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A REFLECTION ON THE PURPOSE OF SCHOOLING: A SURVEY OF NIGERIAN STUDENTS AND GRADUATES

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A number of young people are in school or have gone to school without understanding the purpose of schooling. Research works are ongoing and in daily progression in defining and delineating the difference between schooling and education. Whilst a number of studies have focused on schooling, learning, learning environment and allied themes, there is still a growing concern and few emphatic studies to clear the air on the purpose of schooling. Today, there is a growing desire and crave to get into various cadres of schools in search for degrees and certificates; parents coercing their wards to go to schools, students supposedly not doing well in school and some dropping out of school. On the other hand, we see persons who have gone through various cadres of the four walls, lamenting and agitating for a change in the

schooling system. The associated challenges of under-employment and unemployment is also on the rise. The goal of this study was to carry out a survey to appraise the perceived purpose of schooling from Nigerian students and graduates with in other to educate all learners on its accrued dividends. An open ended structured interview was conducted amongst 100 randomly selected Nigerian students and graduates with a view to evaluate their purpose of going to school. A content analysis was carried out to analyze the qualitative research data by grouping the responses based on thematic issues as presented in charts and word clouds. Findings revealed the meaningful patterns and themes on the reflection of students and graduates on the purpose of schooling, such as: capacity building, education, societal expectation, future aspiration, parental decision and knowledge acquisition. 22% of the respondents revealed that they went to school with the perceived purpose to build capacity in their chosen fields; 18% revealed that they went to school because of their future aspirations; a combination of 16% of respondents went to school because of the societal expectation to go to school and the coercing of parents to do the same. 14% on the other hand went to school just to acquire knowledge; while only the balance 9% of the respondents were conscious of going to school as a platform for their education. The study posits that whilst schooling is for a season, its reason must be defined as early as maturity dawns so as to embrace the dividends of true education.

keywords: school, schooling, education, formal education, purpose, learning, nigeria.