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ASSIGNMENT TITLE: REVIEW OF CHAPTER 8

COURSE TITLE: HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

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QUESTION

In not more than 2 pages, do a review of Chapter 8 of Temidayo D. Oladipo and Noah O. Balogun, History and Philosophy of Sciences: A brief Survey. Pages 86-95.

TOPIC: PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND APPLIED SCIENCES

The socio-cultural milieu in which positivism grew is called the renaissance and the enlightenment period. It is called that it marked a period because it marked a period when people started a revolution of return to their Greek heritage of using reason in matters of public concern and not the dictate of religion as it was in the age prior to this time. Romanticism gave rise to humanism and naturalism, and works of art and literature produced at this time were also regarded as classic. There are a lot of problems with this conception of ideal knowledge seeking enterprise of which the first one is OBSERVATION.

Social science can be said to be an area of study where human behaviors, manifestations and interaction either that of a group or individual is explained. Sociology, economics, political science and many more are disciplines in this. Auguste Comte is regarded as the father of social science. The philosophy however arouses out of the curiosity that the central focus of science may be impossible or unachievable due to methodological mismatch. Objectives of social science include:

1. Ability to understand and predict human behavior
2. Ability to influence human behavior
3. Discovering the laws governing human behavior, and many more.

One of the problem of reasons and causes is that it must have an invariable or constant relation in the sense that whenever the alleged cause occurs, the effect must also occur. Francis Offor states that “The principles of cause and effect states that for every event in the universe, there is a set of conditions are all fulfilled, then the event invariably occurs”. He goes further to assert that, “by employing the scientific method in social investigation, the social sciences seek to explain the cause of action involving human agents.” One way to solve this problem is to accept reasons are not causes but motive or intent. However, some scholars such as J.S. Mill, T.M. Newcomb and Auguste Comte have argued on whether it is not better to leave reason as motive, drive or intent and not cause.

According to Max Weber, methodology of science becomes inapplicable due to the fact that the object of study in social science is man, a rational being with freewill, desires, emotions and other sentiment features that come into play in his action or reaction. All these factors undermine the notion of predictability of behavior with which natural science is known to deduce their principles and laws. for example, the law of demand and supply in economics which predicts that human as a rational being will buy less when the price is high and buy more when the price is low. It is on this basic assumption of rational, behavior that the law of demand and supply was formulated; The higher the demand, higher the price but the higher the supply, the lower the price. It was further observed by economists themselves that these laws do not hold all the time since man does not behave rationally all the time.