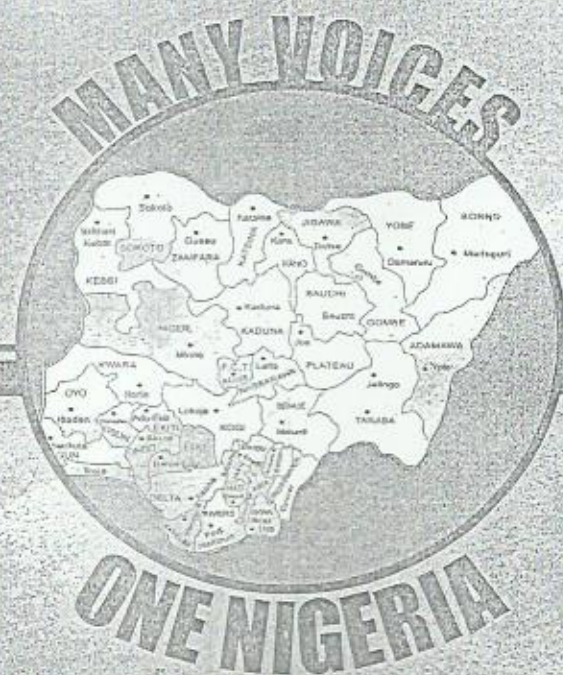


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THE POSSIBLE INFLUENCES OF GLOBALISATION ON THE STRUCTURE OF KNOWLEDGE IN NIGERIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

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Abstract

This paper attempts an analytical presentation on the influence of globalisation and Nigerian Educational system. The paper notes that the phenomenon of globalisation is multidimensional, embracing all facets of human activities through which the information communication technology facilitates interrelationships among people and institutions across the globe.

Thus globalisation is capable influencing every sector of human activity of which formal education becomes topical issue of discourse for Nigerian educational system.

Introduction

The phenomenon of globalisation means different things to different people; as a result, it remains controversial among policy makers, activists and academics. Globalisation, which has gained ground particularly in the international world in the last two decades, is tending towards becoming the dominant feature of the world. The engine of globalisation is the revolutionary advances in information technology; through information and communication technologies, diverse countries are fast turning into a truly global village (Elaigwu in Michael, 1999). The process of globalisation is sweeping across the whole world, turning it into a global village. The forces of globalisation are such that individual cultures will be unable to resist the phenomenon. Hence, the questions could be, how can these cultures, as well as education be integrated with the mainstream constituted by the process of globalisation? How, with the framework provided by globalisation could inter-cultural communication take place today? Against this view, Onyekpe (2001) and Michael (1999) argue that globalisation is not as value-free as it is being portrayed in the West. In other words, globalisation is only the stage of European economic and cultural domination of the rest of the world which started with slave trade and colonialism, went through imperialism and is now at globalisation stage.

The debate about globalisation as a world process and its consequences on educational policy, values and culture have been going on in a variety of different fields on intellectual work for some time (Fadahunsi, 2001; Onyekpe, 2001). Nicholas and Carlos (2000) see the phenomenon of globalisation as the emergence of supranational institutions whose decisions shape and constrains the policy options of any particular nation-state. For Jan (2000), it is the overwhelming or superseding impact of global economic processes; including processes of production, consumption, trade, capital flow and monetary interdependence. He explains further that it is the removal of barriers to trade, and the integration of national economies and its potentials as a force for reducing poverty levels in the world. Carlos and Roberto (2004) argue that the phenomenon of globalisation implies the emergence of new global cultural forms, media and technologies of communication which assist to reshape the relations of identity as well as interaction within and across local cultural settings. The definitions, however, reveal that globalisation is not a new era; it was a period of colonialism in Africa. The colonial adventure actually began in 1800 up to the late 20th Century following the abolition of slave trade. Also, many factors were responsible for colonialism and a typical example of this was the colonial factor. This factor includes industrial revolution which was possible through slave trade (Okereke & Ekpe, 2002). To achieve this idea of capitalism and colonialism in using slave labour, it was observed that progress in the industrial sector was moving faster than progress in agriculture. In the same vein, Lugard in his Dual mandate cited in (Okereke & Ekpe, 2002) confirmed that:

supplies of raw materials and food to meet the needs of the industrialised nation of Europe (p.13).

However, Bagudo (2002) summarises the major historical waves of globalisation as follows:

- a. The diffusion of the world religions and the establishment of transcontinental civilisations.
- b. Europe's colonial conquest in Naval exploration in the 15th Century.
- c. Intra European power struggles.
- d. European imperialism from the 19th Century to 1918.
- e. Second World War
- f. Financial cum cultural waves.

Nevertheless, the phenomenon of globalisation is the construction of the oneness of the world, thus, a move towards global unit in all aspects of human cum social life.

The Paradox of Globalisation and Development

Globalisation and development are two complex terms which are basically on people and goods and services. Globalisation has been defined already, while development on the other hand can be defined as "A stage of growth or advancement", "Industrialisation or economic advancement of a country or an area" (Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English, 1995). Cole (1987) uses different terms with regards to development where he classified countries into industrialised and non-industrialised countries. Thus, Noah (1995) posits that a state of development is determined by economic productivity, high standard of living, political stability, technological advancement as well as human basic needs. Beyond these definitions, development as a social science concept has been characterised by shifting meaning through time and space. Despite this observation, it should be noted that these various definitions have certain common indices, the major one being that development is about the people, which implies (though, not necessarily always) a rise in the standard of living of a people (Uroh, 1998). Development so understood entails both quantitative and qualitative dimension; that is, material and normative character. However, students of development studies especially in Africa have submitted that development in Africa would among other things include:

A. progressive elimination of poverty, unemployment, social inequalities, authoritarian political structures, monopolisation of opinions by the state and all other negative tendencies that have today, regrettably though become the defining characteristics of the continent namely, "the chronic debt problems, the declining productivity and negative growth rates and (Worse still) the threat of starvation to over 150 million people" on the continent (Uroh, 1998: pp3-4).

The world in which we live today makes us much more interdependent with others even thousands of miles away, than people have ever been previously. Gidden and Durieier (2000) assert that there is a connection between local actions the ways in which people relate to one another in face-to-face contexts and their relationships in larger social settings around the globe. These connections between the local and the global are quite new in human history. Relationships have accelerated over the past thirty and forty years as a result of the dramatic advances in communication, information, technology and transportation. According to Caporaso (1998), the development of jet planes, large, speedy container ships and other means of fast travel have meant that people and goods can be continuously transported across the world. The worldwide system of satellite communication has made it possible for people to be in touch with one another instantaneously.

Theoretical Analysis of Globalisation

Trying to understand the complexity of the impact of globalisation on society raises the importance of the theory of globalisation. Macro-analysis is essential if we are to understand the institutional background of daily life. The ways in which people live their everyday lives are greatly affected by the broader institutional framework, as is obvious when the daily life cycle of activities of a culture, that of the medieval period is compared with life in an industrialised urban environment. The macro-sociological analysis is the analysis of large scale social systems like the political system or the economic order. It also

includes the analysis of long-term processes of change, such as the development of globalisation. The two macro-sociological analyses that are polemical to globalisation here are functionalism and conflict theories. To the functionalist, the function of a socio-activity is to analyse the contribution(s) that the activity makes to the society as a whole. Schulte (1993) explains that functionalism, is a theory of international relations that arose principally from the experience of the Second World War and a strong concern about the obsolescence of the state as a form of social organisation. Rather than the self-interests of nation states that realists see as a motivating factor, functionalists focus on common interests and needs shared by states (but also by non-state actors) in a process of global integration triggered by the erosion of state sovereignty by the increasing weight of globalisation (Rosamond, 2000). Held (1996) asserts that functionalism is a pioneer in globalisation theory and strategy. According to him, states had built authority structures upon a principle of territorialism. State-theories were built upon assumptions that identified the scope of authority with territory, aided by methodological territorialism (Schulte, 2000). Functionalism proposed to build a form of authority based in functions and needs which linked authority with needs, scientific knowledge, expertise and technology, that is, it provided a supra-territorial concept of authority.

Worsley (1968) discusses the first salvo when he writes, "Until our day, human society has never existed". There is the tendency to aptly ask Worsley if those who lived before "our days" were humanoids. The import of his writing is that it is only in recent times that one can speak of social actions that span the whole universe. The world has become a single social system as a result of growing ties of interdependence; both social and economic concerns now affect virtually every one. Wallace (1990) explains that an everyday aspect of globalisation can be found in people's closets and drawers. He further explains that if one takes a look at the labels of one's clothing and sees the many various countries in which they are manufactured, then one is experiencing globalisation first hand. Deducible from Wallace's explanation is that changes in human life in terms of politics, economy, education and many others via globalisation has a far-reaching effect. A contentious issue however, is the fact that some see globalisation as a tool of inequality. Keohane and Hoffmann (1991) refute this by writing thus:

The industrialised and the developing societies have developed in interconnection with one another and are today more closely related than ever before. No society on earth any longer lives in isolation from others and even in the wealthiest countries; everyone is dependent on imported goods.

In view of this, globalisation from functionalism perspective is an emergence of harmonious desirability among nations.

From Marx's time to the present day, many sociological debates are centred upon the idea that Marx's set out about the influence of economics on the development of modern societies. Freeman (1999) explaining Marx's works explained that, modern societies are capitalistic. The driving impulse behind globalisation then is to be found in the pressure towards constant economic transformation produced by the spread of capitalist production. Capitalism is a vastly more dynamic economic system than any other that preceded it in history. Capitalists compete with one another to sell their goods to consumers and this leads to constant technological innovation, because increasing the effectiveness of the technology used in a particular production process is one way in which companies can secure an edge over their rivals. Capitalism therefore according to Marx, is a restlessly expanding system pushing outward across the world. Impliedly, this is the conflict theorists view of globalisation.

Danziger and Gottschalk (1995) writing from the conflict perspective sounded a bit cautious when they write:

...although many economists, politicians and business people have sung the praises of globalisation, there is reason to approach such claims cautiously.

The basis for their caution is hinged on the fact that globalisation may well be increasing economic inequality in the world and therefore could further widen the gap between the wealthiest and the poorest workers and nations. Freeman (1999) observes that globalisation is not the only cause of inequality, but blamed increasing inequality on the spectacular growth of hi-tech industries which employ mostly well-

Safe to conclude that globalisation is not without its role in the growing stratification of the society. It is not only the environment surrounding our lives that has changed; these transformations have radically altered and continue to alter the most personal and intimate side of our dearly existence, which also influence the educational system.

Globalisation and Nigerian Educational System

Globalisation as a phenomenon is characterised by increased connectedness as well as major inequalities between countries and within countries. As a result, there is need to understand the particular impact of globalisation on educational policy and practice. As such concepts like restructuring, reform, poverty, gender, identity, citizenship, multiculturalism, popular culture and many others become a focus for educational policy and practice especially in Nigeria as a developing country. Moreso, it becomes imperative for educators to acknowledge the force of these trends and also implications for shaping and constraining the choice available to educational policies and practices in the Nigerian society.

Nicholas and Carlos (2000) agree that nothing could be more personalised; more intimate and local, than the educational process in which children and youth come to terms in the context of acquiring and learning their family, regional as well as national culture. Before the advent of formal education, indigenous African education or upbringing of children was also a personal affair, governed by families and local communities; and this type of education makes every individual fit into a community way of life which can be seen as the educational imperative cutting across the community. Lending credence to this, Rodney (1982) maintains that "before even the British came into relations with our people, we were a developed people having our own institutions and our own ideas of government." Similarly, at communal level, everybody is taught principles, religious beliefs as well as various occupations thereby preparing the young ones for adulthood (Fafunwa, 1974; Christopher, 1979; & Bolarin, 1994). In view of this, festivals, demonstrations, imitations, practical arts, story telling, proverbs and taboos are parts and parcels of African culture which also assist to achieve the aims and objectives of traditional education which encompasses communalism and collectivism.

The questions we are facing now is, how far can Nigeria control her educational system in a world of global markets? How far can Nigeria promote her culture through education and what forms should these take in pluralistic societies? In this era of globalisation, does the Nigerian educational system have a future at all? If globalisation is an inexorable trend, how does this affect the politics, economy, education, culture and values in pluralistic societies? Also, to what extent is the educational endeavour affected by processes of globalisation that are threatening the autonomy of national educational systems? In all, what is the implication for the Nigerian educational systems? Of all these questions, the dynamics of the process of globalisation are therefore, a focus of concern of educational sociologists, philosophers, curriculum planners, policy makers, parents, teachers, leaders and elites who are involved with the educational endeavour.

It should be emphasised that under-investment of elementary education has often been noted as one of the most mitigating factors responsible for the failure of human development programme in many developing countries (Kankwenda, Gregoire, Legros & Quedraogo, 2000). Despite some recent improvements in some of the developing economies, statistics show that the amount invested particularly in primary education hardly touches one percent of the GNP (Kankwenda, et al 2000). In contrast, the total estimated expenditure on education in the United States of America for all levels, both public and private, during the 1995/1996 school year was about US\$ 526.9 billion. Furthermore, UNESCO World data on education statistics of 1995 explains that developed countries spend an average of about US\$ 4979 per pupil, and for the poorest countries the figure is a meagre sum of US\$ 33. It therefore, becomes imperative that the educational policy makers should see funding in the educational sector as a critical strategy for a long-term investment and failure to provide sufficient levels of financial allocations for all levels of education could lead students going into elite private schools thereby increasing further social inequalities and human disparities.

Information and Communication Technologies and Educational System

For human resource development and education in particular, the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) is very important. In other words, it has opened up new strategies, avenues and possibilities of learning. In view of this, educators want and expect their current and future students to learn and master the generic skills required to ensure that the students become computer-literate which will also integrate into the total cognitive, affective and psychomotor learning experience of students. Though many developing countries especially Nigeria often claimed the paramount importance for students to acquiring at least the basic skills in the use of the computer technologies but the financial investment in terms of budget allocations reflect more of a token amount than that of total commitment.

It should be emphasised that in a globalised world where change is very rapid, one of the great dangers that will face the world is the long-term impact of education and the number of persons who are excluded from meaningful participation in the economic, social, political and cultural life of the communities. For instance, the policy through globalisation are privatisation, decentralisation of educational systems; among many others are prevalent in the trends of globalisation. In view of this phenomenon of globalisation, there is need to discuss the effects of globalisation on educational policy and policy formation which will also produce new educational models that will combat the problems of globalisation, including education, values and culture in the context of new popular culture in the Nigeria society. Thus, the educational policy makers have to discuss a new model of rural education for marginalised areas, education of the street children, education of girls and women in general especially in traditional societies where culture has suppressed women education.

The role of education in development is slowly becoming unclear and more rhetorical in debates on globalisation and development. There is need to raise the issue of the role of higher education development in African regions where nearly half of Sub-saharan African's 600 million people live on less than US\$ 1.00 a day, more than a third of children are malnourished, people are dying of AIDS with minimal improvement in education and health. As a result, there should be increased participation rates in education as human right and as a strategy for development. The United Nations report on sustainable development warned that education is becoming a forgotten priority of which the 1999 Rio meeting had put education on the agenda but failed to specify the role of higher education (Human Development Report, 2003).

Similarly, in the globalising economy, higher education had featured on the World Trade Organisation (WTO) agenda not for its contribution to development but more as a service to trade in or a commodity for boosting income for countries that have the ability to trade and export their higher education programmes. To this end, there is need to rethink the role of higher education in national development as national economics are slowly being replaced by a global economy and national higher education is being slowly replaced by global systems of higher education.

Influence of Globalisation on Education

The National Policy on Education (2004) states the aims and objectives of education and higher education in particular as follows:

1. the acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper value orientation for the survival of the individual and society;
2. the development of the intellectual capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate their environments; and
3. the acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which enable individuals to develop into useful members of the community (Section 5, subsection 32: pp34-35).

The National Policy on Education with its emphasis on science, technical as well as vocational education helps to meet the needs of the citizens and in achieving this demands, the society needs some skills. Thus, the influence of globalisation in the structure of knowledge in Nigerian educational system means that to survive in a globalised world, every citizen of Nigeria needs some basic skills to survive in his/her

environment in order to become a useful member of the society.

Another influence of globalisation on the structure of knowledge in the Nigerian educational system has to do with its attempt towards cultural homogeneity. Technology has now created the possibility and even the likelihood of a global culture. The Internet, fax machines, satellites and cable TV are sweeping away cultural boundaries. Global entertainment in countries shape the perceptions and dreams of *ordinary citizens, wherever they live*. This spread of values, norms and culture tends to promote western ideas of capitalism. As a result of cultural conflict, others see globalisation phenomenon as declaration of war upon all other cultures. For instance, Africans speak over 1,000 languages, but colonial languages have dominated much of modern life including the educational system. In other words, globalisation erodes local languages; and the economic globalisation, particularly in the entertainment sector, has allowed English to edge out many local languages, threatening cultural diversity. The question therefore is, will local cultures inevitably fall victim to this global consumer culture? Will English eradicate all other languages? Against these questions, the Third World countries are in conflict with their local culture. For instance, the universal spread of European languages particularly English, destroys the ability of indigenous communities to keep their languages alive. Also, the battle between maintaining tradition and adapting to modernisation remains a difficult one for indigenous peoples.

In cognisance of this, the educational policy makers in Africa especially in Nigeria should emphasise the relevance of the educational system at local level which will also reflect their relevance in the global context. For the benefit of developing countries in this era of globalisation, new reform policies on education should be developed in order to revive their institutions. In doing this it becomes paramount that the international agencies such as the World Bank (WB) should revise their policies in support of education in general and to accept the view that there is need for investment at all levels of education as a strategy for promoting development. In other words, the era of globalisation on education policy and practice to local needs becomes important because changes taking place as a result of globalisation have put a lot of emphasis on the need for accountability to society beyond financial accountability since demand for intellectual leadership and partnership contributes to development of every society. It is indeed a challenge to educators and researchers to examine and anticipate the possible extent of the optimistic and pessimistic impact of globalisation on the world of education, mindful of the fact that the hopes and expectations, contradictions and paradoxes still persist alongside the current stage of human development. As education forms the fundamental bedrock towards the development of knowledge the challenge of globalisation to the field of education needs to be re-emphasised.

Conclusion

There is need for genuine commitment to development and mutual beneficial partnership in every society. In view of this, the role of education at this period of globalisation should assist to shape the attitudes, values and understanding of multicultural citizens in developing countries. It is therefore imperative to know that the advent of globalisation has put the public education at crossroads which has become a threat to the society. With regard to the threat to indigenous cultures by globalisation, what Africa needs to do is to intensify efforts in redeeming its rich cultural heritage. One critical area suggested for intensification of these efforts is in the indigenisation of its educational system. The revival of African cultures which have been virtually overwhelmed by Euro-American culture through centuries of slavery, colonialism and imperialism are most urgent to be incorporated in the National Policy on Education cum the curriculum at all levels of educational institutions before they will be completely wiped away by the new forces of globalisation. As already mentioned, a good starting point would be to indigenise African educational systems which, in the case of Third World countries had been too long neglected by the policy makers, academics and the elites.

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