teaching methods draw philosophical standpoint from Aristotle's doctrine of Form and matter. For instance, modern educational practices and teaching in schools in Nigeria adopts the following methods which are hylomorphic to a large extent.

1. Teacher-Centered Approaches: Such as Lecture Method which is still heavily used in secondary schools to deliver content, allowing teachers to cover large curricula and provide structured information; Demonstration Method where teachers demonstrate science or art procedures for students to observe, this is quite popular in secondary schools too. Another is Question & Answer Method - guided questioning to check comprehension and maintain engagement.
2. Student-Centered and Active Learning: This method includes Project-Based Learning - students work on long-term assignments to apply knowledge, enhancing practical understanding etc. There is also, Collaborative/Group Work which involves small group assignments that improve communication and teamwork. Again, there is the Inquiry/Discovery Learning which encourages students to research and ask questions to find answers, fostering independent learning.
3. Modern and Digital Approaches: Here we have Blended/Hybrid Learning which involves mixing face-to-face instruction with online tools, particularly in modern private institutions etc. Example of modern and digital approaches include Flipped Classroom: Students study content at home, using classroom time for interaction and solving problems. Another digital approach is Educational Technology Use which has to do with the use of projectors, educational videos, and apps in content/lesson delivering.

Apart from the aforementioned, there are other teaching methods at the primary school level. These include; Play-way method or Gamification – learning through games and fun activities, Story telling method which is common in nursery/primary schools to enhance imagination and memory capacity. Here, oftentimes, the principle of learning is upturned as the child could be forced to learn from the unknown to the known. For instance, the story of Tortoise and Dove could be taught and recited over and over by the children even when they have not seen tortoise or dove in real life. The same is applicable to the case of teaching on Elements from the periodic table. In most cases, students learn about Nitrogen, Calcium, Lead, etc before it is shown to them. This is similar to learning the Form of the elements without their matter.

However, these methods often differ significantly between urban areas which tend to adopt more technology and rural areas which may rely more on traditional methods due to limited infrastructure. More so, the dichotomy between private and public schools in terms of availability of educational infrastructures, could also determine the teaching method to adopt.

In conclusion, Aristotle's concept of form and matter holds on to the dualistic tendencies comprising exactly the mind and the body, that is dual nature of man, hence, education in line with this should pay attention to the people's interest, body development and awareness of their mind. It equally tests the mind, excites the intelligence, body or physical development and put an end to lethargy of inactivity. All these are the architects of self-realization. Self-realization is not merely the manifestation of one "self" but complete development of individual which originates from the mind and hence the body (Timothy et al, N.d). This may be possible because of the dual nature of individuals. The self-

realization here discussed about as the aim of education, premises on the synthesis of ideal which comprehends the individual and social ideal since both aspects of self-realization are important.

In line with Aristotle's concept of form and matter, education can be regarded as the process of development of the person, particularly his consciousness, spiritual self and body. It is what individual makes out of what is presented to him that constitutes his knowledge and education (Hassan, 2004).As hylomorphism gives greater importance to spiritual values in comparison with natural attainment, it premises on the spiritual, moral and the development of sound mind in body of the individual. Hylomorphism equally expatiates on the intelligence or rationality, the mental and body. The idea seems to lay emphasis on the principle of unity in diversity. The form (spirit, mind or mental) and matter (body) are unified to perform the function of teaching and learning in man. The principle of unity in diversity according to Timothy et al (n.d), underlines the working of all activities on daily basis as it is the implicit force in the whole realm of education. A developed mind and body can be perceived and understood as the parading force that leads to agglomeration of all records of development in man.

In summary therefore, one can infer that hylomorphism in education places emphasis on the exaltation of human personality or self-realization which is the major casual force of knowledge of self, as the development of the self in education is achievable through the proper functioning of the spirit or mind or mental in assertion with the body.

In the Nigerian school system, Aristotle's Hylomorphism shifts the focus from purely abstract thinking to the development of the "whole person." It suggests that a learner is not just a mind (Form), but a physical being (Matter) that needs a specific environment to reach its full potential.

In the Nigerian context, the learner is viewed through the lens of Potentiality. The student is seen as "raw material" with latent talents. The learner's journey is to receive "Form" (education) to become "Actualized" (a productive citizen). This is why Nigerian parents and teachers place so much emphasis on vocational choice early in secondary school—to give the "Matter" a specific "Form" (e.g., becoming a doctor, engineer, or artisan). More also, The Learning Environment is viewed as a "Laboratory". Because Aristotle believed that knowledge comes through the senses (studying Matter), the ideal Nigerian learning environment is designed to be empirical. The requirement for science labs, agricultural farms, and technical workshops in the 6-3-3-4 and 9-3-4 systems reflects the need for a material environment. Without "Matter" (tools, soil, chemicals), the "Form" (theories in a textbook) cannot be fully understood.

The School as a Micro-Society is not just a classroom, it includes the playground; the assembly ground, and the school farm. These physical spaces are where the learner "practices" being a citizen. Aristotle argued that "we are what we repeatedly do." This influences the disciplinary environment in Nigerian schools. The rigid structure of Nigerian schools—uniforms, bells, marching, and manual labor (cutting grass or sweeping)—is designed to habituate the "body" (Matter) so the "mind" (Form) can be disciplined.

The learning environment is expected to be a place of moral training. A learner who is brilliant (intellectual Form) but undisciplined (chaotic Matter) is considered an "incomplete" product of the Nigerian system.

Another noticeable influence of Aristotle on Nigerian education is sensuous learning (Realism)The Nigerian learner is encouraged to learn through observation. For example, Field Trips and Excursions are basic realist practices adapted to the Nigerian educational practice. Taking students to see the Niger Bridge or a local factory is an attempt to connect the "Form" of geography or economics to the "Matter" of the real world.

Meanwhile, the heavy use of charts, models, and realia (real objects) in Nigerian primary schools is based on the idea that the mind cannot grasp the "Form" without first perceiving the "Matter."

Implications of Aristotle's Concept of Hylomorphism for Nigerian Education

The Nigerian educational system at the moment shares a lot of things in common with Aristotle's hylomorphic disquisition. Suffice it to state that Aristotle has a substantial effect on Nigerian education. The implications of this is instrumental to politico-economic growth and development of the country. For instance, the present day of Nigeria attached great importance to skill acquisition. This is a strong influence from Aristotle's education. It is in recognition of the importance of skill acquisition that one of the goals of Nigeria philosophy of education is "the acquisition of appropriate skills" which will equip

"the individual to live in and contribute to "the development of the society (FRN, 2004). Thus, Nwafor (2016) opines that the process of skills acquisition should include, among other values, "the "acquisition of competencies necessary for self –reliance". In effect, the Nigerian educational system encourages the acquisition of skills right from the Junior Secondary School level, (i.e., basic 7-9;), which is expected to be pre- vocational and academic. More so, Vocational Education is encouraged through the establishment of technical and vocational schools, as well as trade centres, where specific skills and training are given to students.

Nigeria's vocational education is expected to be organized as a tool for the effective integration of an individual into society's workforce. Through this organization, the individual can develop national skillmanship, consciousness, achieve self-realization, strive for social, economic, cultural, and political prosperity, and promote institutional unity in the country.

Again, Aristotle emphasizes specialization in various fields of knowledge. The Nigerian educational system borrowed a leaf from here. Accordingly, in Basic education, pupils are made to acquire knowledge of both Sciences and Humanity/Arts subjects which culminate into the choice of specific area of interest or field of specialization in the senior secondary and university. This arrangement is very much in tandem with Aristotle's hylomorphic view that education ought to affect the physical and the metaphysical aspects of the individual.

Many writers who are familiar with both the Greco-Roman and the Nigerian educational system can observe the striking similarities between the two educational systems. Such resemblance is indubitably, the replica effect of Aristotle's educational view on the Nigerian education system. Nevertheless, the Nigerian educational structure seems to be devoid of a solid foundational approach probably due to colonization, civilization and absence of effective quality assurance control, and source remembrance in policy formulation as rightly noted by John (2015).

Invariably, the implications of Hylomorphism (the unity of Form/Soul and Matter/Body) for Nigerian education center on the belief that a person is only "complete" when their intellectual potential is married to physical and practical skill. In the Nigerian context, this philosophy moves away from "purely academic" learning toward functionalism.

1. The Necessity of Vocationalization: The primary implication is that education cannot be purely theoretical. Because Form (knowledge) requires Matter (physical application) to be real, the Nigerian 6-3-3-4 system insists on pre-vocational subjects. The implication is that astudent who knows the "Form" of an engine (theory) but cannot touch the "Matter" (the engine itself) is not truly educated in an Aristotelian sense. This justifies the government's push for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

2. Education as Character Molding: Hylomorphism implies that the "Soul" (Form) is the organizing principle of the "Body" (Matter). Hence, Nigerian schools do not just focus on passing exams; they emphasize discipline and morality. This is why "Character and Learning" are both required for a degree in Nigerian universities. The teacher acts as an "architect" shaping the raw matter of the student into a virtuous Form.

3. The Crisis of Form without Matter: A significant implication of this concept today is the critique of the Unemployed Graduate phenomenon in Nigeria. When Nigerian schools provide certificates (the "Form" of being an expert) without providing the laboratory equipment or workshops (the "Matter"), they produce an "Accidental Form." This leads to graduates who have the title but lack the substance/skill to work, creating a disconnect in the national economy.

4. Holistic Curriculum Design: Hylomorphism suggests that because the mind and body are one, the environment must cater to both. This mandates that Nigerian school curriculums include Physical and Health Education (PHE) and sports. A "Sound Mind in a Sound Body" is a direct Hylomorphic goal - ensuring the physical "Matter" is healthy enough to support the intellectual "Form".

5. Empirical Teaching Methods: Since Aristotle believed knowledge starts with the senses (observing Matter), the Nigerian teacher is expected to use Instructional Materials (realia).Teaching "Photosynthesis" by just talking is an "empty Form." Bringing a leaf into the classroom provides the "Matter" necessary for the student's mind to grasp the true "Form" of the concept.

Conclusion

Aristotle's theory of hylomorphism as the bedrock of this research work emerged with the intent of proffering solution to the problems bedeviling education in the Nigerian society.

As a metaphysical conception focusing on the discovering and demystification of the true knowledge and nature of the constituents of our being, Aristotle and his hylomorphism focused on the conception of true idea, self-realization, character and intellectual development as a way of confronting and overcoming the challenges bedeviling humans in the society.

The Nigerian education system cannot be said to have been successful enough especially in graduating people with critical and creative abilities. This fact can be justified by considering the level and number of projects and policies that are impetuously initiated and implemented in the Nigerian education sector. Suffice it to say that the Nigerian society is in an urgent need of a pragmatic and sustainable education system that can groom men and women who in spite of acquiring certain abilities are equally, physically, mentally and spiritually developed. With such individuals who recognize the hylomorphic composition of the human personality, our country can be positively transformed in to a society where social cohesion, co-operation, peace and security are the order of the day. In this regard, this discourse has demonstrated how Aristotle's doctrines of hylomorphism can resourcefully be utilized by the Nigerian education system in order to attain a balanced society.

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing, the researcher recommended the following:

1. Nigeria education should be repositioned to ensure the inclusion and teaching of ethics as a stand-alone subject/course of study at all levels of education in the country. This is to concretize Aristotle's belief that virtue is a habit. Such moral conviction should not only lead to inclusion of Civic Education and Moral instructions in our school curriculum, but should bring about the enshrinement of Ethics as a fully-fledged subject of its own in the Nigerian schools' curricula.
2. The emphasis on school rules, uniforms, and discipline should be an all-round practice at all levels of education in the country. Emphasis on such rules as uniform, dress code and labour should not be limited to primary or secondary schools. Undergraduate students in the university should equally be made to pass through similar regulations in order to curtail the problem of feminine nudity and indecency among students in higher institutions of learning in Nigeria.
3. Nigerian curriculum development should ensure that academic concepts - the "Form" or theory, are grounded in practical reality - the "Matter" or physical application. This is in tandem with Aristotle's postulation that Form does not exist separately from Matter. In this regard, scientific and technical subjects like Agriculture, Home Economics, and Basic Technology should be structured is such a way that students do not just learn the "Form" of the subject (definitions and laws) but also engage with the "Matter" (farming, cooking, or building.
4. Educational institutions in Nigeria should adopt and encourage Integrated Learning. This approach should be central to the realization of the goals of the9-3-4 system of education which lay great emphasis on vocational subjects, where the "lesson note" (Form) must be validated by "workshop practice" (Matter). Accordingly, theoretical learning should go concurrently with practical. The Nigerian learner should be encouraged to learn through observation. For example, Field Trips and Excursions should constitute basic component of every instruction content. Taking students to see the school library or a mechanic workshop is an attempt to connect the "Form" of library or Mechanical Engineering to the "Matter" of the real world.
5. Teachers and administrators of schools in Nigeria should not limit teaching and learning to the four walls of the classroom. The entire school premise should be regarded as a classroom where teaching and learning of both the Form of the subject and the Matter of it can take place. The classroom in this respect may include playground, the assembly ground; the school farm, the staffroom and staff office as the case may be. These physical spaces should be utilized by the learner to practice being a citizen. The learning environment is expected to be a place of moral training. Thus, Aristotle was convinced that a learner who is brilliant (intellectual Form) but undisciplined (chaotic Matter) is considered an "incomplete" product of the Nigerian system.

Nigeria's vocational education should be organized as a tool for the effective integration of an individual into society's workforce. Through this organization, the individual can develop national

skillmanship, consciousness, achieve self-realization, strive for social, economic, cultural, and political prosperity, and promote institutional unity in the country.

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