



OVER SCHOOLING IN ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES AND THE CRISES OF UNEMPLOYMENT: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

The paper on Over Schooling in Social Sciences and Crises of Unemployment: The Nigerian Experience examines the concept of over schooling and the social science. The difference between the levels of education an individual or a graduate acquires with his required schooling needed for a preferred job is also analyzed. As a relatively new concept, over schooling requires education from direct background to show concern and contribute to this very important and controversial aspect of education ideology. The purpose of this position paper therefore, is to expose the need to match schooling with employability, skills and employment. To make this paper comprehensible and result oriented, basic concepts relevant to the discourse were conceptualized: career options in the field of social sciences are also highlighted. The crisis of unemployment, as well as the inability of over schooling to address those crises was equally examined. Based on the foregoing, the paper recommends among others, that practical and functional education, knowledge, skills, abilities and competence should take prominence during curriculum planning and implementation.

Keywords: Over Schooling, Social Sciences, Acquired schooling, Required Schooling etc.

Introduction

The concepts of Over Schooling, Over Education and Over Bothering in teaching and learning from the Crèche to the highest citadel of learning, the university, today in the school environment seems to be the new conflict arising from the link between Education, Employability and Productivity at work places. The search for results, fulfillment, job satisfaction and often times the struggle to lead a better and most fulfilled life and in a more friendly and serene environment has always made man to be in an unending search for theories, principles, knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies to adequately achieve these permutations on live issues. Therefore, whether in the Arts, Social Sciences, Humanities, Applied and Natural Sciences, the struggles, the conflict, the search and the efforts are in no way different. Though, the anxieties, discomfort, dissatisfactions, stress and strains arising from the supposed link between Education, Employability and Productivity and other numerous life issues are evidently worse in developing and the underdeveloped societies. The unabated desire to create a more robust relationship between Schooling, Education, Employability and Productivity at work places appears to be the driving force in the creation of the new concepts of Over Schooling, Over Education, Required Schooling, Needed Schooling etc The question is, since the birth of these new concepts in the education industry; it has created the lacuna between Education, Employability, Employment and Productivity in the society.

The Concept of Schooling

The study of the origin of words by known Linguists such as Naom Chomsky and Pier Paolo Pasolini in Mordi, & Jike, (2005) strongly affirmed that the concept of Over Schooling took its origin from the simple concept of School which means an institution that promotes teaching and learning process in all human environments, (Wikipedia, 2010). In these systems, students progress through a series of schools usually from the lowest to the highest level of schooling. While Schooling is a process, School on its own is a Physical Structure where schooling takes place over a period of stipulated time. There is thin line between education and schooling. Schooling is an organized process of teaching and learning which takes place in a four wall of an institution. This process (schooling) if properly executed or carried out is supposed to midwife into education.

Ideally, schooling ensures that learners are equipped with knowledge of theories, models, concepts, facts, figures and certain physical skills in the case of technical education. All these if learnt are potential tools in the hands of the possessor. However, most times, these things are not properly learnt by the supposed learners.

On the other flank, education is much more than schooling in that education can happen anywhere and anytime. It is broader and deeper than schooling because it is change-based. It is all about application and problem-solving. If what schooling offers cannot be applied to solve societal problems, then, education has not taken place. If what schooling offers cannot instigate change in personal or group behaviour, then, education has not occurred. Indeed effective and productive schooling is expected to beget education but the big question is; what type of education does our school system in Nigeria today beget?

The Concept and Philosophy of the Social Sciences

The philosophy of the Social Sciences is the study of the Logic, Methods, and foundation of the Social Sciences (Comte, in Mordi & Jike, 2005) . Social sciences according to Mordi & Jike (2005) are important category of academic disciplines concerned with the basic understanding of human society and the relationships among individuals within a society. Social science as a whole has many branches, each of which is considered a social science, (Wikipedia, 2009)

Social science is, in its broadest sense, the study of society and the manner in which people behave and influence the world around them. Social science tells us about the world beyond our immediate environment and experience, and can help explain how our own society works - from the causes of unemployment or what helps economic growth, to how and why people vote, or what makes people happy (Robert,1999). It provides vital information for governments and policymakers, local authorities, non-governmental organizations and others.

Disciplines in Social Science

The specialties, disciplines and subject areas within the family of the social sciences according to William, (1988) include amongst others; Sociology, Social Studies, Economics, Political Science, History, and Geography are considered as Social Sciences. Social science as an academic field of study developed out of the Age of Enlightenment (or the Age of Reason), which flourished through much of the 18th century Europe. The frontline Philosophers whose works remain as compass in the field of the social sciences till date as quoted by Giddens, (2006) are Adam Smith, Voltaire, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Denis Diderot, Immanuel Kant, David Hume and others. These Philosophers were among some of the giant intellectuals at the time who laid the foundations for the study of social sciences in the Western World. Individuals began to take a more disciplined approach to quantifying their observations of society, and over time similar aspects of a society, such as linguistics and psychology, were separated into unique fields of study, (Giddens, 2006).

Formal Education in Social Sciences

In the U.S according to (Wikipedia, 2009), the early education of social sciences took off from the elementary school, and progresses throughout middle and high school with an emphasis on core Social Sciences such as Sociology, Social Studies, Economics, Political Science and History. At the college level in the United State of America, more specialized disciplines are offered.

The Philosophy of the Social Science

The Philosophy of the Social Sciences according to Giddens, (2006) can be conceptualized as that aspect of the Social Sciences that examines the rationale behind the birth of the Social Science. The phrase, the philosophy of the social science can be broadly descriptive unearthing the fundamental conceptual tools in social science and relating them to the tools employed in other human endeavours. It also considers the various concepts, methods, and logic of the Social Sciences for the ease of understanding the subject area. To achieve their aim, the Philosophers of Social Science investigate both the practice of the social sciences and the nature of the entities that the Social Sciences study, such entities as human beings themselves.

Historically, according to Giddens (2006), many philosophers of Social Sciences have taken the basic question of their discipline to be whether the Social Sciences can be “Scientific” in the same way that the Natural Sciences are. The approach that answers this question affirmatively is called Naturalism, whereas that which answers it negatively is known as Humanism, though a number of theories attempt to combine these two approaches. Given this framework, the term Philosophy of social sciences is arguably not restrictive.

The branch of the Social Sciences that figure most saliently in Humanist Approach, which centrally feature the interpretation of meaning and consciousness according to Mordi & Jike (2005), are Anthropology, History, and those parts of Sociology that focus on the margins of mainstream society. Moreover, these disciplines strikingly confronts a host of questions that bothers on man and his immediate Social, Cultural, Economic, Religious, Political environment that trouble Philosophers of Social Science on how to fruitfully understand and decently make more comfortable and convenient decisions for man. The questions that are grouped around the topic of Relativism (the Doctrine that either experience, assessments of value, or even reality itself is a function of a particular conceptual scheme. These views are called epistemological, moral, and Ontological Relativism) Mordi & Jike (2005).

But not all Philosophers of Social Science, Mordi & Jike (2005) insists, believe that meaning is something on which the Social Sciences should focus. Despite the fact that human actions and reactions are clearly meaningful on the surface, some Philosophies of Social Science have denied; that meaning ultimately has (or should have) a fundamental role to play in the Social Sciences. One of the most noteworthy of these approaches is Behaviorism, which dispenses with inner mental states and cultural meanings altogether. Instead, human behaviour is conceived as a series of responses to external stimuli, responses that are regulated by the patterns of conditioning that have been inculcated into the organism.

A Social Scientist

Social Science is a discipline that covers the studies of man and human environment. The result of the constant interaction between man and his immediate environment is a major area of concern to the field of Social Sciences. On the other way round, one who studied any of the disciplines in the field of social sciences is termed a Social Scientist. Giving credence to this understanding, WikiBook (2010) asserts that a social scientist not only studied social science but is seen as one who conducts research within his or her field within the family of the social sciences and makes recommendations about how research findings can be used to improve human relation and the entire human society. In order to effectively report their own and interpret the findings of others, successful Social Scientists have excellent writing and oral communication skills.

Career options in the field of Social Sciences

Careers options in the world today according to wikibook (2010) are numerous and are in upward multiplication daily since the beginning of the 21st century but the ones within the family of the Social Sciences include but not limited to the following:

Teaching and Lecturing
Advertising/Marketing
Banking and Insurance
Business Management
Management Consultancy
Market research
Media and Politics
Tourism
Town Planning

Over Schooling and the Crises of Unemployment: The Nigerian Experience

It is no longer a moonlight tale that the unemployment crises in Nigeria today is choking and terribly frustrating nearly every sector of the economy without any hope for imminent recovery. It has truly become evidently clear that the crises of unemployment

and employability in Nigeria remain one of the major causes of Nigerian youths devising several means of survival today and one of such survival strategy is Over Schooling among the graduates of but not limited to Social Sciences. This means of survival are descent while many of it cannot be said to be that descent. Movie industry is one of such careers that can be said to have grown out of the heat of unemployment in Nigeria. The comedy industry, Okada ridding philosophy, and even “Europe by land venture” and volunteer works all emanated from the ugly tail of unemployment crises. Others include touting, pilfering and criminality of all sorts, music and dance industries, drug and narcotic peddling and many other emergency careers. The sudden popularity of Entrepreneurship Education and the upsurge of Skill Acquisition Centers are all part of the issues. It may not be totally a fallacy to insist that the crises of unemployment in Nigeria is not totally a catastrophe but has acted advantageously to some extent in bringing out the best from Nigerians who are desirous in earning a living decently.

Unemployment is one concept that though has variously been defined by scholars in Commerce, Economics, Business Education, Trade and other disciplines known for job and wealth creation. Despite the constant search for the postulation of single universally acceptable definition of the concept of unemployment, the meaning and implication does not exceed the simplest fact that – Unemployment means a situation and that, when an individual has no job or work to do. Underemployment is a more pleasant better situation than unemployment. Underemployment is a job situation, where one has a job or work that is far below ones certification. In looking deeper into the concept of unemployment, Ogunsanya (2007) defined unemployment as a condition in which one has no job to do on a regular basis. It is a situation where a strong, healthy and qualified adult has no job or work to do. Hornby (2010) asserts that unemployment is state of not having a job. Unemployed people according to Iwegbu,(2018) do not include young people who are still in school or those who are mentally incapable or ill. Those who passed out from Universities, Colleges of Education, Polytechnics, Trade and Technical Centers without jobs are said to be unemployed. According to the ILO (2009) 160 million people in the world today are unemployed, and many more subsist on the margins of the economy or have jobs that do not provide them with adequate means to ensure their survival.

Asserting further, ILO (2009) affirm that nearly 40 per cent of those without work

are young people, and levels of unemployment tend to be two to three times higher for this group than for the adult population. The situation of unemployment is particularly grievous for young graduates in most developing and underdeveloped economies of the world, as studies suggest a huge imbalance between the supply of young workers and the demand for their labour (ILO, 2009)

While critically looking at the problems created by the painful unemployment situation in the present day Nigeria, Iwegbu, (2018) asserts that unemployment has caused, to say the least extreme havoc to Nigeria and Nigerians at large. Unemployment has led to the increase in crime rate and sudden eruption of all forms of vices in Nigeria that were unheard of in this part of the world. Many of the unemployed youths indulge in crimes such as armed robbery, kidnapping, assassination, prostitution, insurgencies. Some of the unemployed youths had forced themselves into drug trafficking to get money for survival.

Solutions to Unemployment Problems

The issue of Over Schooling remains one of the most misconceived strategies through which people planned to escape from the harsh unemployment condition but the reverse has remained the case. In permanently curbing the problem of unemployment in both Nigeria and other developing nations of the world, practical and functional education is an enduring panacea where every individual will end up practicing what he or she has learnt in school Iwegbu, (2018). Situations where graduates keep waiting for government employment after graduation is no longer fashionable in these present times of population explosion and heavy graduate turn out from various tertiary institutions. People should be trained in such a manner that after graduation, they set up business outfits and offices in relation to what they studied in schools and as their creativity and businesses enlarge, they will certainly end up as employers of labour, this is ultimately the way to go is the Nigeria nation must develop to its full capacity. The educational sector should be restructured to encourage self reliance. In other words our educational system should lay more emphases on skill acquisition. There should be proper management of the economy by the government. This will make her to have enough money to provide jobs for the people who are unemployed. People should focus on

agriculture instead of depending on the government. Nigeria has enough fertile land. Government should provide machines and train the youths on how to operate the machines for farm work as the educated youths would not like to work with native hoe and machetes. This will create employment for many youths.

Government should make rural towns and villages a conducive place to dwell and hospitals and other social services should be provided. This will make the youths live and do agricultural work there instead of moving to the big towns in search of job. Schools should teach subjects which will help the students to be self reliant when they leave school. Such subjects like Agriculture Science, Computer Science, Pure and Applied Sciences, Home Economics, Arts and Crafts and others truly should be made more practicable than what it is today so that they can start life after graduating from school. More factories and industries should be built to accommodate unemployed graduates. The scenario were an a graduate of Electrical and Electronics Engineering in Nigeria can fix an electric bulb in his house is most ridiculous and unfortunate. Nigeria educational planners truly need to grow up in their planning and implementation techniques. Our leaders should be neutral in the case of employment. They should give employment based on the order of merit and practical experience irrespective of one's ethnic group. They should see their Citizens as one Nigeria and not one ethnic group. It is important to note that unemployment is something that is not new but the only difference is the rate of increase. Unemployment is something that cannot be wiped out entirely from any nation. The causes and remedies were discussed in the body of this work. The government (the policy makers and curriculum planners) should restructure the educational system in the country to include and encourage skill acquisition which will help to minimize unemployment rate.

The Crises of Unemployment and Under Employment in Nigeria: Is Over Schooling a Way Out?

Over Schooling is never an answer to the crises of unemployment and underemployment in Nigeria. The crises of unemployment and under employment threatening the Nigerian nation to its foundation today has become entrenched into the Nigeria national life from poor policy initiative of the government. This indeed is visibly

evident from the government show of total lack of commitment and dedication coupled with lack of political will to overhaul the entire machinery of the state (Okorie, 2014). Asserting further, Okorie, (2014), insists that if it took poor policy initiative to plunge the Nigerian nation into the dungeon of unemployment and underemployment, policy reversal and reorientation is all it will also need to change the trend. Until the right policies that will translate into wealth and job creation is put in place, while making the environment conducive for business growth, Nigerian graduates will continue to lament over unemployment crises.

It is most erroneous, frustrating and indeed ridiculous for any serious academic to think that Over Schooling is a way out of the present choking unemployment rate in Nigeria. Over Schooling in this regard can be said to be illusory and more of a mirage in outlook. It is simply the act of acquiring certificates upon certificates which may never be used in the work life of a public or civil servant. To say the least, most of the certification, knowledge, skills, abilities and competence acquired through Over Schooling by the holder of these certificates may not even be necessary or needed in the line of duty of the individual. Think about a Practicing Medical Doctor acquiring ICAN, ANAN, ASCON, Diploma in Journalism, M.Sc in Labour Relation, M.Sc in Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management, Ph.D in Peace and Conflict Management and so on. This is a simple case of Over Schooling and the question is, in which Office will the Medical Doctor going to use these certificates, Labour Room of his Operation Theater?. Also considering a Primary School teacher acquiring a Ph.D with less than three years in service and this teacher is already sixty years of age. Is such Schooling not laughable? What about Dangote Trailer Drivers with MS.c and Ph.D Certificates as reported early last year, in which area of driving will the Certificates improve their driving skill (Eruogi, 2012).

Over Schooling does not create job, it does not enhance productivity neither does it promote employability. The end result of Over Schooling in most cases is usually frustration, depression and poor work attitudes. Functional and Productive education is the only way out of the unemployment crises ravaging the Nigerian nation today.

Conclusion / Recommendation

Over Schooling in Arts and Social Sciences and in every other discipline experiencing it today among Nigerians cannot be said to be a tea party. The cost of Over Schooling among those deeply involved in it is heavy, Over Schooling is time consuming and energy sapping. Over Schooling in the most sincere language is draining and frustrating considering the huge investment in money and time. Over Schooling practically, may make one versatile but has little or no impact on productivity and employability. It therefore means that, if a concept has minimal or no impact on employability and productivity, it will have minimal or no impact on the issue of employment, unemployment or underemployment as the case maybe. The issue of unemployment in Nigeria today that is already a canker worm plummeting the Nigeria nation into a near irredeemable dilemma can only be addressed effectively using practical education as a panacea, only if the policy framework of the Nigerian Educational System can urgently be reversed to make schooling more practicable and functional. Practical and Functional Education where Knowledge, Skills, Abilities and Competence acquired through schooling are put into practical use in industries, businesses and institutions even to the extent of individual graduates establishing themselves into practicing what they learnt in school. This is the surest way of fighting unemployment and underemployment to a standstill.

Today's employers in Nigeria need employees who can put into practical use the education they have acquired through effective and functional schooling and not graduates who only parade chains of Degrees. To the employers, that is only when the employee is employable and productivity guaranteed. In conclusion therefore, if the chains of degrees acquired by an individual through Over Schooling cannot culminate into practical realities, that is, increase in productivity at work place, then the overall aim of schooling and education may have been largely defeated.

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