

# Educating the Self for Economic Viability: A Pragmatic Approach

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*Abstract- Education as a concept is so elastic in nature that it can be stretched to any extent. Thus, it has undergone a series of explanations in different contexts. In whatever context that is used, the end result is that it produces change or changes in whoever might have been affected by it. Education whether acquired advertently or inadvertently leads to behavioural modifications or changes to an extent either positively or negatively. In view of this, it is seen as the process of the impartation or transmission of knowledge. As used in this work, it is a process of the transmission of knowledge that is worthwhile to those who are committed to such knowledge and will in turn use such knowledge for their good and the betterment of society. Education is of different forms or types and the mode of transmission varies. Pragmatism as a component of philosophy emphasizes the practical style of its modus operandi. This makes the product to be practical in whatever field he or she will decide to acquire and pave way for a life of self-reliance. When this happens, the person will be able to contribute to the development of society (politically, socially, economically, etc.). this work therefore titled "Educating the self for economic viability" believes that if pragmatic principles are employed, the outcome will be that the individual will be able to take care of himself and contribute to the development of the economic sector. The work covers an introduction, conceptual framework, theoretical framework, and the relevance of the pragmatic form of education to economic viability.*

*Indexed Terms- Education, Economic Viability, Pragmatic Approach*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The imperative of education is expressed in the fact that it serves as a tool to enrich an individual's

knowledge and develop his potentials as well as develop sound moral character for the benefit of the society. Education develops national consciousness and political awareness in people and helps to alter ways of thinking, and attitude to people, events, and situations. Education is a powerful instrument in the advancement of individual and national goals, education is the most powerful weapon which can be used to change the world. The development of any nation in every facet, is predicated on the knowledge base of her citizens.

Martin Luther King (Jnr) as expressed by Ekanem and Ogar (2007), opined that the function of education is to teach one to think intensively and critically. Education is an important aspect of the modern industrialized world. Education is needed for survival in the present competitive world. The modern knowledge society is based on people who have high living standards and knowledge which allows them to implement better solutions for their challenges like twenty-first-century Nigeria. Education facilitates quality living all through life among people of different age group, creed, religion, and region. It plays a great role in career growth as well as in personal growth. Thus, intelligence plus character is the true goal of education (Onwuka, 2014)

The features of the education include empowerment resulting in poverty alleviation as well as the safety and security of individuals who are less susceptible to being cheated or become victims of violence. Other features are the prevention of wars and terrorism which lead to a safe and secure life. This is why Individuals should take active part in various educational activities or enterprises.

These type of productive activities provide knowledge to live a better life, and promote commerce and trade in the country. A good education

does not simply mean going to school or college and getting a certificate or a degree. Education helps us to become self-dependent and build great confidence among the citizenry to accomplish difficult tasks. Another important feature of education is the internalization of law and order by the citizenry to enable the process of the nation's fast development. Further still, the relation between education and communication is apparent. A good education helps to communicate better with other people. Education is the social institution through which society provides its members with important knowledge, including basic facts, job skills, cultural norms and values. As social beings, it is our responsibility to give back to society and make it a better place for the next generations. An educated person is aware of his personal as well as social responsibilities. Proper education teaches a person to think beyond his interests and also provides him the ability to give back to society. Education could also mean innovation. Innovation and creativity can only occur when people are skilled enough to know how to operate or apply different technologies. Educated people always find a solution to their problems with the help of better techniques. It is no secret that a good education has the power to change a life.

What is new is the demand for that change. Governments are investing more than ever before on educating their citizens, eager for them to compete in the global workforce. A growing global middle class citizen is spending more of its own money on educating their families. Employers are looking for a new sort of colleague, someone with the skills to flourish in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Combined with technologies that continue to develop at breakneck speed, the result is a world that has the want, and the means, to learn at scale (Onwuka, 2014).

## II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

- Education

Education is the process in which the character, behaviour, attitude and perception of an individual is changed through the process of teaching and learning. Plato in Ategwu (2004), opined that becoming educated means becoming good as a person. Education as a concept has been defined by various educationists, philosophers, and scholars

from different fields. Education also comes in various forms with its unique features and importance. The system of education varies across the globe; in Nigeria, the system of education differs from that of America, Japan, Brazil, Australia, and other nations of the world. Etymologically, the word education is derived from two Latin words "Educare" and "Educere" (Amaele et al., 2011). Accordingly, "Educare", means to train, to form, or to mould. In other words, it means the system by which a society trains, forms, or mould individuals to achieve social needs and aspirations of the society. "Educere", on the other hand, means to build, to lead, or to develop. This is mostly favoured by the humanists who argue that the function of education is to develop the natural potentialities in the child to enable him to function in the society according to his abilities, interests, and needs (Kingdom, Orji & Job, 2013). This view is in tandem with what Okafor (2004) has earlier said that, "education is a process of acculturation by which an individual is helped to realized his/her potentialities and their maximum activation when necessary according to right reasons and to attain hereby his self-fulfillment".

Beside, education is entirely used to develop human beings in their cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and psycho productive domains. It involves a pleasing approach in human behaviour through the process of teaching and learning. Fafunwa, (2004) defined education as what each generation give to its younger ones which makes them develop attitudes, skills, abilities, and other behaviours which add positive values to the society in which they live. Amaele et al. (2011), buttressed the aforementioned definitions of education as the total development of the individual child through acceptable methods and techniques according to his abilities and interests to meet up the needs of the society and for the individual to take his/her rightful place and contribute equally to the enhancement of the society. It is therefore a process of transmitting what is worthwhile to those who are committed to it (Peters, 1972).

Furthermore, education is the social institution through which society provides its members with important knowledge, including basic facts, job skill, and cultural norm values. One of the most important

benefits of education is that it improves personal lives and helps society to run smoothly.

Education is a tool that provides people with knowledge, skill, technique, and information, enables them to know their rights and duties toward their family, society as well as the nation. It develops the capabilities to fight against injustice, violence, corruption, and many other bad elements in the society. It is the most important element in the evolution of the nation (Rajesh Parihar, 2017). This was buttressed by Bhatta, (2009) who opined that “healthy society was not possible without educated individuals”. Above author also believed that the educational framework which targets the purpose of personal development is a good basis of human ethics. Thus, without education, one will not explore new ideas and development.

Education entails the process of acquiring knowledge or undergoing training in every facet of life; physically, mentally, academically, socially, spiritually among others to enable one become self-reliant, self-sufficient as well as a prominent member of the society that would contribute to the development of the country. There are different types/forms of education all of which are integrated to enhance human capital development as a panacea for national development and economic viability.

- Economic viability

The concept economic viability is pregnant with lot of meanings. It has undergone diverse explications by different researchers or academia. It is a conglomeration of two separate words or concepts, “economic” and “viability”.

Taking separately, economic in a narrow sense refers to an academic discipline. Thus, it is defined as a social science that is concerned with the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. Applied in the context of this work, it is a discipline that studies how individuals, businesses, governments, and nations make choices about how to allocate resources.

Put in another word, economic is the study of scarcity and its implications for the use of goods and services, growth of production and welfare overtime and a

variety of other complex issues of vital concern to the society. How sustaining is the application of scarce resources for effective production growth or development of the society will give rise to economic viability. In general, economic viability is an economic potential to embark on a new technology and to safe guard its continuation or continuity. It is also the capability of development and surviving as a relatively independent social economic or political unit. In generic terms, viability implies the following:

- The ability to live, grow and develop.
- Capability to withstand harsh conditions.
- Capacity or capability to survive against all odds.
- Ability to function adequately.

All the above are encapsulated in the evidence of the usefulness of education in a pragmatic sense.

- Pragmatism

Pragmatism as an element of philosophy etymologically is coined from the Greek phrase “Pragme” meaning “work” or “action” and could also be called “functionalism”, “instrumentalism” and “experimentalism”. It was pioneered by Charles Pierce (1839-1914), William James (1842-1910) and John Dewey (1859-1952). Their central teaching was anchored on learning by doing in order to be useful to “the self” and the society at large.

It has a strong influence on the Nigerian educational system because it assisted in the re-structuring of her educational system from a purely rote system to a practical approach to learning(Sharma & Hyland, 1991). According to them, pragmatic philosophy has been influential in shaping educational policy in Nigeria in a number of important areas (P.55). These important areas include social and political, national unity, agriculture, a shift from purely academic studies in colleges and universities to vocational and technical studies.All these have implications and relevance to the present Nigerian system of education.

### III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on the following theories considered relevant to it.

- Social Demand Approach (SDA): This is a theory in educational planning. The central teaching of this theory is that education is a social public service and should be provided to all citizens who desire it. Its applicability to the present study is that the development of an individual and to enable him or her contribute to the economic development of the society an opportunity should be provided for education. According to Olagboye (2004:252), this approach assures that:
  - i) Government has to provide education for all those who demand for and are qualified for it at all levels.
  - ii) The demand for education will be greater than supply at all times.
  - iii) Education will provide the people with social and economic benefits.

This approach was popularized by the 1963 Robbins reports on higher education in Britain.

- Manpower requirements approach: This approach implies the use of statistical inputs from economic sources in order to establish present and future need for manpower. Thus, it is essentially a forecasting technique used in estimating quantitative and qualitative skilled labour needed in the economy in future. This aims at eliminating future shortage of human resources for viable economy to thrive. It is therefore important to this study because an individual can take care of himself and still contribute to the economic development of his nation if he is given the necessary education.
- Cost-Benefits Analysis: This approach is a method of comparing the projected or estimated cost and benefits (or opportunities associated with a project decision) to determine whether it makes sense from a business perspective. According to Olagboye (2004) this approach sees education as an investment in human resource development or human capital, the benefits of the returns of which can be compared with returns from the use of alternative resources. This approach therefore views whatever is used for the provision and improvement on education not as an expenditure but investment.

- Pragmatic Education, The Self and Economic Viability:

Education for the pragmatists is a sine-qua-non for individual and national development. The more educated a person is, the higher his socio-economic rating and ability, and the higher literacy rate of a country, the higher the rate of socio-economic and political development. Anderson, Greene and Rodee in Ogbiji (2011) have found out that the best democracies of the world are country with the highest literacy rate. As the industry that produces manpower for all sectors of the economy, that increase the productive capacity and by implications raising the national per capital income of the country, it is necessary that a functional system be provided.

According to Ogbiji (2011) to be civilized in modern context implies being knowledgeable in both the arts and science and the acquisition of technological skills. This can only be acquired through pragmatic education. To relegate this education to the background is to be uninformed, socially and technologically deformed and incapacitated, thus being subjected to misery and exploitation by progressive individuals and nations. National development should be left to the whims and caprices of individuals and organizations. The relevance of education and its contributions to the viability and sustenance of our national economy cannot be over emphasized. Education is an important social investment which a nation can ignore only at the risk of her doom and future existence (Essien, 1998). Thus, pragmatic education is relevant to an individual and the society in general in the following ways:

- Tools for Human Development

Education also develops in individuals those value which make for good citizenship, such as honesty, selflessness, tolerance, dedication, hard-work and personal integrity, all of which provide the rich soil from which good leadership potential is groomed. As already noted, education trains an individual to be responsible in the society. From this, it is clear that education gives moral training. Consequently, some of the ugly trends in Nigeria today such as terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, thuggery etc can be averted if proper pragmatic education that will reasonably engaged it products after graduation is given. This will in turn affect the economy of the nation

positively (Ogundowole, 2010). The world today is in dire need of people with proven integrity in business engagement. A proper pragmatic education is a sure bet for this.

- Global Impact of Education

Practical oriented education can leave a long-lasting impact on global development. An educated person always works for the benefits of humanity. We all acknowledge the importance of education, knowledge, and truth for promoting the world outlook. Education produces citizens who are men of intellectual and moral integrity, tolerant and wise. It aims at producing ideal human beings. People that will be truly cultured, wise, tolerant and public-spirited. And when engaged in business will be people that other business men and women globally can do business with them without fears.

#### Pragmatic Education Promotes the National Interest

Education also helps in promoting the national interest of a country. The highly educated society has a critical intelligence of an exceptional order. They can form independent conclusions from given facts. The educated persons have the wisdom and knowledge to work for the betterment of the country. They are from all walks of life, work together in protecting the national interest. This was Dewey's idea for evolving it (Ategwu, 2004). Dewey was convinced beyond any reasonable doubt that pragmatic education was a condition precedence for the development of the American nation and advocated that the system of education should be open to innovation and also a change from the old system of doing things.

- Vital Role in the Development of Countries

For the pragmatist philosophers' education is a central cohesive source of support and stability in the development of countries, and its economy. Developing countries should have to recognize the importance of education and must focus on the development of high valued educational system because a sound education system works effectively for sustainable development of the economy as well as society. A stable economy of a country is closely related to education. The educated people of a country have more ability to become entrepreneurs, scientists, writers, doctors, and engineers and it may

become a deciding factor for the future economic development of any country (Nwabuisi, 1986). This in turn will lead to economic viability.

- Education Enhances Creativity

According to the pragmatists, education or educational activities also boost the creativity of students. Education provides the opportunity for students to apply their skills in creative ways and become more professionals. The creativity of students provides them with opportunities to achieve their goals. This in turn will impact positively on the economy of the nation hence the need for learning by doing. Learning by doing leads to self-sufficiency, economic viability, sustainability and development.

- Curiosity for learning new things

Pragmatism as a school of philosophy instill in learners the spirit of critical reasoning or thinking. This will pave way for the desire to learn new things. This also breed curiosity for learning new things in life, which ultimately becomes the passion to learn and understand things in a scientific way with objectivism. Education is an investment for economic growth as encapsulated in the national policy on education (NPE, 2004).

Pragmatist philosophers and educators know the necessity of education in the life of a nation. Dewey realized this when he wrote on democracy and education in America and opined that American old educational system of rote learning must give way for practical-oriented education system. This informed the United States committee on education and labour (USCEL) (1998) to aver that:

*education should be concerned first with the well-being of the individual student and his capacity for a productive and happy life as a student and as a worker. But education must also be concerned with the well-being of the nation, its economic and social integrity, its political wisdom, its security and survival, and growth.*

Investment in education therefore is for all round development of a nation, individual citizens, socio-economic, political, etc. Pragmatic education is therefore a panacea for the national progression of

any nation in every facet of its existence. Thus, education is an investment in human capital.

#### IV. RECOMMENDATION

- Government should provide enough funds in order to have the necessary facilities for practical lessons.
- More vocational and technical schools should be established.
- Provision for the production of more qualified vocational and technical teachers should be made.
- Paper certificate should be de-emphasized.

#### CONCLUSION

Our home is the first educational institute where we start learning. School education develops some subject related knowledge, scientific knowledge or some other skills but we learn how to behave with others and learn moral values at home.

Education is the only key to success in the life of an individual. It is a continuous and secure process of achieving goals which not only helps us in obtaining knowledge but also success in life.

Education starts at birth and one can gain it till life ends. Its main aim is to develop a healthy and prosperous society which possesses knowledge, rights, awareness and many other qualities. In providing a good level of education, educators play a very important role.

Whatever we learn through a proper process, goes with us throughout life, which we again in turn hand over to our next generation. A good education always helps us in almost all walks of life and guide us in the right direction. Pragmatic principle of teaching and learning is of relevance to the alternative of this.

Education has unbelievable power. The proper and right use of this power can keep us away from evil and make us wise, problem solver and a responsible citizen. It also keeps our mind calm and peaceful and enables a person to live a balanced happy life. A balance happy life is a condition precedence economic viability. This is easily made possible

through the provision of pragmatically oriented education. A practical education acquired through learning by doing stick to an individual memory and is not easily forgotten by the individual. The graduand of such an educational system is prepared for future living and can easily fend for himself or herself. This in turn will leads to economic viability.

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