

INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: A PROGRESSIVE APPROACH

Angela Nebechi Agbo

Abstract

Globalization has turned the world into a single village. It is only global citizens that are aware of the wider world and know their roles, respect and value diversity. They understand the way the world works, are willing to proactively make the world equitable and sustainable and can function optimally in global society. In order to make global citizens out of Nigerians and the world at large, higher education should be internationalized. This paper discusses internationalization of higher education in Nigeria as a progressive approach to improve the country's global standard. It attributes the problem of education in Nigeria to the inability of the government to implement education policies. Analysis of the success history of some countries such as China, Japan, India, United Kingdom etc. was carried out. The concept, benefits and strategies for internationalization of education in Nigeria was discussed, and recommendations were made such as nationalizing public and private schools, providing financial support to students and institutions seeking internationalization of courses.

Key words: Internationalization, Progressive, Education, Nigeria.

Internationalization of education in Nigeria should be a welcomed idea in the process of education development. Internationalization is the process of integrating an international and intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service of education institution. Nigeria is a large country whose economic potentials and population are large and pose a problem of management. For that reason things seem to have fallen apart in many areas and most worrisome is in the area of education which is an important agent of development.

Education is the bed rock of any nation. The quality of education of any country determines the quality of a nation's economy, politics, and social life. As things are, Nigeria seems to be among the poorest nations in the world in terms of the quality of her Education. In the past, people came from other countries to study in Nigeria but shortly after the independence, education system in Nigeria began to decline. Education is no longer given attention, resulting in Nigerians going outside the country in pursuit of quality education. This is a good indicator that the system of education in Nigeria does not meet the global standard. This is an area of concern which should be addressed but instead, our leaders perpetuate the condition by sending their children outside the country for studies. They nonchalantly admit that they do that because they can afford it but what of those who cannot afford going outside for quality education? Education in Nigeria has suffered in the hands of our leaders or rather suffered from the economic down turn of the country.

Going down the memory lane of Education policy formulation and implementation, we see that the system of education at all levels has undergone rapid changes within a context of an unstable

economy. The economic crisis has had a negative impact on the education system and played a major role in the decline of the quality of education offered. Odukoya (2016) lamented that there has been a long year of neglect and inadequate attention to policy frameworks within the sector which has resulted in low literacy rate; about 49% of the teaching force is unqualified coupled with low access to basic education and disparity in educational standard and learning achievement. Emphasis is on rote learning and theoretical knowledge at the expense of technical, vocational and entrepreneurial education. Further in his analysis, it was found out that after several years of deliberation on the National policy the policy came up with solutions to virtually all the educational problems but apparently it was never implemented. The National policy on Education states that Nigerian's philosophy of education is based on the development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen, but education in Nigeria has not succeeded in doing that because there is still a high rate of illiteracy and unemployment in Nigeria, resulting in ineffective citizens (Odukoya, 2016). There are policies upon policies but none is being implemented. Frequent changes of policy and government has negative impact on education. Each of the Presidents, Governors and Ministers has his own conception about policies on Education. There should be new policies to address issues of equity, access, funding, quality and management of the educational system in Nigeria. Nationalization and Internationalization of education in Nigeria will save a lot for Nigeria and promote the economy and standard of the country. In this era of globalization, Nigerian education should be internationalised and they too can join in the global competitiveness.

The problem with Nigerian education is large. There is no equal education right now in the country. More quality education is obtained in private schools which is highly expensive for low income families. This is similar to what Chan (2011) described as American neoliberal education policies which do not enable people to acquire basic universal rights. He posited out that the quality of schools in the U.S. varies, and students' ability to choose amongst these schools creates competition. This competition does not allow socioeconomically disadvantaged students to access the same higher-quality education that middle- and upper-class students can. The government has failed to provide balance to the system causing disadvantaged students to lose their right to an equal education.

This form of competition would be fine for commodities, but education is not a commodity, it is a human right. "Education is not a static commodity to be considered in isolation from its greater context that it is an ongoing process and holds its own inherent value as a human right (UNICEF in Chan, (2011))". By making education a commodity, Chile and the U.S. have violated the right of citizen to an education and that is what Nigeria is letting education turn into. However to address this problem, Higher education in Nigeria should be both nationalized and internationalized.

Internationalization focuses attention on the intentional actions of individuals, groups and social institutions to cross national borders in pursuit of social, economic, political or cultural benefits. As a matter of fact internationalization is more appropriate now in Nigeria in order to enjoy the benefit and contribute positively to the growth and development of the country. In this write up, the discussion on internationalization of education in Nigeria will be tailored toward higher education. The paper highlighted Nigeria's educational problems, analyse other countries' failures and successes in the literature such as China and Japan, UK and their approaches of internationalization of higher education. It also evaluated the concept and strategies of internationalization of higher Education in Nigeria as a progressive approach to improving education in Nigeria.

Higher Education in Nigeria

Federal Republic of Nigeria National policy on Education (2014) defined Higher education known as tertiary education in Nigeria as the education given after secondary education in the Universities, Colleges of Education, Polytechnics, etc. Higher education provides economic, social and political benefits, both to individuals and the public, produces qualified human capital and professional development, adapts and generates knowledge through research and innovation, brings about equitable opportunities and access provisions, supports other levels of Education (through training and development), promotes international cooperation and improves competitiveness in the global knowledge-based economy (Uche&Ahunanya, 2013 in Okah 2014). Okah, observed that there is competition in the world among institutions of higher education to enhance their internationalism and this would be a real advantage not only for these institutions but for their home countries. Nigeria should key into the system to be more equipped to meet up in addressing both local and global social, and environmental challenges. Okah suggested that one way this can be achieved is through internationalization for research and teaching capacity and knowledge transfer. He has regretted that the recent reforms towards increased capacity of university education in Nigeria have not resulted in the attraction of measurable foreign faculty and students into the Nigerian university system, instead, there is increased number of students studying abroad. The problem of strikes, poor funding, access and dilapidated infrastructure in Nigerian public universities and those of high cost and inadequate staffing in private universities have contributed to Nigerians seeking cross border education. The habit of firms hiring Nigerians abroad as they have no confidence in indigenously produced graduates is another factor (Okah, 2014). For this reason, Nigeria's higher education needs redirection.

Concept of Internationalization of Education

Internationalization according to Mamrick (1999) in IGI global publication is the preparation of people to operate very well in international and culturally relevant and diverse environment. Internationalization of education is a continuous improvement on the process of education such as to meet global dimension. There is global education reform that preach 4Cs and the 5Es which is the educational strategies of teaching and learning. Internationalization takes cognisance of a) international b) intercultural and c) global dimension

International—consciousness of relationship between and among nations. It takes cognisance of how different countries relate and how the citizens see and accommodate each other, weather there is mutual understanding between and among them?

Intercultural --- Is there cultural dynamism, people can come from different countries live in another country without culture shock.

Global dimension --- Globalization of education, economic and wealth. One can have business in any parts of the world, obtain education and work in any parts of the world. Global dimension is broadly 'exploring the world's interconnections'. By including a global dimension to education, learners have an opportunity of engaging with complex global issues and find out the links between their own lives and people, places and issues throughout the world. Education is an important means of helping children and young people recognise their responsibilities as citizens of the global community. It educates and equips them with the skills they require to make informed decisions and take responsible actions. By including the global dimension in teaching, links can easily be made between local and global issues, and young people are given the opportunity to:

- critically examine their own values and attitudes

- appreciate the similarities between people everywhere, and learn to value diversity
- understand the global context of their local lives
- develop skills that will enable them to combat injustice, prejudice and discrimination.

Such knowledge, skills and understanding enable young people to make informed decisions about how they can play an active role in their local and global community.(Global learning programme, 2017)

From higher educational institution perspective, Knight (1999) cited in Douglas & Nielsen (2012), defined internationalization of higher education as a matter of integrating transnational elements into the ‘purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education. Colleges and Universities are therefore internationalizing their behaviour when they reshape their purposes to attract international students, to deploy their programmes across national borders, concentrate on internationally advantageous educational programme niches, restructure work roles or compensation systems to recruit, retain or manage employees. Internationalization of education is integrating the process of preparing people to function in an increasingly international and culturally relevant and diverse environment. For education to do that, has to revolutionize curriculum, redefine job integrity (dignity) and develop the objective on affective domain. Internationalization is not a static concept but a continuous effort in making some changes to meet the taste of the international community. The idea of internationalizing education is making education have the same look and worth as the one in other parts of the world. As it is now, education in Nigeria is education with tears. No good infrastructures, no educational facilities, no modern instructional facilities. There is no basis for comparing Nigerian education to that of other parts of the world where there is serene environment that is peaceful, and conducive for learning.

Looking at higher education institutions, Knight (2014) defined Internationalization as a process of change towards meeting the individual needs and interests of each higher education institution by integrating transnational elements to attract international students. He also defined Internationalization as ‘the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, function or delivery of education’. (knightVaghese (2008), in Okah (2014) defined internationalization of education as the imparting of knowledge, skills and values which have universal appeal and application which implies that a curriculum becomes cross-national and intercultural in nature. Uche&Ahunanya (2013) in Okah, posited out that there are different models of internationalization of education, namely: - international student mobility, faculty exchange and development, research collaboration, foreign language study, building international perspectives, international networks, distance education, locally supported distance education, twinning programmes, articulation programmes, branch campuses, franchising agreements and international quality assurance systems. According to Okah, these have resulted in intensified mobility of ideas, students and academic staff in Nigerian universities away from Nigeria, leading to brain drain and capital flight. The acquisition of international skills by students without having to leave the country can also be regarded as internationalization of education. Sometimes, it involves a shift from producing for national markets to international markets. This could happen by changing the orientation of courses offered in the domestic universities, which sometimes is referred to as “internationalization at home” (Varghese, 2008) in okah (2014). This may take place without the presence of any foreign provider at home. Nationalism of education is also very important in the development of the nation and it accelerates internationalisation of education. In the early 1980s a number of changes took place in Japan due to notably Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone’s

promotion of the concept of 'healthy nationalism' (Hood 1999 ; Aspinall 2002in Hammond 2016). Healthy nationalism according to Nakasone (1987)' in Hammond (2016) is when a race or group of people who share a common destiny make every effort to enable the country to grow and prosper politically, economically, and culturally. It is when they have their own identity, or sense of self, in the world politically, economically, culturally, and otherwise and co-operate to contribute to that identity. Without this, there is no way that a nation will be able to stand on its own two feet. Nigeria does not think in that direction. The diversity nature of the country plays a huge negative impact in the progress of the country. However it is not difficult to unite among us and with our neighbouring countries to achieve a goal if there is determination to do that. It is high time Nigeria left political rivalry, ethnicity and think of how to make this country better. Internationalizing higher institutions is the best progressive approach in joining the global market. It will create a sense of critical corporate perception of the indigenous institution and ability to do business abroad.

Benefits of Internationalization of Higher Education in Nigeria

There are many benefits of internationalization of education. When asked about the most important benefits of internationalization, the top three reasons at the global level listed in order of relevance were: increasing international awareness of students; strengthening research and knowledge production; and fostering international cooperation and solidarity. Students get to know more about other countries and are able to work there. By collaboration in research there are share of ideas and knowledge.

Motivating Students' International Awareness

Internationalisation is not an act, it is a habit (Bols, 2013). It is looking at everything a university does through an international lens. According to Bols, internationalisation is not a one-size-fits-all approach. The blend of international strategies any particular university adopts should be uniquely matched to its particular goals. Again internationalisation of higher education has economic grounds for going full steam with it. The motivation for internationalisation is not only for widening participation: it makes economic sense in the long term. This goes beyond the tuition fees that international students bring or even the economic impact of their living and spending in the country abroad. Bols further explained that there is more to internationalisation than simply injecting fresh blood into the country's economy. He said, ' When our students or staff go overseas, whether temporarily or indefinitely, they make international connections and raise the global profile of our universities' He further explained that when new people from abroad join Universities, the new staff and students share their ways of thinking with their peers, and everybody benefits from these new ideas, which spark the production of whole new lines of thinking. Internationalisation allows us to tap into excellence across the globe; this may seem a very selfish view of internationalisation, but in the long run, it is our students, our academics, our universities, our economy, and our country that benefits (Bols 2013).

Students Development, Research and Knowledge Production

This is true at the level of staff, whose duty it is to come up with new ideas for their research and their teaching. However, it is more relevant for students, who are at the stage where they are actively developing their ways of thinking. In this case institutions that attract international students and staff

look more attractive for all students and staff, whether international or from within the country. The many new ideas that can be generated through interactions with peers from abroad are enormous, and these are felt in every aspect of the students' development. The fastest pace of innovation comes from the period of interfaces between disciplines, between academia and business, between communities and cultures (Bols 2013).

International Cooperation and Solidarity

The efforts of 1994 Group of Universities in UK, with their combination of research intensity and personal attention, helped in ensuring that students and staff from abroad are integrated socially, stretched intellectually and benefit very well in joining the institution. These group of Universities takes great pride in being international universities and are well placed to support international students and staff who decide to come to them for research and studies. In this regard prospective students will need to seek out information about what kinds of international opportunities are available to them. This can as well apply to Nigeria Universities by creating a forum where there will be active contributions enriching the experience of Nigeria students and their staff. Nigeria should also encourage their own students to build themselves in order to promote quality assurance in Education in Nigeria.

Marmolejo, (2012) in Henard, Diamond and Rosevear (2012) outlined the benefit of internationalization as follows; to improve student preparedness, internationalise the curriculum, enhance the international profile of the institution, strengthen research and knowledge production and diversify its faculty and staff. They believed that despite dramatic variations between countries and institutions, there is a general consensus that internationalisation can – when better experienced – offer students, faculty and institutions valuable benefits. It can spur on strategic thinking leading to innovation, offer advantages in modernising pedagogy, encourage student and faculty collaboration and stimulate new approaches to learning assessments. With the infusion of internationalisation into the culture of higher education, students and educators can gain a greater awareness of the global issues and how educational systems operate across countries, cultures and languages. Research is inherently internationalised through collaborations and partnerships amongst teams, and most scientific projects can no longer remain nationally-bound.

Strategies for Internationalization of Higher Education in Nigeria

In today's age of global knowledge and technology, an interconnected network and global awareness are increasingly viewed as major important assets. With the current labour market requiring graduates to have international, foreign language and intercultural skills to be able to interact in a global setting, institutions are placing more importance on internationalisation. The accelerating rate of globalisation has focussed attention on student mobility, international research collaboration and education as an export industry. (Henard, Diamond and Rosevear (2012). They are being seriously considered as strategies for internationalization of higher education which institutions should embark on.

Students' Mobility

The number of students enrolled in higher education outside their country of citizenship practically doubled from 2000 to 2010 (OECD, 2012a) and this trend is likely to continue. However,

student mobility is simply the most aspect thought about when internationalization is mentioned. Internationalisation, is more complex and in different forms sometimes referred to as internationalisation at home, which consists of incorporating intercultural and international dimensions into the curriculum, teaching, research and extracurricular activities and hence helps students develop international and intercultural skills without ever leaving their country (OECD, 2004 and Wächter, 2003 in OECD 2012). Other popularly known forms of internationalisation are transnational education sometimes delivered through off-shore campuses, joint programmes, distance learning, etc. and they seem a more far reaching approach and cost effective, especially where higher education is now seen as an integral part of the global knowledge economy (Henard, Diamond and Reseveare 2012).

Higher Education Exchange

The Higher Education Exchange is founded on a thought articulated by Thomas Jefferson in 1820: “I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education.”

In the tradition of Jefferson, the Higher Education Exchange agrees that a central goal of higher education is to help make democracy possible by preparing citizens for public life. The Higher Education Exchange is part of a movement to strengthen higher education’s democratic mission and foster a more democratic culture throughout American society which can extent to other parts of the world.

Working in this tradition, the Higher Education Exchange publishes interviews, case studies, analyses, news, and ideas about efforts within higher education to develop more democratic societies. (Brown and Witte 2016 in Hammond 2016). Nigeria should make effort to invest in Higher education exchange programmes and this will motivate the higher institutions to revolutionise their curriculum and have specialized courses peculiar to them that addresses peculiar issues. This will help to attract foreign students and raise the global standard of the institutions.

Nigeria should learn from China’s 30 years development history which saw the number of Higher Education Institutions, dramatically increase to over 3000 institutions enrolling over 24.5 million students, making China the largest HE provider in the world (Wang 2009 in Hammond 2016). China’s open-door policy and economic reforms aimed at achieving ‘the four modernizations’: the modernization of industry, agriculture, defence, and science/ technology (Huang, 2003). In view of this, the government recognized the need to train experts and high-level professionals who could facilitate the modernization of the nation, and so provided financial support to students and scholars to study abroad at foreign universities thus Internationalization, nationalism, and global competitiveness. The activities of this phase in China’s development are an example of the import-oriented position described in Huang’s framework for HE internationalization. At the start, Chinese HEIs did not have the capacity to foster economic growth and so had to import knowledge and models of teaching and learning from abroad. Today, Higher Education internationalization in both countries is now very much about economic competition and strategic position-taking on the global stage. This country has focus and are resilient. They solve one problem after another. The problem with Nigeria is impatience and lack of perseverance coupled with greedy insensitive politicians whose missions seem to be to loot and not to build. The most recent iteration of Japan’s Kokusaika policy is Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s ‘Top Global Universities’ initiative. With this policy Abe hopes to usher more Japanese

universities into the top 100 world rankings (Hammond 2016). Even though, according to Goodman 2007 in Hammond 2016, sceptics point to the long list of similar policies that have failed in the past there is no doubt that perseverance patriotism fetched them success.

International Education and Research Collaboration

According to Bols (2013), Internationalization is not a one way street. It has several ways. There is more to internationalization than mobile students who decide to study in another country, or the branch campus that some University has established in other countries. The way each institution engage in it depends on the University mission agenda. For example in UK where there is divers institutions with different sizes, degree of focus on research, courses and types of qualification. Bols view of internationalization is an opportunity for cross pollination between people from different back grounds. This is an opportunity for an exchange of ideas and creating solutions to problems. To be innovative such idea like collaboration is required. Taking a look at all the universities that engage in internationalization, you will see that most of them have other institutions they conduct researches with. International Universities will always have international perspectives in everything they do ranging from staff and students they recruit to the curriculum they teach (Bols 2013). Cross campus research collaboration and joint research activities with foreign universities will help in fostering global standard research processes. Universities should be adequately funded. At least, the UNESCO standard of 26% annual national budget should be strictly adhered to if the deplorable state of equipment, facilities and infrastructure can be stemmed. (Okah 2014)

1231 Monoculture Nationalist strategy

Monoculture nationalist approach to internationalization by overlooking the existing multiculturalism in the country and focuses on global standardization, information technology, and global competition perhaps it might bring the country together as they are working toward one goal and this time it is competition with outsiders not within the country.

Conclusion

Since internationalization is opportunity for cross pollination between people from different back grounds and opportunity for an exchange of ideas and creating solutions to problems, it is a progressive approach for quality assurance in Nigeria higher education which will gain international recognition to the nation. The trend of globalization has actually encouraged many countries to set up policies to internationalize their higher education. Some Higher institutions have been nationalized while others are still on it. Hopefully, the benefits and approaches as reviewed in this paper will spur higher institutions in Nigeria to action in joining the global trend of internationalizing higher education curriculum.

Recommendations

In view to improving the quality of higher education in Nigeria through internationalization approaches, the following were recommended.

1. Nationalizing public and private schools. Both private and public institutions should be encouraged to work with the same standard. This should be done by equipping the public institutions. The UNESCO standard of 26% annual national budget should be strictly adhered to.

2. Providing financial support to students and institutions seeking internationalization of courses. When China and Japan government initiate a policy, they use institutions to achieve the intention of the government but Nigeria relegate institutions to the back ground yet they want the country to achieve whatever they want within...(they will quote whatever number of years they want). Higher institutions in Nigeria should be pampered and not only supporting them.

3. Fair and equal treatment of international students. If foreign students' fees is the same as local students it will attract more foreign students into the institution. There should be increase in the financial support to mobile students to help them achieve what they went for.

4. In terms of student exchange programme, or any collaborative activities among institutions or countries, agreement should be signed by the authorities and sanction imposed on any party that violets the agreement.

5. The concept of 'classrooms without walls' should be encouraged if the security situation in Nigeria persists, as a way of internationalization of university education. This will involve the use of offshore activities in faculty and student exchange with limited physical presence geared towards motivational mentoring. Bashir (2007), in Okah (2014) posited out that most countries deliberately encourage foreign collaborators to improve the quality of domestic higher education. It was noted that the emerging increase in regional and global market for skilled labour is increasing private demand for internationally accepted higher education.

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