

## CHALLENGES OF CREATIVITY AND FUNCTIONAL EDUCATION: IN A COMATOSE ECONOMY

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### **Abstract**

Creativity and innovation are important aspects of today's global economy. The economy and business endeavours depend largely on how much skills are being utilized for profitability. Unfortunately, the school curriculum, especially in Nigerian educational sector does not give room for creative courses; thereby producing students who are not well grounded' in creativity and innovation. For this reason, the graduates do not have all it takes to prepare for challenges that our society and economies face. Creativity is naturally endowed in every human, but this only comes to fruition when it is fostered by instructors. In order to cultivate the right skills and enhance the potentials of every person, the educational curricula must be explored. Without education, the potential citizen of a country is less informed and lacks creative and entrepreneurial skills to boost economy of his or her country. Thus, the school programmes must be relevant and comprehensive, to cater for both educational and entrepreneurial skills of the learners. The paper sets out to examine creativity and innovation in education as a key to effective functionality in a comatose economic society.

Creativity and innovations have become one of the major engines of long-term economic growth and development. The concepts are closely linked with knowledge, which is the key value-creating factor in modern society. In recent decades, the concept of creativity has broadened, it refers to making attempts to come up with new and reliable ideas that would serve purposes beyond its original intent. Creativity paves way for innovations; while the former attempts, the later acts upon what has been attempted. The process of acting upon usually results in inventions which could be technological, non-technological or social inventions in public and private services.

The word, creativity, according to Agbowuro, Saidu and Jimwan (2017), refers to the entire process by which ideas are generated, developed and transformed into values. It has to do with what people mean by innovation and entrepreneurship. Since it deals with skill acquisition, it aims at liberating human energy, especially as ideas of the creative person are seen to be original and of value. Being creative person, therefore means being imaginative, inventive, challenging and daring despite over-winning risks. However, researchers have shown that creativity, especially in a dwindling economic system, like Nigerian's, goes beyond being idea-oriented but being idea-solution oriented. This explains why a lot of people believe that creativity without zeal and courage actualize to actualize dreams is inactive and dead. Similarly, innovations which comes as a result of creativity, does not only entail inventions and changes but also relevant and useful changes in any economic system. The two concepts, however, do not come to fruition without the aid of education. Education and training are therefore the key factors for achieving the economic and social innovations in a country.

According to Ropke (1998), education provides appropriate skills and competences for creativity and innovation and creates new knowledge within the "knowledge triangle" of education, research and innovation.

Since the modern economy requires a broad creative skills base, education sets out to enlighten undergraduate on the fundamental views of the economy. The education of Nigeria, for instance, is expected to be highly rated in natural development places; that is, school activities and curriculum should be relevant, productive and comprehensive so as to enable the learner acquire the appropriate skills for the great economic challenges ahead of them (Udoh and Akpan, 2014). The purpose of this paper is - as the background notes - to initiate an investigation on the need for creativity and innovations in education, so as to foster functionality of the individual in a comatose economic system, like that of Nigeria.

### **Creativity; An Infinite Source of Innovation**

Nigeria, as a developing country is facing enormous socio-economic challenges which is otherwise referred to as economic recession. High rate of low skilled adults and of youth unemployment continue to be on the high increase.

According to Heydesdorff, Loet and Henry (2000), many people are oblivious of the underlying solution to the above menace and as such, they continue to wax cold and impoverish their already poor condition.

Innovation approaches and creative uses of new technological opportunities, the authors observe, create new and better jobs in a new industries and offer potential solutions for the quality maintenance and sustainable development of public service social-security and health-care systems, and as a basis for functionality in a comatose economic society.

Innovation, the creation, dissemination and application of knowledge, has become a major criterion for creativity and functionality in economic expansion and social development. In 1987, for instance, Robert Solow was awarded the Nobel Prize for developing a modern growth theory, which identifies technological progress and innovation as the greatest empires of growth. Since then, it was certain that innovation is a prerequisite of creativity and a significant effect on productivity at the firm-industry and country level.

Agbowuro, Saidu and Iinwan (2017) define creativity as the entire process by which ideas are generated, developed and transferred into values. It comprises what people commonly mean by innovation and entrepreneurship. The authors further opine that creativity is about liberating human energy; a process of developing new ideas that are in fact, original and first of its kind. Creativity and innovation are broad, complex and multi-faceted concepts that can be applied to several fields. Their multi-disciplinary accounts for a variety of approaches and conceptualizations. As Weliner, (Sikszentmihalyi and Magyari—Beck (1991) Point out, the mass of research in creativity can be compared to the elephant in the fable in which blind men have to touch it in order to describe it. As everyone touches a different part, they all come to a different conclusion as to what it is, and fail to recognize it as an elephant.

Craft (2005) sees creativity as the ability to see possibilities that others have not noticed. Esquivel (1995) views it as the critical process involved in the generation of new ideas. Innovation has also been defined as the "intentional introduction and application within a job, work team or organization of ideas processes products or procedures that are new to that job" (West and Richards, 1999). Again, Craft (2005) sees innovation as the implementation of new ideas to create something of

value proven through its uptake in market place. The foregoing indicates that innovation is an integral part of creativity. Creativity is seen as the infinite source of innovation.

### **Challenges of Creativity and Functional Education**

Just as challenges are synonymous with life and to education too, creativity in schools has its own challenges. According to (Ochu A. N. O. and P. F. Haruna, 2014) on this, are listed some school conditions that hinder creativity and functional education. These include, shortage of teachers to teach the subject, lack of equipment in teaching and learning which makes teachers and students to concentrate on the theoretical aspect of the course, large classes where regimentation is essential instead of effective practical exercise, the belief of teachers that creative students are hard to manage and their work harder to grade, discouragement of anything outside the prescribed pattern, teaching strategy that do not contextualize learning to provide students reflection over an extended period of time and finally teachers not serving as facilitators allowing students to construct their knowledge through learning application, action, review and reflection.

Funding also remains a strong militating factor in provision of study materials.

The textbooks are outdated, while others are perhaps of foreign background, which may not actually meet our local needs. These challenges of creativity are related to the factors that lead to poor achievement. One might therefore rightly say that if creativity is enhanced in a basic science classroom, achievement of students in basic science may increase.

The quality of any curriculum rests on the quality of its teachers in the implementation of its programme. Hence, the training of teachers is rated high. In the national policy of education. It is stated that no education system may rise above the quality of its teachers. Again, teacher education shall continue to be given major emphasis in all educational planning and development. It follows that the teacher can neither make or mar the interest of the students in the teaching and learning process. The minimum qualification for entry into the teaching profession as stipulated in the National Policy in Education is the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE). It is emphasized that all teachers in educational institutions shall be professionally trained. Hence, teacher-education programmes shall be structured to equip teachers for the effective performance of their duties.

The quality of education is directly related to the quality of instruction in the classroom. The teacher is considered the most crucial factor in the implementation of all education reforms at the grass root level. It is a fact that the academic qualifications, knowledge of the subject matter, competence, skills of teaching and the commitment of the teacher have effective impact on the teaching. The need for competency of the teacher arises because the competent teacher possesses the ability to provide for and personally utilize more position reinforcement and the elimination of tension within the classroom and to facilitate the development of more positive feeling within the students. Since the enhancement of creativity in the classroom rests more on the shoulders of the teachers and again, it has been noted that enhancing creativity in the teaching and learning process could go a long way in solving or at least ameliorate the poor achievement of students schools.

### **Prospects: Developing Creativity and Innovation Through Education**

The skills needed for innovation tend to be contextual and there are differences in approaches to innovation between and within sectors.

Innovation processes are often networked multi-disciplinary and problem oriented, even higher demands for competences. Education or schooling helps to instill creativity and innovation in learners and the approaches differ depending on the stages of education.

The early stage of the education system usually focuses on motivations, learning to learn skills and other key competences. The further stages focus on more specific skills and competences of a discipline or a field of industry. The Aho report for instance, gives special attention to creating interim and excitement in science and technology. However, the report noted that skills need change at an accelerating rate following close global competition and the development of knowledge, technology and organizations. Thus, learning to learn skills become more and more important in vocational education and training in higher education.

Education and training are necessary for future innovations; but innovations are also needed to improve education systems. Creativity and innovation should therefore be a tool, a strategy and a key to reach those objectives inherent in the economic system of a country.

### **Conclusion**

This paper provided an overview of how creativity and innovation are conceptualized in utilized in the context of education and the economy of a country. The existing research on creativity and innovation is broad, since it addresses multi—faceted concepts. For this study, the idea of creativity and innovation are interwoven; while the former refers to product or process, the latter refers to implementation of such a process or product in a given sphere.

The notion of creativity has been researched in various fields and approached in several ways. This paper shows that creativity can be linked to different factors residing both in the individual and in the surrounding spheres. To sum it up, creativity is education oriented; it undergoes affective and cognitive learning processes. Creativity par innovation in education is not just an opportunity, but a necessity. This work highlighted an inclusive, democratic, political and economic perspective of these concepts, which sees all people as being creative from early childhood to adulthood where they are faced with economic challenges and try to survive in such circumstance.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made:

1. Nigerian curriculum should be modified to include creative and innovative skills at all levels.
2. Government, parents, institutions and organizations should, as a matter of necessity encourage and finance creative programmes and mentions of any kind.
3. Government should ensure to allocate enough funds to educational sector in order to finance technological and entrepreneurial programs in schools. When funds are sufficient, much vocational skills are encouraged in schools.
4. Curriculum load must be reviewed. Curriculum planners must wake up to the demands of mordent era.
5. Economic diversification is necessary.
6. University administrators must, as a matter of responsibility, ensure to launch programs leading to skills acquisition by would be teachers, instead of training than only on the teaching-practice techniques and methods.
7. Teachers must realize that education moves away from classroom. Education must also train the students in vocational skills in order to qualify them as potential self-employed graduates.

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