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# Advocacy for a Pragmatic Education in Nigeria Universities

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**Abstract:** The major essence of education is for information and training which will help in rehabilitation of an individual and the community at large. In our country, Nigeria education is recognized as a major instrument for effective national development, this is evident leading to the number of universities in the country. The crista importance of education is that it's crucial for social, economic and political development. It is unfortunate that this aim has not been achieved in Nigeria because her curriculum is shabbily organized and as such lack practical nature which makes education more formidable and substantial. The universities in Nigeria are seen globally as producing liabilities instead of assets. Every year, over 32,000 youths graduate from Nigeria universities without any plan to better the country's economy. This is the problem created by the university system due to the fact that the curriculum could not capture the need of the country, rather, the need of the school aiming towards generation of income through school fees payment. If the curriculum is restructured to give more room for practical than theory, the Nigeria economy would have been superb. This article identified and advocates a pragmatic curriculum in Nigeria University Education. The researcher recommends pragmatism as a true solution for educational meltdown in Nigeria. These goals of education can be fully attained if and only if pragmatic approach is adopted in Universities education curriculum in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Education, University, Pragmatism, Nigeria and Curriculum

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## 1. Introduction

The Nigerian Education is at a 'tutorage' stage, it has very much been neglected and left to suffer a bad fate. A nation that neglects education does so at its own risk. The consequences are made manifest in different ways in our national life. In the first place, the contemporary Nigerian education does not equip its recipients to be self-reliance. It removes people from productive activities in industry and agriculture. It channels every educated man/woman to pen-pushing and white kola jobs or to the unproductive arena of politics, obtaining by tricks, fake contract award, and currently, the more lucrative kidnap for ransom. The reason behind this is that our education system has failed to make people to be self-reliant in their life endeavours. The value attached to paper qualification in the Nigerian society has also caused more harm than good to the education sector.

In today's Nigeria society, what matters is not what can be done but what certificate. This is to the extent that the acquisition of certificate has become a tool for social

mobility whether relevant to the needs of the society or not. In an effort to be qualified, these certificates are acquired at all means and costs, including examination malpractice. It has given rise to a situation where certificates are acquired for the sake of securing employment at the expense of productivity. Thus, the country continues to suffer low outputs of goods and services, while looking up to foreign personnel to salvage her economy. This is a hilarious situation that needs urgent attention.

In an effort to salvage and revitalize the Nigeria education and give it a futuristic hope the researcher therefore adopted pragmatism as the best method of teaching and learning in Nigeria University. He further advised that the curriculum reformers and the Nigeria University administrators should as a matter of fact adopt and enforce pragmatism in the school curriculum.

## 2. Conceptual Clarification

Terms are clarified in accordance with its usage for the understanding of the readers. Some of the concepts

explicated in this work for the avoidance of ambiguity are as follows:

### **2.1. Curriculum**

Curriculum is a word which was derived from its Latin root “currus”, it simply means ‘a race course or race track for chariots’. It however becomes a course which someone runs to meet a goal. In the ancient Latin America, the latin meaning of curriculum therefore is a “vehicle in which we move from cradle to the grave” [1].

A lot of interpretations have been given of curriculum, some have equated curriculum to scheme of work, academic syllabus, teaching units or course outline. For instance, a school supervisor once narrated his experience with a certain teacher. He told us that during their school supervision in a certain school in Nsukka, a teacher was told to bring out the school curriculum she went and brought their academic syllabus. It is clear to understand it here that curriculum is not syllabus, scheme of work or course outline, hence curriculum is more than the scheme of work or course outline. In the mind of the teacher narrated above, curriculum is a collection of syllabus or subject matter of instruction such as chemistry, physics, biology, geography and history. This means that one can make a curriculum if one understands the nature of school subjects.

In the look at the definition and explanation of curriculum above, one will see that it does not embrace the connotation of the Latin definition of curriculum. According to some educators, “curriculum is an attempt to communicate the essential principles and features of an educational proposals in such a form that it is open to critical scrutiny and capable of effective transmission into practice” [2]. It is also defined as “all the planned experiences provided by the school to assist learners attain the designated learning outcomes to the best of their abilities” [3]. Curriculum has several definitions and each definition is according to the understanding of the educator. Taba defines curriculum as a plan learning [4] while Macdonald defines it as plan material that precedes instruction [5]. However, curriculum is a document designed to be used as a point of departure for instructional planning [6].

Curriculum is central to education at all level in the world. It is an instrument for possible education. Curriculum is the medium through which the educational institutions seek to translate the societal values into concrete reality. Through this, educational institutions actualize what the society considers as desirable learning.

### **2.2. Education**

Education according to Ukeje is the process by which people are acclimatized to the culture into which they are born in order that they may advance it [7]. This definition points to the aim at which school is been established. The purpose of educational establishment was to teach the young the culture and norms of the society so that they may advance it. Onuoha in a similar view defines education as process by

which the individual is enabled to develop his capabilities through the acquisition of skill, knowledge, values and attitudes both for his own benefit and for the benefit of the society [8].

The above definitions therefore pointed out what education stands to project. It is a process of teaching or passing on the way of life of the people to the younger generation. It is the responsibility of the youth to learn from the elders the norms and culture of the land and make every effort to advance. This is why students are been encouraged to read wider to enable them advance in their selected field of specialization.

Plato, one of the frontiers of education stated that education is a means of acquisition of skill. He was of the opinion that education is very important in the state because it is through education that the child will be trained. He further stated that the philosopher king who could rule the state must be well educated [8]. Education can be looked at as the process of development or enfoldment or the process of developing the abilities or capabilities of the individual. These abilities might be physical abilities. Education involves nursing and nurturing of an individual so that he or she will become a full fledged member of the society. Education is a continue process, it starts from the cradle and end in the grave.

### **2.3. University**

The word university comes from the Latin “Universitas” which in turn was derived from two more Latin words ‘Uni’(one) and ‘Versus’(in the direction of, towards), the composites of the both words become ‘universus’. The common use of the word is “Universus mundi” meaning the whole world. As time passes on, the expression was replaced in a common usage by the neuter form ‘Universum’ meaning universe. It is a word used in referencing to the entire created order seen as constituting a unified whole. Further, the Latin suffix ‘itas’ (genitive-itis) refers to a state of being. So the word ‘unitas’ means the state of being united into one: and the word ‘Universitas’ originally expreed the state of being formed into one hole from diverse sources.

In the middle ages, the meaning was expanded to include the state of something which is conceived as being constituted of several parts and overtimes, it can also be referred to a group of people united for common objective or purpose, a corporation. Hence, it came to pass that by the twelve century, a gathering of masters and students for the transmission of universal knowledge, a “studium generale” i.e a school of general knowledge came to be known as “universitas magistrorum et scholarium”, that is a community of teachers and students [9], which overtime became known by its short form ‘universitas’ (University).

According to Henry Newman, a university is a citadel of leaning, a veritable republic of universal knowledge where scholars and teachers congregate for the dissemination of knowledge [10]. He sees the university in the role of an impartial arbitrator between rival claims of competing branches of knowledge, assigning to each its proper sphere and restricting their propensity for mutual encroachment and

violation of intellectual boundaries. The purpose of the university is to train and educate different classes of people of all branches of knowledge. This was exemplified by Charle Magne in his "Studis Generalia", in the leading cities of the kingdom, Paris, Pavia and Bologua. Charle Magne sought out eminent scholars from all across Europe and invited them to come, work and live in his dominion. He intended these people to educate clergy, the nobility, as well as the poor. There were to be intellectual meeting classes for all ranks, classes and races. Such was a University in idea and purpose.

#### **2.4. Pragmatism**

Pragmatism is a modern philosophy of education; that is, it is not an ancient philosophy of education like Idealism and Realism. Its major advocates are Americans: Charles Sanders Pierce, William James, and John Dewey. John Dewey is however the most prominent among them. He is a renowned philosopher because of his prolific writings and immense contribution to social, political, economic, and educational discussions. John Dewey would prefer to refer to pragmatism more as experimentalism because of the emphasis of the philosophy on exploration of the natural and social environments for man's personal and societal development [11].

The pragmatists believe in the democratic ideals because it is only in a democratic society where freedom, character, intelligence and other potentialities are developed. They also subscribe to life-long education to enhance the update of knowledge to be at equilibrium with the new realities in the changing world. As John Dewey would say, "education is the constant reconstruction or re-organization of experience" [11]. The ability to constantly apply experiences to meet the challenges of later problems is to the pragmatists, very necessary. And, to them, because the world is constantly changing, there are no already-made answers to problems hence, the need for life-long education so as to face the challenges that are bound to occur. This will ultimately lead to self-reliance.

In the pragmatic philosophy, the curriculum should be made to eliminate the gap that exists between what is learnt in school and the wider society. All genuine knowledge emanates from a problem or difficulty. This implies that an adequate curriculum must be activity centered that will give opportunities to the learners to explore and solve problems themselves. Thus, pragmatism recommends learning by doing and, teaching to be related to pupil's interest and experience. Finally, the pragmatists see the role of the school as linking new experiences in school and those of the outer society.

### **3. Origin of Nigeria Education**

What we have today as Nigeria Education emanated during the missionary activities in Nigeria. When the missionaries found it difficult carrying out their missionary work due to language barrier, then calls the need for

enlightenment of the people. The missionaries hired some indigenous labourers to serve them as catechist, clerk and interpreters in the propagation of Christian faith in Nigeria.

However, in 1842, schools were established, these schools were attached to the missionaries to cater for the few converts they got who were taught to read, write, solve simple arithmetic and also learn the catechism. From this process the spread of education began in Nigeria till the era of Higher education.

The first higher educational institution was the Yaba Higher College which was established in 1932 as the first institution of higher learning. But before the establishment of Yaba College, there was post-secondary educations in the form of vocational education and sub-professional courses were taught there such as Agriculture, which was been conducted and learnt at the central Agricultural Research Station, Moore Plantation, Ibadan and Samaru near Zaria. Veterinary Science, which was taught at Vom, near Jos, and Engineering which was conducted in Lagos by the Nigeria Railway Company and the Government Technical department [12].

The agitation of Nigerians for a more comprehensive higher education provision led to the constitution of Asquith and Elliot Commissions on Higher Education. Their reports in 1943 favoured the establishment of universities in Nigeria. Consequently, in 1948, the University College Ibadan was founded as an affiliate of the University of London. The inception of World War from 1939-1945 affected the institution seriously; this was due to the deployment of lecturers into military and unavailability of fund.

The visit of Dr. K. Mellaby in July, 1947 dashed in hope for the revitalization of the institution in Nigeria. Mellaby took over the institution as the nucleus of new University College where he was automatically made the principal. On February, 1948 the University College was relocated to Ibadan and all the 109 students of the institution were equally transferred to Ibadan on Christmas of the same year to form the foundational students of the University in Ibadan.

In the year 1959, the Nigeria government commissioned an inquiry (Ashby Commission) to advise her on the higher education need in Nigeria. In 1960, at the independence, University college of Ibadan became a fully-fledged University. In the Easter Nigeria, the University of Nigeria Nsukka was established in 1960 while Obafemi Awolowo University, Ille Ife was established in the west in 1961 and Aimadu Bellow University was established in the North in 1962. In 1962, the University of Lagos was also born and in the year 1970, the University of Benin was founded.

In the year 1977, seven Universities were established. These Universities include, University of Calabar (1975), University of Illorin (1976), University of Jos (1975), University of Sokoto (1977), University of Maiduguri (1977), University of Port Harcourt (1977) and University of Kano (1977), these Universities became federal Universities by the virtue of Decree 46 of 1977 which authorized the federal government to take over all the Universities in Nigeria.

In 1979, the constitution authorized the state governments to establish their own Universities in their states if it pleases them. Then, with this authority between 1979 and 1985, the following Universities were established; Bendel State University, Ekpoma; Anambra State University of science and technology, Enugu; Imo State University, Ekiti; Ogun State University, Ago-Iwoye; Ondo State University, Ado-Ekiti; River State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt; Cross River State University, Uyo; and Lagos State University, Ijanikin.

Between the year 1981 and 1985, seven other federal Universities were founded. These were federal Universities of Technology Bauchi (1981), Markudi (1982), Owerri (1982), Yola (1983), Akure (1983), Abeokuta (1984), and Minna (1984). Since the period of democratic Republic till this present date, several universities especially private Universities have emerged. Today, there are federal universities in all the thirty six (36) States of the federation including the capital territory, Abuja.

#### 4. The Philosophy and Objective of Nigeria Education

The philosophy of Nigerian education is embedded in the National Policy on Education. According to the policy document, the five national goals which Nigeria's philosophy of education draws its strength are: 1. A free and democratic society: The question that readily comes to mind here is what does a free and democratic society entail? And how can this be achieved through education?

A free society, is a society where the citizens do not suffer restraints or undue interference. They are at liberty to achieve whatever they want to achieve that the least capable person can attain. Just like freedom, democracy implies: 1. That all men possess certain inalienable rights; 2. That all humans are to be regarded equal in certain respects; 3. Faith in human intelligence; 4. Enhancement of individual freedom; 5. Right to peaceful dissent [13].

1. The needed level of awareness of the citizens of the Nigerian society on the benefits of a free and democratic society as outlined above can be achieved through a virile education system that is guided by rational policy, which the society itself has evolved for its own benefit [14].
2. A just and egalitarian society: The attributes of a just and egalitarian society entails that all persons should be considered of equal importance and their opinions treated equally and seriously [15]. Underneath a just and egalitarian society is the principle of justice and fairness; and the principle of fairness to all is also the principle of equity. The goals of a just and egalitarian society can indeed be pursued through education. Here, education can be used to deliberately inculcate in the learner the spirit of fairness and help to recognize individual differences and needs.
3. A great and dynamic economy: A dynamic economy is

an economy that is capable of enhancing equitable income distribution by: i) Eliminating absolute poverty; ii) Participation of broadly based group in public matter affecting the citizens; iii) A reduction in the level of literacy; iv) A greater control and manipulation of the resource endowment of the nation by the internal forces. The role of education in achieving a great and dynamic economy for Nigeria cannot be underestimated. Skilled manpower of various categories and in their diverse qualities is needed in the various economic sectors to pursue the goals of economic growth and development. It is through the process of education that these skills are developed and used to implement any meaningful economic development plan [16].

4. A united, strong and self-reliant nation and A land full of bright opportunities for all citizens: To build a united country entails that education should be able to inculcate in every Nigerian the ability contribute to the development or up-liftmen of the country; every Nigerian should be his brother's keeper irrespective of religion, ethnicity or social background; a country that will be strong in defending its territory; a country that defends the rights of her people and upholds the integrity and dignity of its citizens and provide social securities [16].

Based on the above national aspirations, the philosophy of the Nigerian education seeks to achieve the following: a) the development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen. b) The full integration of the individual into the community; and c) The provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school system. In order to make the philosophy of education work harmoniously for Nigeria's goals, education in Nigeria has to be tailored towards self-realization, right human relations, individual and national efficiency, effective citizenship, national consciousness, national unity as well as towards social, cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological progress [17]. Following this aim, the Nigerian education system is value-laden and seeks for the betterment of the citizens in order that they may live a better life and contribute to the advancement of society.

#### 5. Problems with Nigeria University Education

The Nigeria University has witnessed a lot of problems, and many problems are still living and leaning within the institutions today. Our major concern in this work would have been to proffer solution to our education problems but we cannot provide solution unless the problems are enunciated. However, some of the major problems discovered in our Universities today are discussed as follows:

Foundational Problems: Foundation here stands for pre-formation into the university. The good foundation is laid

with their primary and secondary educational system [18]. Unfortunately, the reverse is the case in our Nigeria; our primary and secondary educational system is nothing to write home about. Our primary and secondary schools are left without maintenance; most of them are left with no infrastructure that is needed for adequate studies, especially, those located in the rural areas. I once visited a primary school where there were only two buildings in which one of them serves as head teacher's office and the other taken to be pupil's classroom. I imagined where the rest of the pupils stay for their lesson until one of the teachers told me that they were staying under the marina tree. That is the case of most primary schools in this country. Adeyinka opined thus;

In majority of Nigerian primary and secondary schools, the classroom accommodation is grossly inadequate. As a result of the large enrolments in these schools, the classrooms are usually overcrowded, with up to sixty or more students receiving instructions in classrooms designed for only thirty or, forty students. In most cases, the chairs and desks are not enough; you see them sharing chairs, standing up, or sitting on windows or broken desks. When students are over crowded like this, there is a stalling of the teaching-learning process and a disruption of the children's mental activity, 'a situation that generally militates against effective teaching and intellectual development of the children [19].

In such situation, what do you think pupils will learn? Most of them concentrate on the cars and motorcycles that passed within their area. Any lecture that is not conducted in a good and conducive environment has little or no impact on the pupil.

Mention is not to be made of the quality and quantity of staff engaged to teach and manage these schools. Most of our primary and secondary school have two or three teachers taking all the classes in the school. Among these teachers that they may have, none of them in most cases is qualified due to the fact that they never attended any institute of education which should equip them to handle the pupil at that level. According to Adamolekun, in 2008, Kwara State tested 19,125 teachers in Primary Four Mathematics... Only seven teachers attained the minimum benchmark for the test in Mathematics. Only one of 2,628 teachers with degree passed the test; 10 graduates scored zero. The literacy assessment recorded only 1.2 percent pass [20]. Our primary and secondary school being the foundations of our higher education is expected to be formidable but alas the reverse is the case.

Lack of Vibrant Staff in Methods and Techniques of Teaching: The policy of education in Section 47 states clearly "All teachers in tertiary institutions shall be encouraged to undergo training in the methods and techniques of teaching". This is to enhance their teaching, but Nigeria is good in policy, its accomplishment will always take a decade. Most institutions of higher learning in Nigeria lack staff development programme for training and re-training of staff.

Vibrant staff development programme on a continuous basis will help academic and non-academic to clarify and

modify their behaviour, attitude, value, skills and competencies. In this way, they grow and develop in their knowledge and thus become more effective and efficient in the performance of tasks. Staff development is paramount because knowledge of today is only sufficient for today. In this era of knowledge explosion and emergent knowledge based economy, staff development should be the priority of any nation. Peretomode in his own part, argued that "the weakness of post graduate programmes of some institutions of higher learning in Nigeria required a strong staff development programme for staff" [21]. He maintained that universities are staffed by lecturers who are not familiar with the topography of educational landscape and have never been expected to formulate their own philosophies of education or their own views about teaching and learning.

Glorification of Examination Malpractice: In Nigerian higher institutions, examination malpractice has been glorified to the level of being a virtue in that anybody that preaches against it is seen as being wicked or stupid, old fashioned or outdated and anybody that tries to prevent or stop students from participating in it is seen as an enemy of progress. Such a person is expected to face any music that is played for him by the society and other high ranked professors of the University. Worst of it all is that everybody seems to be part of this examination malpractice including the teachers, parents, and clergy men, to mention but few.

It is regrettably to say that, this act of malpractice has given Nigerian society bad name in the outside world and this has made our graduate to be unsalable in the world's labour market. According to Udoh examination malpractice which is rampant in Nigerian educational system has given less credibility and integrity to the Nigerian society [22]. The consequences of these malpractices are that our certificates are being rejected abroad due to its loss of credibility. The scourge of examination malpractice affects production of competent and qualified people used in offices and parastatals. Olatunbosun who observed the adverse effect of examination malpractice averred that, "it is a social evil that can damage society to the extent of possibly leading to failed state" [23]. It has very serious economic, political and social consequences. It has rendered the goal of education invalid because the country has ended up producing graduate that are not able to apply knowledge, competence and skills to exploit the resources of the nation. The most ridiculous indication of the rot in our University education was the reported dismissal of three graduates of the Enugu State University of Science and Technology from the National Youth Service Corps scheme some time ago for falling below the standard expected of graduates. How could they have graduated if not for examination malpractice?

Inadequate Funding and Misappropriation of Available Fund: lack of funding has for a long time been a problem in Nigerian Universities. Presently, Nigerian Universities are on strike which they began on Monday 23 March, 2020 because of nonpayment of salary. Government and the people concerned have paid just a lip service towards educational development in Nigeria without doing anything serious to

salvage the situation when it comes to funding. Money has been spent on frivolities like organization of jamboree or other events other than education. Nwachukwu in confirmation of what is said above declares that, “there is no doubt that the government has apathy towards quality education, which has been exemplified in inadequate funding and improper supervision, which has necessitated continuous strike actions for donkey years...” [24].

This apathy towards educational system in Nigeria has contributed a lot to the higher educational decay in the country. It is however, true that the monies our higher institutions get from the government, IGR, grants and donations are not sufficient, but the question which has to be tackled is, the “little monies” the management and school authorities have gotten how have they used it? There is a consensus that if those little monies have been used judiciously the decay in our institutions of higher learning would not have gotten to this stage.

It has been discovered that most administrators of our higher institutions after succeeding in getting the government to kowtow to their needs, many are sure that the money will not reflect in the academic sector. It has also been noticed that “the university management, spend millions to erect super-gates when their libraries are still at foundation level; expend millions to purchase exotic vehicles for university officers even though they lack basic classroom furnishings; spend hundreds of millions in wall-fencing and infencing when students accommodation is inadequate and in tatters; are more interested in spending money on creation of new programmes instead of consolidating and expanding access to existing ones” [24]. All these discussed above have gone a long way in negatively affecting Nigerian higher educational system.

**Poorly-Equipped Libraries, Laboratories and Class Rooms:** For effective teaching and learning, well equipped laboratories and class rooms are needed; but the truth is that many of Nigerian University institutions today lack these essential facilities. The physical facilities of the schools are inadequate, dilapidated, over stretched, and improvised. Many universities have buildings that they call libraries, but most of these are not equipped with essential books and current journals and magazines. Also, many higher institutions do not have science laboratories while a good number of those that have, do not possess the basic tools or equipment as microscopes, dissecting instruments and specimens. While kerosene stoves are used as Bunsen burners in some laboratories.

Also, many schools do not have special rooms for teaching basic courses. In some courses in the University, students are more than the hall can carry. I visited a micro biology laboratory in one of our Universities and discovered that the lab hall could not contain all the students and it was only two microscopes that were used by over fifty (50) students. In a situation as this, the teachers cannot put in their best; and the students, too, cannot derive maximum benefit from the instruction being given. Again, the teaching-learning process is stalled and the overall development of the students, within

the school system is retarded.

**Political Interference:** This has been the major bane of all tertiary institutions in Nigeria. It is just a case of “he who plays the pipe, dictates the tune”. This interference started in 1976, when the former President of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, removed some Vice-Chancellors and sacked some lecturers without recourse to the rule of law, ethics and governance. This trend continued unabated during successive governments whether in the State or Federal controlled institutions. Government has hijacked every sphere of University education in Nigeria, this is not supposed to be so. The university should maintain a unitary leadership where she states and manages all they generate, but here, the reverse is the case, the issue of promotion, selection and other issues that have to do with University administration are now controlled by government. It should be noted that in 1993, the Federal Government appointed a Major General as the sole administrator for Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. In the year 2000, under the democratic process, the Registrar of Lagos State University was re-deployed to the Ministry in Alausa. It is pathetic that Vice-Chancellors are at the mercy of Governors, Commissioners of Education and the like.

The tertiary institutions are being inundated with requests of admit the bearer either for employment, admission or contracts, especially during this political era. This attitude and the likes do not make for good university administration. It has made some tertiary heads become politicians and proud due to their closeness with political office holders. Some of them violate Court Orders with impunity. Good example could be seen at the University of Ilorin that sacked university lecturers. Later the President in January the following year at the institution’s convocation ceremony said that he supported the Vice Chancellor’s decision to sack the affected lecturers. The issues of what to teach, how to teach it and what should be the role of the tertiary institutions in society or co-operation within the local community are not being addressed at all. What each institution is after is how to generate funds; funds at the expense of academics.

**Cultism and Other Vices:** A big challenge to quality in higher education in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria is the increasing activities of secret cult groups, kidnappers and other vices. The higher education institutions in Nigeria are under siege barded and almost ruined by secret cults [25]. As a result of the activities of cult groups and kidnappers’ majority of students, lecturers and their families live in perpetual fear. Some of these cult groups indulge in arm robbery, rape, assassination and infrastructure destruction. They cheat in the examination openly and threaten lecturers when caught. While academic and senior staff of universities in the country are being hunted by kidnappers and those kidnapped are made to pay huge sum of money as ransom before they are released. The tensions induced on members of institution communities as a result of the activities of these secret cult groups and kidnappers tend to generate negative impacts on quality of higher education in Nigeria. Another big challenge to administrators of institutions of higher learning in Nigeria is students’ uprising. Handling

demonstration and strike by students in protest of their rights or government insensitivity to demands by the civil society.

**Brain Drain:** A big challenge to the quality of education in Nigeria University is the problem of brain drain. Over the past decades, there has been mass exodus of brilliant and most talented lecturers to other sectors of the economy. Some of the lecturers left Nigerian universities to join the business world, some joined politics while others left Nigeria for better services in South African, India and USA. As succinctly put by Alli, many experienced and young lecturers are fleeing Nigeria from the frustration of university life into more rewarding and more challenging sectors of the economy and even to overseas countries [26]. There is diminishing scope of mentoring junior researchers by seasoned and senior lecturers in Nigeria due to brain drain. Brain drain has led to decline in research outputs from institutions of higher learning in Nigeria vis-à-vis the disappearance of research centers in Nigerian universities. Research brings about improvement in teaching and learning [27] but when there is exodus of brilliant and seasoned academics from institutions of higher learning, the quality of education delivery is threatened.

## 6. Pragmatism as a Solution to Nigeria University Education Problem

The need for adopting pragmatic approach in the revitalization of education in Nigeria cannot be underestimated. What are the pragmatic strategies needed for empowering and strengthening Nigerian education? Our choice of the pragmatic school of thought is obvious. It is an approach that is very much concerned with the application of knowledge in tackling the life challenges. Hence, their aim of education is that knowledge acquired must be of relevance to the need of the society. Thus, the principle of pragmatism suggests thus;

**Education According to the Needs of the Society:** Survival to the pragmatists depends on man's ability to use acquired intelligence to overcome the problems of his existence and that of his society. For ideas to become useful therefore, they must be applied practically. The pragmatists advocate individualism capable of over-coming the problems of the environment. The National Policy on Education recognizes this when it says that "efforts shall be made to relate education to overall community needs" [17]. For the needs of the Nigerian society to be solved, the gaps that usually exist between what is learnt in school and its wider society must be eliminated. Nigeria should formulate educational policy that adapts the needs of the nation. Our educational policy should be made to help towards the solution of our present predicament as a nation. For instance, there should be Pragmatic Development Commission which should serve as a link between what is taught and what is learnt in school and its needs to the nation and the quantity turned out by our Universities yearly. The commission can as well serve as guide to the candidates as well as information on the areas of

knowledge that are high in demand.

**Learning by Doing:** There is an inherent relationship between action and knowledge. The pragmatists believe that knowledge results in our various interactions when we experience the consequences of our actions and note the action-consequence in relation to different experiences and uses this to solve subsequent problems. To create the necessary knowledge to solve problems therefore arises from interacting with such environment. By implication, it means that learning by doing will not only lead to skill acquisition, but also leads to the development of self-reliance. When people are self-reliant the problem of unemployment in the Nigerian society will be a thing of the past. Learning by doing ultimately, reduces the quest for paper qualification. Moreover, when the youths are engaged, the issue of social vices and cultism will be less heard.

In pragmatism, action is combined with one's level of qualification. This encourages professionalization because for anyone to prove his qualification, the necessary action must be followed in order to solve a problem. In Nigeria, there should be a symbiotic relationship between the formal school education and non-formal apprenticeship education in such a manner that the whole community becomes the resource centre for the education of the learner, and the wall of separation between the world of school and the world of work is broken down. This idea is being implemented in Tanzania, and reports have it that it is working well and profitable to the economic development of their nation.

**Life-Long Education:** Education they say is continues process; it starts from birth and ends in the grave. The method and application of educational values changes over time but the continue updating of knowledge makes one align to different changes. What the pragmatists propose is the type of education that continues till adulthood. Life-long education is a solution to the changing world; knowledge should be updated so as to take care of the problems arising from the changes in the universe. This type of education as Nzeneri puts it "is learning about anything at all that helps us understand the environment we live in, and the manner in which we can use and change this environment in order to improve ourselves" [28]. Unfortunately, in Nigeria this aspect of education is not properly functional. We have not considered how the school drop-outs and the products of various literacy campaigns can rejoin the formal education system. A realistic role of the school is that scheme will be found to be that of an enabling institution within a life-long educational continuum [29].

**Teaching to Be Related to Pupil's Interest and Experience:** Another aim of education in the Pragmatic school of thought is that teaching should be related to pupil's interest and experience. It favors a diverse curriculum in order to take care of differences and needs of the learners. The uniqueness of every individual has to be identified and developed. To expose every individual to the same curriculum is to ignore this important fact. In Nigeria, there should be a radical departure from the old one, where parents select courses for their children/ward without reference to potentiality of the

learner. However, when these students are misdirected and misguided into the preference of their parents, they probably end up being frustrated and consequently, they show lack of interest in the practice of their disciplines after graduation. This may further result into a situation where the graduate will abandon his profession and resort to office work. Thus, some of the problems schools encounter comes from parents. Parents should keep off and allow the choice of what to study to be the function of interest, the learner's interest and his potency. The services of the guidance counselors are therefore needed if the students must make the right choice of career. It is in this direction that the government should make the guidance and counseling units of every school to be properly functional.

Promotion of Democracy: Democracy and education have a symbiotic relationship in the pragmatic philosophy. While the business education should be necessarily democratic, the democratic ideals on the other hand, are strengthened by education. Thus, the pragmatists have been attracted by the idea of democracy because, as Enoh puts it, "they believe that it is only in a democratic community, where there is give and take and where free interaction between individuals and social groups exist, that human freedom, character, intelligence and other potentialities can develop" [30]. However, it will be so necessary if Nigeria education shall adopt a democratic statue. Every members of the academic environment like the teachers and the learners are to work in 'paripase' to ensure that the major aim of education is achieved. The aim of education is knowledge dissemination and training of the youths. This training should not be one-sided or lop holed as education is directly meant for students orientation and training. The teachers should not show authority over the knowledge or overshadow the training by making the students listeners than collaborators. This is because the participation of the listeners will give in an opportunity for them to develop an evaluative rationality and critical reasoning in carrying out necessary task of life.

Thus, the teachers are advised to put up some programs which will enhance and involve students' inclusiveness in the curriculum planning. The ability of the students to play certain roles in the course of the class activities will bring up the capacities of the students in their future endeavors especially outside the school environment.

## 7. Conclusion

The identity of a man cannot go beyond his level of understanding. This is the reason the national curriculum planners of Nigeria education should put into consideration a pragmatic nature that will make Nigeria education a top notch to her sister countries in Africa and the world at large. In the todays Nigeria, it has been reviewed that the education is suffering from epileptic disease. This is due to the fact that those piloting the affairs of education in Nigeria are less serious in educational programs. The educational planners are advised to put up pragmatic measures in achieving the aim of education to ensure that there is progress and

economic rehabilitation in our Nation.

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