

THE ABSENCE OF PHILOSOPHY IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES: CONCERNS FOR THE FUTURE OF A NATION

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Abstract

The dawn of the modern world's progress on the provisions of post-modernity, progress in science and technology and advancements of disciplines within the social sciences have continued to undermine the place of philosophy, often described as abstract, non-professional and non-lucrative. Thus, scholars have criticized philosophy for concerning itself with the same reality or thoughts over the centuries beginning from the time of the ancients to the contemporary period, and therefore, non-progressive. These criticisms, notwithstanding, this paper has studied the fundamental place that philosophy occupies in nation building, and, therefore, why it cannot be compromised in university or tertiary education. It has also studied the state of affairs regarding the absence of this course in many Nigerian universities with clear consequences on the future of the development of the nation. This work argued that the state of affairs calls for an emergency, not only for the introduction of philosophy to Nigerian universities but also the primary and secondary schools' levels. For the purpose of this study, the critical, analytical and thematic methods of inquiry were employed.

Keywords: Philosophy, Nigeria, Universities, Student, Northern.

Introduction

To the question: *What would our world/life be like without philosophy?* Ava Kiely had this to say "Without philosophy, life will be very dull as questions will not be asked about the world; people's opinions and ideas will be silenced, and therefore everyone would be forced to be the same"¹. Ashna Kalra responded: "Without philosophy, there will be no equality; human beings wouldn't be given the freedom to make their own choices, and every day would be the same"². In the contention of

¹ A. Kiely, *What would our world/life be like without philosophy?*
<https://mountsackville.ie/News/What-would-our-world-life-be-like-without-philosophy/43794/Index.html> <https://mountsackville.ie/News/What-would-our-world-life-be-like-without-philosophy/43794/Index.html>

² A. Kalra, *What would our world/life be like without philosophy?*

Weiwei Teong, “I think if there was no philosophy, we wouldn’t see or at least attempt to see things around us the way they truly are”³. For Niamh Cronin, “The world without philosophy would be less interesting as philosophy challenges us to think deeper about the world around us”⁴. The perspectives of these philosophers on the question of what the world will become without philosophy echoes beyond the parameters set by the question to speak of philosophy as an indispensable accompaniment for the building of a humane world.

This notwithstanding, in January 2022, after a class on *Phenomenology of Religion*, which discusses the contributions of philosophers like Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger in a university in the Northern part of Nigeria that has been in existence for more than five decades, one of my students walked up to me and asked: “When will philosophy be introduced into our university as undergraduate or post-graduate course?” Not being sure of what exactly to say to the student, I paused for a moment and then said to him: “In the nearest future”, what that meant, I didn’t know. Was it a prophetic statement or the simplest means of discharging the student? I am yet to know. But one thing remains clear: there is a hunger for the introduction of philosophy as an independent course in many universities in Nigeria.

I had always known that philosophy was not taught in many universities, especially in Northern Nigeria, but had never thought about its implications as I did after my student asked this question. I imagined how many generations had graduated from the university in question for more than five decades without the benefit of philosophy, and how much disservice the graduates have unconsciously endured as a result of the absence of philosophy; if it is a disservice, to whom then? Is the victim of this disservice aware of the consequences that he or she endures? And if he or she does, are these consequences of any value? If the victim is not aware that he or she is a victim of disservice and does not in any way understand the consequences of this disservice, then a paper on this matter is indispensable.

This is the experience that constitutes the inspiration for this paper. After our conversion, as a scholar dedicated to the affairs of pen and paper, I felt that it was necessary to put on paper my personal thoughts and research on the disservice that the university system does to their students and the future of our dear country and

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³ W. Teong, *What would our world/life be like without philosophy?*

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⁴ N. Cronin, *What would our world/life be like without philosophy?*

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continent at large as a result of the absence of philosophy. The paper also gives me the opportunity to study the universities where philosophy is not taught nationally, and particularly in the northern part of Nigeria, and also to see if it has peculiar consequences on the nation or on a particular region. To achieve this, the first stage will be the study of the state of affairs in Nigerian universities regarding the study of philosophy as a degree course.

Philosophy in Nigerian Universities: The State of Affairs

This section of the paper focuses on the state of affairs regarding philosophy in Nigerian universities. It first studies the number of federal and state universities and how many of them that offer degrees courses in philosophy. It further studies the universities in Nigeria that are privately owned and how many of them offer degree courses in philosophy, not as general studies. The outcome of this study will constitute the state of affairs regarding the state philosophy in Nigerian government and private universities.

TABLE 1: *List of Federal and State universities in Nigeria in relation to the study of philosophy as a degree course*

No	Federal Universities	Philo	No.	State Universities	Philo
1	Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi (ATBU)	NO	1	Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba (AAUA)	NO
2	Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (ABU)	YES	2	Adamawa State University Mubi (ADSU)	NO
3	Air Force Institute of Technology, Kaduna (AFIT)	NO	3	Akwa Ibom State University of Technology, Uyo (AKSU)	YES
4	Bayero University, Kano (BUK)	NO	4	Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma (AAU)	YES
5	Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun (FUPRE)	NO	5	Benue State University, Makurdi (BSU)	YES
6	The Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA)	NO	6	Bauchi State University, Gadau (BASUG)	NO

7	The Federal University of Technology, Minna (FUTMINNA)	NO	7	Bayelsa Medical University, Bayelsa	NO
8	Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO)	NO	8	Bornu State University, Maiduguri (BOSU)	NO
9	Federal University, Dutse, Jigawa State (FUD)	NO	9	Cross River State University of Science & Technology, Calabar (CRUTECH)	NO
10	Federal University, Dustin-Ma, Katsina (FUDMA)	NO	10	Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Uli (COOU)	NO
11	Federal University, Kashere, Gombe State (FUKASHERE)	NO	11	Delta State University Abraka (DELSU)	YES
12	Federal University, Lafia, Nasarawa State (FULAFIA)	YES	12	Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki (EBSU)	YES
13	Federal University, Lokoja, Kogi State (FULOKOJA)	YES	13	Ekiti State University (EKSU)	YES
14	Federal University, Ndifu-Alike, Ebonyi State (FUNAI)	YES	14	Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu (ESUT)	NO
15	Federal University, Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State (FUOYE)	NO	15	Eastern Palm University Ogboko, Imo State (EPU)	NO
16	Federal University, Otuoke, Bayelsa (FUOTUOKE)	NO	16	Edo University Iyamo (EUI)	NO
17	Federal University, Wukari, Taraba State (FUWUKARI)	YES	17	Gombe State University, Gombe (GSU)	NO
18	Federal University, Gusau Zamfara (FUGUS)	NO	18	Gombe State University of Science and Technology	NO
29	Federal University, Birnin Kebbi (FUBK)	NO	19	Imo State University, Owerri (IMSU)	YES

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20	Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB)	NO	20	Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai (IBBU)	NO
21	Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi (FUAM)	NO	21	The Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni (IAUE)	NO
22	Federal University Gashua, Yobe (FUGASHUA)	NO	22	Kaduna State University, Kaduna (KASU)	NO
23	Michael Okpara University of Agricultural Umudike (MOUAU)	NO	23	Kebbi State University, Kebbi (KSUST)	NO
24	The Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola (MAUTECH)	NO	24	Kogi State University Anyigba (KSU)	YES
25	Nigerian Army University Biu (NAUB)	NO	25	Kano University of Science & Technology, Wudil (KUST)	NO
26	Nigerian Maritime University Okerenkoko, Delta State (NMU)	NO	26	Kwara State University, Ilorin (KWASU)	NO
27	Nigeria Police Academy Wudil (NPA)	NO	27	Lagos State University, Ojo (LASU)	NO
28	Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (UNIZIK)	YES	28	Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso (LAUTECH)	NO
29	Nigerian Defence Academy Kaduna (NDA)	NO	29	Moshood Abiola University of Science and Technology Abeokuta	NO
30	National Open University of Nigeria, Lagos (NOUN)	NO	30	Nasarawa State University Keffi (NSUK)	NO
31	Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife (OAU)	YES	31	Niger Delta University Yenagoa (NDU)	YES

32	The University of Abuja, Gwagwalada (UNIABUJA)	YES	32	Northwest University Kano NWU	NO
33	University of Benin (UNIBEN)	YES	33	Oyo State Technical University Ibadan (Tech-U)	NO
34	University of Ibadan (UI)	YES	34	Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago Iwoye (OOU)	YES
35	University of Calabar (UNICAL)	YES	35	Ondo State University of Science and Technology Okitipupa (OSUSTECH)	NO
36	University of Ilorin (UNILORIN)	NO	36	Ondo State University of Medical Sciences (UNIMED)	NO
37	University of Jos (UNIJOS)	NO	37	Osun State University Osogbo (UNIOSUN)	NO
38	University of Lagos (UNILAG)	YES	38	Plateau State University Bokkos (PLASU)	NO
39	The University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN)	YES	39	Rivers State University (RSU)	YES
40	University of Maiduguri (UNIMAID)	NO	40	Sokoto State University (SSU)	NO
41	University of Port-Harcourt (UNIPORT)	YES	41	Sule Lamido University, Kafin Hausa, Jigawa (SLU)	NO
42	Usman Danfodiyo University (UDUSOK)	NO	42	Tai Solarin University of Education Ijebu Ode (TASUED)	NO
43	University of Uyo (UNIUYO)	YES	43	Taraba State University, Jalingo (TASU)	NO
			44	Umar Musa Yar' Adua University Katsina (UMYU)	NO
			45	Yobe State University, Damaturu (YSU)	NO

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TABLE 2: List of Private Universities in Nigeria in relation to the study of philosophy as a degree course

NO	Private Universities	Philo	No.	Private Universities	Philo
1	Adeleke University, Ede	YES	41	Novena University, Ogun	NO
2	Achievers University, Owo	NO	42	Nile University of Nigeria, Abuja	NO
3	Ajayi Crowther University, Ibadan	NO	43	Oduduwa University, Ipetumodu – Osun State	NO
4	Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti – Ekiti State	NO	44	Obong University, Obong Ntak	NO
5	Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin	NO	45	Paul University, Awka – Anambra State	NO
6	African University of Science & Technology, Abuja	NO	46	Pan-Atlantic University, Lagos	NO
7	Al-Qalam University, Katsina	NO	47	Redeemer's University, Mowe	NO
8	American University of Nigeria, Yola	NO	48	Rhema University, Obeama-Asa – Rivers State	NO
9	Augustine University	YES	49	Ritman University	NO
10	Baze University	NO	50	Renaissance University, Enugu	NO
11	Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo	NO	51	Samuel Adegboyega University, Ogwa	NO
12	Bowen University, Iwo	YES	52	Salem University, Lokoja	NO
13	Benson Idahosa University, Benin City	NO	53	Summit University	NO
14	Bingham University, New Karu	NO	54	Southwestern University, Oku Owa	NO
15	Bells University of Technology, Otta	NO	55	Tansian University, Umunya.	YES
16	Caritas University, Enugu	NO	56	Veritas University Abuja	YES

17	Caleb University, Lagos	YES	57	Wesley University of Science & Technology, Ondo	NO
18	Chrisland University	NO	58	Western Delta University, Oghara Delta State	NO
29	Crescent University	NO	59	Wellspring University, Evbuobanosa – Edo State	NO
20	Crawford University Igbesa	NO	60	Christopher University Mowe	NO
21	Covenant University Ota	NO	61	Anchor University Ayobo Lagos State	NO
22	Evangel University, Akaeze	NO	62	Arthur Javis University Akpoyubo Cross River State	NO
23	Edwin Clark University, Kaigbodo	NO	63	Coal City University Enugu State	NO
24	Elizade University, Ilara-Mokin	NO	64	Cn Hill University Eiyenkorin, Kwara State	NO
25	Fountain University, Oshogbo	YES	65	Dominican University Ibadan Oyo State	YES
26	Gregory University, Uturu	NO	66	Kola Daisi University Ibadan, Oyo State	NO
27	Godfrey Okoye University, Ugwuomu-Nike – Enugu State	YES	67	Legacy University, Okija Anambra State	NO
28	Hezekiah University, Umudi	NO	68	Admiralty University, Ibusa Delta State	NO
29	Hallmark University	NO	69	Precious Cornerstone University, Oyo	NO
30	Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Ikeji-Arakeji	YES	70	Spiritan University, Nneochi Abia State	NO
31	Igbinedion University Okada	NO	71	Clifford University Owerrinta Abia State	NO

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32	Kwararafa University, Wukari	NO	72	Atiba University Oyo	NO
33	Kings University	NO	73	Greenfield University, Kaduna	NO
34	Lead City University, Ibadan	NO	74	PAMO University of Medical Sciences, Portharcourt	NO
35	Landmark University, Omu-Aran	NO	75	Skyline University, Kano	NO
36	Mcperson University, Seriki Sotayo, Ajebo	NO	76	Eko University of Medical and Health Sciences Ijanikin, Lagos	NO
37	Mountain Top University	NO	77	Westland University Iwo, Osun State	NO
38	Madonna University, Okija	YES	78	Trinity University Ogun State	NO
39	Micheal & Cecilia University	NO	79	Claretian University, Nekede	YES
			80	Samuel Adegboyega University, Ogwa Edo State	YES

Results of Data Analysis

There is a total of 168 universities in Nigeria - 43 Federal, 45 State and 80 Private. These universities are spread across the geographical zones as follows: 20 in North West (12%), 15 in North East (9%), 24 in North Central (14%), 53 in South West (32%), 25 in South East (15%) and 31 in South South (18%). Analysis of data reveals that only 38 universities (23%) offer philosophy as a programme. It also shows that the 38 universities that offer philosophy comprised 13 Federal universities (34%), 11 State universities (29%) and 14 private universities (37%).

Figure 1: proportion of Nigerian universities that are Federal, state and private

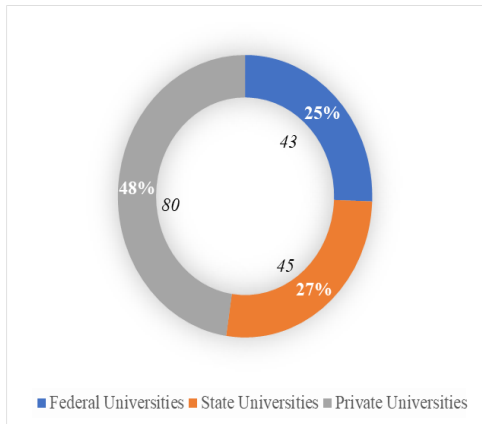


Figure 2: The spread of universities across geographical zones in Nigeria

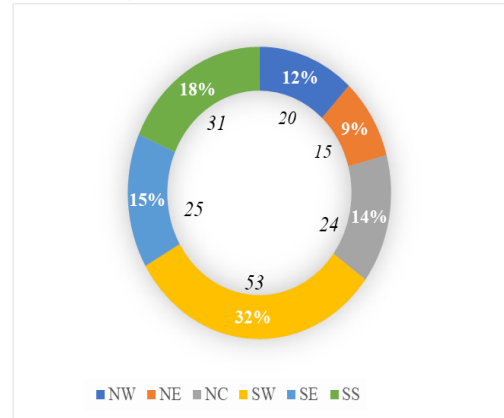


Figure 3: Presence of philosophy in Nigerian Universities

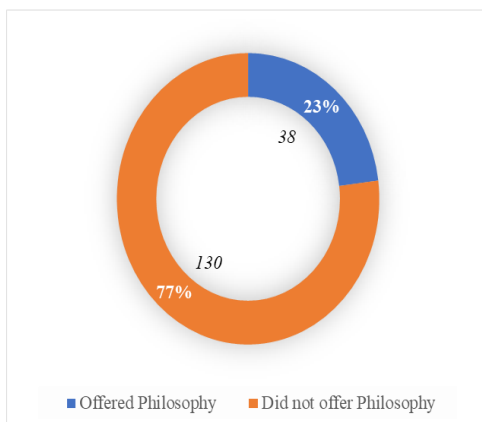
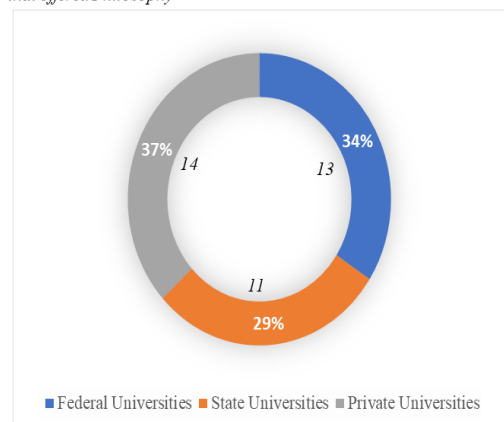


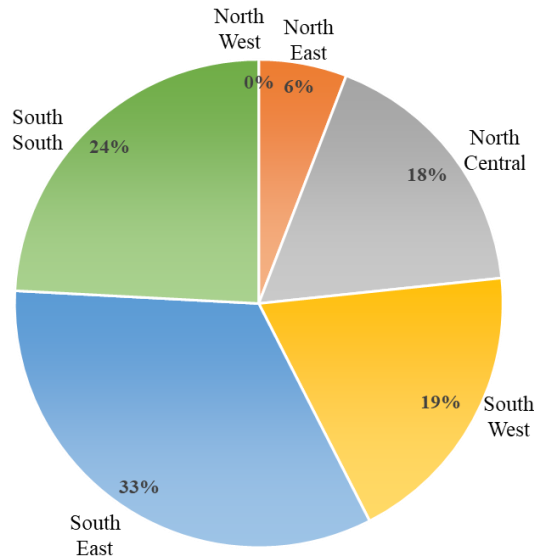
Figure 4: proportion of federal, state and private universities that offered Philosophy



Further analysis of the data shows that out of the 38 universities in Nigeria that offer philosophy, 33 percent are in the South East; 24 percent in the South South; 19 percent in the South West; 6 percent in the North East; and 0 percent in the North West.

Figure 5: Geographical location of universities that offered philosophy

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Specifically, of the 20 universities in the North West, none offer Philosophy (0%). In the North East, only one out of fifteen universities (Federal University, Wukari) offer philosophy while in the North Central which has 24 universities, only five offer philosophy – two federal universities (Federal University, Lafia and University of Abuja); two state universities (Benue State University, Makurdi and Kogi State University, Anyigba); as well as one private university (Veritas University, Abuja). As shown in figure 2, the South West is the zone with the highest number of universities (53). In fact, more than one in every four universities in Nigeria (32%) is in the South West. Although the region has the same number of Federal universities as other zones (7), except for the South East which has 5 and the North West which has 10, it has the highest number of state universities (10) and private universities (36). However, of all the 53 universities in the South West, only 12 universities (23%) offer philosophy– three federal universities (Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife; University of Ibadan, Ibadan; and University of Lagos); two state universities (Ekiti State University and Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago Iwoye); and seven private universities (Adeleke University, Ede; Augustine University, Lagos; Bowen University, Iwo; Caleb University, Lagos; Fountain University, Oshogbo; Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Ikeji-Arekeje; and Dominican university, Ibadan).

It was found that in the South East, which has 25 universities, 10 universities offer philosophy. With 40 percent of universities in the South East offering philosophy, the region has the highest proportion of universities that offer philosophy. Of the 10 universities in the South East that offer philosophy, three are federal

universities (Federal University, Ndifu-alike; Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka; and University of Nigeria, Nsukka); three are state universities (Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki; Imo State University, Owerri; and Anambra State University, Uli); while four are private universities (Godfrey Okoye University, Ugwuomu-Nike; Madonna University; Tansian University, Umunya; and Claretian University, Nekede).

Data analysis also shows that of the 31 universities in the South South, 9 universities offer philosophy (29%). This proportion is comprised of four federal universities (University of Benin; University of Calabar; university of Port Harcourt and university of Uyo); four state universities (Akwa-Ibom State University, Uyo, Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma; Delta State University, Abraka; and Niger-Delta University, Yenagoa) as well as one private university (Adeleke University, Ede).

Figure 6: Proportion of universities in various zones that offered philosophy

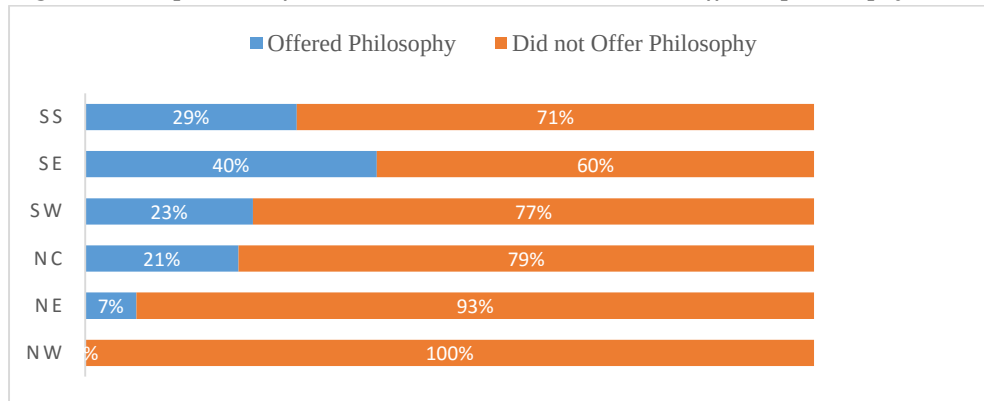


Table 1: Number of Federal, State and Private universities that offered philosophy in various geographical zones

	NORTH WEST		NORTH EAST		NORTH CENTRAL		SOUTH WEST		SOUTH EAST		SOUTH SOUTH	
Is philosophy offered as a programme?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES	0	10	1	6	2	5	3	4	3	2	4	3
STATE UNIVERSITIES	0	7	0	6	2	4	2	8	3	3	4	6
PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES	0	3	0	2	1	10	7	29	4	10	1	13

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TOTAL	0	20	1	14	5	19	12	41	10	15	9	22
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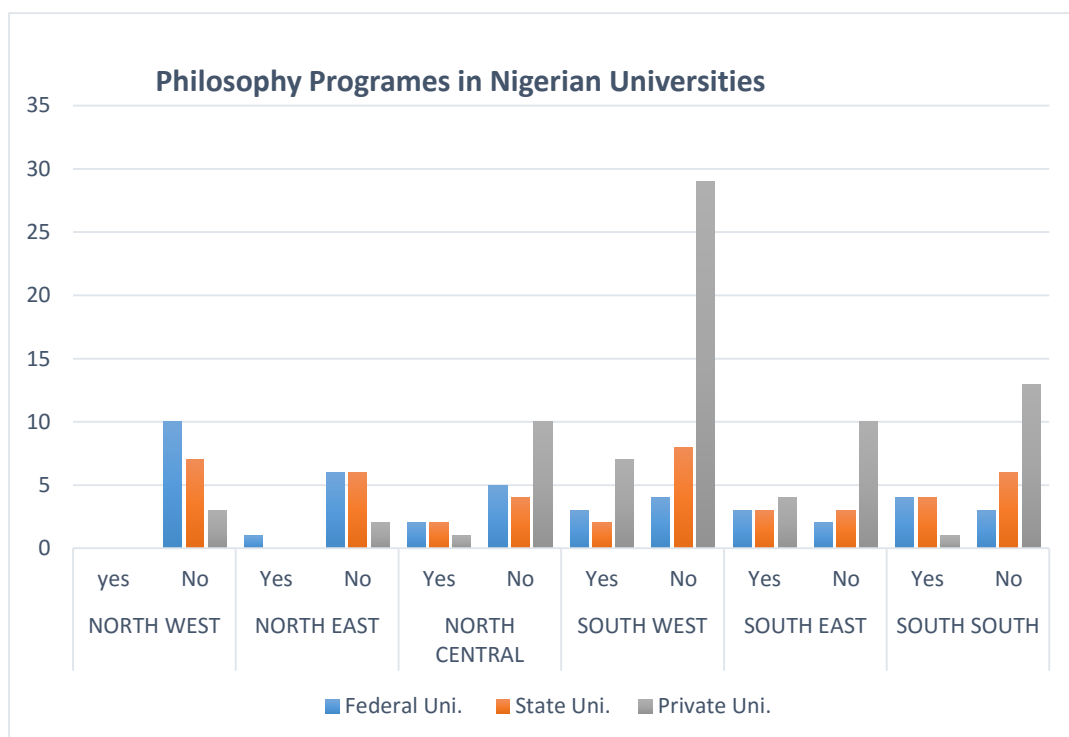


Figure 7: *Philosophy programmes in Nigerian universities*

The Relevance of Philosophy

While distinguishing the value of science from that of philosophy, Bertrand Russell avers that while the value of the sciences is to be found in its inventions useful to human beings, the kind of goods which philosophy strives to achieve is not in terms of utility but through its effects upon the lives of those who study it⁵.

But further, if we are not to fail in our endeavour to determine the value of philosophy, we must first free our minds from the prejudices of what are wrongly called ‘practical’ men. The ‘practical’ man, as this word is often used, is one who recognizes only material needs, who realizes that men must

⁵ B. Russell, *The Value of Philosophy*,
<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/sanjacinto-philosophy/chapter/bertrand-russell-the-value-of-philosophy>

have food for the body, but is oblivious of the necessity of providing food for the mind. If all men were well off, if poverty and disease had been reduced to their lowest possible point, there would still remain much to be done to produce a valuable society; and even in the existing world the goods of the mind are at least as important as the goods of the body. It is exclusively among the goods of the mind that the value of philosophy is to be found; and only those who are not indifferent to these goods can be persuaded that the study of philosophy is not a waste of time⁶.

Focusing on the value of philosophy, which go beyond the provisions of utility, the following will be discussed:

- 1. Philosophy builds problem-solving capacity:** Philosophy as a discipline helps its student to build the capacity to solve problems through the analysis of circumstances, propositions, concepts, personalities, questions and problems in such a manner that the mind is able to extract what is essential from the variations available and then articulate ideas in such a unifying fashion. This is possible because philosophy builds a person's general cognitive ability- the learning ability; the ability to process and pull together disparate bits of information⁷. Alexander Leivesley writes that "Philosophy brings the important questions to the table and works towards an answer. It encourages us to think critically about the world; it is the foundation of all knowledge and when utilized properly, can provide us with huge benefits"⁸. Christine Tiefensee adds:

You will need to see quickly through complex issues, put together convincing arguments for or against given proposals, filter relevant from irrelevant information, check the consistency and soundness of policy papers, decide which problems are crucial and identify the issues that are still badly understood. These skills of rigorous analysis, sound argument and critical examination are the bread-and-

⁶ B. Russell, *The Value of Philosophy*,
<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/sanjacinto-philosophy/chapter/bertrand-russell-the-value-of-philosophy>

⁷ T. L. Friedman, How to Get a Job At Google. *New York Times*, February 22, 2014; *Forbes* on March 4, 2014; *Wall Street Journal* on March 31, 2014.

⁸ A. Leivesley cited in Joanna Hughes, *Four Reasons why philosophy is as relevant as ever*. Keystone Bachelors Studies.
<https://www.bachelorstudies.com/article/four-reasons-why-philosophy-is-as-relevant-as-ever>. November 16, 2018

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butter of philosophy: no subject trains our ability for consistent, systematic thought better than philosophy⁹.

TIS holds that:

...because philosophy teaches techniques like observation, intuition, and logic, using critical thinking and effective research, you can break problems down to their essence and test solutions. Philosophy was developed as a way to solve problems in the form of big questions. It makes sense that it would be useful for any problem¹⁰.

All these flow from the critical examination of the grounds of our convictions, prejudices, and beliefs, a capacity which philosophy bestows.

2. **Philosophy builds the capacity for critical thinking: Philosophy right from its very beginning has been concerned with basic questions concerning** human rights, meaning of existence, government, etc. The dedication of philosophers to exploring thought process helps the capacity for critical thinking. TIS avers that:

Critical thinking and reasoning are a huge part of what defines philosophy. For years, philosophers debated how to assess and categorize different styles of thinking, how to identify sound reasoning, and so on. The debate is always going on. When you adopt a philosophical mindset and learn to analyze statements and ideas with a critical eye, you become a better thinker. You're able to tell when an idea is worth your time or if it's relying on something that's inherently weak and unsound. This is an essential skill that can be applied everywhere in your life¹¹.

When a person exercises his or her mind in the disciplines of critical and logical thought, the person gains the ability to imagine, debate, and clarify the nature of the good life. Philosophy encourages and empowers you to discover what really is true and good, and to distinguish it from what merely appears so¹².

⁹ C. Tienfensee cited in Joanna Hughes, *Four Reasons why philosophy is as relevant as ever*. Keystone Bachelors Studies, <https://www.bachelorstudies.com/article/four-reasons-why-philosophy-is-as-relevant-as-ever>. November 16, 2018

¹⁰ TIS, *Ten reasons why philosophy is important*, <https://theimportantsite.com/10-reasons-why-philosophy-is-important/> 2 February 2022

¹¹ TIS, *Ten reasons why philosophy is important*, <https://theimportantsite.com/10-reasons-why-philosophy-is-important/> 2 February 2022

¹² The Most Important Reason to study philosophy,

3. **Philosophy builds expressive skills:** As a result of the encounter with varieties of perspectives and arguments, and with great orators of various ages, philosophy helps the student to build his or her communication skills. Philosophy “helps one to express what is distinctive of one's view; enhances one's ability to explain difficult materials; and helps to eliminate ambiguities and vagueness from one's writing and speech”¹³.
4. **Philosophy builds persuasive capacity:** One of the gains of philosophy is that it helps the student to build his or her persuasive powers through sound reasoning, critical thinking, well-constructed prose, maturity of judgment and an enlightened consciousness. This is gained through the encounter with various shades of arguments, both well-constructed and not-well so constructed. This encounter equips the mind with the skills and principles for the construction of convincing arguments which is an indispensable capacity in varied fundamental life's spheres¹⁴.
5. **Philosophy builds writing skills:** A great deal of philosophers encountered by philosophy students were not just philosophers; they were also great poets of their time who wrote and spoke in flowery forms. Courses in philosophy, therefore, help the student to build his or her ability to write. Thus, “Philosophy develops interpretive writing through its examination of challenging texts, comparative writing through emphasis on fairness to alternative positions, argumentative writing through developing students' ability to establish their own views, and descriptive writing through detailed portrayal of concrete examples”¹⁵.
6. **Philosophy builds self-knowledge:** A dictum attributed to Socrates is: “Man, know thyself”. This is one of the values of learning philosophy. Unlike other fields of human inquiry that help you to do something outside of yourself, philosophy helps the student to look at the world with a new

<http://blogs.lmu.edu/philosophy/the-most-important-reason-to-study-philosophy/the-most-important-reason-to-study-philosophy>

¹³ *Why study philosophy?*

<https://www.unk.edu/academics/philosophy/why-study-philosophy.php>

¹⁴ *Why study philosophy?*

<https://www.unk.edu/academics/philosophy/why-studyphilosophy.php>

¹⁵ *Why study philosophy?*

<https://www.unk.edu/academics/philosophy/why-studyphilosophy.php>

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wonder, and have a much better idea of what really makes them happy. It helps the student to understand his or her place in the world and how to relate with the world around.

- 7. Philosophy builds the capacity for research and analysis:** Philosophy helps in the areas of building our capacity to frame hypotheses, to do research, and to put problems in manageable form. In responding to the question: why do we need to study philosophy, James Madison University avers that:

Philosophical thinking strongly emphasizes clear formulation of ideas and problems, selection of relevant data, and objective methods for assessing ideas and proposals. It also emphasizes development of a sense of the new directions suggested by new hypotheses and questions one encounters while doing research. Philosophers regularly build on both the successes and failures of their predecessors¹⁶.

This is what positions the philosopher with the capacity of researching in any field of human inquiry, be it science or arts. Philosophers, by their training, therefore, "... can get information and organize it... They can generate ideas on many different sorts of problems. They can formulate and solve problems. They can elicit hidden assumptions and articulate overlooked alternatives. They can summarize complicated materials without undue simplification... They can distinguish subtle differences without overlooking similarities"¹⁷.

- 8. Philosophy and other disciplines:** As one of the oldest disciplines, philosophy concerns itself with the generality of existence in their essence¹⁸. It housed all disciplines until they gradually became distinct in terms of independence. However, philosophy still has great influence among them because of its emphasis on fundamental knowledge. As a second order, philosophy questions constructively the first order so as to improve the first order¹⁹. The first order here could be politics, economics, science, religion, psychology, law, education, etc. In relation to psychology, philosophy

¹⁶ James Madison University, *Why study Philosophy?*

<https://www.jmu.edu/philrel/why-study-philosophy/why-study-philosophy.shtml>

¹⁷ James Madison University, *Why study Philosophy?*

<https://www.jmu.edu/philrel/why-study-philosophy/why-study-philosophy.shtml>

¹⁸ A. Egbeke. *What is philosophy? An African inquiry*. Done Family Circle Publications, Enugu, 1996, 164

¹⁹ C. Obi. *Philosophy: Definition and meaning*. In C. Nweke, C. Obi, C. Onnebunne, and O. Nnajofofor (Eds.). *Basic Philosophy and Logic*. Fab Aniehi Nig. Ltd., Anambra, 2006, 3

provides it with concepts such as sensation, memory, intelligence, perception, etc., for its empirical research. In relation to law, philosophy provides logic for the presentation of cases and interpretation of situations; it is also instrumental in the formation of legal theories, and above all examines the nature of law in relation to human values²⁰. In the world of education, philosophy provides her with the theoretical framework required in the classroom²¹. It also examines the definitions, goals, chains of meaning used by teachers in the classroom. In the area of science, it is philosophy that defines science and examines its value to human society. It also establishes the criteria for a valid scientific knowledge²². Without philosophy taking its place in these fields of human inquiry, they will not reach their full potential. It is in this regard that TIS holds that:

Philosophy isn't just useful in a classroom or learning setting. It's an important tool for many career fields, including the business world. To succeed in business, a person must work through often-complex issues, write persuasive arguments for a position, and research quickly and effectively. Critical thinking and reasoning are essential. This is even more true for legal professions. A career in anything related to science also requires mastery of philosophical concepts and analytical thinking. Any career benefits from a bit of philosophy; it isn't a subject that's limited to academia²³.

Important questions about each discipline, such as pertains their concepts, their standards of evidence and relationship with other disciplines does not belong to these disciplines to raise and respond to. It belongs to the field of philosophy given that they are philosophical in nature.

- 9. Philosophy as a basis for change and progress:** The major political, religious, cultural, etc., changes or revolutions in the history of humanity began as a result of the influence of one philosophical position or the other. They were mostly borne out of intellectual debates that have their roots in philosophy as it consistently reminds the world to take a more profound look at what it does and how it does it and how better they could be done. By

²⁰ B. Leiter. and M. Sevel. *Philosophy of Law*. <https://Britannica.com/topic/philosophy-of-law>. 2016

²¹ P. Smeyers. *Philosophy and education: A critical kind of wisdom*. In P. Nweke (Ed.). *International handbook of philosophy of education*. Springer Publishing, London, 2008, 12.

²² O. Mmaduabuchi. *Introduction to philosophy of science*. Saola Prints, Enugu, 2018, 1.

²³ TIS, *Ten reasons why philosophy is important*. <https://theimportantsite.com/10-reasons-why-philosophy-is-important/> 2 February 2022

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turning your mind to the consideration of the most basic questions concerning reality, human existence, and God, you open yourself to a world of possibilities for understanding the world and our place in it²⁴.

- 10. Philosophy and the capacity for the evaluation of belief:** What philosophy does to a person of a particular faith is that it helps you to question your faith or what a person believes. It helps a person to take a closer look at worldviews and thus have a better understanding of his or her religious worldview. This is the kind of evaluation that questions all forms of fundamentalism that destroys the true taste of religion and human society.

Concerns for the Future of the Nation

The danger of not offering philosophy in a greater percentage of Nigerian universities is that it leaves deep scars on individual graduates, as it affects not only their employability but capacity for survival and entrepreneurship. A good number of students are, therefore, denied the opportunity of building their capacity to solve problems through the analysis of circumstances, propositions, concepts, personalities, questions and problems in such a manner that the mind is able to extract what is essential from the variations available and then articulate ideas in such a manner that is unifying. There is an increasing number of graduates from Nigerian universities who lack the capacity for solving concrete historical problems in the society or for asking fundamental questions beyond the theories learnt in the classroom, and yet it is at this level that solutions to problems are gained.

The capacity for critical thinking is also affected since critical thinking and reasoning are a huge part of what defines philosophy. The great debate of philosophers, their categorization of different styles of thinking and principles for identifying sound reasoning becomes inaccessible to them, and thus, the university graduates men and women who cannot even think for themselves let alone think for the nation. The obvious cases of graduates not being able to express what is distinctive about their view; of not being able to be persuasive through sound reasoning, critical thinking, well-constructed prose, maturity of judgment and an enlightened consciousness; poor writing skills and clear cases of poor self-esteem and self-knowledge are all consequences of the absence of philosophy in many Nigerian universities, not only

²⁴ The Most Important Reason to study philosophy. <http://blogs.lmu.edu/philosophy/the-most-important-reason-to-study-philosophy/the-most-important-reason-to-study-philosophy>

as a degree course but also as a general course. If there is a need to reclaim the future, the absence of philosophy in our universities must be reconsidered.

Research is the first stage in the development process, given that it is through research that solutions to problems are found and thus is a development route discovered in terms of innovation, new products and services. If Nigeria intends to compete with the rest of the world in terms of science, technology, services, etc., she cannot ignore research. And this is where philosophy comes in as it helps in the areas of building our capacity to frame hypotheses, to do research, and to put problems in manageable form. That philosophy is not taught in many Nigerian universities, considering the advantage it offers in this direction, raises more concern in relation to the future of the nation. Nigeria is among the underdeveloped countries in the world; a country weighed down by several problems and challenges. These challenges and problems require research for the purpose of finding solutions to them. If philosophy is necessary for research so as to find solutions to the problem of Nigeria's underdevelopment, it then means that Nigeria needs philosophy more than the many developed countries where philosophy is taught right from primary school through secondary to the university level. More so, if there is a connection between research and development, it then means that Nigeria as a country needs to put in more effort in encouraging quality research, and one of the ways to do that is by ensuring the presence of philosophy in her universities.

As has been observed, major political, religious, cultural, etc., changes or revolutions in the history of humanity began as a result of the influence of some philosophical idea or philosophical intellectual debates that consistently reminds the world to take a more profound look at what it does and how it does it and how better they could be done. Such changes, for instance, ensured the transition of governments from absolutist monarchies to democratic governments. Such was the French revolution (1789-1799), the Haitian revolution (1791-1804), the American revolution (1775-1783), among others. Nigeria at the moment is stagnated, and she needs a change if not a revolution. What the absence of philosophy does to the country is that it denies the nation critical minds who would be able to ask fundamental questions about the state of the nation. The absence of these critical minds and thus questions about the egocentric political packages, swindlers and profiteers of all dimensions who fight over power without a vision or mission, keeps the nation where she is, and philosophy can make a difference. There is a strong connection between a person's thought and his emotion. If the thought is empty, it affects the way a person feels, and the way we feel affect the way we act. Until we have men and women who will ask questions that will trigger our thoughts, we will continue to feel that all is well; until we feel otherwise, we cannot act otherwise.

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Nigeria is gradually becoming a home for all shades of fundamentalism-given the subscription of her citizens to different religious beliefs. It is, therefore, not surprising that in recent times, the conflict between Muslims and Christians have become more violent and frequent than ever. This is at the base of the establishment of terrorist groups or organizations in the country and beyond, notable among them is the Boko Haram terrorist group of 1995. The consequence of fundamentalism is that subscribers of particular religious groups are not able to tolerate one another as in the case of Boko Haram trying to establish a purely Islamic state. The results are different degrees of suicide bombings, massacres, sexual abuse, pain and destruction of property. What philosophy does to a person of a particular faith is that it helps to question your faith or what a person believes in. It helps a person to take a closer look at worldviews. This is the kind of evaluation that questions all forms of fundamentalism that destroys religion and human society. With the absence of philosophy in many of our universities, especially in the Northern part of Nigeria, creates a breeding ground for fundamentalism and the intolerance of alterity. While the government emphasizes the importance of education in the project of ending the religious crisis in Northern Nigeria, she also needs to ensure that philosophy is not exempted from this package of education.

Conclusion

The criticisms of philosophy notwithstanding, it occupies a fundamental place in the scheme of things. This piece has studied the fundamental place that philosophy occupies, and thus why it should not be omitted in university education. It has also studied the state of affairs regarding the absence of this course in many Nigerian universities with clear consequences on the future of the development of the nation. In discussing the important place that philosophy occupies, it pointed out its role in the building of the human capacity for solving problems, critical thinking, the developing of writing and communication skills, developing the power of persuasion, the understanding of the self and diversity, development of the capacity for research and analysis, as catalyst for change and progress. These indices are strongly linked to development, and, therefore, indispensable for the development project of the Nigerian nation as there are vagaries of deficits on all fronts littered all over the dimensions of the nation. This state of affairs calls for an emergency, not only for the introduction of philosophy to Nigerian universities as degree courses and general courses, but to the primary and secondary schools' levels.

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