

CREATIVE AND FUNCTIONAL EDUCATION: THE CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS IN A COMATOSE ECONOMY

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A complex developing country like Nigeria requires a comprehensive creative and functional education for its growth and development. The attempt to come out with comprehensive creative and functional education faces many challenges though planned and developed very well. Dele (2005) observed that Nigerians plan very well but cannot implement the things planned in this country. The general objectives of education in Nigeria are good example which implementation according to Dele (2005) is poor. The whole implementation which has to do with the process putting the whole curriculum into action requires commitment, and hard work, the use of adequate instructional materials, use of proper teaching methods and sincerity on the part of teachers, students, administrators and student leaders in the school and outside school. The subtheme of this conference is comprehensive enough to capture all categories of people in the country. Many developed countries have succeeded because of the about mentioned qualities.

As observed by Ben Yunusa (2005) functional education is creative in nature. It goes by skills and practicality. This is because the learners learn better by

doing. What one does can be remembered forever, what one is told can be forgotten easily. This therefore calls for practical approach in teaching and learning of science and technology. According to Ogundara (2007), national development encompasses development in every aspect of life of the citizens. However, human resource development is central to any development. So any nation aspiring for development must identify the human and material resources it needs and their values, integrate them for a sustainable development. Sustainable development means development that continually meets today's needs of a nation in a way that does not jeopardize the future generation. No nation can continually develop without resourceful human power. That is to equip individuals with appropriate skills, abilities and attitudes that will enable individuals to live and contribute to the development of the society (NPE 2004). Functional education is the education that equips the individual to contribute positively to the development of his/her society.

What is Creativity?

Creativity is an intellectual and dynamic property of human mind that

can be used in solving problems and inventing new ideas that can be of value to human growth in terms of economy, social and political development of any nation. A creative individual has all the necessary materials worthy of confronting any problem with a very strong and valid solution to solve the identified problems. According to Chambers 20th Century Dictionary, the word "Creativity" refers to a state or quality of being creative, ability to create. Here, creativity means to bring into being or form out of nothing, to bring into being by force of imagination, to produce or form, to design, to be the first to act. However, to Ekpeyoung (1999). creativity could not fetch a single definition because different thinkers consider it from different perspectives. All the definitions of creativity indicate that it involves development of something unique by individuals. He further defines creativity as the capacity to originate, invent, reflect, analyze and synthesize. Fasko (2000), considers creativity as a thinking skill that can be developed through training after identification of the characteristic traits of creative persons. According to this definition, creative pattern is manifested in creative behaviors which include such activities as; inventing, designing, contriving, composing and planning. People who exhibit these types of behavior to a marked degree are recognized as being creative.

In the educational community, scholars and practitioners have long recognized the necessity of creativity development in children and adults (Feldman & Benjamin, 2006). In light of

the potential benefits of accessing and using creativity both in learning processes and in daily life, a large number of efforts and major funding have supported the incorporation of creativity into curricula, policy, and experimental learning projects—usually with the expectation that this will reinforce educational reforms (Baer & Garrett, 2010; Craft, 2010). Creativity has also been viewed as an important component of the positive psychology movement, which comprises a variety of cognitive, affective, and interpersonal processes intended to "optimize children's functioning in social domains, academic domains, or artistic domains" (Pearson, Russ, & Spannagel, 2008). In the adult-learning contexts, meanwhile, creativity-centered activities can enhance adults' psychological well-being, personal growth, successful adaptation, and sense of fulfillment of life (Flood & Scharer, 2006). Consequently, several educators have urged rethinking adult-learning curricula that can be seen as overemphasizing critical thinking at the expense of the promotion of creative thinking in adult learners.

According to Tsai (2015), no extant framework is capable of capturing all creative-education scholarship and current practices, in part, this may be because creativity and education scholars tend to have very different beliefs about the nature of creative education, as well as very different views of what creativity is for or in education, as a phenomenon, might consist of. The common components mentioned in the proposition and models

are characteristics that are positively related to creativity, such as curiosity, open-mindedness, and taking risks. The major difference among scholars is coming from different paradigms to describe the role of creativity.

Although it is possible that these rival paradigms could result in a cacophony of outlooks and ideas regarding creative education, it is still worth making a deliberate effort to generate a working framework for synthesizing existing research on creativity and education. It is hoped that via integrating diverse theoretical perspectives on creativity in educational research into a coherent scheme, students as learners and teachers as content deliverers will be able to optimize the expected outcomes of their journeys toward a sound educational practice. It is important to distinguish carefully between creativity education and creative education. For example, Peng and Plucker (2012) discussed creativity education in China with a focus on promoting creative thinking in educational discourse. In their view, creativity education is parallel to the idea of the important role of creativity in education. Here, creativity is presented as a means, not an end; it is the use of creative methods to promote students' learning. In other words, creative education could be viewed as the employment of creative means and perspectives in support of the energization of existing educational structures. In this sense, creative education can be broadly defined as

creative ways of teaching, thinking, and learning. In order to fulfill that goal, educators should employ different approaches to encourage students to think differently and to learn efficiently.

Generally, education is a mother in investing creativity in the mind, and tasking individual to think independently and bring an absolute decision that may be reliable, concrete and achievable once hold and used. The novelty and uniqueness of idea on solution to a particular problem indicate the high level of intellectuality and creativity in education. It is based on this dimension that Goff (1993) summarizes ten measures of evaluating a creative individual. According to him, a creative individual has the ability to:

- a. Produce a large number of ideas
- b. Shift easily from one type of thinking to another
- c. Come up with unusual or remote ideas
- d. See relationships where others may miss them
- e. Elaborate an idea
- f. See ways to improve or charge a situation or object
- g. Generalize easy and draw principles
- h. Have interest in problem solving
- i. Have interest in universal non localized events.
- j. Have honour and love to short stories.

Functional Education

In regarding education as a tool for development and economic growth for every nation, effort has to be made in order to make education functional and profitable for every citizen. Elombah (2010) sees

education as means of equipping the child to excel in his immediate environment through acquiring a requisite material that would help him to live in modern world. For planning educational programme, children and societal needs have to be considered much so that education will uplift the interest of the child as well as the society he lives in; such education serve as a mechanism for activating the child's mind toward achieving his desirable activities (Ziebeger 1999).

Education as a programme set to give knowledge, develop skills and attitude to make the learner become particularly useful and self-reliant within the community. Asaju and Adagba, (2014) defined functional education as a level of opportunity that would bring about high quality manpower that would turn around the available resources into wealth for the nation.

Looking at the weak economy of the nation, the educationists have to stand on their feet in confronting the menace through the right way educationally. These have to be through eradicating the traditional subjects and substituting them with the real ones even though traditional subjects like, History, Geography, Social Studies, Religion have their roles in modifying and molding the individual to know his right and value and also to appreciate his environment but have to be merged in order to give enough time for other economic friend subjects.

Creative and Functional Education Barriers

Barriers are obstacle one may easily come across in the event of creativity and invention. We are living in a more conservative society that is always frown to

the innovation: a society that is looking at its back not for tomorrow but only to appreciate the ancestors, a society that always at fight with its progressives. Therefore, parts of the problems that creativity and functional education are facing among others include:

a. Prejudice

Prejudice is prejudgment or forming an opinion before articulating and sensitizing the relevant facts of a given case (Gomerep 2015). We are living in societies that are eager to give an irrational and preconceived opinion before knowing all the facts that surround the events. This has a negative result in many of our attempts to bring something new or changing the statuesque.

b. Poverty

The high rate of poverty is another bottle neck to our creativity and innovations. A hungry man is an angry man like wise a hungry mind is definitely an angry mind. The evolution of creativity and invention is the product of settled mind, as it is only mind that can imagine, analyze, synthesize and evaluate the event with full confidence and reasons. The variables mentioned are not found among us.

c. Fear of problem

The beginning of any problem is fear of the creation of problem; problems to the creative mind are the beginning of the solution. Gomerep (2015) was of the opinion that problem is an opportunity to enhance reasoning. He continued saying that, the happiest people welcome and even seeks out problems, meet them as a challenge

and opportunity to improve thinking. In Nigeria as a country, we are trying as much as possible to avoid problems. This kind of experience hinders the mind from inventing and creating as well as innovating.

d. Fear of failure

Fear of failure is one of the major obstacles in attaining creative and invention. Majority of the students as well as other individuals are feeling reluctant whenever they try to solve a problem and fail along the line. In fact, our culture and society are not accommodative for any failure that one finds himself. The issue is almost devastating as majority are looking and celebrating once failure instead of encouraging him. These habits discourage a lot of our intellectuals from harnessing their gifts.

e. Lack of awareness

The society that is still battling from hand to mouth can never look outside the dark box. Awareness and experience are very vital ingredients in manipulating creativity. Always a creative mind tries to make the best of variety of reasoning and options. Therefore, experience will definitely play a role in sharpening and straightening the mind in fishing the most best among the best. The Cripple Economy

Looking at your pocket and expenses in your daily needs will definitely tell you the kind of economy we are running in the country. A country with more than one hundred and sixty million people depends solely on one chain of revenue (petroleum) which is considered

operating under a weak and crippled economy. Nigeria needs to be more creative and innovative to find other sources of revenue generation regarding the population.

A critical situation with a combination of different factors such as depreciation of the currency, huge budgetary cuts, debt burden, high rate of unemployment, investment construction, bank speculation and lack of transparency have rendered our economic activities in shamble style from meltdown to recession conditions. Right now, over twenty four states of the federation are owing their workers' salaries, pension or gratuity which at last translated to low income to the earners. Other workers are looking for their promotions and other entitlements for over ten years all in vein.

Nigeria now is indebted to the tune of N60b (Agbowuro and Saidu 2017) and many domestic investors are also the victims. To buttress the point, a lot of retrenchments are the order of the day in banking industries. Our educational institutions most especially primary and secondary schools have become empty due to lack of proper and adequate infrastructure, low and delay in payment of salaries. This alone can leave the country in a terrible doom, and, once educational sector is underrated the outcome will not be favorable to the entire society. High persistent rate of criminal activities ranging from kidnapping, cattle rustlers. Boko- Haram, communal and tribal killings are part of the causes of economic decay in some states of the

country. Corruption, which is eating the fiber line of the nations' economy, has also rendered the investors to continue withdrawing their economic belongings from the country year in year out. Insufficient power to generate and operate at maximum level cause skyrocketed inflation of commodity in all spheres of the country, while the minimum salary remain eighteen thousand for over ten years. There is great difference between earning and expenditure in the country. All these as mentioned are part of educational barriers in the country.

Challenge of Creative and Functional Education

Despite the fact that National Policy on Education (2014), has emphasized among others the importance of creativity as one of the major goals of education right from early childhood care development, education (ECCDE), creativity for the child is yet to be functional in other parts of the country. This is due to the fact that the environment in some part of the country is not conducive to accommodate this mighty gift that will be of enormous advantage in development and economic growth of the nation. Ogbomna (2015) was of the opinion that whatever problem hindering vocational and technical education is equally a challenge to creativity. He further identified the problems hindering vocational and technical education which are related to creative education in Nigerian schools in this order:

- Poor implementation
- Absent or misuse of integrated approach

- Lack of qualified teaching staff
- Improper funding
- Poor staffing
- Public negative attitude
- In efficient industrial and institutional performance
- In adequate research effort
- Deficiency of instructional materials
- Poor equipped laboratories
- Inadequate teacher education programme

Prospect of Creative and Functional Education

Once creativity and functional education become the epicenter of our education, the nation would definitely witness the high growth in development and economy. It would serve as a strong treatment to our crippled economy in the country.

Many individuals may stand on their feet without waiting for the white color job. People may create employment for them and invite others through different kinds of small scale investments.

Conclusion

Based on the discussion on creativity and functional education challenges and prospects in comatose economy, the education sector of the nation has to embark on massive changes in the planning of our curriculum to generate and integrate subjects that have a direct implication into one economy. The country should have more emphasis on practical aspect of the subjects so that studies may become functional to individual as well as benefiting to the larger society. As education is the right tool for

development of economy, the government has to embark on the massive injecting of resources to salvage the lingering situation in our economic sector.

Recommendations

To sum up, the following strategies and techniques are recommended to foster functionality and creativity in education sector in Nigeria.

- ICT facilities to be erected and mounted for effective teaching and learning
- Schools should try and decongest the population of the students to barest minimum
- Government should increase the salary /wages of the teachers most especially in primary and secondary schools so that spirit of enquiry and invention may be cultivated in proper material.
- Providing favourable environment: This means adequate library and laboratory facilities, freedom of thought and action, openness to new ideas, feeling of tolerance and above all, creative attitude on the part of teachers, parents and school authorities.
- Open ended subject content: The content in the field of his/her choice may be provided, as far as possible.-Students should be exposed to a variety of literatures through libraries.
- Removal of cultural, sexual and educational barriers; An example of cultural barrier is that some parents impose their own choice subjects on their children rather than encouraging the latter, to pursue courses

according to their own creative impulses. In the area of sexual barriers, some parents discourage girls from engaging in technological oriented subjects regarding them as exclusive preserve of boys/men. Over emphasis on examination, teaching through foreign language, the uniform pattern of state produced textbooks etc are some of the educational barriers. To removes these barriers; teachers should educate parents regarding cultural and sexual barriers and also should take precautions not to generate such barriers by their own acts of commission or omission.

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