

EFFICACY OF ‘THE WORLD IS EASY FOR THE WISE’ IN AFRICA PHILOSOPHY: ITS INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION AMONG BUSINESS EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS IN SOUTHWESTERN NIGERIA.

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Abstract

Africans are known for their tenacity and doggedness in the pursuit of their ambitions including the wrong ones. The entire race seeks to have an African on their teams especially when it comes to the hardest parts of their jobs. Application of wisdom in addition to working hard cannot be swept under the carpet. Unfortunately, the interpretation and application of some wise sayings or philosophies in Africa turn different sides to individuals, especially the youths in Nigeria and in the entire African race. An example of these philosophies which is ‘the world is easy for the wise’ was analyzed in this study in relation to the roles of Business educators to build the youths in capacities to be economically productive and serve as a good role-model to the youth. This will enhance a positive mindset in the minds of the youth and the philosophy of ‘the world is easy for the wise’ will be properly and rightly interpreted and applied. There has been fear of African youths by other race especially Nigerians because of the high rate of fraud popularly known as ‘yahoo-yahoo’. Studies have shown that many youths have lost interest in education because they can get wealth by any means by application of ‘wisdom’ regardless of the moral standards and societal acceptability. However, this study concluded and upheld that, there are yet, a good number of youths who are doing very great in their chosen careers and in the business economy without being fraudulent whatsoever and African philosophies should be taught from the elementary levels of education to the higher education level, especially the philosophies in line with making wealth through businesses and other diligent means.

Keywords: *Philosophies, Wisdom, Role-model, Youth, Business Educators, yahoo-yahoo*

Introduction

One of the innumerable things Africans are known for, is their philosophical ideologies. Africans have at least, a proverb or a word of wisdom to back any topic of discourse up which would drive in better understanding and strengthen the morals and cultural beliefs of Africa. According to the Wikipedia, **African philosophy** is the philosophical discourse produced using indigenous African thought systems. African philosophers are found in the various academic fields of present philosophy, such as metaphysics, epistemology, moral philosophy, and political philosophy. African philosophy is a critical thinking and a deep thought on fundamental issues of life. It comprises traditional beliefs, cultural values, and the philosophical implications of African experiences. Africans cite various experiences both previous and current to address any situation at hand.

The requirements of an individual to help others are typically deemed heavier in African than in Western morality. People in the West tend to think that individual rights should largely determine the resources one may possess; for example, one has a right to keep what one deserves for having been productive, a right to shares in virtue of having contributed to a cooperative scheme, or a right to keep what one has received by voluntary transfer from a previous owner. Giving to others what they have no right to is not thought of as upholding a duty but as being generous. In contrast, a greater percentage of Africans think that one is morally obligated to help others, roughly to the extent that one can and that others need, with rights not considering the analysis of how much one ought to transfer wealth, time or labour. Illustrative is the parable of the cow (and similar widespread sayings): “If you

have two cows and the milk of the first cow is sufficient for your own consumption; this means you are expected to donate the milk of the second cow to your underprivileged brothers and sisters.” Conversely, more Africans than Westerners think that it is permissible to take goods such as food without others’ consent, so long as one does not overdo it. The issue of success and how to attain it in a morally acceptable way is one of the major issues that Africa has philosophies on. The interpretation and application of the African philosophy that says ‘the world is easy for the wise’ is an issue of concern among this present-day youth and among some adults. Many have different perspectives on this philosophy.

To some, this philosophy means success must be attained at all costs, regardless of how success is achieved it is not an issue to be bothered about. Nigeria has witnessed tremendous and rapid change through social media where large proportion of this social media feature not only in corrupting the Nigerian value system but constitutes a big threat to people’s financial and privacy security (Ezea, 2017). Online fraud, sexual promiscuity, nudity, pornography, and other obscene materials such as multiple sexual partners which are glorified in social media sites are anti-Nigerian values. The social maladies aggravated by popularity of social media have frustrated the institutionalization of both communal living, sense of decency and proper conduct on one hand, and on the other, creates a disorganized, and grossly fractured family values (Button and Cross, 2017).

Before the technological innovation which brought the Internet, the financial fraudsters known as “419-ners” that operated in popular cities in Nigeria such as in Lagos and Abuja, were mostly educated or illiterate adult men and women, who specialized in using fax machines to defraud unsuspected foreigners and Nigerians of their hard-earned money (Ezea, 2017). However, in recent times, the tides have changed. The technological innovations in social media networks have popularized youths in the business of defrauding unsuspected foreigners and Nigerians today. Social media has made most Nigerian youths game players in the waters of financial frauds and cybercrimes in the country today. In Nigerian streets today, many youths are seen driving very expensive cars, building mansions and reveling in luxurious lifestyles which baffle most decent citizens, and which has raised a worrisome thought about the future of the country. Thus, due to these current facts, this study focusing on youths in Owerri Municipal in Imo state will investigate their perceptions about youths’ usage of social media for crime, understand why youths engage in cybercrime (AKA “yahoo-yahoo”) and to identify other social maladies that can emanate from their use of social media, as well as identify possible solutions to combatting the incessant engagement of youths in cybercrime in the country.

The internet and social media have become a major part of youth’s life all over the world. In Nigeria, and particularly Imo State higher institutions, it is very uncommon to find a youth who is not engaged in one form of social media. Nigerians as a people have an identity, a factor that distinguished them from other societies and makes them unique. Before the technological innovation which brought the internet that opened routes for setting up various social media, the way of life associated with Nigerians was remarkably instilled in traditional values and morals that enriched social life and people’s life views (Tade and Aliyu, 2011). The virtues of respect for public property, respect for the laws of the land were also commonplace. Unfortunately, moral values, especially amongst the youths in the country, have been cornered by the influence of social media (Tade, 2013). These youths unfortunately live in a society where values and ethics are changing very fast. In society such as Nigeria with gross structural inequalities, weak sanctioning system and wide gap between the rich and the poor, there is a tendency for the deprived to reject and embrace illegal means of achieving prescribed goals such as been wealthy in young age. Moreover, the corruption that is looming over the affairs of our so-called leaders, politicians and technocrats in the country has further given the youths more impetus to engage in crime in order to bask in affluence as these corrupt leaders (Ninalowo, 2014). Social media has also become platform where some scrupulous youths swindle people of their hard-earned money in Nigeria. The globalizing effect of introducing internet to Nigeria did not only advance the state of technology in the country but also birthed social vices such as internet fraud popularly known as yahoo-yahoo. Since internet was popularly referred as yahoo at point of introducing the service to Nigeria (Doppelmayr, 2013), youth that engaged in activities relating to the

internet were immediately labelled “yahoo-yahoo-boys”. They are referred to as boys because basically male youths engaged in various criminal activities connected to internet usage at this time (Tade and Aliyu, 2011; Tade, 2013)

Ribadu and Olugbodi, 2010). The yahoo-yahoo-boys nomenclature is prominent among Nigerian youths and involves defrauding unsuspected foreigners and even rich Nigerians to the tune of millions of dollars and Naira. In most cases, these scrupulous youths are said to dupe unsuspected victims by using fake identities on dating websites claiming they are from United States or working in some other prominent country. They are also said to disguise themselves by claiming to have merchandise to sell or an on-going project to be executed (Okeshola and Adeta, 2013), hence, they request for financial aids from unsuspected Nigerians and foreigners and afterwards defraud them of their hard-earned money. In 2010, the National White Cyber Crime Centre and the Federal Bureau of Investigation reported that Nigeria was ranked third in the world with the highest rate of cyber-crime, a phenomenon that is popular known as “yahooyahoo” (Tade and Aliyu, 2013). The most disheartening fact is that the youths that engage in cybercrimes and social media frauds have totally lost interest in searching for white collar jobs or pursuing education, rather they have resorted to this crime as a way of making a living (Olugbodi, 2010).

According to Odo and Odo (2015) the large number of people involved in cybercrimes and other social media crime fall within the age bracket of 18 to 30 years of age. This situation has led to the undermining of Nigeria’s reputation in the international spheres (Okeshola and Adeta, 2013). The growing dependence of youths on internet crime has become a thing of concern in the country. It is conceived that the average Nigerian youth want to live a very comfortable life without necessarily engaging in physical work; invariably relying on any short cut to make money, including defrauding others through the internet sources. Another, troubling fact is that various attempts and efforts have been done by Nigerian government in combatting cybercrime, however, the outcomes leave much to be desired.

The way that success is defined shapes the ways we operate our lives. It affects how organisations perform, who progresses within them and how power is exercised. Students committed to learning will find many possible paths to success. No path is error free, but the path best for you may not look like the same path as another student. For this reason, students should continuously assess their academic progress in courses and adjust their academic strategies accordingly.

Business Educators attitude to success and roles in building successful youths

Business education is a branch of education that involves teaching the skills and operations of the business industry. This field of education occurs at multiple levels, including secondary and higher education. Business education refers to the development and training of individuals in the skills and knowledge necessary for success in the business world. This includes a focus on business strategy, personal development, innovation, and leadership. Business education is important because it dives into various subjects in business and provides specific training to professionals who wish to pursue a career in that field. Business education at the university level will cover skills such as management, finance, accounting, economics, and human resource management. I am a professionally trained teacher who specializes in teaching business-related subjects, such as economics, accounting, and business studies, in educational institutions like universities and colleges. Business educators are well versed in the mechanics of teaching, including planning curricula, delivering lectures, researching material, writing assignments, and grading. For college and university students, business teachers can be instrumental in helping the youths find a field of study and even a life-long career path and inform them of the options available in an ever-changing field.

Business educators offer numerous societal benefits, including increased economic growth, reduced unemployment, and improved living standards. It also fosters a more informed and engaged citizenry, promotes entrepreneurship, and strengthens communities through increased financial stability and community involvement. When it comes to learning about the ins and outs of a business, creativity, and collaboration are two key components that will serve any professional well. Developing the collaborative skills of students is paramount in any business education program. Not only are

collaborative skills sought by colleges, but they're also a characteristic of great leaders in every business setting. Creativity and innovation are skills that both business schools and job recruiters look for in candidates. Youths can benefit from these skills in all aspects of their life, more importantly in their future careers. Having an eye to identifying problems is a valuable skill in any business environment, but even more, is the ability to turn problems into opportunities for improvement. When young people engage in business education at school, they're learning how to recognize problems in a professional environment and provide innovative solutions to them. Without a good foundation, difficulties in the workplace may become overwhelming or seem like burdens instead of opportunities for growth and improvement. Teaching students to expand their problem-solving skills encourages personal and professional development.

One of the main parts of business education is teaching students to be flexible to learn new things and be open to changing directions. The ability to think on your feet is one that job recruiters actively seek out. Entrepreneurship skills like this one can help students move gracefully from job to job, even as industries grow more technologically advanced and reliant on automation. Youths are taught by business educators how to prepare well for the uncertain future. Additionally, youths with a business program at their private secondary school can interact with community businesses to gain real-world perspectives. Through various activities such as visits to local businesses, interactions with guest speakers from diverse industries, and receiving professional feedback, youths gain invaluable first-hand experience. This direct exposure fosters practical skills and a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the business world. Alongside individual coursework, students tackle projects and challenges within a team environment. The results of these projects are communicated using diverse mediums such as professional business-style presentations, comprehensive written reports, creative skits, and reflective essays. This emphasis on teamwork not only enhances the learning experience but also mirrors the collaborative nature of modern workplaces.

The Principles of Business and Economics Honours course at our private high school is the foundational year within the High School of Business program. Designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of key business concepts, students learn about business operations and law, financial analysis, marketing, and strategic management. They also explore the intricate relationship between businesses and external factors including consumer behaviour, government policies, and economic conditions. It's important to mention that throughout the course, students will design a business analysis report and conduct an environmental scan of the local business community, thus reinforcing theoretical concepts with practical applications.

Business educators teach students communication skills, emotional intelligence, and professional development during this introductory course within the High School of Business program. They will also learn about economic decision-making, understand the time value of money, and financial management techniques, and explore various investment avenues. This will all be done through planning and implementing projects to reinforce learned concepts.

The mindset of the present youth to success

The United Nations and Common Wealth of Nations have come up with specific age categories to define a youth. Perhaps, that informed Echebiri (2005) in Nnachi (2012) to indicate that, the United Nations uses age category 15 -24 years to define a youth, while the common wealth uses the age category of 15-29. Most countries have either adopted the UN or common wealth definition. However, in Nigeria, the range is 15-36 years has been taken to be the youth category. A growth mindset is a key factor that significantly impacts your effectiveness as a youth. Developing a growth mindset will make a huge difference in the ability to empower and inspire, especially among the youth. A growth mindset is the belief that abilities and intelligence can be developed. Individuals with a growth mindset view challenges as opportunities rather than obstacles to be avoided.

They embrace setbacks as valuable learning experiences and persist in the face of difficulties with resilience. Young people's attitudes towards wealth creation are diverse and influenced by factors like financial literacy, parental influence, and societal expectations. Some young people are motivated by ambition and a desire for financial freedom, while others prioritize work-life balance and

sustainable living over traditional wealth accumulation. A key factor is the belief that wealth creation requires hard work, skill development, and a strategic approach to saving and investing. Some youths believe that 'being wise' in the context of philosophy means achieving whatever you want to achieve through any means, including engaging in exam malpractice in the school to succeed. Some go into fraudulent acts while some believe being wise is my engaging in immoral acts to make the world easy for him or her.

The African philosophy of success emphasizes community, collective well-being, and ethical conduct over individual achievement. It prioritizes the interconnectedness of individuals and the importance of contributing to the common good. Success is not solely measured by material wealth but also by character, integrity, and the impact on the community. The philosophy of success is a product of mindset and execution. Cultivating a growth mindset becomes a necessity in order to succeed in any aspect of life. A growth mindset constantly upholds that abilities, intelligence, consistency, dedication and hard work eventually leads to the attainment of the desired goal.

Some youths are great entrepreneurs who make judicious use of the available resources to produce economically useful commodities in order to make ends meet. an entrepreneur is an individual who identifies opportunities, takes calculated risks, and creates a new business or venture, often with the goal of generating profit or creating value. In this present world where it seems a larger percentage of the young ones are into fraudulent activities because of the wrong interpretation and application of the philosophy 'the world is easy for the wise', a few youths still take it upon themselves to be morally upright and with the right mindset and attitude to success and wealth, they have made tremendous marks in their chosen careers and in the business world at large.

Conclusion

The roles of Business educators in building the youths in capacities to be economically productive and serve as a good role-model to the youth cannot be over-emphasized. This will enhance a positive mindset in the minds of the youth and the philosophy of 'the world is easy for the wise' will be properly and rightly interpreted and applied. There has been fear of African youths by other race especially Nigerians as a result of the high rate of fraud popularly known as 'yahoo-yahoo'. Many youths have lost interest in education because they have concluded that they can get wealth by any means through the application of 'wisdom' regardless of the moral standards and societal acceptability. However, this study concluded and upheld that, there are yet, a good number of youths who are doing very great in their chosen careers and in the business economy without being fraudulent whatsoever. The study also concluded that the application of wisdom is germane in every sphere of life but the ways it is applied and its manner of approach which is how it is viewed, is to be put under watch because a great number of youth in Nigeria and in the South West which are the focus of this study do not care about the integrity and dignity in acquiring wealth and power in a way that is not questionable anymore. Also the study concluded that if African philosophies are taught in schools, especially from the elementary classes and continued to be taught at the higher education level, the positive interpretation of these philosophies and their accurate application to suit the moral standards their were meant to achieve would be greatly attained.

Recommendations

1. Empowering Young People: As a business educator, you play a pivotal role in shaping the mindset of the young people you support. By embodying and promoting a growth mindset and training them the skills needed to be self-reliant, you empower them to adopt the same attitude towards their own abilities and potential. You put in them the belief that they can learn, grow, and overcome challenges with effort and persistence.
2. Navigating Challenges: Youths often navigate complex and ever-changing situations, from supporting young people through personal struggles to advocating for their needs within systems and organizations. A growth mindset equips them with the resilience and flexibility needed to navigate these challenges effectively.

3. Modeling Behavior: As a role model, your mindset sets the tone for how young people approach their own challenges and goals. By consistently demonstrating a growth mindset in your words and actions, you show young people that success is not determined by innate talent or intelligence. Instead, their own effort, perseverance, and a willingness to learn make all the difference.
4. Facilitating Learning: Youthfulness is fundamentally about learning and personal development. Your intentional effort to guide them enhances your ability to create a learning environment. That way young people feel safe to take risks, make mistakes, and learn from failure. Instead of fearing failure or criticism, they embrace it as part of the learning process. And that leads to greater confidence and self-efficacy.
5. African philosophies should be taught from the elementary levels of education to the higher education level, especially the philosophies in line with making wealth through businesses and other diligent means.

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