Redefining Slants of Research in Philosophy of Education as Distinct Academic Discipline

Joseph Munyoki Mwinzi
University of Nairobi.

ABSTRACT

This treatise is envisaged to draw attention to a pertinent stratum of enacting the research problems of philosophy of education. This discourse elaborates the general perception of the concept research in academic disciplines, and then delineates the essence of research in philosophy of education. The purpose of this treatise is to enhance the meeting point between philosophy itself and education as two distinct academic disciplines. In this regard it is fundamentally necessary to accentuate what is relatively positive and constructive in creating a reasonable connection between philosophy and education exclusive of probable partiality to any. As such, the process of teaching and learning or rather education itself and by extension pedagogy occupies a larger space than the theories, principles, and methods as reflected in epistemology, axiology, metaphysics, and logic as the principal components of philosophy as a distinct discipline.

1. Introduction

A research in general and philosophy in particular is generic in nature and responds to various issues whose direct implications influence pedagogy and its inherent activities. This expose is envisioned to delineate research in general and in philosophy from philosophy of education. It is glaring that education occupies a greater role as opposed to philosophy in the discipline of philosophy of education. This is because the substantial data which is obtained from the teaching and learning background cannot be isolated and be abrogated in education theory and practice. This explains why a desktop research, which is probable in philosophy, fails the test in philosophy of education. The paper conveys valuable assistance to enhance the essence of sense-data to the subject of education, and only reveals what is borrowed from philosophy which is relatively the theories, principles, and methods.

Objectives

i. To typify the nature of an academic research
ii. To explicate the construct of research in philosophy
iii. To elucidate the fundamental concepts of philosophy of education
iv. To estimate research in philosophy of education

2. The Concept of an Academic Research

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006:8), an academic research is a process of investigation which is envisaged to arrive at a dependable solution of a problem through planned systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. The concept of research as an activity is defined by Mohammed and Saad (2015:21) as the scientific search for knowledge, or any systematic investigation, to establish novel facts, solve new or existing problems, prove new ideas, or develop new theories. However, it is glaring that the source tried to define research within precincts of scientific phenomena, but confuted other approaches. The implication is that research in any field of study can be wider than what the sources tend to accentuate, however, this treatise is not designed to protract

into that direction, but only to draw attention to the concept of research, research in philosophy, and research in philosophy of education.

Thus, the concept of academic research is founded on either quantitative or qualitative paradigms (Calabrese, 2006:40). A qualitative supposedly starts without any concept in mind and then allows the data derived from the study to suggest concepts, while quantitative begins with a distinct concept in mind and strives to prove or disprove that concept. The process of collecting information, its analysis, and interpretation are parallel in a qualitative research. A qualitative paradigm uses interviews, observations, focus groups, and document analysis as some of the tools of collecting data. In qualitative paradigm, data is analyzed using thematic and content analysis.

As a paradigm of research, questionnaires are basic tools instruments of collecting data in quantitative paradigm. In quantitative paradigm, data is relatively empirical and it is analyzed using measures of; central tendency, relationships or correlation, variability, and relative positions. The data obtained through quantitative paradigm can be generalized to similar situations. On the other hand, qualitative paradigm, data is rational and it is analyzed using the faculty of abstraction. It is the faculty of theoretical reason or the realm of notional inquiry where truth or falsity is acquired through speculative abstraction (Audi, 2006:912). This is where pure philosophical treatises are academically located. In both case, the scientific research has four-fold functions:

- To discover new knowledge
- To describe a phenomenon
- To predict the outcome
- To improve and control or regulate a phenomenon

3. Research in Philosophy

A research in philosophy is purely abstract and its fundamental emphasis is on giving and evaluating logical arguments and presenting them using conjectural or speculative reasoning in support of competing positions and

Tele:
E-mail address: joemwinzi@live.com

propositions. Entirely, research in pure philosophy will attempt to answer questions such as; what can we know, what is real, how should we act, how can we extend knowledge, and how can human beings live and govern themselves (SparkNotes, 2006:2). This explains why the central problems of research in philosophy include the question of appearance and reality, the existence of matter and form, the nature and limits of human knowledge, world of universals and particulars, existence of God, the relation of mind and body, and the possibility of free will. It is proportional that the character, methods and history of philosophy accentuates the questions allied to human nature such as:

- What are the distinctive features of a human being?
- What is a good human life?
- What are human rights?

In an abstractive reasoning, philosophical research aims at realizing sufficient reasons to accept a conclusion. According to Audi (2006:583), philosophical methodology appeals to and defends common sense by utilizing conceptual analysis such as refutational analysis, distinctional analysis, decompositional analysis, and reductional analysis. This conclusion must be reached through a systematic construal which is either deductive or inductive argument. A research analyzes the expression of arguments especially the two general types of structure: structures that are distinguished by the way that compound sentences and their constituents parts are related in arguments, and structures that depend on the features of both compound sentences and quantifier words such as 'all', and 'some'. This postulates an emphasis on rational dialogue which is increasingly the complex conception of dialectic and the engine that drives philosophical investigation (SparkNotes, 2006:11).

A connection between a definite linguistic structure with the validity of an argument is exposed in order to reveal that linguistic structure is a foundation for recognizing valid arguments and for showing that they are valid (Curren, 2006:99). According to Curren (2006), such arguments simply amount to a terminological recommendation and tend to formulate complete concord on all the essential points. However, these are solely envisaged to be philosophical arguments, and not precisely specified concepts embedded in a framework that is defined by explicit rules. This underscores why Noryati (2009:89) holds that philosophy is a critical examination of reality which is characterized by rational inquiry and its central aim is to reach to objectivity and truth for the sake of attaining wisdom. Thus, a collective philosophical approach to research in philosophy responds to questions about issues of absolute and objectivity, relativity and subjectivity, truth and falsity, certainty and uncertainty, problem of substance, problem of universals, particulars, problem of identity, time and space, morality, ethical statements, social contracts, natural rights, and rational abstraction. These core areas of philosophical research endorse rationality as the primal cause of reference.

In this case, philosophical research evaluates related concepts such as inconsistency, logical equivalence, and logical truth. Therefore, a philosophical research founded on logical perspectives culminates at the level of analysis and proof, and such a research should determine whether a type of argument is valid or invalid and then show that it is valid or that it is invalid (Ozmon & Craver, 2008:258). A research shaped by logical paradigm is envisaged to develop a much finer ability of abstraction, the ability to see what is in common among concrete examples that differ in subject matter. Thus, philosophy in general and philosophical research in particular has no decisive parallelism with concrete situational analysis as is the case in education, but focuses solely on abstract thinking. This argument remains within the realm of metaphysics and rational speculation about being itself (SparkNotes, 2006:114).

4. Analyzing Philosophy of Education
4.1 The Concept of Education

According to Barrow and Woods (2006:12), education refers to 'upbringing' or 'acquiring knowledge'. In this sense practically anything one experiences, hears, or reads may be said to be part of one's education whether sensible or silly, coherent or incoherent, true or false, and regardless of how one came by the knowledge. It is in this sense that education is referred to in terms of a system, implying no distinctions between various things that might be learnt or how they might be taught. In a more pithy and accurate definition, education is considered to be something worthwhile which is intentionally transmitted in a morally acceptable manner (Barrow & Woods, 2006:29). The term 'education' is naturally ambiguous concept because it has myriad connotations to different people including instruction, training, role-learning, formation, drilling, indoctrination, conditioning, and moulding (Ozmon & Craver, 2008:36ff). Thus, there is no specific meaning of 'education' because of three reasons.

- It is a general term – refers to a whole range of meanings.
- A complex concept – has got multifarious meanings.
- It is a relational notion – it is often used in juxtaposition to other realities, and experience such as academic discipline, performance, going to school.

As an academic discipline, education poses diverse interpretations and definitions because of the complex nature of human personality who is the central reality in the entire enterprise (Ozmon & Craver, 2008:37). The human personality is central in terms of development of an individual, who is complex in nature based on social, physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual and aesthetic aspects (Gutek, 2011:315). In analogous stratum, human environment is complex, such that education enables a person to adjust to the environment whilst environmental aspects such as physical, cultural, social, economic affect an individual (Ozmon & Craver, 2008:312). According to Ozmon & Craver (2008:312), human beings are the products of different circumstances, whereby the coincidence of the changing circumstances and the reality of human activity such as education can be understood as inventive practice. An example is that an economist perceives education as a process of societal creativity, while a sociologist will consider education as a process of socialization and integration.

Further, there are different philosophies of life whereby, different thinkers design different philosophies according to places of origin and their own general perception of the world. Finally, there are divergent educational theories and practices, and as result, there are diverse educational theories that account for different definitions of education (Gutek, 2011:102). In this view, various schools of thought such as empiricism or rationalism respectively perceive education as means to fill an empty slate or a process that moulds anything out of it.

The notion of *education* is derived from Latin terms *educere* and *educare*. In this case, *educere* is a verb which means 'to lead out'. The word *educere* can also mean 'to launch, beget or give birth to'.

On the other hand, the verb '*educare*' refers to the physical process of rearing or bringing up children (Winch & Gingell, 2008:8). In some occasions, education is considered to be synonymous with '*instrucio*' such that it is rapt to specific process of formal and systematic learning (Gutek, 2009:53). Noryati (2009:96) defines education as any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character, or physical ability of an individual such that it culminates at propagating accumulated societal knowledge, skills and values from one generation to the next. Therefore, education can further be defined as a scheme of leading out all the potentials of a person. It refers to a process of becoming or a movement from ignorance to knowledge, from foolishness to wisdom, from darkness to light. The implication is that the word '*education*' signifies an activity, process, or enterprise of educating or being educated and sporadically to signify the discipline or field of study taught in schools of education that concerns itself with the activity, process, or enterprise (Barrow & Woods, 2006:145).

As an activity or process, education may be formal or informal, private or public, individual or social, but it always consists in cultivating dispositions, such as abilities, skills, knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, values, and character traits. In a wider sense, education is any act, experience or process that has a formative effect on the mind, character, or physical potentiality of an individual. As an academic discipline, education studies or reflects on the activity or enterprise by casting doubt on its aims, methods, effects, forms, history, costs, value, and relations to society. The process of educating and creativity draws attention to concepts such as 'schooling', 'instruction', 'knowledge', 'the curriculum', amongst others (Moore, 2010:7).

4.2 The Concept of Philosophy

The term 'philosophy' or *philosophía* (φιλοσοφία) is a compound term which is derived from two Greek words whereby '*philein*' or *phílos* (φίλος) literary means 'love, friend, or lover of' while '*sophias*' or *sophía* (σοφία) literary refers to 'wisdom/knowledge' (Noryati, 2009:88). An etymological definition of the term philosophy is loosely perceived to mean 'love of wisdom'. It is pertinent that philosophy does not embrace of an exact definition, however, a deeper meaning of the term comprises of an intellectual attempt of understanding, interpreting, and unifying of reality (Shouler, 2008:231). On the other hand, an academic research in philosophy draws attention towards the primacy of rationality in analyzing the issues related to metaphysical, epistemological, axiological, and logical perspectives in order to establish apt meaning and truth.

According to Moore (2010:1), the nature of philosophy as an enterprise is to give a comprehensive and cogent account of reality by nominating the role of human being in the scheme of things. It is within the context of metaphysical inference that an overall outline of reality supported by coherent argument is arrived at. A universal acuity of philosophy is that it has no distinctive subject-matter of its own (Audi, 2006:667ff). As such, philosophy is a universal contrivance of enquiry, about the concepts and theories reflected in other disciplines in order to divulge a rational justification. The reason why it is difficult to isolate philosophy is because to philosophize is applicable into every activity that human beings tend to engage in during life – anyone who wants to think clearly in every subject cannot escape it (Noryati, 2009:88).

Therefore, the intent in every philosophical inference is to bring clarity to the concepts, to test the coherence of the theories, and to serve the therapeutic purpose of dissolving those problems which posit logical confusions. The corollary is that philosophy endorses the significance of rational autonomy (Winch & Gingell, 2008:18). As such, philosophy is strictly an academic discipline of 'higher-order' compared to hard sciences. This is because, its primal activity is to deal with mental abstraction within the realm of 'mind' in terms of conceptual issues that leads to clarifying conceptual confusions instead of the 'concept of purpose', which evaluates the purposes ascribed to specific problems experienced. The discipline of philosophy is perceived as the analysis and clarification of concepts used in other areas (Shouler, 2008:232).

4.3 Philosophy of Education as Academic Discipline

Western philosophical tradition began in ancient Greece (Shouler, 2008:1), and as such, philosophy of education began with it. The major historical figures developed philosophical views of education that were embedded in their broader metaphysical, epistemological, ethical, and logical theories. In the contrary, it is patent that philosophy parse does not have its own fundamental subject matter, and therefore it is naturally contingent to other disciplines. On other hand, the initial background of philosophy of education was typically developed as a facet of philosophical systems within the context of ethical theories (Noryati, 2009:96). However, the proponents such as Paul Goodman and Robert Hutchins were neither professional philosophers nor educationists. Therefore, it is apt to postulate that philosophy of education is a higher-order activity since it is inscribed in the theory and practice of education.

In the early twentieth century philosophy of education developed as an autonomous academic discipline which resides in the schools of education under educational foundations. Instead of being taught in philosophy departments, philosophy of education is usually housed in departments or colleges of education. The multiple ways of conceiving education coupled with the multiple fields and approaches of philosophy make philosophy of education not only a very diverse field but also one that is not easily defined. Although there is overlap, philosophy of education should not be conflated with educational theory, which is not defined specifically by the application of philosophy to questions in education.

Philosophy of education also should not be confused with philosophy education, the practice of teaching and learning the subject of philosophy. In similar context, philosophy of education can also be understood not as an academic discipline but as a normative theory of education that unifies pedagogy, curriculum, learning theory, and the purpose of education and is grounded in specific metaphysical, epistemological, axiological, and logical assumptions. As a discrete academic discipline, philosophy of education attempts to demarcate its own position from philosophy, in order to align itself with the theory and practice of pedagogical processes and activities.

The concept of *philosophy of education* is a distinct academic discipline which employs philosophical principles, methods, theories, and concepts to solve issues of education. Noryati (2009:96) defines philosophy of education as the application of philosophical methods to the theory and practice of education. In this case, a shift of emphasis from philosophy transpires which is postulated by an attempt to

deal with substantial issues, about what exists, has purposes, and the upshots in which the supposed educational problems are stated. Accordingly, this academic discipline investigates various topics such as the nature of learning, the purpose of education, type of imparted knowledge, concepts of education, the source and legitimacy of educational authority, and how to conduct an educational research (Noryati, 2009:96). This explains why philosophy parse aims at realizing the objectivity of truth while philosophy of education is designed to examine education practice, such that the latter has more practical ends besides that of analyzing educational enterprise.

Thus, philosophy of education utilizes philosophy as apt tool to analyze and evaluate education as a human and societal activity in relation to its theories, values, meaning, and justification. As such, it is aptly an academic discipline appended on education and therefore, it involves the application and integration of philosophy into the theory and practice of education as an enterprise. As an academic discipline, philosophy of education involves a conceptual inquiry (Winch & Gingell, 2008:52). It is defined as the philosophical conjecture of analyzing the processes and activities of pedagogy. In its entirety, the central subject matter of philosophy of education is education itself, whilst, its methods inquiry are those of philosophy. Primarily, the philosophy of education explores the meaning inscribed to the concept of knowledge, process of knowing and methods of knowing. In this case, some of the inevitable and pertinent concerns include the type of knowledge, the process of dispensing it and the expected upshots as crucial facets necessary for inclusion in an educational curriculum (Moore, 2010:25).

Accordingly, the subject matter and the technique of research is reserved for the philosophers of education whose task is to evaluate the conceptual apparatus used in pedagogical theory and practice in order to establish their rational connection and reach at intrinsic logical finale. A rational estimate posed on education reveals diverse views that can be adopted on a wide range of educational practice. These views range from more or less conventional and unreflecting comments on schooling to detailed accounts of the roles and functions of education in society. The problems thrown up by education are not usually problems arising from conceptual confusion, but are real substantial problems arising out of pedagogical practice, these problems need to be solved rather than dissolved (Moore, 2010:3).

This academic discipline endeavors in formulating rational responses to questions about the curriculum, about worthwhile knowledge, about teaching methods, about social considerations and in education theory and practice. These answers have been embodied in educational theories, either explicit or implicit in practice (Moore, 2010:8). It follows necessarily that whatever problem identified in education theory or practice is estimated within the terms of philosophical stratagem. Such terms are tested using philosophical analysis as an attempt to establish the correct criteria for their usage. This activity of analysis is imperative for the betterment of education rather than philosophy (Moore, 2010:7).

It is glaring that the essence of philosophy of education is to give a rational directive to the elemental discourse about educational theory and practice. However, it is an integral description of the purpose of education in the society in terms of its aspirations, identity and complexity.

The concept of philosophy of education is a philosophical inquiry about education as social activity and therefore, the essence of philosophy of education is to assess the issues affecting education practice in order to establish apt deliberations that are coherently authentic. The essence of philosophy of education is to provide direction in education practice in the context of the world which is fascinated by utility and practical sense based on the knowledge of the national aspirations in the society.

As an academic specialty, philosophy of education uses philosophical approaches to study the issues that are central to the subject of education in relation to promoting a specific type or approach to education theory and practice. This means that philosophy of education may be part of educational discipline in the sense of being concerned with the aims, forms, methods, or results of the process of educating or being educated; or it may be meta-disciplinary in the sense of being concerned with the concepts, aims, and methods of the discipline. In other words, philosophy of education may be either the philosophy of the process of education or the philosophy of the discipline of education. It follows necessarily that philosophy of education is either envisaged to serve as a process or a product of an educational enterprise. In an equal measure, a research in philosophy of education can be perceived within the context of philosophy of education as process or product. In this treatise, the notion of philosophy of education as an academic discipline, defined by its discrete tactics of research, is comprised of two implications; philosophy of education as a product and philosophy of education as a process.

4.3.1 Philosophy of Education as a Process

A research perceives philosophy of education as a process which is used to evaluate events in education theory and practice. In such a research, philosophy itself serves as an instrument aimed at an incessant proposal of reflecting and estimating education practice (Cahn, 2009:488). According to Cahn (2009:488), philosophy of education is neither a process of giving nor taking, but a shifting exercise concerning the positions of pedagogical activities. The question posed by philosophy of education is; how does teaching and learning institutions undertake education theory and practice as an academic discipline? As a process, philosophy sets clarifications and enacts criticism by analyzing and evaluating education theory and practice. A research in philosophy of education must be present-oriented instead of future to draw attention to the tension between task imperatives and status constraints (Semel, 2010:151).

The crucial purpose of philosophy of education which is worth stating is the coherence and inclusive alignment of societal aspirations for which education exists (Mwinzi, 2012:39). Mwinzi (2012:39) insist that a meaningful and prolific role of philosophy of education is to model pedagogical events within the margins of aspirations ratified by the society. It falls within the precincts of this discourse to discern and manifest how to embed research in philosophy of education to shape the context of education practice. The course of identifying the link between philosophy and education as reflected in philosophy of education is a process. The upshot of a process settles at certain results acquired during the period of teaching and learning experiences. The focal point of philosophy of education as a process is on the procedures used to cultivate significant dispositions. These procedures comprise of the methodical form of reasoning about how to achieve specified end, but a deliberative process

in which both means and ends are open to question (Carr, 2006:426).

A research in philosophy of education may attempt to accomplish its task by using the tools of logic and techniques of analysis to examine substantive trend and generate normative conclusions about education. In this case, the focus remains throughout the process besides the relation between the subject and the phenomenon (Jackson, 2013:60). It is from the results of such analytical work and of factual inquiries about pedagogy that research in philosophy of education must expose. In a pedagogical research, it is explicitly or implicitly assumed that certain educational events are evaluated as the ends and the means of education.

4.3.2 Philosophy of Education as a Product

As a product, philosophy of education explores every aspect that resides under the subject of education. A relatable research in philosophy of education explores the outcome of what is taught, its value, and the essence of being educated in schools. In this case, emphasis is placed on the content and the value of education in relation to the standards envisaged in the society (Pollack, 2007:239).

As a product, philosophy of education is perceived as a decisive tool of formulating an apt content of educational curriculum (Barrow & Woods, 2006:39). It can also be one of the subjects in the curriculum of higher education in order to enable the teacher to think clearly, explicitly, and logically as possible about education theory and practice. In a similar vein, philosophy of education is envisioned to provide more coherent arguments to shape the dispositions aimed at and the methods used in the theory and practice of education. Additionally, philosophy of education is a product in the sense that it criticizes the systems of education in order to initiate functional reforms (Drew & Mackie, 2011:455). Therefore, philosophy of education is an existing enterprise of elucidating incoherent perspectives that obviate education theory and practice. In this case, philosophy of education is envisaged to produce a rational upshot. A philosophy of education can provide the platform of formulating and improving a compromise theory of education.

It is plausible to maintain that the product aspect of philosophy of education exudes the outcomes ensuing from the academic discipline of education, by asking whether it qualifies to be a discipline, what its subject matter is, and what its methods are, including the methods of the philosophy of education itself. The product emanates from the activity of learner's ability to reason, think, apply, discover, invent, communicate, test and critically reflect (Jackson, 2013:53). However, philosophy of education may not endeavor in formulating explicit dispositions to be followed, but it makes an analysis and critique of the prevalent concepts, arguments, and methods utilized in any reflection upon education theory and practice.

5. Research in Philosophy of Education

A research in philosophy of education fuses two academic disciplines, philosophy and education. There are a number of basic philosophical slants, problems, issues, and tasks that have occupied the discipline of philosophy of education throughout the history of the subject. The discipline of philosophy of education uses philosophical perspectives, concepts, approaches, methods and theories to evaluate issues testing education theory and practice. Thus, philosophy of education is perceived as a philosophical reflection on the nature, aims, and problems of education. An educational research using a philosophical slant can explore either simple

or complex trends through interventions, relationships, communities, or programs (Baxter & Jack, 2008:544).

The history of philosophy of education is an important source of concerns and issues, just as the history of education itself because it is envisaged to set an intellectual agenda of contemporary education. A critical concern in an educational research that utilizes philosophical slant is to draw attention to the issue of germane methodology and the rationale. In this case, it is necessary to identify a philosophical coherence that can channel what methodology ought to be followed and its essence or authenticity. Such a research should reveal a conceptual framework which may fall within an ethical, epistemological, ontological, and coherent spectrum, but remaining parallel to the identified methodology and applicable methods necessary to contextualize theory within practice of education.

A research in the discipline of philosophy of education looks inwardly to the substratum discipline of philosophy and outwardly to educational theory and practice. In such a dual focus, a research requires the researcher to work on both sides of the conventional divide between theory and practice, taking as its subject matter both decisive philosophical facets such as critical, analytical, phenomenological or speculative functions and applying them to specific issues vexing educational practice such as necessity of apt policies of standardized testing. These practical issues in turn have implications for a variety of long-standing philosophical problems in epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, and logic.

In addressing these many issues and problems, the researcher of philosophy of education strives for conceptual clarity, precise argumentation, coherent inference, and informed valuation. Jackson (2013:50) notes that without the explicit formulation of the pedagogical and philosophical background, the implications for verification, explanation, knowledge of reality are lost such that the tangible linkage between philosophy and education tend to be imprecise. In such a situation, the deeper meaning and value of research cannot be isolated. According to Jackson (2013:50), philosophical ideas tend to be hidden, and the consequent is that the strength and clarity of pedagogical problem and philosophical task that underpins the justification of the research is overlooked.

An abstract research dealing with philosophy and education draws attention to the fundamental problems of education (Carr, 2006:422). A philosophical research of education must examine some of the fundamental concerns that focus on the suitable aims and guiding ideals of education, proper criteria for evaluating educational activities, institutions, practices, and theories. A research that uses philosophy to analyze education must focus on at least two variables such as endorsing inquisitive disposition, fostering creativity, enhancing knowledge base, inventive perception and imagination, realization of potentiality, liberated mind, restraining parochialism, endorsing national aspirations, fostering moral thinking, rational judgment, and constitutive rationality reflected in critical thinking. Carr (2006:422) notes that what research in philosophy of education derives from philosophy is a theoretical account of the distinctive nature that constitutes its object of study and justification for the kind of knowledge it seeks to generate.

However, based on the forgone arguments, research in philosophy of education is not the same as research in philosophy or research in education. It is equally relevant that the range of contemporary approaches to the subject of

philosophy of education is surrounded by diverse approaches in the contemporary research. An important slant of research in philosophy of education is the line of enquiry which draws attention to the aspect of justification of the nature and the content of an educational concern in the curriculum in relation to what is known, and how it is being known (Moore, 2010:25). In this engagement, philosophy is necessary to open minds to analyze other aspect of the issue of research. It is crucial that some of the most general questions must be observed including; what to research, how to research, and why research.

The riposte to these relatable questions is inter-related to the central concepts of ontology, epistemology, and human nature. The implication is that the actual problem of research must thus be aligned to the purpose of philosophy which serves as a necessary parameter. Therefore, if researchers do not perceive the reality of creating a connection between the issue of research and philosophical underpinning, then there is probable contradiction in methodology (Carr, 2006:426). Thus, such type of inconsistency is fallacious to research standards, thereby undermining the very nature of the research discipline, and research techniques. Baxter and Jack (2008:554) briefly describe five techniques for analysis in research that uses a philosophical slant. These techniques are; pattern matching, linking data to propositions, explanation building, time-series analysis, logic models, and cross-case synthesis.

In relation to the *pattern matching* technique, it is fundamental to note that there are a number of basic philosophical problems, issues, and tasks that have occupied researchers of education throughout the history of the subject. It is necessary that researchers have to create parallel pattern between an identified issue facing education, and the philosophical strategy that is borrowed to solve the issue. According to Carr (2006:431), the question about how the philosophical analysis of human life, human attitudes, human actions, and human institutions align with education theory and practice is inevitable. Nevertheless, it important to affirm that the nature of philosophical estimation of an educational problem is to provide resources required to enhance excellence in this field. It ensues that philosophy of education provides a functional framework needed for inquiry into the process of schooling that is foundational in terms of being theoretical, diverse, and critical. Therefore, a research in philosophy of education must create a pattern that matches philosophical facet and educational concern.

The technique of *linking data to propositions* attempts to divulge that education is the central foundation of research. In this case, it is crucial to affirm that as there are many kinds of philosophy, many philosophies, and many ways of philosophizing, so there are many kinds of philosophies of education, diverse types of researches, and ways of doing it. A research paradigm that involves philosophy of education is based not on a philosophical analysis of the role of human reason in advancing practical knowledge, but on the necessity of developing a research methodology appropriate to the issue such that research in philosophy of education can be vindicated from the dominance of philosophy par se (Carr, 2006:432). It follows necessarily that researches in philosophy of education and by extension philosophies of education have to isolate problematic issues relevant to education but not philosophy per se. Consequently, any research in philosophy of education is not essentially designed to describe, compare, or explain any enterprises to

systems of education, past or present unless when there is necessity of tracing of its own history. Any other inquiries are left to other disciplines in educational foundations.

In a research in philosophy of education, an *explanation building* technique should not be confused with prescription. Instead, it is adequate that explanation aims at giving unequivocal and explicit meaning ascribed to terms and concepts. A correctly perceived research in philosophy of education must borrow from the content, the principles, methods, perspectives of philosophy to examine educational issues. Some of the major domains include metaphysics, epistemology, axiology, and logic (SparkNotes, 2006:2). This does not exclude the possibility of using schools of philosophy such as idealism, realism, pragmatism, existentialism, and analytical philosophy theories to analyze issues in education. It is important to expound in summary what each school entails as follows:

Idealism – the primacy of the mind (ideas and reason).
Realism – the primacy of the senses (experience).
Pragmatism – the utility of or what is practical (usability).
Existentialism – the significance of being as such (occurrence).
Analytic philosophy – the essence of scrutinizing language.

In principle, the philosophical approaches include analytical which is logical or rational, critical which is considered as Socratic or prescriptive or epistemological, speculative or metaphysical, and phenomenological or existential in order to address questions in and about pedagogy, education policy, curriculum, and the process of teaching and learning (Mwinzi, 2012:117). Exclusively, philosophy of education commits itself to explaining and setting clarifications of educational events. Some of the main events that philosophy of education touches on include the upbringing and education, the values and norms revealed through upbringing and educational practices, the limits and legitimization of education as an academic discipline, and the relation between theory and practice in education.

Regardless of the philosophical strategy used, logic is obligatory in research. Therefore, the *logic models* provide rational inference in every stage of research in philosophy of education. An introduction by Socrates of the 'Socratic method' of questioning which is the dialectic (Shouler, 2008:24), began a tradition in which reasoning and the search for reasons to justify beliefs, judgments, and actions was fundamental and still indispensable in any research of that utilizes philosophy to estimate education. This questioning leads to the view that a research in philosophy of education should integrate rationality in order to enable the pursuant of the value of reason. This central place of reason in research in philosophy of education permeates its diversity of inquiry (Kani & Sa'ad, 2015:23). Therefore, reason is not optional in a research in philosophy of education. This explains why Plato endorsed Socrates' view that the fundamental task of education is to help people to value reason and to be reasonable. In a related context, Aristotle took the highest aim of education to be the ability to foster good judgment in the process and product of education.

A research in philosophy of education may adopt a *time-series analysis* which explores pedagogical issues within the context specified time factor. In this case, these dispositions are embedded in philosophy of education and emanate from the society according to the prevalent cultural values. In this case, the ends and the means of education are defined by the cultural tradition to realize its fundamental purpose.

As such, philosophy of education is engrained on estimating education practice using the philosophical approaches such as phenomenological approach, critical theory, analytical method, and speculative model (Curren, 2006:178). A fundamental hint is that philosophy of education does not describe or compare the structure of the systems of education, but it analyses and critiques various perspectives of education practice such as the concept of education itself, and the process of teaching.

The broad view which is covered in philosophy of education comprises of the significant aspects of educational activities including the purpose of education, who can receive education, how is education determined, how is such education imparted, how is education progress evaluated, how does such education serve the society, and what obstacles does education practice encounter. In such a full-fledged philosophical normative theory of education, besides analysis, there are propositions of the following:
- Basic normative premises about morality - good or evil, right or wrong.
- Basic empirical premises about humanity and the world such as climate change.
- Basic premises about knowledge, its acquisition, and methods of delivery. (Audi, 2006:670).

A research in philosophy of education may espouse a *cross-case* synthesis technique whereby various issues impeding education theory and practice are assessed (Kani & Sa'ad, 2015:21). In this case, a philosophical research in education may examine arguments such as the view of Aristotle that 'good' ensues 'happiness' and also ensues 'excellent activity' such that for a individual there are two kinds of excellent activity, one intellectual (logical inference) and moral factor (justice). Therefore, having these types of excellent activity should lead to acquiring logical knowledge and ethical disposition. Some normative premises are required to facilitate the line of reasoning about what education should foster, how it should do this, as reflected in terms of metaphysical, axiological, logical, or epistemological range (Curren, 2006:3). Thus, what is central and crucial in any normative philosophy of education is not epistemology, metaphysics, or logical, as is sometimes thought, but ethics, value theory, and social philosophy.

Nonetheless, the propensity to undertake such an affluent analysis culminates at providing a better clarity of the case of research. A probable obstruction may occur if a researcher will analyze a discrete subunit and circumvent to assess other units in an entire research. Therefore, the necessity to define, enforce certain methods, and delimit the subject matter that is unique to the philosophy of education remains a paramount concern. This is because many scholars concentrate their studies on questions that abrogate the substance of actual issues of education theory and practice. The same deprivation elongates to research in philosophy of education because the scholars have qualms regarding their authority concerning what philosophy says to educators (Audi, 2006:671). On the other hand, a fruitful topic for reflection is whether a more self-critical approach to philosophy of education, even if at times it seems to be pulling up its own roots for examination, might prove more productive for thinking about education, because this very tendency toward self-criticism keeps fundamental questions alive and open to reexamination.

5.1 Theoretical Framework

The term theory refers to the general and abstract principles of facts (Mwinzi, 2012:126). It follows necessarily that theory plays an important role in determining the nature of educational discourse, including teacher education in a relative perspective. Mwinzi (2015:678) holds that a theory is a rational scheme or construct supported by either empirical or abstract abstraction to explicate an event, trend or a phenomenon. A theory may consist of hypothesis that has been verified by observation or experiment, or a systematic thinking defined by coherence in thoughts (Mwinzi, 2015:679). An interaction with theories or ideological constructs enables a research in philosophy of education to evaluate the impact of human enterprises reflected in education theory and practice.

Philosophy of education is a field characterized not only by broad theoretical eclecticism but also by a perennial dispute concerning the scope and purpose of the discipline. In one sense, philosophy of education was defined around canonical works of great philosophers such as Plato, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and others). In another time, the field was dominated by the figure of John Dewey and emphasized on progressivism, and finally it was characterized by analytical tradition as the only authentic approach to the discipline. An explicit theorizing about education resides at an argument and attempts of justifying, since prescriptive educational theory is never simply a matter of assertion. Theory will involve reference backed up by reasons, which may be appropriate or not, relevant or not, adequate or not (Moore, 2010:7).

In research, a theory must be pragmatic in character and abstract in nature (Mwinzi, 2015:677). This treatise is shaped by the 'theory of descriptions' which underscores that descriptions are 'incomplete symbols' that are meaningful only in the context of other symbols. This means that the symbols are meaningful in the context of the sentences containing them. It follows necessarily that descriptions are not referring expressions but they deserve an objective analysis based on proper isolating of the logical form of the sentences in which they occur (Audi, 2006:914). An imperative purpose of philosophy in education is to generate theories and adapt them to estimate and augment education practice. As such, philosophy provides a platform of theoretical thinking to make education more germane and accurately practical (Mwinzi, 2015:677).

5.2 Methodology

A philosophical research that has no educational subject matter does not contain any empirical experiments, surveys, statistics, searches of educational literature, educational jargon and team work; but emphasizes on reasoning and arguing, detecting fallacies/nonsense, distinguishing the apriori from the aposteriori, conceptual analysis, clear exposition (Kani & Sa'ad, 2015:21). This is an indication that there are modalities of conducting research by philosophers in educational problems since there are marked things they do and do not in the research. It is true that the method is wonderful, but also difficult, because a pertinent question ensues concerning the problems being studied, probable outcome, and the issue of philosophy parse which prevails without any educational problem. This approach seems to expose itself since the modalities followed are moot, the researcher is conformed and the individual critical thinking principle is defeated (Kani & Sa'ad, 2015:23). Therefore, a research in philosophy of education must search for literature related to an educational problem, enclose some educational dictums, and sculpt of teaching practice such as discourses that are not found elsewhere. The implication is that conducting a research in philosophy of education is more

intricate and convoluted than either philosophy parse or education parse.

The process of collecting data can align to either qualitative or quantitative paradigms. There are occasions when a research can be formulated under both paradigms depending on the nature of topic under investigation. A crucial aspect of choosing a methodology is 'researcher positionality' and the philosophical assumptions concerning beliefs, values, ontology, epistemology and relationality since research is subjective – even the most scientific, positivist, objective, quantitative researcher will make a subjective choice, for example, of which statistical measure to apply – and interpretative as the researcher's perceptions are utilized in all stages of decision-making throughout an entire research (Jackson, 2013:50).

On the one hand, an investigation must display a pedagogical issue and the philosophical slant used to examine it. A research in philosophy of education may attempt to respond to the incongruities in education that cannot be quantified using quantitative paradigm. The discrepancy of being unable to enumerate world views, conceptions, perceptions, ideas and feelings disqualifies quantitative approaches in philosophy, but can cagily apply in philosophy of education. In philosophy, phenomenological slant takes reality itself in its totality as the object of research. A phenomenological approach serves as a medium through which reality manages to describe and interpret itself (Mwinzi, 2012:142). This means that phenomenological slant allows the evaluation of conscious experiences as experienced from the subjective or first person's point of view such that the world views, feelings, ideas, perceptions and conceptions of individuals are classified as conscious experiences of the first persons or the first-person's perspective.

A research in philosophy of education may utilize analytical slant to define terms or elucidate educational concepts such as teaching, indoctrination, ability, and trait, not excluding the term 'education' itself (Curren, 2006:178). A further aspect of research ought to critique and clarify educational dictum, maxim, axiom, and aphorism such as 'education is power'. Therefore, a research in philosophy of education is not concerned with proliferating substantive propositions, either factual or normative, about education. It conceives of its task as that of analysis such that the research will only attempt to analyze and evaluate certain arguments, propositions, and methods used in reaching conclusions about education by its exponents.

Baxter and Jack (2008:554) note that one important practice during the analysis phase of any research in philosophy of education is the return to the propositions (if used); there are several reasons for this. First, this practice leads to a focused analysis when the temptation is to analyze data that are outside the scope of the research questions. Second, exploring rival propositions is an attempt to provide an alternate explanation of a phenomenon. Third, by engaging in this iterative process the confidence in the findings is increased as the number of propositions and rival propositions are addressed and accepted or rejected. An inference is that any research in education that invokes philosophy must explore diverse categories of educational theory and practice by means of rationality or coherent connectivity of concepts and propositions. The research should draw attention to an aspect of education and show how an aspect of philosophy should be used to analyze the problem.

6. Conclusion

An attempt to re-define the slants of research in philosophy of education articulates a coherent setting of how philosophy is relevant in addressing the problems, issues, and tasks surrounding education theory and practice. All educational activities, from classroom practice to curriculum decisions to the setting of policies at the school, district, state, and federal levels, inevitably rest upon philosophical assumptions, claims, and positions. Consequently, thoughtful and defensible educational practice depends upon philosophical awareness and understanding. Thus, philosophy of education is essential to formulate proper guidance of educational theory and practice.

A philosophical inquiry in terms of logical argument and analysis facilitates in revealing the link between philosophy and education. This is true of philosophy in general and of philosophy of education in particular. However, many philosophers of education tend to ignore the significance of tying philosophy and education as an attempt to study the two disciplines concurrently. It is fundamental to note that studying either philosophy or education is easier than the two combined.

As stated earlier, philosophy of education is a discrete academic discipline whose processes are envisaged to solve problems related to education through critical evaluation and systematic reflection (Amayo, 2009:5). A definite philosophy of education deals with issues of pedagogy embracing the curriculum, learning theory, method of teaching, role of the teacher, learner's discipline, assessments, and so on. There is also a philosophy of education which is cherished by every pedagogical endeavour and by every educator. A philosophy of education is perceived to affect either positively or negatively the decisions that ensue in such pedagogical enterprises.

It is essential to state that knowledge of research in philosophy of education would benefit not only teachers, administrators, and policy makers at all levels but also students, parents, and citizens in general. Societies that value education and desire that it be conducted in a thoughtful and informed way ignore the role of philosophy at their peril. Its relevance, reach, and potential impact make it perhaps the most fundamental and wide-ranging area of academic concord.

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