

AN EVALUATION ON THE VALUE OF EDUCATION: A PHILOSOPHICAL
PERSPECTIVE
BY

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ABSTRACT

The problem of human behavior or human nature has rendered the whole conception of education irrelevant. Education is a social practice which is deeply rooted in social reconstruction. Education is a process of learning or training of the child to guarantee his cognitive and socio-psychological development. Education reflects the character molding or character building of the child. The sole objective of education is aimed at the acquisition of knowledge and the comprehensiveness of human rationality or behavior. Education is the key to human capacity building. Education is a social system or practice that requires the moral training and the psychological development of the child. A well-ordered society is a well-educated society; and a well-educated society is a well-civilized society. Education requires the normative possibility of social order. Education and social order are paramount to human socio-psychological development. Education simply means a process of teaching, training and learning of potentials by the maturing minds. Education is a perquisites and it constitutes the most fundamental bedrock in the development of any democratic society. Education is an indispensable instrument, in so far as the acquisition of knowledge is concerned. It is worthy of note that philosophy cannot be separated from education. Philosophy acts as a second order discipline to education by querying its basic assumptions and pedagogical principles. Philosophy, therefore, interrogates and probes into the very nature, essence, goal, principle and meaning of education. Education is a process of learning or training of the child to guarantee his cognitive and socio-psychological development. It is a continuous process and a progressive reconstruction of human experiences.

Keywords: Knowledge, Education, Learning, Training, Community.

1.1 Introduction

One of the ways to set order into the society is to properly educate or to have informed citizens (Osemwegie, 2013:78). A critical examination of education showcases that it has far reaching effects and pragmatic values. Scholars have placed emphasis on the child's education. A well-educated society is a well- developed society. This theoretical discourse reflects that development which is the hallmark of an orderly society is characterized by enlightened citizens (Osemwegie, Ibid). When the citizens of a country is properly educated, the problem of deviant, non-conformist, eccentric, hegemony, lawlessness, criminality, unruliness etc which constitute social menace are almost completely solved or reduced to the barest minimum (Osemwegie, Ibid). The word "education" is related to both to the notion of bringing up or rearing and to that of bringing out or leading forth a child in a proper manner or trait of character (Adetutu, 2010:11). Education is the liberation against illiteracy, mediocrity, ignorance, and poverty. Education is the key to human capacity building. The whole conception of education is multidimensional. The multidimensionality of education has a pragmatic orientation. Education is intellectual power and it can help man to liberate himself morally, culturally, politically, socially, psychologically, existentially, pragmatically, scientifically and technologically or developmentally. The whole conceptualization of education is all embracing or all inclusive. Education has great relevance to man and his society at large. Education is also relevant to man's quest for self- development. Human development requires sound education. Education requires the training of the human person characterized by a sound mind. Society cannot develop fully when majority of its populace are not properly educated. A well-educated society is a well civilized or organized society. Man cannot do without good education. Education and social order are significant elements of ensuring the normative possibility of human society. Education is deeply rooted in the rationalization of society. This paper discusses or focuses on the value of education to man and society. It argues that education serves as means of man's liberalization and it enhances man's cognitive and socio-psychological development. This paper is compartmentalized into seven subsections. It starts with an introduction. Secondly, it anchors on the value of education to man. It focuses on the value of education to contemporary Nigerian society. It reflects on the significance of education and social order to human society. The paper, therefore, argues that education and social order serves as solid bedrocks for the normative structure of human society. It also evaluates the paradox of education to the contemporary Nigerian society. Today, the contemporary Nigerian society is bedeviled by myriad or plethora of social crises such as Islamic fundamentalism, terror and terrorism, abject poverty, corruption, kidnapping, electoral malpractices, poor leadership structure, ethno-religious crises and herdsmen-farmers clashes. All these fundamental problems currently facing the contemporary Nigerian society are as a result of a fall-out of its poor educational foundation. Finally, a well-educated society is a well-organized society. The Nigerian government should deem it fit and as a matter of priority to adequately fund educational programs in Nigeria.

1.2 The Value of Education

The word "education" means a process of teaching, training and learning especially in schools or colleges, to improve knowledge and develop skills (Hornby, 2010:468). Education...is a condition-sine-qua-non which constitutes the most fundamental bedrock in the development of any society. Education is an indispensable instrument, in so far as the acquisition of knowledge and setting order in the society is concerned (Osemwegie, 77). Philosophy cannot be separated from education, since it housed the very aim for which education is directed

(Osemwegie, 78). Philosophy also acts as a second order discipline to education by querying its assumptions and fundamental principles (Osemwegie, Ibid). Philosophy interrogates and probes into the very nature, essence, goal, and meaning of education. Education is desirable in every society. It supplies education with normative principles and theories for validating educational claims and aims (Osemwegie, 78-79). It is worthy of note that education is desirable is the opinion of all modern civilized States, but it, nevertheless, a proposition which has at all times been disputed by some men whose judgement commands respect. Those who opposed education do so on the ground that it cannot achieve its professed objective (Russell, 1977: 9). The whole idea of education is double sided. Education reflects the temperamental cleavage which deeper than any other controversies; and that it is the fundamental cleavage between those who consider education primarily in relation to the individual psyche and those who consider it in relation to the community (Russell, Ibid). Education helps to train good individuals. The good individual is he who ministers to the good of the whole, and the good of the whole is a pattern made up of the good of individuals (Russell, Ibid). For Russell, there is such a thing as the good of the individual as distinct from a little fraction of the good of the community. Education is deeply rooted in the acquisition of knowledge. Knowledge and comprehensiveness appear to us as glorious attributes, in virtue of what is the value of education. What man loses in knowledge, he gains in imagination and the cognitive part of man is the basis of his excellence (Russell, 2). Knowledge, emotion, and power, all these should be widened to the utmost in seeking the perfection of the human being (Russell, 10). The elements of knowledge and emotion in the perfect individual as we have been portraying him are not essentially social (Russell, 10-11). Russell argues that education has an inherent power and it helps us to develop the exercise of power and our emotion. Education is deeply rooted in the democratization of learning and the relentless outpouring of facts. For Plato, education is the attempt to ignite fire in a child's soul and certainly has nothing to do with scraps of information (Howie, 2009:15). Philosophy has great role to education. Philosophy is peculiarly concerned with critical thought. Learning to think critically is learning to discover, order, verbalize, remember and present good argument (Howie, 12). Education is aimed at benchmarking the child and it has to do with moral learning; learning to be a moral agent in a moral community (Howie, 11). It aims at widening participation and social inclusion; and the commercialization of education system was presented in terms of which resonated with liberal and humanistic principles of equality and social practice embedded within the tradition of the primary, secondary and university institutions of learning (Howie, Ibid). Education is all about teaching and teaching is a social practice carried on in accordance with a social tradition (Howie, 10). The underlying tensions in education are caused by the radical transformation of learning from a process into a product (Howie, 7). It is our contention in this theoretical discourse that the transformation of learning into such an educational product affects not only how and what we teach but also, at a deeper level, learning and even reason itself (Howie, 7-8). Teaching has become delivery, the learning process has become something that can be delivered, students (or their future employers) have become customers and research is an activity that can be measured in outputs (Howie, 8). Education is seen as a life-long act, which begins after parturition and terminates at death. It is a continuous process, a progressive reconstruction of experience (Aguolu, 1975:66). Education is tied to socialization and culture. Education is conceived as a process of socialization, enculturation and transmission of what is worthwhile to those who are committed to it, be they children or adults (Peters, 1966:45). Education is the exertion of physical, intellectual, and moral behavior

in the younger individuals in the society by the adults (Osemwegie, 80). Education is seen as the shaping into the standard form of social activity (Dewey, 1916:10).

Nonetheless, education is deeply rooted in man's rationality. Animality incorporates his bodily nature, while his rationality underlines his intellectual quality. Rationality is the ability to think, analyze and synthesizes his thoughts (Iroegbu, 2000:80). Education requires open mindedness. Learning is important in education. The goal of education is complete when learning takes place. The learner must voluntarily open his mind to learn (Osemwegie, 87). Children learn fast and better via objects seen or experienced. The need for suitable environment and playing grounds are invaluable as expounded by scholars such as Plato, Rousseau, Quintillian Froebel, Pestalozzi and Dewey (Osemwegie, 89). Education is a social practice or a social activity. It is a social activity that would stimulate the ability ingrained in the child to affect his society positively; and it is crystal clear model to be incorporated in our educational system. Education is the hallmark of the normative expectation of social order. Good educational system brings about scientific, technological progression and assimilation, socio-political, cultural and psychological development of the child. Education is the hallmark of social order and equanimity which is completely devoid of sentiments and prejudices. If any society is to rise to the climax of development, the education of its citizens is a sheer desideratum (Osemwegie, 90).

1.3 The Value of Education in Contemporary Nigerian Society

The educational system in contemporary Nigerian society has failed due to lack of government intervention. The educational programs in contemporary Nigerian society are in a sorry state. We are currently experiencing incessant strikes by various trade unions such as Academic Staff Union of Universities, primary and secondary schools teachers, college of education and polytechnic teachers. All these incessant strike by these unions due to lack of government intervention has led to a total collapse of our educational system. There is the need for the revitalization of our educational curriculum and educational infrastructures to meet up with global best practice. The contemporary Nigerian society is currently experiencing poor educational methods and teaching aids due to poor funding. This has drastically affected the quality of teaching in Nigeria. Our value system has dropped due to poor educational system.

In addition, there is need for adequate government intervention to education Nigerian educational system because education serves as the solid bedrock or the key to sustainable development, human capacity building and the progressive or radical transformation of society. Education has a transformation power dynamics for human socio-cultural, political development and economic growth. Education is aimed at not just the progressive transformation of society but the rationalization of society. Rationality is the key to human development and self- transformational moments of human existential relationships (Hasen, 2009: 208-209). Education is geared towards self-transformation, if a man is to be made good and wise by experience and learning of many things (Plato, 2006, 159). Any country that wants to develop rapidly must be able to spend at least 26 percent of its annual budget on education. The business of education is a very serious business and no meaningful development can take place without meaning or effective system of educational policies in a country like Nigeria. Education demands the total development of the individual psychologically, intellectually, socially, culturally, politically, technologically and

scientifically. Effective education in contemporary Nigerian society can bring about effective leadership structure and organized social system. Our contemporary Nigerian society is in total or complete disarray due to its poor educational foundation or system. Nigeria is currently facing serious social crises and moral decadence because of its poor foundation of education. With the power of education our country –Nigeria should be subjected to serious moral rebirth or moral re-evaluation through educable sensibility. Education reflects those experiences that train, discipline and develop the mental and physical potentials of the maturing person (Ferrante, 2003:538).

Nevertheless, education reflects the practical utility and the training of the mind, with the vision of the good as its ultimate objective (Plato, 2007:249). Education of the child is not just by what he sees or experiences but by the instrumentality of language. In all nations of the world language follows the vicissitudes of morals and is preserved or degenerates as they are (Rousseau, 1979:109). Education requires skills or methods for the purpose of effective training of the child. In other words, specialization is the key in the training and the psychological development of the child. It is worthy of note that we ought to respect childhood, and not hurry to judge it, either for good or for ill. Let the exceptional children show themselves, be proved and be confirmed for a long time before adopting special methods for them (Rousseau, 107). The educational principle is of the utmost importance and merits deeper study and special attention (Rousseau, 100). Education requires good character as one of the essential elements of the psychological development of the child. A good character is as essential as a good constitution (Rousseau, 57).

1.4 Values and Teaching

The value of education should be seen in the moral character, behavioural, psychological, physical and spiritual development of the child (Osemwegie, 87).

The focus on child education is aimed at addressing the root of social menace (problems) and moral disorder prevalent in the society, today. Society depends more in rehabilitating or reforming social deviants, criminals, non-conformists etc than in the training and education of its citizens. Education has a formative effect on the mind and on the physical ability of the individual. It teaches the citizens the need to be morally upright and be responsible for one's actions. It exerts on the individual physical, intellectual and moral behavior of the child. The emphasis on education must be placed on qualitative education and acquisition of skills (Osemwegie, Ibid). Good education is aimed at the overall interest of the individuals in society. The well-being of fellow citizens should be emphasized in the child's training program. In any civilized nation, the education of the child is the most paramount. The child should be taught the tenets and meaning of the metaphysical principles of justice, equality, equity, fairness, law and order. It is worthy of note that all these culminate into what constitutes social order in the society (Osemwegie, 87-88). Society demands that the child should be taught good morals, values and trait of character and once a child is able to reconcile his/her conducts with these basic metaphysical principles through education, then social conflicts that would have arisen from the ambivalence of the child's idiosyncracies and the norms of the society would have been out rightly annihilated. In this regards, the child is well attuned to the basic norms, values and demands of the society, thus facilitating the normative principle of social order. Nevertheless, it is worthy of note that education as a formative process requires values inculcation and character development (Osemwegie, 88-89).

However, most educational theories are centered on the child's development. Education is built on establishing social order and ensuring moral values in society. The education of the teeming populace is necessary towards establishing an orderly and ideal society that is deeply rooted on values and teaching of the moral character of the child (Osemwegie, 87). To strip society of the knowledge of philosophy and education is to set the society in a great disarray, unrest and rumpus. From the views of some scholars adumbrated and articulated in this theoretical discourse, it is germane to assert that education is vital for the progressive reconstruction of experience. The continuous creation and recreation of experience is a desideratum for an orderly society. Man achieved this feat by tasking his rational faculty. The human mind is well modeled by the process of education to initiate order and moral values in the long run bring about social development (Osemwegie, 86). Education reflects the transnational processes of the human minds. The mindset should be oriented towards nation building. National consciousness is paramount in the educational development of the child (Osemwegie, 87-88)

1.5 Education and Social Order

Man needs good education for him to strive and in order for him to liberate his mind from the shackles of ignorance and illiteracy. Ignorance is a socio-psychological menace. Education aims the liberalization of the human soul and spirit. Education is one of fundamental elements of human's quest for freedom. Freedom itself is power just as the acquisition of knowledge is power. Freedom is one of the most driving and hotly debated concepts in the fields of study. Freedom could be political, economic, psychological, social and intellectual. It is worthy of note that knowledge itself is dynamic because the educative process or the acquisition of human knowledge is a continuous one. Learning is a continuous process. Man cannot stop until his death. Man stops learning at death. As far as we are alive as human beings, we are bound to keep learning from our daily experiences within the sphere of our individual private lives and in our existential relationships with others. We learn from others as well as individuals.

Furthermore, man cannot do without the tenets of sound education. Education is the perquisites for man's psychological, socio-cultural, political, intellectual and economic liberalization in a globalized world. Education is itself a "moral instructor". It instructs man in the right direction of life. Our contemporary Nigerian society is facing serious socio-political and economic crises because of our poor or shaky educational system. A system is a process of attaining an objective. Some Nigerians are fond of behaving irrationally because of their poor level of educational background. A man who is well educated ought to behave maximally and optimally to meet up with the normative expectation of his immediate society. An educated person ought to keep the pillars of the societal structures intact from the brink of collapse. An educated person is a reformer; he tries to reform society from social disorderliness or from social crises. A good man is a custodian of the normative structure of his immediate society. It is worthy of note that every society is built on the normative principle of social order. Education helps us in advancing the socio-psychological and cognitive development of the child. Society requires both education and the normative principle of social order. However, no society can survive without the normative principle of social order and good normative foundation of education. Education and social order are key concepts for the development of normative society.

1.6 Evaluation

The Nigerian government should deem it fit and as a matter of priority to adequately fund educational programs in Nigeria. Education makes the individual a complete and reasonable person in his day to day activities and in his existential relationships with others in the democratic community. Education helps the individual person in critical thinking and sound mind. An educated person is more organized or composed than the person who is not educated. Education is like a shining to the person who acquires knowledge. Francis Bacon has argued that knowledge itself is power. Knowledge brings about intellectual freedom. Education is all about facts and values. According to the Weberian orientation, the teacher is to express facts and personal values, in the classroom (Ritzer and Stepnisky, 2014:122). The sole purpose of education is to provide opportunities of growth and to remove hampering influences. The second holds that the purpose of education is to give culture to the individual and to develop his capacities to the utmost. The third holds that education is to be considered rather in relation to the individual, and that its business is to train useful citizens (Russell, 21). Education does not require compulsion, because the effect of compulsion in education is that it destroys originality and intellectual interest (Russell, 23). Desire for knowledge, at any rate for a good deal of knowledge, is natural to the young, but is generally destroyed by the fact that they are given more than they desire or can assimilate (Russell, Ibid). Children should be trained in an ideal environment. The ideal school is better than the ideal home (Russell, 45). For Russell, home is often too emotional. Children need a quiet life, containing enjoyments and activities, but few intense emotions and a due amount of wise parental affection is good for a child, giving him a sense of security and of his worth as a human being (Russell, 44-46). Education is deeply rooted in social solidarity; the state is only one of them, the other being the Churches (Russell, 46-47). The parental sentiment has a powerful influence upon behavior, not only in women, but also in men (Russell, 47).

1.7 Conclusion

Education simply means a process of teaching, training and learning of potentials by the maturing minds. Education is a perquisites and it constitutes the most fundamental bedrock in the development of any democratic society. Education is an indispensable instrument, in so far as the acquisition of knowledge is concerned. It is worthy of note that philosophy cannot be separated from education. Philosophy acts as a second order discipline to education by querying its basic assumptions and pedagogical principles. Philosophy, therefore, interrogates and probes into the very nature, essence, goal, principle and meaning of education. It provides education with basic principles and theories for validating its claims and aims. Education is deeply rooted in the acquisition of knowledge. Knowledge and the comprehensiveness of learning appear to us as positive attributes to human beings. Education helps to train good citizens in a country. Education is a social activity that would stimulate the ability ingrained in the child to affect his immediate social environment positively. The sole purpose of education is to provide equality of opportunities between the sexes (male and female) and to prevent negative influences. The purpose of education is to give culture to the child and to develop his intellectual capacities to the utmost. Education is considered rather as an existential relationship between the individual and the community.

Moreover, education does not require compulsion in order not to prevent or destroy originality, exceptionality and intellectual interest. Education is the progressive and radical transformation of society; and it aims at not just the progressive transformation of society but

the rationalization of society. Education is aimed at benchmarking the child and it has to do with the moral learning of the child. Education is the democratization of learning and the relentless discovery of facts, truth and values. Education is an attempt to ignite the soul and the psyche of the child. Education is all about teaching and teaching requires skills and methods. It is indeed a social practice. Education as a social practice which requires teachings is carried on in accordance with social tradition, customs and culture. The underlying principle of education is the transformation of learning from a process into a product. Education requires moral or good character. Education is a process of learning or training of the child to guarantee his cognitive and socio-psychological development. It is a continuous process and a progressive reconstruction of human experiences. Education requires patience and open mindedness. It is a process of socialization, enculturation and transmission. Finally, Plato emphasizes the importance of education to human society by arguing that the philosopher-king should be well trained in the fields of mathematics, logic, astronomy, rhetoric, arithmetic, law, philosophy and politics. He believes that this form of education of the philosopher-king should be rigorous up the age of 50 years. He argues that as part of the educational training of the philosopher-king, he should deem it fit to desist from having sexual intercourse with women. The philosopher-king is a political leader who is well equipped with knowledge and expertise.

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