

NIGERIA'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN THE ERA OF GLOBALIZATION: THE MISSING LINK

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Abstract

Globalization is a fundamental factor affecting education globally in this century. It has provided many educational opportunities. As a member of the international community, Nigeria is not shielded from the globalization process. This paper, therefore, examines the challenges of education in Nigeria in a globalizing world, with emphasis on the availability and usability of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The paper suggests ways by which the challenges of education in relation to ICT and globalization could be reduced; among them include investment in the areas of research and ICT and other facilities that will enhance globalization of education.

Keywords: Globalization, ICT, Education.

Introduction

Education in the present century can no longer be localized but globalized. However, African countries including Nigeria should globalize her education system with caution. This is to ensure that in our rush to please the international community, we do not lose sight of our peculiarity, culture and local contents. Whatever education content we give to our children should be able to liberate them from ignorance, superstitions beliefs, religious fanaticism, cultural catharsis, ethnic chauvinism and mental enslavement and make them candidates of academic and national patriotism devoid of academic and national dishonesty (Oleforo, 2013).

If education in Nigeria is to remain relevant in the emerging world order which is information and technology-driven, then ICT must be given a pride of place in the scheme of things. No country that downplays ICT can function properly in the emerging global village that the world has been reduced. Globalization has given rise to many educational opportunities such as online distance learning, it has attracted foreign students, introduced programmes and competition in education, especially higher education (Bonga & Dafiaghor, 2014). To become a key player in the emerging 'global village', Nigeria has to re-think ICT and provide the necessary environment for it to thrive at all levels of our education system. Doing this will adequately integrate Nigeria education into the world global system.

According to Aliyu in Ossai & Nwalado (2013) globalization is a process which has affected many areas of human life, one of these being education. Education is undergoing constant changes under the effects of globalization on education which bring rapid development in technology and communication across the world of ideas, value and knowledge. Globalization is a fundamental factor affecting education in Nigeria, especially tertiary education. The issue of "globalization" has generated a great deal of interest in the recent past. This level of interest can be said in part to be a direct consequence of technological advances especially in the field of education and technology (Ogakwu & Isife, 2013). Our knowledge of today will not be enough to solve our problem of tomorrow. To reap bountiful fruits of education in this century, we must invest heavily in ICT. These will open a vista of a brighter future for Nigeria as she marches confidently into the information and technology-driven age (Oleforo, 2013).

The Conceptual Clarifications

For better comprehension of this paper, the major concepts are clarified below:

The Concept of Globalization

Globalization finds expression in the process whereby the transmission of knowledge, skills, attitudes, abilities and behaviour cease to be geographically fixed, partly as a result of technology, also through international media. Globalization is a process driven by trade liberalization, modern technology and democratic government and aided by global organizations.

Globalization means different things to different people. Simply put, globalization is the movement of people, language, capital, goods, services, ideas etc around the world. Global means pertaining to or involving the whole world. Ogakwu and Isife (2013) conceptualized globalization as the process of interaction and integration among the people, companies, and governments of different nations - a process driven by international trade and investment and aided by information technology.

The Concept of Educational globalization

Educational globalization is the delocalizing of education content and undermining of local academic cultures, thus making education content and academic cultures comply with international best practices. Global education arose from the challenge of translating globalization issues into concrete school programmes. It is centered on global learning and seeks to develop the abilities to understand, to feel and to adjust to the challenges of a changing society. Global education is grounded in the reality of globalization and the interconnectedness of nations, economies and governance that demands that students must be well acquainted with global problems and issues (Arokoya, 2012).

The Concept of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Communication is the process of passing information. It is seen as interpreted medium of self-expression. In education processes, communication goes on between two or more individuals in line with stated objectives. Technology on its own part refers to the new techniques, machines, equipment and way of doing things that are based on modern knowledge about science and computers (Oleforo, 2013).

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is “an equipment or interconnected system of equipment that is used in the automatic acquisition, storage, manipulating, management, control, display, switching and transmission of information (National Policy for Information, FRN, 2014). Put differently, ICT can also be described as a generic term referring to technologies which are being used for collecting, storing, editing and passing of information in various forms. It covers the range of computers, telecommunication and networking technologies involved in the transfer and processing of information.

The Concept of Education

Education emerged from the Latin word, “educare” this literally means to bring up. Different scholars have described education in various terms. In general terms, education is the process of transmitting societal values, norms and desirable attitudes from one generation to another. Ocho (2005) sees education as the process through which individuals are made functional members of their society.

Education is a process through which young people acquire knowledge and realize their potentialities and use them for self-actualization and to be useful to themselves and to others. It

is a means of presenting, transmitting and improving the culture of the society. In every society, education connotes acquisition of something, good or something worthwhile (Oleforo, 2013).

Education is one of the fundamental rights of individuals. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948, stipulates that:

a) Everyone has the right to education. This shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory while technical and professional education shall be made generally available. Higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

For education in Nigeria to conform to the global standard it must be in harmony with Nigeria's philosophy of education which is based on:

a) The development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen

b) The full integration of the individual into the community; and

c) The provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country of the primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school system (FRN, 2004).

The Relationship between Globalization and Education in Nigeria

Invariably, one would think that globalization only concerns business and industry. But, if one considers education as part of the information business, then education can be seen as the core of globalization. Globalization has brought fundamental changes in the ways in which countries are forming and planning educational policies and practices and its impact. The social, political, economic and technological changes in the world today through globalization have revolutionized education, calling for a more radical change to meet the current demands of the society. Internet is a window to the world. It opens a vast store of information and communication. Connectivity has become important as building a new school for the community advancement (Olaniyan, in Ubi & Edet, 2013).

According to Taylor (1985) governments are trying to compete on the global markets by placing their priorities on education to produce the human capital that is most appealing to global competition, which is in line with the world new initiative that tries to support life-long educational programmes as well integrate the work with education, student mobility and joint study programmes.

Again, Castell Ubi and Edet (2013), asserted that in a world economy that is controlled by communication and information technology, empowered by those that control capital, new options for the educational subsector are inevitable. A shift to the new technologies is seen as a catalyst for new learning environment. Access to communication has become crucial and has to be taken as one of the fundamental human rights. Thus, a substantive progress in the implementation of information and communication coupled with progress in the quality of life and development cannot be achieved without preparing people for a knowledge society.

This knowledge driven society can be achieved in one hand through the wanting of science and technology education based programmes that will necessitate the use of computers in system information science, parallel and distributive system, software engineering simulation techniques and telecommunication systems.

New options for distance education are driving the shift from traditional learning communities such as school, universities and colleges towards unrestricted life-long learning possibilities. This shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered learning means that teachers at all levels need to embrace new information and communication technologies. As new technology

is being accepted as the catalyst for new learning environment therefore access to communication has become crucial (Olaniyan, in Ubi & Edet, 2013).

Today, there is need for modern education oriented towards the need of citizens of nation state to transform it into postmodern education oriented towards the need of global citizens (Lakoso & Betty, in Ubi & Edet, 2013). They went further to state that globalization which depends largely on technological efficiency, massive industrialization and a string capital base to triumph, did not favour the underdeveloped (third world) countries. Schools are now seen as conservation institutions slow to adopt new practice and technologies. The aftermath is that the recipients are not properly equipped (half baked) who can hardly fit into the highly skilled workforce and make meaningful contribution to the society.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the Globalization of Education in Nigeria: The Missing Link

Nothing has revolutionized education in the present century than international media and information and communication technology (ICT). Connectivity allows us access to all kinds of information at unprecedented speed and in multiple formats (Bandeke, 2006). Information involves knowledge acquired in any manner, ideas and facts that have been communicated or any data that can be stored and retrieved in machine in a readable form (Ibrahim, 2003). It is pertinent to state at this juncture that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a major facilitator of education and the globalization process all over the world. However, these resources are grossly inadequate in Nigeria's educational system.

The use of ICT makes it possible to receive vast amount of information from anywhere in the world in seconds. This technology greatly facilitates acquisition of knowledge, offering the opportunity to enhance the educational system and improve policy formulation and also widen the range of opportunity (Emesini, in Oleforo, 2013). The knowledge and information explosion and the revolution make information and communication easy and inevitable for the success of any educational system. ICT has reduced the entire world to a small village where people can readily communicate with each other through connectivity to the internet. As such, stored information around the world can be located or retrieved from the internet within seconds.

ICTs facilitate access to information anytime anywhere. It is not limited by space or geographical boundary. On-line course materials, for example, maybe accessed in 24 hours (Umoren, 2006). It does not require that learners and instructor (s) be in one physical location before education can take place. Apart from the above, certain types of ICT, such as teleconferencing day, 7 days a week, ICT-based educational delivery (e.g. educational programme technologies) enable instruction to be received simultaneously by multiple, geographically dispersed learners, that is synchronous learning (Umoren, 2006). He went further to state that with globalization the teachers and learners no longer have to depend on printed books and other material in physical media housed in libraries for their educational needs. The internet and the World Wide Web provide a rich wealth of learning material in almost every subject and in variety of media. It can now be accessed from anywhere, at any time of the day and by unlimited number of people. The issues of virtual libraries have also helped to globalize education especially in countries with limited and outdated library resources. ICTs also facilitate access to resource person – mentors, experts, researchers, professionals, business leaders and peers – all over the world (Umoren, 2006).

Other ICT devices, facilities and strategies which use the computer include the internet, the electronic mail (e-mail), virtual library, Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI), Computer Managed Instruction (CMI) and the Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM). These facilities have been used to globalize education. ICT holds out the opportunity to revolutionize

pedagogical methods, expand access to quality education and improve the management of education systems (World Bank, in Etuk, 2007). Through ICT, teachers, learners, libraries and schools can communicate with one another and share information to enhance understanding, access and view documents in richly formatted texts and pictures; connect colleagues, scholars, friends and resource persons in almost all parts of the globalized world (Oleforo, 2013).

Factors Militating against the Utilization of ICT in Nigeria's Educational System

Some of the problems militating against the globalization of education in Nigeria in relation to ICT application include:

Inadequate Expert Knowledge on the use of ICT

There is the lack of expert knowledge of ICT by teachers as most Nigerian school teachers are computer illiterates. If it is true that no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers, then the present crop of teachers in all levels of the educational system should be re-trained in ICT, since most of them never had such training when they graduated from schools. As it is now, the present crop of teachers, most of who are computer illiterates cannot adequately prepare students for today's information and technology driven world (Oleforo, 2013).

Poor or Inadequate Funding

The expensive nature of ICT equipment and resources, such as computers, projectors, satellite equipment among others, is a major challenge to its utilization. Adequate funding is of utmost importance in the adoption and use of any ICT resource. To procure ICT resources, funds are required. In Nigeria, education is not well funded. In this sense, funds are needed for every activity of ICT resources such as procurement, management, maintenance and so on. For instance, the N369 billion (9.7%) allocated to the education sector by the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) in 2016 budget is far short of 26% minimum recommendation by UNESCO.

Inadequate Pre-service Training for Teacher Trainees

Majority of the teachers lack ICT skills due to poor background- this makes them to be incompetent in its usage and management. Teacher Trainees should be given opportunities in the acquisition of ICT knowledge. This can begin by promoting computer- training programmes for them. Monetary incentive could be offered as means of motivation.

Teachers' Unwillingness to Integrate ICT in their Teaching

Most teachers in Nigerian schools are not computer compliant. Even if they are, many prefer to use their knowledge of computer in making money as consultants instead of using them in teaching.

Epileptic Power Supply

The epileptic state of the nation's power supply poses a major threat to the effective utilization of ICT resources. ICT resources are made to function with other amenities such as electricity. When electricity supply is not stable and consistent; it is difficult to keep high-tech equipment like computer. The cost of running an alternative power supply (generating set) is very expensive in Nigeria.

Lack of Personnel for Maintaining ICT Facilities

In Nigeria, people who maintain or service ICT facilities are very few. As a result, when the accessories break down, the system will be packed waiting for repairs, which may take a very long time. On this ground, Mkpa (2007) lamented that the required personnel or manpower to maintain the system are very much in short supply.

Inadequate Computers in Nigerian Schools

In most schools, there are no computers for learners' use. Where they are available, they are grossly inadequate. This unpalatable condition is threat to effective teaching and learning.

Conclusion

Information and communication technologies have a major role, not only in improving existing learning but also extending opportunities for lifelong learning. Education in this 21st century cannot succeed meaningfully without computer technology and ICTs. To ensure this success, certain provisions must be taken into consideration. These include the provision of physical facilities like quality buildings, furniture and equipment that will enhance ICT. These have a way of impacting positively on the success of globalization of education. Education in this century transcends national boundaries and does not recognize physical barriers, de-emphasizes spatial limitation and downplays facial interaction. This era of computers, revolutionized telecommunication and the internet is what the country cannot shy away from, but the positives of the times should be properly harnessed for the country to appropriately benefit from economic globalization.

Recommendations

Teachers' efficiency could be developed to meet the global standard through ICT in the following ways:

- To remain relevant, Nigeria must globalize her educational system. The country must re-think of ICT and integrate same into its educational system. This will enrich its educational contents and pedagogical strategies.
- Adequate and qualified manpower to man these facilities is a necessity. Etuk (2007) made a forceful point that the attainment of a functional and qualitative education will be a mirage without adequate, well trained and qualified teachers to meet the challenges of the school system vis-a-vis computer age and globalization.
- Investment in areas of research and ICT and other facilities that will enhance globalization of education is urgently recommended.
- There is need to develop or equip the satellite programmes so that the local students running online programme can meet up the much needed national and international standard.
- Also, in the achievement of Nigeria's educational goals, curriculum planning should be both futuristic and goal oriented. This means it should be concerned with the future and the purpose should be to achieve specific goals.
- Joint publications of research works with international schools should be encouraged.
- The government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria should develop their human resources to meet up with the knowledge requirements of the globalization process.
- The international organizations through agency like the UNESCO should provide the needed technologies and training of personnel in developing countries.
- Adequate funding of education is urgently recommended.
- Provision of adequate power supply (electricity)
- There should be creation of nationwide network of information system in schools.

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