

Zimbabwean Education In A State Of Abortion Under Sanctions: Pragmatism Is The Best Concoction

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Abstract

Instances of educational abortion in Zimbabwe are mainly due to the illegally imposed economic sanctions by the West. Sanctions are a merciless human propelled problem in need of a human solution. The paper seeks to critically analyse the application of pragmatism as an attempt to restore sanity in the Zimbabwean education system. Stakeholders such as teachers, politicians and policy makers will be epistemologically empowered to deal with these educational challenges. Thus, the analyses of pragmatic principles that curtail the negative effects of illegal economic sanctions are topical in this paper. Education as a universal human right is negatively affected by the imposition of politically motivated illegal sanctions/trade restrictions/smart sanctions imposed by the West on Zimbabwe. Good governance and democracy in Zimbabwe is threatened due to the perilous effects of the illegal sanctions. The philosophical analysis is the methodological kingpin in this invaluable research.

Key Words: Pragmatism; Concoction; Education; Principles; Experience; Experimentalism; Instrumentalism; Curriculum; Sanctions; Illegal

Introduction

This paper seeks to address the invaluable importance of pragmatism as a suitable philosophy of education capable of dealing with a sanction riddled Zimbabwean Education System. Hence, the paper addresses the historical background of pragmatism, conceptual analysis, pragmatic tenets that are capable of dealing with the challenges of an education system stifled by illegal economic sanctions imposed by the West against Zimbabwe. Among other pragmatic principles and concepts addressed in this paper in the fight against illegal sanctions are: Education; Curriculum; Knowledge; The teacher; The child/learner/student; Critique of pragmatism and a Conclusion which is followed by a list of references used in the paper. The principal focus of this paper is to reflect philosophically on how Zimbabwe in its education system is attempting to survive under the inhuman illegally imposed sanctions through the

implementation of pragmatism. A nation should be in a position to use its resources in dealing with problems. Mararike (2001:4) reinforces, “No nation has succeeded without taking full control of its tangible and intangible assets.” It is strongly government’s responsibility to address problems in the Zimbabwean education system. Siddiqui (2004:vi) purports, “The government has an important role in promoting school reform and accelerate technology use by serving as visionary, catalyst, and publisher of pertinent information and knowledge.” Thus, government should creatively pragmatically exploit the information technology arena in a bid to improve the quality and quantity of education in Zimbabwe especially under the current challenges of illegally imposed economic sanction by the West. Hence, Shively (2008:83) reiterates, “ The most basic service that most governments are expected to offer their people is education.” Education is actually a universal human right in need of serious consideration the world over.

Historical Background of Pragmatism

Conveniently, pragmatism is a philosophy that emanated from the American philosophers such as Charles Saunders Peirce, William James and John Dewey (Akinpelu 1981; Dewey 1990; Meyer 1972; Stumpf and Fieser 2008). However, John Dewey born on 20 October 1859 in Burlington Vermont near a farm and died on 1 June 1952 is generally referred to as the current kingpin in the contemporary philosophical discourse of pragmatism (Meyer 1972; Stumpf and Fieser 2008). In a nutshell, John Dewey was an American philosopher, logician and classroom practitioner whose works on pragmatism in education and politics heavily influenced the American education system as well as those of the Diaspora, Zimbabwean education system included. Stumpf and Fieser (2008:371) sum, “The central message of these three philosophers is that there is little value in philosophical theories that do not somehow make a difference in daily life.” It should also be noted that African education especially the traditional one is both essentialist and pragmatic in nature (Fafunwa and Aisiku 1982; Ramose 1999). Therefore, the hybridisation of American pragmatism and the African Traditional Zimbabwean pragmatism is the bedrock on which the sanction militated Zimbabwean education system could avoid educational ‘abortions’ in its human factor oriented developmental goal. The illegal economic sanctions imposed by the West on Zimbabwe have gone against the United Nations Millennium goals where education is treated as a universal human right. Shively (2008:412) posits, “Imposition of an economic sanction consists of a state or group of states deliberately withholding normal economic relations to

punish another state... An economic sanction is certainly direct coercion, though it involves no military activity.” In short, the education system in Zimbabwe is always under threat, a real state (condition) of abortion due to the negative effects of the illegally imposed economic sanctions by the West. A state of educational abortion is pretty similar to the biomedical one. In this regard, Boss (2008:81) states, “In an 1859 resolution, the AMA (American Medical Association) condemned abortion as an “unwarranted destruction of human life.” Therefore, the imposition of illegal economic sanctions that is affecting effective and efficient educational delivery in Zimbabwe is also unwarranted and evil to the innocent souls of Zimbabwe. Illegal economic sanctions should be stopped. These sanctions are currently working against any developmental initiative in Zimbabwe. However, through pragmatic creativity, originality, innovation, evaluation and monitoring of educational practices, Zimbabwe is employing pragmatism as its adaptive pedagogical and andragogical stencils in a bid to curtail a state of educational abortion in the country. Pragmatism as a philosophy of life should inevitably liberate Zimbabwe and Africa as a continent.

Conceptual Analysis of Pragmatism

Historically, in 1872 in a Metaphysical club paper presentation, Charles Saunders Peirce was the first to coin the term pragmatism (Meyer 1972). But from an etymological point of view, Aggarwal (1985) states that pragmatism comes from a Greek term pragma – meaning to do, to act. In a more compatible manner, pragmatism therefore, refers to a philosophy of education that emphasises on the fundamental value of activity in any meaningful quest for knowledge – it is rather an action-oriented approach in education. In the same vein, Ornstein and Levine (1985:562) define pragmatism as, “The philosophy, which judges the validity of ideas by their consequences in action.” Hence, the essence of activity-based learning is of paramount importance in Dewey’s pragmatism. From the same standpoint, the Zimbabwean education system under these somewhat perennial illegal economic sanctions is adopting a pragmatic style of philosophy as the government attempts to develop its human capital through the use of environmentally here and now policy formulation, development, implementation and evaluation techniques. In this regard, therefore, pragmatism seems to be the best concoction (therapy or solution finder) to do away with the threats of illegal economic sanctions thwarting the intended achievements of the education system of Zimbabwe. It is high time to turn to the application of a plethora of pragmatic principles in

Zimbabwe's attempt to abate 'abortion' in the educational arena, that is, from grade O up to University level – a scenario whereby both global and local pragmatism are put to use.

Pragmatic Principles and Concepts in the Fight against Illegal Economic Sanctions in Zimbabwe's Education System

Zimbabwe's education system in the period 2007 to 2008 at the height of illegally imposed economic sanctions almost came to a standstill – a near clear state of nature. Scruton (1995:206) says, "In a state of nature, Hobbes believed, rights cannot be enforced: instead there is a war of all against all, which can be brought to an end only by some agreement to cease fighting." Means of fighting against illegal economic sanctions should be put in place in dialogue with the perpetrators of those sanctions. This will enable meaningful catharsis to take place in Zimbabwe. Pervin and John (1997:524) explain, "Catharsis; The release and freeing of emotion through talking about one's problems." This research as well as the effort that is being put by the various government ministries in trying to address problems brought about by the imposition of these illegal economic sanctions is some form of pragmatic catharsis. A shrewd pragmatic revision of the inalienable value of education by the Honourable Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education Cde Stan Mudenge and then Honourable Minister of Education, Sports and Culture Cde Eneas Chigwedere had some positive impact though the latter's ministry came to a halt between 2007 and end of 2008. Anywhere, the first port of call is to address the nature and conceptualisation of education under pragmatism.

John Dewey, a pragmatist in Akinpelu (1981:147) defines, "Education as the continuous reconstruction or reorganisation of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases the ability to direct the course of subsequent experience." Thus, even under the threat of illegally imposed economic sanctions, talk about education especially in the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, there was/is some reconstruction or reorganisation of experience by all stake holders. This is the case in a once almost abortive education system in Zimbabwe where the government brought in learners, parents, guardians, government cadetship skills retention scheme and other stakeholders in an attempt to sustain continuity in the education sector. Certainly, had it not been the adoption of the pragmatic sense of education in Zimbabwe from the year 2000, there was inevitably going to be a state of educational stagnation due to the inhuman effects of the illegally imposed economic

sanctions by the West. It is a question of trying to suit education to the enviroing situation. As Awoniyi (1979:3) note, "...no educational system stands apart from the society which establishes it. Education draws inspiration and nourishment from a society, but in turn contributes to the growth, renewal and development of the society." By revisiting the value of education in the society in a pragmatic manner, pragmatism becomes the sole and best concoction in addressing educational challenges brought about by the imposition of illegal economic sanctions in Zimbabwe that is adversely affecting educational delivery in all sectors of life. Pragmatism in its conceptualisation of education reminds one of what Ducasse gives as an etymological definition of education cited in Schofield (1972:32) that, "Etymologically, to educate is to lead out or bring out." And Langford in Schofield (1972:33) that, "Education is an activity which aims at practical results in contrast with activities which aim at theoretical results." In light of these definitions of education, the Zimbabwean government through its ministries of education managed to go practical in a pragmatic manner as a way of dealing with an array of challenges in its education system. With no surprise, in the year 2010, the UNESCO United Nations Report put Zimbabwe at first position in Africa with regards to the level of literacy. Truly speaking, no country could afford to lead its continent's literacy rate whilst gruelling under the negative effects of illegal economic sanctions without turning to shrewd pragmatism as the best concoction; Zimbabwe is one of the clear cases of survival in world history. Thus, the reconstruction or reorganisation of experience in education is a continuous process in Zimbabwe's attempt to stop the sanction driven abortion process in the educational fraternity. In confirmation, Fafunwa and Aisiku (1982:9) say, "... education for the good life has been one of the most persistent concerns of men throughout history." What is important for Zimbabwe is to get what is good. Even Mukusha (2010:330) in the Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa states, "... the term 'education', in the eyes of Peters (1973), entails some sort of process leading to the development of a desirable state of mind in a morally, unobjectionable manner." Although pragmatism and absolute morality are difficult to square up, in Zimbabwe pragmatism and relative morality strike a balance resulting in the government's ability to survive the perilous sanction driven abortion threats to the education system. It is also important to note that even in the Government of National Unity (GNU) the two Ministers of Higher and Tertiary Education, Honourable Cde Dr Stan Mudenge and the Ministry of Education, Sport, Art and Culture, Honourable Mr David Coltart are still using pragmatism as a philosophy in order to overcome the challenges in their respective education ministries

being caused by illegally imposed economic sanctions. In a nutshell, for Dewey in Aggarwal (1985:6) “Education is the development of all those capacities in the individual which will enable him to control his environment and fulfil his responsibilities.” In light of this, it is justifiable to pronounce that pragmatism is the best concoction in dealing with an education system in a state of abortion due to illegal sanctions. Philosophically, in line with curriculum theory, the conceptualisation of a pragmatic education is incomplete without addressing the nature of a pragmatic curriculum.

The Concept Curriculum

For any sound education system, whether during war or peacetime, should dwell on the needs, wishes and demands of its society. All this baggage of requirements is necessarily sufficiently captured in the nature of the curriculum, that is, its contents includes the aims and objectives supported by an ideology driving the curriculum. In light of this, Zvobgo (1997) reiterates that a curriculum is a product of the ideology of its designers. From a Zimbabwean perspective, under illegal economic sanctions, an almost home grown or adaptive curriculum is indispensable. Thus, through the two ministries of education, pragmatic curricula are currently under way addressing the winds of change in a here and now approach at the expense of conservative curricula.

However, for the sake of understanding, Lawton (1983) says, “Curriculum is a selection from culture.” In addition Biko cited in Coetzee and Roux (2003:84) defines, “A culture is essentially the society’s composite answer to the varied problems of life.” A pragmatic curriculum capturing the cultural aspects of Zimbabwe should be put in place in order to address current economic sanctions related problems. On the other view, Gatawa conceptualises curriculum as a political product by the politicians. In detail, Gatawa (1990:5) observes, “Central to the discussion is the argument that the curriculum is political action and it should be viewed with a given social context. It is not a “given”. It has no existence of its own. It stems from human construction – social engineering... It serves and is a reflection of a given socio-economic formation.” But for Jack Carr in Lawton (1983) curriculum refers to what takes place inside or outside the classroom whether individually or in groups. Stemming from these definitions, Zimbabwe has approached the issue of curriculum in a multifaceted manner in order to tap out what is of use to its myriad of problems induced by the illegal economic sanctions. In this manner, one would be justified in asserting that the current

Zimbabwean education curricula are pragmatic in orientation whereby issues of culture and what is happening here and now form the basis in planning, development and implementation of policies in the education sector. From a pragmatic conception of a curriculum, Dewey in Akinpelu (1981:150) suggests, “Curriculum is nothing more than the social life of the community simplified and translated into the classroom.” Hence, the curriculum should be a clear reflection of what is actually taught in school, poly technique, and universities and also outside these schools due to the fact that they are pragmatically viewed as societies in miniature. In other words, what is learnt in different learning institutions should portray what the learner is going to meet in the wider educational cosmology. Dewey (1990) stresses that the school is a society in miniature. It is part and parcel of the society at large. Following this position, Zimbabwean education system has been constantly reviewed of its curricula. This has resulted in the establishment of State Universities in almost every province in a bid to address the different societal niches of the people. For instance, the Great Zimbabwe University (GZU) in Masvingo province where the writer of this paper is stationed, has its niche as a Centre of Excellence in Creative Arts, Culture and Technology; National University of Science and Technology (NUST) in the second capital city, Bulawayo focuses on a scientific niche and Lupane University established within wildlife parks and conservancy in Matabeleland North province is basically for the promulgation of Wildlife and Agriculture and many others with their varying niches. This is a clear pragmatic localisation of the education system in order to cater for its enviroing situational demands, with or without illegal sanctions. In Zimbabwe, a highly pragmatic and adaptive kind of education curricula is more visible in the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education under the auspices shrewd guidance by the current Honourable Minister Dr Stan Mudenge than in the Ministry of Education Sports, Arts and Culture currently under Honourable Minister David Coltart. The latter ministry is failing to cope with a barrage of problems caused by the inhuman merciless illegal economic sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe by the West. In simple terms, there are more educational abortion threats and incidents in David Coltart’s ministry than in Dr Stan Mudenge’s. Probably it is a question of creativity and cultural adaptation that is incapacitating Honourable David Coltart – a white man and former Rhodesian service aid and lawyer. However, both ministers’ efforts are pragmatic in nature varying in degrees rendering pragmatism as the best concoction in the Zimbabwean education system in a state of abortion under illegal sanctions. The presiding paragraph imperatively turns on a view of knowledge in a pragmatic scope.

Knowledge

Zimbabwe as a country is trying to survive the illegally imposed economic sanctions through the effective and efficient utilisation of its knowledge base. Mukusha (2010:329) in the *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa* posits, “It is the researcher’s conviction that the epistemological utterance of Socrates, in Akinpelu (1981), that knowledge is virtue and ignorance is vice, is inevitably authenticated...” In this regard, the pragmatic notion of knowledge, where theory and practice merge into praxis helps whilst the lack of such knowledge in a sanction turbulent Zimbabwe education system is vice. Thus, knowledge in the pragmatic sense has an instrumental value. Rusk and Scotland (1979:219) note, “Knowledge is always a means, never an end in itself; it is purely instrumental...” Again, Stumpf and Fieser (2008:G-4) notes, “Instrumentalism Dewey’s theory that thought is instrumental insofar as it produces practical consequences.” Pragmatically, knowledge is viewed as a weapon to deal with life problems, for instance, in this case, the use of knowledge to fight against the illegally imposed economic sanctions in Zimbabwe’s education system as well as in various political forums. In other words, if whatever is learnt or is going to be learnt does not have a utilitarian value, for Dewey and his pragmatic colleagues, it is just a mere waste of time. Jurgen Habermas notes, “The Emancipatory domain identifies ‘self-knowledge’ or self-reflection... Insights gained through critical self-awareness are emancipatory in the sense that at least one can recognise the correct reasons for his or her problems” (<http://physicised.buffalostate.edu/danowner/habcritthy.html>). Pragmatism cultivates critical thinking and reflective approach to issues. Gwarinda (1985:64) reinforces, “True knowledge is thus said to emanate from praxis: theory and practice.” It is through the appropriate pragmatic use of knowledge in Zimbabwe that accords knowledge an instrumental value similar to a shovel or a hammer used to perform its function practically. Gribble (1969:3) notes, “In Ryle’s view, the job is not to increase what we know, but to “rectify the logical geography of the knowledge which we already possess.” It is this pragmatic knowledge that has been and is being used to consistently continuously review the education system’s reliability and validity at any given time in a sanction cursed State, Zimbabwe.

Furthermore, the once suspicious Presidential computer donations by His Excellency President Robert Gabriel Mugabe are unbelievably now yielding tremendous fruits in

Zimbabwe's education system through the introduction of Information Communication Technology (ICT). Siddiqui (2004:1) posits, "Technology is critical to preparing students to live, learn, and work successfully in a digital age." In this respect, a mere computer connected to the Internet – a pragmatic case at its toll, replaces textbooks scarcity in an illegally imposed economic sanctions situation in Zimbabwe. Bigham and Bigham (1998:6) also stresses, "Internet resources engage students in what they are learning. Students learn by doing, and when they can use the Internet to explore, they become active participants in the gathering, analysing, organising, and presenting of the information they find." Currently, schools, polytechnique colleges, teachers colleges and universities in Zimbabwe are sufficiently empowered by the Presidential Computerisation of Zimbabwe Campaign thereby pragmatically successfully thwarting the negative effects of the illegally imposed economic sanctions in various sectors of Zimbabwe, education included. Saddiqui (2004:2) interestingly notes, "Giving all students continuous access to multimedia-capable, Internet-connected computers is currently quite fashionable. For politicians, the Internet in every classroom has become the modern equivalent of the promised "chicken in every pot." In a nutshell, the use of pragmatism in Zimbabwe's education system goes in tandem with the pragmatic assertion that an educator is to cultivate the habit of the intellect, that is, intellectual growth. There should be some correlation relationship between activity and intellectual development (Dewey 1966; 1990; Meyer 1972). Thus, the two, activity and intellectual development should always strike a strong symbiotic relationship for positive education to flourish in any sound Zimbabwean educational pursuit. O'Hear (1985:16) also observes, "Knowledge in Otto Neurath's instructive metaphor, is like a ship on which we are afloat, which we can therefore change only plank by plank." Thus, vie for computerisation and continuous review of the education system in Zimbabwe resemble the pragmatic plank-by-plank replacement according to time and need. One can safely assert that pragmatism is the best concoction in dealing with the Zimbabwean education system in a state of abortion under illegal economic sanctions.

The Teacher and Methodology

A pragmatic type of education can only survive under the guidance of an ideologically biased pragmatic teacher in Zimbabwe. Pragmatically, Dewey and Dewy (1962:52) purport, "Learning by doing is a slogan." Hence, the teacher needs to adopt a pragmatic activity based learning supported by reflective thinking accomplished through Dewey's popular method –

Problem Solving or Project Method. Chung and Ngara (1985:107) note, “Theory divorced from practice is barren. Practical skills divorced from theory lead to workers being able to repeat learnt processes, but unable to innovate or adapt.” Life, for instance, in Zimbabwe and elsewhere is punctuated by problems in need of solutions through active participatory involvement of the learner. Thus, Dewey (1990) views the teacher in any sound teaching-learning episode as an organiser, facilitator and supervisor. However, due to the negative effects of economic sanctions on the teacher’s remuneration, the pragmatic notion of teaching is receiving some hiccups in its implementation. In an attempt to overcome this motivation threatening remuneration aspect, the Government through its respective Ministers of Education allowed institutions to look for local incentives in monetary form as well as in kind where money is a big problem like in schools situated in rural areas. In the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education especially in the university sector, local allowances dubbed ‘*Chomusha*’ that which comes from each university’s initiative plays a messianic role in the continuation of educational activities and the retardation of the fierce brain-drain of staff members to greener pastures outside Zimbabwe. This is a case in point where pragmatism takes its toll at the expense of formally offered unsustainable remuneration packages though the situation is trying to normalise salary wise. Although the brain-drain effect is still eminent in an illegal economic sanctions imposed country like Zimbabwe, the rate has been largely abated courtesy of ‘*Chomusha*’ (local allowances) – what a creative adaptive pragmatic approach? Concurring with the pragmatic fruits of participatory methodology, Mukusha (2010:330) in the *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa* posits, “Participatory methodology can be defined...as the process in which various groups are involved in identifying their own problems, discussing solutions, planning, and carrying out effective action programs.” This addresses problems through problem posing, problem solving, project method, debates, dramatisation, discussion and role-play. It is how the Zimbabwean education system is run in an attempt to stop the always-threatening effects of illegal economic sanctions driven educational abortion. Pragmatism is the best concoction in dealing with Zimbabwe’s social, economic, political and educational woes!

Experience

The common adage that experience is the best teacher augurs well in the Zimbabwean education system under sanctions in an attempt to abate the devastating effects of illegal economic sanctions. Just like old wine that tastes best, Dewey (1958:ix) confirms,

“Experience is not a veil that shuts off man from nature; it is a means of penetrating continually further into the heart of nature.” Pragmatism, Dewey as an experientialist, instrumentalist, empiricist and growth theorist, acknowledges and appreciates the view that knowledge should be functional in the practical sense in order for learners and other stakeholders to explore meanings in their environment. Petty (1998:6) emphasis “We learn best by doing. I am told, and I forget. I see, and I remember. I do, and I understand. We learn by doing better than by watching or listening.” Thus, “action prepares men for the struggle against the obstacles to their humanisation (Freire 1972:90)”. The current pragmatic and at times ad hoc management of the education system is an ontological struggle against the illegally imposed economic sanctions by the West that are dehumanising Zimbabweans and the very West though the latter unknowingly. Therefore, the use of pragmatism in Zimbabwe’s education system is an attempt to balance out the degree of dehumanisation that is caused by illegal economic sanctions with the humanising pragmatic education practices in order to yield humane conditions in Zimbabwe. Echoing the same sentiments, Didier Njirayamanda Kaphagawani in Oruka (1991:180) states, “Oruka... encourages the attitude of ‘letting one hundred flowers to blossom’ so as not only to create traditions but also to promote debates, critical analysis and self-criticism when grappling with innumerable issues in contemporary Africa which are amenable to philosophic solutions.” The adoption of pragmatism in the Zimbabwean education system in a state of abortion under sanctions is the best concoction for survival, progress and developmental sustainability.

The Learner/Child/Student

Addressing the pragmatic nitty gritty with regard to the learner or student or child is a necessary logical condition in Zimbabwe’s creative struggle against the merciless inhuman illegal economic sanctions that are currently affecting the whole spectrum of life. In a pragmatic sense, Dewey (1990:9) stresses, “It is him and not the subject matter which determines both quality and quantity of learning.” Thus, a close understanding of the learner’s needs, interests and desires is necessary in all learning institutions in Zimbabwe. Pragmatism inevitably advocates the learner/child centred education, a system that puts the learner at the core in any sound teaching-learning situation. The Zimbabwean education system is to a large extent implementing the pragmatic learner centred methodology as a means of empowering learners to solve their everyday problems. Freire (1972:12) reinforces, “Men educate each other through the mediation of the world.” The world of illegally imposed

economic sanctions is taken advantage of by shrewd Zimbabweans in educating each other through them, in them in order to overcome them in different facets of life, education being one of the facets. Thanks to pragmatism – the best concoction in addressing Zimbabwe’s educational, social, economic, cultural and political woes in an illegal economic sanction dominated environment demanding those made of sterner stuff – the Zimbabwean patriotic, independent and pragmatic self-liberators. One day, our stolen humanity, stolen Ramosean (1999), notion of ubuntu will be fully restored through an incessant application of activity plus reflection leading into praxis – a revolutionary ideology in the fight against illegally imposed economic sanctions by the West in Zimbabwe. Pragmatism, will avoid a situation, according to Bottery (1992:6) where, “They lower their heads to pull the cart instead of raising their heads to look at the road.” The road in the Zimbabwean sense is the one leading to emancipation and total liberty across all life genres. Anywhere, in the field of academia, it is crucial to address some of the limitations of the implementation of pragmatism in the Zimbabwean education system through its critique that highlights its weaknesses.

Critique

Although pragmatism as a philosophy of education has worked some wonders in the current economic sanctions threatened education system in Zimbabwe, it has its own shortfalls. Pragmatism in its truest sense is a cultural global package that does not match the African Zimbabwean traditional cultural pragmatism. In this sense, a limitation with regard to the effective and efficient implementation of pragmatism in the Zimbabwean situation that does not have adequate state-of-the-art scientific gadgets and laboratories is a point to note home. Mukusha (2010:unpublished) notes that globalisation is viewed as an extension of colonial and imperial culture. Fortunately, Zimbabwe is trading in-between African traditional pragmatism and Western pragmatism though the latter is given more weight than the former in an attempt to restore sanity in Zimbabwe’s education system among many other areas. It is important to revisit the African traditional life nostalgically captured in Wanjohi (1981:xi; 26) that, “In traditional Africa, life was joyously received and happily lived... Life is not a unique and unrepeatable event: it is an ebb and flow, a systole and diastole, a perpetual recommencement.” Pragmatism has an uphill task to restore sanity in Zimbabwe – a situation depicting an almost uphill clamp to the bottom but possible. The relationship between the teacher and the learner is not always as purported under pragmatism in Zimbabwe since it inherited a Western colonial British style of education immediately after independence in

1980 where the colonial debris of authority and subordination are indispensable twins that are still haunting the mindsets of the Black people of Zimbabwe in managerial and non managerial posts. Retrospectively, Zvobgo (1999:111) observes, “On attaining independence, most African countries found themselves landed with an education system that needed extensive surgery in order to turn into a tool that serves the needs and aspirations of the people. For most, the operation has been a traumatic one, bedevilled with sometimes conflicting demands of politics and economics.” Hence, the illegal economic sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe are a case in point. Probably going through Ngugi’s *Decolonising the Mind* would make wonders in Zimbabwe if pragmatism per se were to be the epitome method and philosophy in the education system. Nevertheless, it is still worth noting what A Training Manual for Teachers (1992) in Mukusha (2010:332) reinforces that, “... the practical application of new knowledge helps to encourage further reflection and analysis.” This echoes Dewey’s pragmatism as expressed in Meyer (1972) that ‘what we know is embedded in what we experience.’ Despite the pragmatic limitations alluded to, pragmatism still stands as the best concoction in the Zimbabwean education system in a state of abortion threats under illegal economic sanctions by the West for material and human sustenance in Zimbabwe.

Conclusion

Having addressed pragmatism’s experientialist, instrumentalist, empiricist and growths principles through its historical background, conceptual analysis, education, curriculum, knowledge, teacher and methodology, the learner, experience and critique; it is safe to give an informed conclusion though open for debate and further research. In a nutshell, the implementation of pragmatism as a philosophy in informing Zimbabwe’s education system that is always under threat from the illegally imposed economic sanctions helps a lot in curtailing the negative dehumanising effects of those very sanctions. It has been noted in the paper that pragmatic creativity, originality, innovation and adaptability enables the survival of Zimbabwe’s education system as well as other societal institutions in a state of high abortion threats under illegal economic sanctions. Limitations with regards to pragmatism are also spelt out in this paper. Messianic, pragmatism proves to be the BEST concoction in addressing challenges under illegal economic sanctions in Zimbabwe’s educational landscape.

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