

INTERNATIONALIZATION OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

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Abstract

Today, internationalization of education means far more than inter-personal or even inter-institutional co-operation across borders. It is a necessary, vital, and deliberate transformation of how we teach and learn. It is essential to the total well being of a man and to the future of Nigeria educational system. In a world characterized by challenges and opportunities of global proportions, internationalization of education is the key agent of change. The purpose of the paper is to describe the holistic approach to internationalization of education in Nigeria, the success and gain of internationalization. Internationalization strategies take cognizance of integrated and holistic approach to teacher education so that, Nigerian teachers will have the knowledge and skills for global competence. The paper suggested action plan for teacher education so that teachers in Nigeria can be globally competent. Consequently, teacher education in particular, and education in general in Nigeria we have strong international reputation. The conclusion of the paper is that there is the need of total transformation of teacher education through curriculum reform in line with international standard.

Keywords; Internationalization, Development, Global, Competitiveness

Nigeria as a nation is blessed with both human and natural resources. In the past, Nigeria had made attempts to tackle the problem of mass illiteracy with little success. The implementation of the defunct (UPE) (Universal Primary Education) scheme brought about new development in teacher training programmes because of the teaching

personnel situation prevalent then. The availability of teachers then was seen as a pre-requisite to the launching of the UPE Scheme and several crash programmes were mounted to produce the urgently needed teachers. The step marked the beginning of the decline in teacher education in Nigeria. (Abdulsalam, 2004).

In today's Nigerian education, the availability and adequacy of teachers both in quantity and quality raises some questions especially with the introduction of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme. However, one of the major functions of the UBE was to have fairly adequate, qualified and well-motivated teacher in a competitive world (Tahir, 2003). To make teachers fit into the New World Educational System, teachers in this country must be exposed to relevant academic and professional programmes which entail significant knowledge and effective skills or techniques (Ighalo and Ighalo, 2010).

In fact, the foundation for training of needed manpower in a country in all areas of specialization is sound products of the teacher education programme in that country. The standard of education in a country is largely dependent on the quality of teachers in the education system. Also, facilities are of paramount importance but for the real delivery of instruction in the classroom setting is the teacher. So the internationalization of teacher education in Nigeria is a crucial factor in educational system. The purposes of teacher education according to the national policy on Education (2013:56) are,

1. To produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system.
2. To encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers.
3. To help teachers to fit into the social life of the community and society at large and to enhance their commitment to national objectives.
4. To produce teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate to any changing situation not only in the life of their country but in the wider world and
5. To enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession.

Despite the fact that the National Policy on Education (2013) outlined the aims and objectives of teacher education in Nigeria, the quality and quantity of teachers in Nigeria are still far below the world standard. Tanner and Tanner (1975) as quoted by Abdulsalami (2004) opine that the success of a curriculum largely depend on teachers handling it...". Therefore the quality of education is largely tied to quality and supply of teachers in the system. So, to meet this urgent need, in educational system the internationalization of teacher education in Nigeria is very vital in this present world of technological competitiveness.

According to knight (2004) internationalization is changing the world of higher education, and globalization is changing to the world of internationalization.

Internationalization is a term that is being used more and more to discuss the international dimension of education generally. It is a term that means different things to different people and is thus used in a variety of ways. To some it means a series of international activities such as academic mobility for student and teachers; international

linkages, partnership, and projects; and new international academic programmes and research initiatives. For others, it means the delivering of education to other country through new types of arrangement such as branch campuses using a variety of face to face and distance techniques. To many, it means the inclusion of an international, intercultural, and/or global dimension into the curriculum and teaching and learning process. Still others saw it, as international development project and alternatively, the increasing emphasis on trade in higher education.

The preparation of teachers in Nigeria traditionally is focused almost exclusively on developing understanding, skills and attitude appropriate for teaching in local schools in it, the area of global competitiveness the importance of global competences and intercultural understanding have not being stressed. As Reimers (2009) asserted, “the education paradox of the beginning of the twenty-first century lies in the disconnect between the superb institutional capacity of school and their underperformance in preparing students to invent a future that appropriately addresses the global challenges and opportunities shared with fellow world citizens.” In-fact, while the political, economic, social and culture situation in the world has been clear for sometime, too little or no attention has given to the question of how to make curriculum more reflective of international dimensions and how to ensure that we have more internationally competent teachers. Austin and Austin (2000) as quoted by Koziol Greenberg, Williams, Neihaus and Jacobson (2011) asserted:

The problems and challenges that we face today – global warming, religious and ethnic conflict, the misdistributions of wealth and opportunity, the decline of citizen interest and engagement in the political process, the increasing ineffectiveness of government to shift from an industrial to a knowledge-based society and from a national to a global economy-call for adaptive, creative solution that will require a new kind of leadership... future leaders will not only need to possess new knowledge skills, but will also be called upon to display a high level of emotional and spiritual wisdom and maturity.

Although these words of this authority are almost a decade, they accurately describe the need to educate a new generation of globally competent citizens. The events of the past years, in Nigeria, the underfunding of education sector, the frequent strikes by the lecturers and the like have brought Nigeria’s international preparedness of her educational system at a crossroads. In fact, the global transformations of the last decade have created and unparalleled need in Nigeria for expanded international knowledge and skills.

Internationalization Strategies, Programmes and Policies

International education takes us beyond the diversity of the classroom, as placing education within national and global, contexts becomes increasingly important

(Bromfield, 2016). The purpose of this section however, to look in some detail at the phenomenon of internationalization. The term internationalization is used to go beyond the idea of international activities. The strategic term used in this context of education refers to both program and organizational initiatives at the institutional level. The issue here is that education of teachers should be more planned, integrated and holistic so that the teachers will have the knowledge and skills to foster global competence. This will help to reduce the many reasons for the failure of teacher's education programmes to foster global competence in their students (Longview foundation, 2008).

In terms of policies, for internationalization of teacher education to be holistic and meet the desired need, it is wise to be aware that many of the policies related to international dimension of education will affect both public and commercially oriented private institutions. Therefore, the policies should be addressed in a conceptual framework. Proper attention should be given to policies that are related to priorities and plans related to the international dimension of teacher education. This could include polices on study abroad, student admission, international linkages and partnerships, cross-border delivery, international exchange of student and so forth. Writing on the issue of making the teachers to be effective, to have international outlook and to avoid the mistakes of the past in policies formulation for teacher educations, Odu (1994) as quoted by Abdusalami (2002), remarked that the quality of training (academic and professional) the teacher has received, the exposure, the motivation, the status of the teaching profession and the school environment must be of international standard. This should be the concern of all stakeholders in education to make teacher education in Nigeria to have international outlook.

Rationales for Internationalization of Teacher Education

According to De-Wit (1995) as quoted by Knight (2004) traditionally, the rationales driving internationalization have been presented in four groups: namely social/cultural, political, academic and economic. However, these generic categories have remained a useful way to analyze rationales for internationalization of any programme.

Furthermore, given the increasing emphasis on competition at the international level, it is very important that institutions particularly in Nigeria should be developing a strong international reputation especially in the area of teacher education. Discussing the issue of rationale for internationalization, De Wit (2000 & 2002) affirmed that institutions and providers are undertaking serious efforts to create an international reputation and name brand for their own institution or for a network/consortium to place them in a more desirable position for competitive advantage. Therefore, the desire of Nigeria in the training of teachers in the present technological age is to have international recognition.

These rationales as presented by De-Wit (2002) are relevant today in the Nigeria context: These are: -

- (a) **Academic:**
 - ❖ international dimension to research and teaching
 - ❖ extension of academic horizon
 - ❖ institution building
 - ❖ profile and status
 - ❖ enhancement of quality
 - ❖ international academic standards
- (b) **Social/Cultural**
 - ❖ national cultural identity
 - ❖ intercultural understanding
 - ❖ citizenship development
 - ❖ social and community development
- (c) **Political**
 - ❖ foreign policy
 - ❖ national security
 - ❖ technical assistance
 - ❖ peace and mutual understanding
 - ❖ national identity
 - ❖ regional identity
- (d) **Economic:**
 - ❖ economic growth and competitiveness
 - ❖ labour market
 - ❖ financial incentives.

One thing to note in this categorization of rational is that internationalization of education generally and teacher education in particular depends on many factors. One of such factors is how much the internationalization process is a bottom-up or top-down process within any given country (Knight 2004). Therefore, it is accurate to say that in Nigeria where education generally is not given attention, talk less of internationalization of teacher education, these rationales have no much relevance. All in all, the rationales driving internationalization vary from institution to institution, from government department to government department, from stakeholder to stakeholder and from country to country. Nonetheless, Nigeria should take it serious and take advantage of these reasons why our teacher education should be internationalized.

Internationalizing Teacher Education in Nigeria

The training of teachers in Nigeria has traditionally focused on teaching pedagogy without paying attention to internationalization process. While there has been a tremendous influence of globalization in all other sectors in Nigeria, no little attention has been given to the question of how to make curriculum for training of teachers more reflective of international dimensions and concomitantly, how to insure that we have more internationally competent teachers.

In internationalizing teacher education in Nigeria the schools have lot of roles to plays. Unfortunately, despite this clear need for education to focus on international and global competence, the Nigerian education system has not responded accordingly. What Longview foundation (2008) said about U.S. education system is also applicable in Nigeria. They asserted;

Our system is not preparing young people for this new reality. Recent education reform efforts have focused heavily on improving reading, mathematics, and science education. These efforts while important cannot ensure that students will develop the knowledge of world regions and global issues, languages, and cross-cultural skills and values of citizenship and collaboration that are so important to living and working in an increasing interdependent world”.

While NGO and private stakeholders in education have all recognized as it is other part of the world, the need for internationalization of teacher education for global competence, government and schools are not fostering the initiative in students who are being trained as teachers in Nigeria. In view of this, Reimers (2009) and Stearns (2009) opined that despite good intention, schools and government do not integrate global competence skills into the teacher curriculum for a number of reasons, including lack of resources and an obsolete mindset. In most cases, while individuals and institutions may value developing global competency when resources are tight, money may first be allocated to more traditional priorities. Similarly, schools are more familiar with developing programmes for traditional skills such as reading and mathematics that are reflected in standard and assessment.

In short, Nigeria is blessed with human and natural resources, but lack the Initiative to harness these resources to produce globally competent teachers. If schools are to become more global, teachers within these schools must have the knowledge and skills to engage in globally-oriented education. The role of teachers in fostering global competence is critical, and yet many teachers are not developing the competence themselves. However, there are many reasons for the failure of teacher’s education programmes to foster global competence in their students. The culture in a broad sense of teacher education has tended to be local, rooted in what is in the immediate

environment rather than global. The reason is because teacher education focuses on the Blessing N. Ighalo and Godwin O. Ighalo, Ph.D.

Unfortunately, the failure of schools to respond to the growing international emphasis is a cyclical process. In fact, students who do not develop global competence throughout their education, grow up to be teachers who are not equipped to foster global competence in a new generation of students. As Longview Foundation (2008) described, the critical role of teachers in internationalizing education has never been clearer, yet today’s educators rarely begin their careers with the deep knowledge and robust skills necessary to bring the world into their classroom”.

In fact, based on her research on international dimensions of teachers education, Schneider (2003) proposed a number of recommendations to foster teacher education internationally: The recommendations are:

- Reviewing and assessing the full range of school resources for international exposure and their accessibility, particularly for students in teacher education program.
- Providing training on international needs and students options for students advisors.
- Fostering development of internationally oriented curriculum through school grants, through workshops for both Art and Sciences and Education department and through the hiring of internationally- trained teachers.
- Reviewing policy and practice for the integration of study abroad in the curriculum with respect to both general education and major field requirements.

S/No	Focus/Type	Purpose of Training
Phase one	Experience the school	A 4-8 week apprenticeship to a public school to acquire some practical school experiencing No teaching involved.
Two	Small group and tutorial teaching in a candidates subject area of specialization. One always has a teaching subject and takes courses in them like those majorities in them.	To expose students to 10-20 weeks of experimenting with teaching strategic under laboratory condition.
Three	Still in the use of the inquiry teaching strategy. Each class group experiments teaching under varying conditions but each of which emphasized Inquiry approach. Each candidate teaches five or more times using Inquiry.	To drill students in the use of inquiry instructional approach Episodes of each inquiry teaching are played back, analysed and refined by the group.

Four	Curriculum practicum. Gaining practical experience in curriculum development and using a curriculum to teach peers.	To provide students with opportunities for an observation –participation experience in curriculum processes and in a variety of ways of teaching.
Five	Simulation of a school and develop an educational programme for the school.	To give inquiry/course mates the opportunity to carry out activities designed to ensure that the school is well run.
Six	Internship	To provide a unique opportunity for graduating students to function as trained teacher already in service, with; teaching co-curricular activities. Salaries and other remunerations. Candidates are sent out to teach in schools and paid for it. They go in teams and use inquiry strategy for teaching.

Looking at these recommendations critically, it can be seen that only true internationalization which is systematic and requires holistic curriculum transformation can make Nigeria teachers to be internationally competent. Hence, Duffy (2009) emphasizes that internationalizing teacher education calls for a model of systemic change, an approach that emphasizes the necessity to envision reform as a system-wide priority.

A casual look at two internationalized teacher training models will ascertain whether Nigeria is on the right part of internationalizing her teacher education.

Teacher's College University of Columbia Model

The teacher education model of university of Columbia, New York, as is evident in the scheme below, could be described as a 6-phase, 3 dimensional format presented in itemized form, its main characteristics are the prominence given to;

- (1) research-oriented activities in a laboratory setting hence, frequent and continue drill, in the use of inquiry method of teaching/learning.
- (2) practicum in curriculum processes, especially curriculum development and curriculum implementation.
- (3) simulation in Education management.
- (4) internship.

(5) team teaching/Team work: like group experimental teaching, group participation in curriculum development/implementation activities as well as group involvement in educational management.

Sources: Eze Igboke and Gabriel O. Igboke, (2004).

The London Model:

Institute of education, University of London has developed a model some of whose important aspects Nigeria has adopted. The main features of London's approach to teacher education can be summarized as follows.

- 1 Accent placed on subject matters hence student teachers are made to study the content of their teaching subject in the appropriate faculties/ developments.
- 2 Educational student carries out in the institute/ faculty of education consists mainly of
 - a) Methodology/ methods courses)
 - b) Professional education courses
 - c) Close monitoring and education of teaching practice in public school, thrice within the duration of the training
- 3 General studies
- 4 Well organized field experience covering about one-fifth of the duration of the B.Ed. programmed. (Nwosu, 2004).

In fact any teacher trained using any of these models, particular, the Columbia model can identify the learning needs of a particularly type of student, plan instruction for him, teach subject progressively and longitudinally and educate the student against himself. This is what Nigeria should adopt to internationalize the training of teachers. This will help the nation to come out of this problem of producing half baked graduate who cannot compete with new world order.

Issues and Suggestions

The issues here is that Nigeria need to use holistic approach to produce teachers for all levels of the educational system who would be highly competent in their chosen area of specialization and can effectively use their classroom functions to promote national development. The Columbia model emphasized that there is need for much practical interaction between teachers and teacher's, student and students and teacher and students. In line with the Colombia model which also envision the teacher as an important change agent, the Nigeria teacher at all levels should be trained for moral integrity and such character that would enable them successfully serve outside the classroom as community leaders, constructive change agents, social reformers or in short, agents of national development.

Conclusion

While the actual implementation of any change effort must be specific to the institutional context, there is hope that the paper will serve as inspiration for our government and stakeholders in education to use a holistic approach to internationalize teacher education. Only through truly holistic efforts can true internationalization take place, and teacher education is a particularly important field for internationalization.

However, this century has already been a time of great changes and globalization, and all indications are that this trend will continue. Therefore schools must be educating globally competent citizens. In that case, teacher education students today will play a critical role in whether or not that happens. The restructuring of colleges of education and other institutions training teachers so that they may be oriented towards employment in the new social and economic order is very crucial. Restructuring to make teacher education to have international outlook is the only answer to the problem of internationalization of teacher education in Nigeria.

Recommendation

The few recommendations in the paper contain action steps which would lead to enhanced professional knowledge and global competence, internationalization of curriculum and pedagogy and gain factors relevant to the internationalization goals. These are action plan and concrete steps this nation should follow if the educational system is to be internationalized. There are actions which are in line with other developed nations which have long internationalized teacher education for global competence.

1. Teacher preparation programmes should work towards curriculum transformation and enhancement of field experiences so that global competencies are embedded in content and professional component of pre-service programmes.
2. Teacher professional development schools should be strengthened in Nigeria with characteristics that reflect commitment to internationalization and have school populations that are culturally diverse.
3. Candidates for certification as teachers should provide evidence of global competency, and this should be the basis for advanced stages of professional certification and assessments need to be designed to assure attainment of these competencies.
4. School systems and school curricula need to support internationalization goals by beginning world language teaching in elementary schools and supporting curriculum development in general that seek to infuse international content and pedagogy in subject matter at all levels.
5. As a matter of urgency the government of Nigeria in collaboration with other stakeholders in education should support school efforts to modify their programmes course content, and personal growth in areas of internationalization and global competency.

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