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ISSN:

Print - 2277 - 078X

Online - 2315 - 747X

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Journal of  
Humanities, Social  
Sciences and Creative  
Arts

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## THE NEXUS BETWEEN LOGIC AND GENERAL STUDIES

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### ABSTRACT

Logic, a branch of philosophy, is essentially concerned with one's ability to reason well. It provides structured rules and principles that act as guides for effective reasoning. As such the correctness or incorrectness of any kind of reasoning can easily be verified by subjecting them to logical techniques and methods. The paper conceptualises general studies as a set of prescribed courses available in a Nigerian tertiary institution, outside a student's area of specialisation that must be registered for and passed, usually, in the first and second years of study. The essence is to ensure that students experience balanced, rounded education and to ensure that scholarship is made relevant to the pressing needs of the society. The paper locates the bond between logic and general studies based on the fact that logic permeates all the courses taught as General Studies and, indeed, all the courses taught in the university be it medicine, geography, architecture. In a knowledge-based environment, the need for effective communication is critical and inevitable. This means that both in the delivery of knowledge as well as its acquisition, care should be taken to avoid fallacious reasoning and deception by the slippery nature and use of words. It is for this reason that a rudimentary knowledge of logic is a prerequisite for every discipline. The paper adopts an analytical and comparative method. Philosophical analysis and reflection are applied in order to evaluate and highlight the importance of logic to other disciplines. Its comparative character helps to demonstrate why logic, and no any other discipline, is most suited to act as the foundation for all other disciplines. In all, the paper demonstrates that for effective teaching and learning to take place in other disciplines, logic is essential. It also underscores the strong nexus between logic and general studies. Finally, it shows how logic can help in enriching other disciplines.

**Keywords:** Logic, General Studies, Effective Communication, Effective Teaching and Learning

### INTRODUCTION

#### Situating Logic

On daily basis, life presents us with many options from which to make a choice or some choices. One could choose to study science, history or geography; to become a performing artist or a trader; to go into politics and so on. To do any of these effectively, one needs to weigh issues, sift through alternatives and think through con-

sequences. All these efforts critically depend on one's reasoning. As such, the ability to make the right choice is inextricably tied to one's capacity to reason properly.

Reasoning also provides the compass for navigating through mass information, highlighting important ideas, bringing out and arranging them in a useful way. It, then, helps to showcase the points put forward as

the basis for accepting or rejecting a particular end result.

The subject concerned with one's ability to reason well is Logic. Scholars, (Sanguineti, 1987; de Bono, 1991; Kahane, 1995; Copi and Cohen, 2000; Hodges, 2001; Ucheaga, 2001; Offor, 2012; Okolo, 2015) even while approaching it from different dimensions, agree that logic is a branch of philosophy concerned with the methods and principles used to distinguish good (correct) from bad (incorrect) reasoning. In fact, logic is not just a branch of philosophy it is the chief tool of the philosopher.

While it is important to adapt courses and academic institutions to a new and changing world, this adaptation cannot be done without holding fast to certain bedrock principles. It is logic that provides bedrock principles based on rules that will enable both learners and teachers to evaluate the correctness of any piece of reasoning. Offor (2012:4) notes that the 'distinction between correct and incorrect reasoning is the central problem with which logic deals and all the principles and techniques of logic have been developed primarily for the purposes of making this distinction clear.' For Sanguineti (1987) training in logic is a useful tool in the sciences and life situations and in the achievement of an ordered society. Commenting on Sanguineti's book, the translator, Myrosław Alexander Cizdyn, observes that logic is so fundamental that without 'a knowledge of logic, no student of philosophy can adequately study his subject matter (Sanguineti 1987:viii).' Indeed, logic as a branch of philosophy participates in philosophy's ability 'to comprehensively and systematically understand the fundamental areas of human experience. These include mind as well as religion, science, art,

language, and morality, among others' (Graham 2005:2). Nwaorgu, Ojukwu and Okolo (2017:168) maintain that philosophy, and by extension logic, 'has ramifications in all the other academic disciplines and probes them to their foundations.' Logic, then, is essential for both teacher and student who desire to begin studies in their respective disciplines with a good conceptual foundation.

### **Positioning General Studies**

Institutions of higher learning in Nigeria share two common features: one, they are centres for knowledge generation, dissemination and skill acquisition, and two, they offer training in different disciplines. For instance, a university can have a College of Medicine, Engineering, Social Sciences, Arts, among others. Within the college, a student in Arts, for example, can be in the Department of History or English or Communication Studies, and so on. The courses that a student in a particular Department is exposed to are usually different from that of other students in other Departments.

The relevance of general studies stems from the recognition that there are some courses that a student irrespective of his/her area of specialisation needs to be acquainted with. Such courses are seen as important both in helping the student to acquire a generalised knowledge and gaining deeper understanding of his/her own discipline as well as the dynamics of the larger society.

It is in this vein that the National Universities Commission (NUC) stipulated that general studies are compulsory courses for all degree programmes in Nigeria. For example, the University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, University Calendar (2009-2012:241) stated that in 'accordance with the requirements of

the National Universities Commission (NUC) stipulated for all degree programmes, UNAAB offers courses in General Studies which are generally unrelated to the courses characterising each degree programme.' It listed the courses assembled for general studies to include 'Communication Skills, Literature-in-English, Nigerian History and Culture, Logic, Sociology, Politics, Philosophy, Introduction to library studies and Government.' The aims are 'to broaden the knowledge of the students beyond their immediate professional horizon in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and to educate them on the socio-cultural peculiarities and problems of the Nigerian society, especially the prevalent customs, values and superstitions' (UNAAB University Calendar 2009-2012:242).

General studies, therefore, refer to certain mandatory courses prescribed for students outside their areas of specialisation that every Nigerian student in a tertiary institution is expected to register for between the first and second years of study. The essence is to ensure that students have balanced, rounded education and to ensure that scholarship is made relevant to the pressing needs of the society.

This is very important, especially, given the increasing recognition that higher education plays a decisive role in the development of a nation, (Ebong (2004), Carel and Gamez (2004), Gravenir (2004), Otunga and Ojwang (2004), Okolo (2017)). As such educational training at the tertiary level should prepare students to participate fully in nation building.

### **The Nexus between Logic and General Studies**

As already noted, logic is one of the courses

offered in general studies alongside others such as Communication Skills, Political Science, and Social Problems. The position of this paper, however, is that logic is pivotal to the teaching and acquisition of knowledge in other general studies courses and indeed in all academic disciplines. The centrality and foundational nature of logic is captured in the following observation:

Any attempt to base logical principles on something more ultimate, whether it be our system of contingent rules for the use of language or anything else, must be self-defeating. For the attempt consists of deducing conclusions from premises and for deduction to be possible the prior validity of logical laws is a prerequisite (Quoted in Copi and Cohen, 2000:18).

This observation is quite relevant to the focus of this paper because logic alone provides the impetus for a complete re-evaluation of other courses. Few examples presented below will suffice:

### ***Logic and Communication Skills***

In a knowledge-based environment, the need for effective communication is critical. Communication entails the process by which information, ideas, and feelings are exchanged. What we read, listen to and discuss all come under communication. The essence of Communication Skills is to equip students with reading, listening, speaking and writing (that is, interactive skills) to help them understand their lectures fully. For a complete realisation of this objective, however, a critical evaluation of what we read, listen to and discuss is cardinal. This means that both in the delivery of knowledge and its acquisition, care should be taken to avoid fallacious reasoning and deception by the slippery nature

and use of words. Sanguineti (1987:24) submits that due to logical knowledge 'we shall be able to analyze the mode of thinking of men, in order to indicate whether they follow the correct norms for knowledge of the truth or not.' Knowledge of rudimentary logical rules and principles will lead to a general consciousness of interrogating what is ordinarily accepted as facts. This will lead to the possibility of discovering fundamental errors that will eliminate dogmas, unreliable or even fallacious method of approach and faulty generalisations. This way logic helps to eliminate errors arising from the workings (or abuse) of language, enhance communication skills and invariably help in the production of critically minded students who will later impact positively on the society.

#### ***Logic and Political Science***

Political Science is particularly concerned with authority, government, the state, the nature of the relationships of states with one another, and how social forces affecting human interactions are managed or mismanaged. To be able to adequately analyse and criticise constitutions and governments and assess the problems of political power and other political behaviour in society, political science must recourse to logic. For instance, it is important to subject the Constitution to logical analysis in order to eliminate vague and ambiguous expressions that may pose problems of interpretation in conflict situations. Writing on the future of Philosophy, Magee (2010) notes that there seems to be a revival of public interest in philosophy, and an increase in the value people set on it. He informs of a recent development in which governments engage philosophers to scrutinise legislation. Logic as the backbone of philosophy will invariably play a big role in political thought.

Also, in the area of problems of political power in society, logic creates awareness of some fallacies that politicians can employ to hoodwink the citizens. Three examples will suffice here: straw man, evading the issue and fallacy of suppressed evidence.

Straw man is committed 'when an opposing view is misrepresented in a way to make it seem foolish or insubstantial.' It also occurs 'when a weak spot in an argument is focused on and blown out of proportion whilst relegating a stronger view to the background' (Okolo, 2015:59-60). For this reason, Kahane (1995:49) cautions that 'extremely clever uses of straw man are hard to resist, which is why intelligent reasoners stay on their guard against them.' For example, in defending the quit notice served to Igbo people by Arewa youths to leave the North by October 1, 2017, the politician and former presidential adviser, Professor Ango Abdullahi stated that 'each year, up to the time Nigeria gained its independence, none of the two regions was able to provide for itself. I mean none of the western and eastern regions had the money to effectively run the affairs of its region until they got financial support from the Northern region' (*The Nation*, June 10, 2017:4). Furthermore, he submitted that it was money from the North that was used to construct Nigerian Railways, refineries and other facilities. Reacting to Abdullahi's position, Majeed Dahiru (*Daily Sun*, June 16, 2017:20) described it as a mix of 'half-truths, misrepresentations and outright lies.' He noted that the 'false claim that oil exploration in the South East and Niger Delta region was financed by monies from agricultural produce like groundnut and cotton from the North is a dangerous narrative that is being propagated by someone who should know better.' He further explained that 'oil exploration in Nigeria was a

50-year business venture that was funded by private equity with government only providing exploration licences to the various international oil mineral development companies.' Thus, in a lucid manner, Dahiru displayed the straw man in Abdullahi's position, which was a deliberate effort to misrepresent the facts, so as to deceive the public.

Also, contrary to Abdullahi's position it has been observed by Nwaorgu (2013:117) that the chief reason which prompted the British to amalgamate the Northern and Southern protectorates was the fact that the South had enormous wealth and was not only self-supporting but usually produced surplus while the North was impoverished and sustained by grants and aids from Britain. Amalgamation, therefore, meant a stoppage of such grants and aids as the wealth of the South would be used to support the North. The fallacy of straw man in the position of Ango Abdullahi is glaring for he deliberately misrepresented the facts to serve his purpose. Dahiru made this crucial observation:

The above presentation of facts against fiction as espoused by Ango Abdullahi should help rid northerners of like mind with him of the false sense of entitlement over Nigeria's oil mineral resources, buried deep in the land and waters of the Niger Delta and foster a sense of understanding and empathy towards the peoples of that region who are asking for a greater share of oil revenue and the neighbouring people of the South East asking for a just and equitable structure.

Fallacy of evading the issue occurs when the matter that is supposed to be addressed is completely avoided. For instance, a

popular phrase often use by Nigerian politicians in addressing some critical issues is the proclamation 'we are on top of the situation'. However, subsequent events usually prove that nothing vital is being done. This approach diverts the attention of the people and prevents them from evaluating the steps they are taking and the strategies to be adopted to solve the problem.

Fallacy of suppressed evidence consists in ignoring relevant evidence. Politicians and other public figures often provide only the evidence that supports their views while relegating other aspects to the background even when they are very relevant. By way of example, Odebode, Akinkuotu and Isenyo report in *The Punch* of April 6, 2017 that while speaking at the Kaduna State Economic Summit on April 5, 2017, the Emir of Kano and a former Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Muhammadu Sanusi II, observed that 'the North-East and the North-West Nigeria, are among the poorest parts of the world.' He explained that why this is not obvious is 'because we were looking at Nigeria as a country that averages the oil-rich Niger Delta, the industrial and commercial-rich Lagos, the commercially viable South-East, and you have an average. Break Nigeria into its component parts, and these parts of the country are among the poorest, if it were a country.' He, in fact, insists that as far back as 2000, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) figures showed that if Borno and Yobe States were a country on their own, they would be 'poorer than Niger, Cameroon and Chad.' He advised that 'for the region (North) to leap forward developmentally, it must fix its social and religious problems.' Nonetheless, those views are not congruent with the ones he expressed while in office as the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria. At that time, in conjunc-

tion with the 19 Governors of Northern extraction, they expressed the view that the root cause of poverty in the North, particularly, the North-East was unfavourable revenue allocation (Nwaorgu, 2013:145). This is a clear case of suppressed evidence since the correct position had been known by Sanusi as far back as 2000.

Awareness of these fallacies will help us to critically evaluate political viewpoints in order to ascertain whether the evidences put forward are cogent or not. Kahane (1995:24) identifies three conditions that a cogent reasoning must satisfy: 'It must (1) start with justified premises, (2) include all relevant information, and (3) be valid.'

### ***Logic and Literature***

Literature here refers to imaginative writing which consists of poetry, drama and prose (short stories and novels). Imaginative literature is 'the attempt to present mankind and the environment via invented sayings and doings' (Okolo 2007:11). As such literature uses the medium of language. Mayhead (1965:14) noted that the imaginative writer has a greater than ordinary interest in the possibilities of language because the languages humans use are inextricably bound with their lives.

However, given that words can be biased and slippery in nature there is need for critical evaluation in order to promote clear thinking. Achebe (1988:91) warns that 'when language is seriously interfered with, when it is disjoined from truth, be it from mere incompetence or worse, from malice, horrors can descend...on mankind.' By subjecting the ideas contained in literature to critical analysis such an occurrence can be forestalled. Equally important is the fact that it will help to deepen both the students

and the teacher's appreciation of literature by equipping them with the necessary tools to interrogate what they are reading. The ability to reason more clearly, then, will affect positively on our society and invariably change it for the better.

### ***Logic and Nigeria History***

History is concerned with past events whether scientific, social, economic or the political development of a nation. The essence of Nigeria History (as a course of study in a university) is to provide students with 'an overview of Nigeria's contribution to world history and her relationship with other parts of the world' (UNAAB University Calendar 2009-2012:246).

Given Nigeria's colonial experience and the complexity introduced by that encounter<sup>1</sup> it is important that historical accounts are not taken as given but critically examined. Logic makes it possible to continuously investigate and evaluate historical claims without blindly accepting records of past achievements. Logic can, for example, ask how the highly centralised administrative system introduced since 1966 by the military regimes has aided the development of every sector of the country. It can even question the ownership of universities by the Federal government and its implications for its governance. Such a measure could have easily forestalled the endless conflicts between the Federal government and Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) over the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) that played a significant role in the ASUU strike that lasted from March to December 2020. To place this in the right perspective is to reflect on the effect of the nine months of suspended academic activities on students training, capacity building, research, and human and national development. Critical re-

flection on the part of all the parties involved would have gone a long way in ensuring that other means of conflict resolution were explored. Criticism 'enables one to reassess one's ideas, beliefs, values, norms, etc., through clarification, argument and persuasion' (Okolo, 2015:112) which are the necessary ingredients of logic. For this reason, there is need to make basic training in logic a prerequisite for all office holders and, indeed, for all citizens.

### CONCLUSION

The need to create, preserve, and transmit to future generation reliable and authentic knowledge is particularly important in a knowledge-based environment. Higher institutions in Nigeria play key role in shaping national information, suggesting and communicating policies as well as training experts to man different sectors in the society. How well any of these roles are handled will depend on the quality of training such an expert possesses.

To this end, critical assessment of both the information-consumed and information-produced is very crucial. While admittedly that all the courses taught as General Studies are individually and collectively important in the production of a skilled and resourceful student ready to contribute to national development, it is however, equally undeniable that logic can significantly provide the impetus for a balanced re-evaluation of other disciplines. It does this by providing a common ground for all disciplines to converge based on common rule (s) and principle(s) for them to validate their claims. Logic can enhance the assessment of the books and information that feed the intellect of students, lecturers and researchers.

### Notes

Often Nigeria's history and those of other colonised countries are written by the colonisers. Fortunately African writers have joined in the narrative.

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(Manuscript received: 17th December, 2019; accepted: 25th March, 2021 )

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ISSN:

Print - 2277 - 078X

Online - 2315 - 747X

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Journal of  
Humanities, Social  
Sciences and Creative  
Arts

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## THE PERCEPTION, AWARENESS AND USE OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES BY UNDERGRADUATES OF THE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE ABEOKUTA, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

This research investigated perception, awareness and use of Guidance and Counselling Services (G&CS) by undergraduates of the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB). Simple random sampling technique was used to sample 283 respondents across the ten (10) Colleges in the Institution. Data were collected with the aid of questionnaire and analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentages, and mean. The questionnaire was subjected to a pilot study that revealed psychometric properties of Cronbach's Alpha 0.86. Results revealed that 91.1% of the respondents were aware of G&CS and 74.6% of the respondents currently using the services indicated that it was very helpful. The rating of the counselling needs of the respondents revealed that academic issues with a mean of 3.62 is the most important factor, followed by examination pressure management which had a mean of 3.51. The rating of the perception of students on the quality and effectiveness of G&CS indicated that organized orientation services for fresh students ranked first (mean = 2.55), while effective counselling on personal, social, academic and vocational challenges ranked second (mean = 2.49). The fresher's orientation service received the highest perception (mean = 2.55) among respondents on the quality and effectiveness of G&CS in the institution. The use of G&CS is presently assisting students to attain competencies needed to overcome academic, career and personal concerns. The study concluded that the G&CS needs of the students across the Colleges differ due to the dissimilarities in their disciplines across the University.

**Keywords:** Need, Awareness, Perception, Guidance and Counselling.

### INTRODUCTION

Guidance and counselling is a professional field which has a broad range of activities and services aimed at assisting individuals in institutions of learning to understand themselves, their problems, their school environment and their world (Egbochuku, 2008; Oniye and Alawaye, 2008; Eyo, Joshua, and Esuong, 2010; Lunenburg, 2010). Oniye

and Alawaye (2008) submitted that the development of effective study habits in relation to how people can utilize their assets and manage their abilities for optimal development is essential guidance and counselling services (G&CS). In relation to this, Idowu and Adeoye (1990) viewed guidance and counselling as a process of planned intervention within a school system by which the