

**CORRELATIONAL REVIEW ON CORE BRANCHES OF
PHILOSOPHY AND EDUCATION**

George Chizoba Okpara, PhD

Department of Educational Foundations

Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Email: georgecokpara@yahoo.com

Abstract

It appears that the study of philosophy in most academic institutions in Nigeria is merely done on the grounds that it has been designed in the curriculum as one of the courses that would be taken either as a general course, core course or elective course and for the sake of meeting the credit load requirements for graduation; without full understanding of the relationship that exist between aspects of philosophy and education. In this paper therefore, the writer reviewed the relationship between the branches of philosophy and education. Analytic and discussion methods are applied in the paper as the writer interprets and removes ambiguity of the concepts and issues that are involved in the discourse. It was established as deduced from the views of different scholars on the issue under review, that great relationship exist between philosophy and education and lack of understanding of this fact makes it difficult to apply the tenets of both disciplines well in the course teaching and learning. Based on the foregoing, the writer suggested among other things that all aspects of philosophy should be effectively taught where applicable in Nigerian educational institutions in such a way that the knowledge inherent in it would be accessible to the recipients of education.

Keywords: Philosophy and Education

Introduction

Philosophy has been described as a multifaceted discipline and the multiplicity nature of philosophy is not a mere assumption but a justifiable fact. Every aspect of human endeavour is guided by one philosophy or the other; hence, one can talk of the philosophy of law, philosophy of education, philosophy of science, and so on. The feeling of wonder is the hallmark of philosophy. That is to say that all philosophy has its origin in wonder and this wonder arouses the philosopher to begin a search for the truth from which he obtains the knowledge of the phenomena under investigation. Philosophy involves the philosopher's attempt to ask and answer, in a formal and systematic way, the great questions of life which non philosophers would not bother asking. For the sake of answering the numerous questions of life, philosophy presents itself like a tree with many branches. However, the core branches of philosophy include metaphysics, epistemology, axiology and logic. There has been some level of debate among scholars as to whether logic is a branch of philosophy or not. While some argue in favour, others argue against. In this work, the writer is of the opinion that logic is included as a branch of philosophy; hence, it is discussed as such. Metaphysics is the branch of philosophy that covers the areas of cosmology, nature and existence. Epistemology on the other hand deals with issues of knowledge while axiology covers all aspects of values, ethics, aesthetic, and the likes. Logic focuses on human capacity to reason, how human being reasons and how they ought to reason. Each of these branches has something to do with man and since man needs knowledge to exist on earth, he is meant to undergo the process of acquiring the needed knowledge. The process of acquiring this knowledge by man is referred

to as education; and at one point or the other in the course of the education of man, all these branches of philosophy play significant role.

Education on the other hand has been described as a viable instrument for the development and transformation of man which consequently would lead to the development of the society. It has been acknowledged globally as a veritable tool for the deliverance of man from darkness (ignorance) to light (knowledge). For the fact that man needs one form of education or the other, he must be linked to the philosophy that guides the educated man. On that note, therefore, philosophy and education are affiliated in many ways. Philosophy manifests itself in various ways but the focus of this paper is to link the core branches of philosophy to education. In this article, the writer's intention is to expose the readers to and opens their minds to the interconnectedness between the branches of philosophy and education and to draw some implications or lessons that would be useful to the readers. The discourse would not go well without the review of the major concepts that constitute the subject of this paper; hence the following concepts are reviewed;

Philosophy

Philosophy as a term means different things to different people but the whole ideas on what philosophy is appears to have pointed at one direction. John Dewey as cited in Oladipo (2014:66) described Philosophy as a criticism of criticism; a vision whose chief function is to free men's minds from bias and prejudice and to enlarge their perceptions of the world around them; as well as a social method for dealing with the social and moral strife of man's daily living. This implies that philosophy places its microscope on establishing the truth inherent in a subject matter and it does this by subjecting all issues to question and or criticism. Jacques Maritan as quoted in Odionye (2018) defined Philosophy as the science which by the natural light of reason studies the causes or highest principles of all things; the science of things in their first causes in so far as these belong to the natural order. This means that philosophy is a discipline that has interest in understanding how things happen and why it happens especially as it concerns the cosmos.

Metaphysics

Metaphysics is classified as a speculative/theoretical philosophy and most often referred to as general philosophy. The concept of metaphysics arises with Aristotle following the series of essays he wrote on fundamental problems about the classification or categories of being. Specifically, metaphysics involves an inquiry into the first principles of being, that is, the attempt to discover the most pervasive characteristics that underlie all human knowledge and reasoning. But fundamentally, the concern of metaphysics has been to provide answers to these basic questions in the broadest possible terms; what is ultimately there? What is it like?

Metaphysics as a concept has an infinite arrays of conceptions and definitions but in all these definitions, the basis of metaphysics is to provide possible answers to all of questions bordering on beings and existence. According to Troxell and Synder (2013:18), metaphysics refers to a "subject that is non-empirical and non-scientific, concerned with the explanation of the fundamental nature of being (ontology) and the world (cosmology)". They further noted that, while the ontological aspect of metaphysics inquires into the essence and nature of pure beings and the principles of things as they are in reality, its cosmological aspect inquires into the order and principles related to the existence in the physical world, that is questioning the

issues of chance and change, space and time, quality and quantity, contiguous relationships, matter and form, causality and effects, magnitude and extension of bodies, succession and performance, and other such concerns of physical relationships observable about natural physical universe.

Gradually the term came to be used to describe the study of the supernatural. Its cosmological aspect raises questions on the nature and existence of God. If he does exist, what is his mode of existence? It tries to understand the nature and the real universe, the distinction between the particular and the universal, individuals and classes, the nature of relations, change, causation, and the nature of mind and mental objects like ideas, thoughts, imagination and soul. It also studies the problem of evil, freedom and determinism. It must be noted therefore that, in contemporary discourse, metaphysical discussion has shifted from its pre-occupation with questions of the existence of God and nature to questions about process and causation.

Epistemology

Epistemology is that branch of philosophy which questions the nature, source, validity, veracity and utility of knowledge. Epistemology is the science of the validity or truth-value of human knowledge, (Umar, 2002:27). That is to say that the A-Z of human knowledge is the major concern of Epistemology. It examines what we mean by knowing and distinguishes it from believing by ensuring certainty in whatever we claim to know. It subjects our knowledge to critical examination and investigates the rationale or grounds on which it rests. Moseley (2012) explained that, epistemology raises questions which are relevant to sciences and also to our basic modes of understanding. He further stressed that several broad philosophical traditions have emerged in the quest for certainty; there are those who argue that we can be certain of what we sense and those who claim that we can be certain of what we think. According to Eboh (2016:108), “epistemology tests knowledge to distinguish truth from falsity; hence, it is also referred to as criteriology, critique of knowledge and theory of knowledge”. According to Cline (2014:12), “epistemology involves an investigation into the grounds and nature of knowledge itself, it focuses on means of acquiring knowledge and how we can differentiate between truth and falsehood”. Epistemology exposes one to steps that would help him or her to analyze the nature of knowledge and how it relates to similar notions and also deals with the means of generating knowledge, as well as skepticism about different knowledge claims, Onyeocha, (2017:7). In the same way, Uka (2012) posited that epistemology as the theory of knowledge tries to sort the standard to which genuine knowledge should conform; attempts at characterizing the kind of knowledge which a given method of study might yield in certain kind of subject matter and how that knowledge will conform to what are acceptable as criteria for knowledge. Okoh (2003) did not clearly define epistemology but highlighted and explained four philosophical approaches to epistemology. These approaches as he noted are represented by Philosophical skepticism, modern rationalism (Idealism), classical empiricism (Realism) and pragmatism. Philosophical skepticism he noted is traceable to the pre-Socratic philosophers who denied the possibility of attaining true knowledge. They held that nothing can be known; that it was futile to see objective knowledge and that any knowledge at all was subjective and constantly changing. Modern rationalism or idealism, originated by Plato, asserts that we cannot say that there are substantive physical object apart from our rational knowledge of such. In other words, knowledge is a clear-cut ideas and logical deduction of reasons for action. Classical empiricism (Realism) postulated that the primary idea is that the universe is made up of

physical objects existing in themselves whether known or not, suggesting that all knowledge comes through the senses and not a product of intuition; hence, the realists argue that the child's mind at birth is pure capacities devoid of actual content. In other words it is a "tabula rasa" (a blank tablet) as yet non-inscribed, his active tendencies are determined by and dependent on his nature, his senses and his experiences. Pragmatism which is an offshoot of empiricism, posits that all knowledge come through the senses and that observation is an important tool of acquiring true knowledge. Empiricists' strength lies on experimental character of knowledge. Hence, the pragmatists agreed that knowledge is neither first in the hand nor merely in the world of senses, rather knowledge they believed comes through experience and experimentation; through action, through doing, which involves interactions with and transformation of the environment. In other words, the pragmatists are of the opinion that, knowledge can be true or false based on the result of how the objects of our ideas and our experiences react to relevant tests and experiments. According to Bowaji (2015), one discipline of epistemology focuses on partial knowledge. In most cases, it is not possible to understand an information domain exhaustively because human knowledge is always incomplete or partial. More so, Lawhead (2002:565) opined that "epistemological study makes it possible to obtain knowledge that is purely objective, value-free and politically neutral." In other words, knowledge is always related to the standpoint of a particular knower, and knowledge claims reflect the dominant values and political structures of a society.

Axiology

Axiology is literarily defined as the study of values. In the words of Ibiam (2013), axiology is that branch of speculative philosophy which tries to evaluate the various basis or grounds of our interests; choices, preferences, wants or desires. It is a branch of philosophy that deals with both intrinsic and extrinsic value. In affirmation to Ibiam's opinion, Uduigwom (2015) described intrinsic value as ends in themselves while extrinsic values are means to other ends. In other words, the acquired values like knowledge when deposited in man becomes intrinsic values but when man uses the acquired knowledge to make out resources to sustain livelihood it becomes extrinsic value . Axiology is divided into two components namely; Ethics and Aesthetics.

Ethics which is sometimes referred to as moral philosophy originated from the Greek word '*ethos*'-meaning custom or character. This is the code of conducts or set of principles which binds a group of people together. Ethics is the discipline that deals with the systematic study of the code and principles by which men live, (Cherry, 2016). Ethics attempts to lay the basis of determining what is good and bad, rightness and wrongness. Technically, the term is used with reference to the study of the principles and codes of human conduct. Where the principle is normative, ethics is used interchangeably with morality. Thus normative ethics has to do with the study and prescription of rules and regulations regarding the rightness and wrongness of human action. This approach to ethics determines what is to be done and what is not to be done if the human person is to live a moral life. Where the study of human actions centers on the prescription of how human beings behave or act without actually making value judgment or prescribing how human beings should or should not act, the study is known as descriptive ethics. This is the approach often employed by the social scientists or the behaviouralists. On the other hand, where the study centers on the clarification and definition of ethical concepts and terms, the approach is referred to as metaethical. Of all the approaches

to ethics, normative ethics is the one that applies to morality. It deals basically with human beings and how they relate to and treat other beings to promote natural welfare, growth, creativity and meaning in pursuit of what is good over what is bad and what is right over what is wrong.

Aesthetics on the other hand is the branch of axiology that is interested in the mind and emotions in relation to the sense of beauty. It is derived from the Greek word “*aesthetics*” meaning ‘perception through the senses. In other words aesthetic is more interested on the outward makeup of beings and their environment.

Logic

Logic is derived from the Greek word ‘logos’ which means reason. Logic is the practical branch of philosophy concerned with reasoning as it examines the structure of valid and correct human reasoning. It attempts to develop systems and criteria for detecting fallacies in arguments. Popkinas affirmed in Ofoego (2017) explained that logic is that branch of philosophy which reflects upon the nature of thinking itself; perhaps the most fundamental branch of philosophy because all branches of philosophy employ thinking and whether this thinking is correct or not it will depend on whether it is in accordance with the law of logic. It may be correct to deduce that logic is the study of rules and techniques of correct reasoning and argumentation. In a clear term logic enables one to distinguish between good and bad reasoning, valid and invalid reasoning, logical and illogical, sound and unsound reasoning. There are two major subdivisions of logic namely; formal and material logic. Formal logic deals with validity, coherence and structure of reasoning while material logic deals with the material, content and correspondence of reasoning, (Ezeani, 2012). He further explained that, unlike formal logic, material logic deals with exactitude, the truthfulness of the facts expressed within every one of the proposition. That means it considers whether what is said in a given proposition is actually true, right, the fact, if so the argument is valid and if otherwise is invalid

Metaphysics and education correlated

The unprecedented breakthroughs in the field of science and technology, and other human invasions make the study of metaphysics very useful in education which has as its objective, the transmission of knowledge about the world. Knowledge of Metaphysics would help students to understand and develop deeper understanding about the society in which they live as well as the world around them. The implication of this is that, studying and understanding metaphysical issues would help even the curriculum developers to design educational curriculum to accommodate both the physical and the spiritual aspect of human development; and when man’s spirituality which remains important for the moral development of individuals is taken care of through education, the society will surely be a better place to live. Broad knowledge in metaphysics would also enable both the teachers and the learners understand and appreciate the metaphysical assumptions that underlie educational practices. The study and knowledge of Metaphysics would challenge man’s interests in exploring the world in search of deeper understanding of the world around him. It will enable students to discover new areas of knowledge, realize those lifelong goals and become more responsible citizens of the society.

The exposure to nature obtainable in the course of studying metaphysical issues is very crucial for any education system to 'produce' in all ramifications an educated man. Therefore the correlation between metaphysics and education lies on the fact that while metaphysics reveals some natural and universal issues that directs the process and practice of education, education serves as a process of exposing the ignorant man with metaphysical issues that would help him in adjusting properly to fit in the world.

Epistemology and education correlated

Epistemological issues are paramount in education; due to the fact that knowledge is an epistemological concept as well as a central issue in education. The whole essence of education is to transmit worthwhile knowledge to the receiver (man). The link between epistemology and education therefore, is that while education aims at transmitting the said worthwhile knowledge, epistemology is that theory of knowledge that questions the worthwhileness of what is being transmitted as knowledge to the recipients of education. In other words, epistemology is the branch of philosophy which inquires into all aspect of knowledge content of education, with the view to ensuring that the receivers of education are not misinformed in the name of education.

The study of Epistemology exposes the teacher to various sources of knowledge, their validity (soundness), veracity (reality or genuineness), utility (relevance or usefulness) and certainty among other things. With the knowledge of the above the teacher will be better equipped to censor what he or she is transmitting to the learner as knowledge. Again, because epistemology exposes the teacher to in-depth knowledge of how to teach, the teacher is left with no option but to study the diversified teaching approaches and method which makes him or her better equipped to teach different subject and subject matters, using suitable methodologies. The knowledge of epistemological issues help the curriculum designers a great deal in considering the nature and types of knowledge and beliefs and how they can be captured in the curriculum content for the learners at different levels.

Axiology and education correlated

It has been noted in this article that axiology is subdivided into ethics and aesthetics. Each of these axiological branches of philosophy is linked to education. Ethics is a moral philosophy that is concerned with the rightness and wrongness of human actions while aesthetic aspect of it is concerned with physical features of man and his environment. In this case, human actions as well as the features of man and his environment are essential in education. Speaking of teaching ethics or ethics in teaching (education), we refer to the set of rules or codes which regulate and control the behaviours and conducts of the teacher and the learner in the course of education.

Education is a worthwhile venture and a value laden activity. Thus, the relevance of ethics to education is embedded in the transmission of those worthwhile moral behaviours, respect for elders and constituted authorities, equal educational opportunities and so on. Thus, Plato emphatically believes that any process that does not teach virtue, no matter the interests it may carryout, cannot be called education. In the same vein, Aristotle linked education to virtue and ignorance to vices. This therefore implies that education is not only a powerful tool for the development of the intellect, but also for the development of shared beliefs, attitude,

values, moral and ethical principles for the survival and sustenance of the society. Hence, ethics cannot be devoid of education lest the society is thrown into anarchy.

Aesthetics on the other hand is relevant in education in the sense that it has increased the excitement in teaching and learning of arts in which one expresses oneself in new ways; either through music, arts, dance, drama or in any other aesthetics fields. Aesthetics entails the exploration of a broad range of human relationships. Thus, education serves as a medium for the inculcation of those acceptable values and societal norms that promotes healthy interpersonal relationship. Since aesthetics is an aspect of all activity, perception and intelligent thoughts, understanding of aesthetics ideals would help students discover new ways of looking at, listening to, moving in and speaking in their everyday experience with regards to the appreciation of the works of arts.

Education can be rich or poor in sensory activities, this accounts that the meaning and function of the senses in the learning process are important for the development of the aesthetics ideals in education. A good educational situation, no doubt, makes one susceptible to learning. This means that the concept of aesthetics in the educational environment comprises much more than just the purely technical skills that are being taught in the visual arts room. A whole picture of the aesthetic educational environment at school would include lessons in the visual arts, woodwork, physical education, home economics, projects, exhibitions, theatre, the interior design etc. This means that the more appealing the environment is, the more stimulating teaching and learning would be to the learners.

Logic and education correlated

Logic is central in every philosophical discourse. Its usefulness in education is unlimited. When we talk about the relevance of logic to education, and to our life, it can only be placed on scale, alongside the study of the subject. In other words, the relevance of logic can be felt mainly when we have committed sufficient attention to studying it. For the sake of clarity, the link between logic and education lies in the fact that; firstly, logic is connected with training the mind to think clearly. Consequently, education is an instrument for training of a critical and rational mind. Secondly, education aims at making every individual that is exposed to it a better, more functional and acceptable member of the society. Logic on the other hand allows these individuals to evaluate situations and to make increasingly superior decisions in life. In addition, logic is the basis of all existence used to comprehend all aspects of reality; and without a basic grasp of logic which one is exposed to in the course of education, it will appear impossible for one to function effectively in a knowledge driven society. Thirdly, Logic empowers the students who are committed to its study, with the ability to right reasoning and engaging in constructive argument through formalization, deductive proofs, analysis and clarification. Fourthly, learning is interconnected to other fields of knowledge, therefore, understanding the principles of logic will help one learn other fields of knowledge easily because logic helps students in understanding salient issues in the course of their education.

Conclusion

Branches of philosophy have several implications for educational processes and practices. It is necessitated by the fact that philosophy treats more of abstract concept with in-depth knowledge and so students and teachers especially in the field of education ought to relate

these abstract concepts and issues to the field of education. All branches of philosophy expose one to in-depth knowledge of the world/universe, human knowledge, moral issue, ethical theories and applications, human reasoning and capability, among other things. It is noted in this article therefore, that education serves as the vehicle that conveys the knowledge embedded in the branches of philosophy in a more coordinated manner, to the learners who are committed to education. On this note, the correlation between these discussed branches of philosophy and education has been established in this paper. The educational implication therefore, is that, philosophy should be effectively taught where applicable in Nigerian education institutions in such a way that the knowledge inherent would be accessible to the receivers of education.

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