4

Educational Counselling: A Progressive Approach in Ensuring Internationalization of Education in Nigeria

AMAKA V. OKANUME-OHAH

Department of Educational Psychology,
College of Education, Zing,
Taraba State.

Abstract

In this contemporary age, internationalization of education is a major trend in all countries of the world, Nigeria inclusive. Many approaches have been developed and adopted for internationalizing education however this paper presents a psychological perspective through counselling unit in the school system. In this wise, the paper examines the concept of internationalization of education with strict emphasis on progressive approach through school counsellor. The paper presents the rationale and framework for how the role of the school counsellor appropriately aligns with implementing globally focused comprehensive school counselling programs. Finally, the paper recommends infusion of themes of internationalization into school programs so as to create a mission statement that can align with these goals.

Keywords: Internationalization, education, school counselling, progressive approach, globalization

It could be affirmed that 'Internationalization' is not a new concept in education field. Many of the earliest scholars travelled widely in Europe, but in the early modern era, the focus was on national development and internationalization became marginalized. Nonetheless, initiatives such as the Fulbright Scholars Program in the United States and the Erasmus Mundus Programme in Europe have aimed to promote mutual understanding and encourage collaboration among institutions of learning. To this end, in the last three decades, the number of students enrolled outside their country of citizenship has risen dramatically, from 0.8 million worldwide in 1975 to 4.1 million in 2010, more than a fivefold increase (OECD, 2011).

However, as a result of accelerating rate of globalization today, attention once again has been on student mobility, international research collaboration and education as an export industry. Also, due to knowledge economy and global knowledge and technology of contemporary age, an interconnected network and global awareness are increasingly viewed as major and sought-after 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 internationalization. According to Gunsyma (2014), the growing interest in internationalization of education can be construed from two perspectives:

"Firstly, the process of globalization of the economy and labour markets pushed demand in internationally-competent workers with knowledge of foreign languages, social and intercultural skills. As world economies become increasingly inter-connected, multilingualism and intercultural skills have grown in importance on a global scale. Secondly, an export of educational services has become one of the sources of revenue for education institutions (EIs) and national economies in many countries. Apparently, internationalization of education brings about improved quality of training, joint research projects, implementation of international quality standards and enlargement of international cooperation (Gunsyma, 2014).

Alongside these positive accounts, however, there has been skepticism towards the quality, effectiveness and relevance of education and research through international cooperation as well as increasing concern over inequity and marginalization. For instance, in Nigeria, Northern region is often referred to as education disadvantaged area while Sothern region is educational advantaged zone. Beyond national boundaries, in respect to cultural diversity in the educational system, school programs demand counselling services in which professional counsellors possess multicultural counseling competencies in order to effectively provide services for all students irrespective of cultural background (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 2012).

As an extension of the multicultural counseling competencies, school counsellors should develop awareness, knowledge, and skills that can be applicable across cultural and geopolitical boundaries in a global context. For Ng and Noonan (2012), internationalization promotes collaborations and mutual partnerships. These collaborative partnerships can be characterized by recognition of differences, cultural sensitivity, intercultural skills, and global competence (Kreber, 2009; Ng & Noonan, 2012). Albeit the word 'internationalization' cannot be gifted with one application in educational arena, specifically in this context, it refers to educational content and delivery that incorporates or emphasizes international, global, or intercultural features (Ng & Noonan, 2012). It is against this backdrop that the paper examines the nexus between school counselling and internationalization of education in Nigeria with the emphasis on progressive approach.

Conceptual Clarifications:
Educational Counselling

The America Psychological Association (1956) defined counselling as a process designed to help individuals overcoming obstacles to their personal growth, wherever these may be encountered and towards achieving optimum development of their personal resources. Put differently, counselling helps the individual to acquire skills that will enable him or her over come blocks infringing on his/her development. According to Action Health Incorporated (2012), "counselling is a client-oriented interactive communication process in which one helps others make free informed decisions about their personal behaviour and provide support to sustain that behaviour".

That is, counselling is a helping profession or guiding process in decision making where the client makes the decision based on quality information given by the counsellor on the seeming unsolvable problems.

On the other hand, the term educational counselling has been rooted deeply with the problems and conditions of school and students. In other words, educational counsellor or school counselor is a professional counsellor who works in schools and has been referred to as 'guidance counsellor' because he/she basically helps out the students through guiding them in their profession. In this sense, school counselling is a face to face relationship whereby the counsellor listens to the student's concerns with a view to understanding the student's life, problems, feelings, thoughts and resources and figuring out what information will help them to make decision about their lives. This implies, according to Omoni (2009), that students are capable of making their own decisions, when well informed and that counsellors do not advise or tell them what to do.

There is no doubt that school counsellors form an integral part of any education program. The school counsellor is an important stakeholder of education who assists students, teachers, parents and administrators each day. The main work of a school counselling program is to address the personal, social and academic growth and development of all the students. For Omoni (2009) the focus of an educational counsellor is to help the students achieve success in school and become responsible and productive members of society. This is supported by House and Hayes (2012) who stated that school counsellors must work to be proactive leaders who are effective collaborators in advocating for the academic success of all students. Thus, school counsellors mainly attend to the needs of the students and ensure that these needs are met in three basic domains i.e., academic development, career development and personal and social development.

Internationalization of Education
Institutions of learning have developed international activity since the Middle Ages, the 1980-90s witnessed a new wave of interest to issues of internationalization in education. The number of students enrolled in education outside their country of citizenship practically doubled from 2000 to 2010 (OECD, 2012) and this trend is likely to continue. Thus, it is a term used to describe the process of developing a multilateral and multicultural learning and research environment through redesigning curricula, engaging non-local staff, encouraging students to study abroad and attracting overseas students.

Knight (2005) defined internationalization in education as the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of education. This definition projects internationalization as a process which combines both international and local (intercultural) elements and is not the same as globalization. No wonder, Knight (2009) argued that internationalization of education is one of the ways a country responds to the impact of globalization yet, at the same time, respects the individuality of the nation. Thus, internationalization and globalization are seen as different but dynamically linked concepts. Globalization can

be thought of as the catalyst while internationalization is the response in a proactive way.

Bernardo (2013) identified two major rationales of internationalization as "internationalism" and "open market transnational education". "Internationalism" focuses on cultural/social development and integration, seeking to develop "international cooperation for the common good and the appreciation of international character or quality in education". Internationalism is associated with international student mobility/exchange programs; teacher development and exchange; research collaborations; internationalizing curricula as foreign language studies; internationalizing curricula as building international perspectives. In the same vein, open market transnational education is "designed to capitalize on the opportunities afforded by the changing demands of a globalized world economy" (Bernado, 2013). This involves distance education; twinning programs; articulation programs; branch campuses; franchising arrangements; and internationalizing standards and quality assurance of curricula.

Furthermore, internationalization functions as a two way street. It can help students achieve their goals to obtain a quality education and pursue research. It gives students the opportunity for "real world, real time" experiential learning in areas that cannot simply be taught. Institutions, on the other hand, may gain a worldwide reputation as well as a foothold in the international education community and rise to meet the challenges associated with globalization. The top five reasons for internationalizing an institution (Marmolejo, 2012) are in order of importance, to: i. improve student preparedness ii. internationalize the curriculum iii. enhance the international profile of the institution iv. strengthen research and knowledge production v. diversify its faculty and staff. Despite dramatic variations between countries and institutions, it is believed that internationalization can offer students, faculty and institutions valuable benefits (Marmolejo, 2012).

From the above, internationalization of education is the preparation of people to function in an increasingly international and culturally relevant and diverse environment (Mamrick, 2009). Thus, an integrative process in international and intercultural dimensions come to fore in teaching, researching and institutional service delivering. Invariably, it holds that the internationalization of education is not a static concept, but represents the continued investment of effort in some changes: and promotes the triad perspective of international; intercultural, and global dimensions. The international dimension refers to the sensitivity of the relations between/among nations, cultures and countries. The intercultural dimension is related to the diversity of cultures that exist within countries, companies and institutions. The global dimension relates to the ability of global perspectives in a great number of readings (British Academy, 2010).

However, student mobility is the most visible part of internationalization, whereas there is an internationalization of education even 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; Wächter,

2003). Other forms of internationalization are transnational education (it is delivered through off-shore campuses, joint programs, distance learning, etc.) and suggest far reaching approach, especially where education is now seen as an integral part of the global knowledge and knowledge economy.

The concern for defence of national cultural values led Malo (2007) to contend that internationalization of education is a process of incorporating an international and intercultural dimension into teaching, research and services. Yet this definition has not curtailed the challenges of internationalization to the *status quo*. For example, it introduces alternative ways of thinking, it questions the education model, and it impacts on governance and management. All of these have different impacts, meanings and import for institutions in countries of varying degrees of social or political development.

Approaches to Internationalization
Knight (2009) identifies four approaches to internationalization as follows:
The *activity* approach is one that has been most prevalent and is characteristic of the period when one described the international dimension in terms of specific activities or programs. The most predominant types of activities include international students, development assistance or academic mobility. In fact, according to some professionals, the activity approach was synonymous with the term international education in the 1970s and early 1980s.
The *competency* approach is more closely related to an outcomes approach to education where quality is thought of in terms of knowledge, skills, interests, values and attitudes of the students. In the competency approach to internationalization, the emphasis is placed on the human element of the academic community- the students, faculty and technical/administrative/support staff. The issue which is central to this approach is how does generation and transfer of knowledge help to develop competencies in the personnel of the education institutions to be more internationally knowledgeable and inter-culturally skilled. Thus, in this approach, the development of internationalized curricula and programs is not an end to itself but a means towards developing the appropriate competencies in students, staff and faculty.
The *ethos* approach relates more to organizational development theories which focus on the creation of a culture or climate within an organization to support a particular set of principles and goals. In the case of internationalization, the focus is on establishing an ethos or which encourages and fosters the development of international and intercultural values and initiatives. This approach attempts to make the international dimension more explicit in the culture of the institution.
The *process* approach stresses the integration of an international and/or intercultural dimension into academic programs as well as the guiding policies and procedures of an institution. A major concern in this approach is the need to address the sustainability of the international dimension. Therefore, emphasis is placed on program aspects as well as organisational elements such as policies and procedures.

On the other hand, progressive approach as a pedagogical movement can be applied to internationalization of education in Nigeria. Dewey cited in Sustein, (2014)

described education as the participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the race. As such, education takes into account that the student is a social being. The process begins at birth with the child unconsciously gaining knowledge and gradually developing their knowledge to share and partake in society.

Considering the world today as a global village, education therefore, prepares students to cope with everyday challenges of life. No wonder scholars like Dewey referred to education as the process of living and not the preparation of future living (Susteinm 2014), so the school must represent the present life. For him, the curriculum in the school should reflect that of society. The center of the school curriculum should reflect the development of humans in society. Therefore, progressive approach emphasizes the development of new attitudes towards, and new interests in, experience.

In a nutshell, different approaches to internationalization are complementary and certainly not mutually exclusive. The typology reflects how dynamic the concept of internationalization is and how internationalization is shaping new directions for education and at the same time, responding to current trends and needs of the society.

Educational Counseling and Internationalization of Education: Progressive Approach

Given the reality of internationalization, the school counsellors are expected to provide information and resources that support counselling students as they work to offer internationally competent counselling services in the schools. According to American School Counsellor Association,(ASCA) school counsellors should address the needs of students from diverse backgrounds and take action to ensure the accessibility of appropriate services and opportunities for all students (ASCA, 2012, 2014). That is, school counsellors provide students and their families with meaningful exposure to internationalized education by using an innovative and progressive approach. This can be done by ensuring that students are aware of their own cultural heritages and how they impact their interactions with others.

To this end, students ought to be equipped with knowledge about other cultures and latest happenings around the world and most importantly, they should apply this awareness and knowledge when interacting with others. It is therefore expected of counsellors to integrate international concepts into their school programs. It could be through the mission and philosophy statements, goals and objectives, and delivery of indirect and direct services to the students. As a major stakeholder in internationalization of education, counsellors may strategically align selected comprehensive programs with already established ones in their schools e.g the International Baccaulreate (IB) program or Oxfam's Curriculum or Global Citizenship (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2014; Oxfam Development Education Programme, 2006).

By and large, the use of progressive approach through school counselling to internationalization of education suggests that counselling is a continuous process of synthesizing knowledge generated through research, scholarship and practice from different cultures and using this knowledge to solve problems in local and global communities. According to Leung and Chen (2009), internationalization involves

collaborations and equal partnerships in which cultural sensitivity and respect are required for success. For Hwang (2009), internationalizing counselling is required in discovering and preserving indigenous aspects of cultures worldwide. This suggests that local philosophical and cultural traditions are germane for the development of culturally aware and culturally sensitive global citizens.

Furthermore, progressive approach in counselling for internationalized education points to the fact indigenous ideas and values should not be viewed as local attempts at isolation from the influence of other countries and cultures, but rather, as an opportunity to discover the unique 'colours' of the world, so that there are more colors to be used and a more colorful picture to be appreciated (Leung & Chen, 2009). Thus, internationalization of education is a mechanism for integrating and inculcating indigenous cultures of the country into the students without them loosing their home cultures. Indeed, it has the potential to enrich culturally inclined international citizens.

However, in spite of the advantages of using a global lens when creating and implementing comprehensive school counselling programs, there are some substantial barriers that might act as obstacles. As a result of accountability of education, the central focus for school counsellors should be on creating data-driven programs that result in measurable student and school outcomes (ASCA, 2012; National Office for School Counselor Advocacy, 2011). Using data to recognize student needs, collaborating with key stakeholders, and aligning programming with the core educational standards are among the expected activities of a transformed school counsellor (ASCA, 2014). This will enable school counsellors to deliver services across several levels of intervention (i.e, individual and group, classroom and course of study, school-wide, community and family) while also engaging in tracking and reporting critical data elements for accountability purposes. To this end, internationalized education is a valuable optional endeavor, which enables school counsellors to take cognizance of the diverse and unique needs of the contemporary student.

Conclusion
In conclusion, this paper underscores the fact that internationalization of education in Nigeria is realizable through school counselling. School counselling as a service provider unit in the school system is saddled with the responsibility of devising comprehensive programmes in line with the nature of school to produce cultural inclined global students. In doing this, progressive approach helps school counsellor to be conscious of present experience or obtainable value systems in the world so as to include real life situation in their programmes.

Recommendations
From the foregoing, it is important for school counsellors to infuse themes of internationalization into their school programs in order to create a mission statement that can align with these goals. This may involve concepts like 'global citizen or global community' empowering students to be open-minded and curious; encouraging critical thinking; and valuing diversity in people and perspectives. If a school counselling program's mission statement reflect afore-mentioned, it becomes easier to naturally

align programming goals and interventions that demonstrate a vested interest in internationalized education and counselling. School counsellors who implement internationalized comprehensive counselling programs are essentially choosing to focus on student competencies related to both recognizing differences among cultures and countries, and promoting respect for these differences and traditions (Ng & Noonan, 2012).

Also, the significance of progressive approach in creating interventions at various levels cannot be over-emphasized. For Erford (2015), school counsellors can infuse international themes and concepts into counselling interventions at all levels: individual and group counselling, classroom and courses, school-wide, community and family, and district-level. OECD (2012) offered practical suggestions and ideas for ways that school counsellors can infuse the aforementioned into their school programmes across all levels of intervention as follows:-

Personal and Group Counseling: School counsellors are uniquely equipped to handle the complex developmental needs of students. Individual and group sessions can focus on themes of respecting differences, resolving conflicts through open-minded dialogue, and engaging in thoughtful reflection about culture and its impact on the self and others. School counsellors can:

• place special emphasis on respecting and appreciating diversity within the self and others.

• develop counseling groups that address international students' special needs and promote their strengths and assets.

• advise a social justice or equity group that can sponsor a variety of activities or programming, such as supplementing typical homeroom curriculum with focused equity lessons once a week.

• create and distribute informed consent documents, pamphlets, and brochures in multiple languages for individual and group counseling.

School Counseling Core Curriculum: School counsellors can internationalize their counseling core curriculum in the classroom by creating new curriculum units and adapting preexisting topic areas. They can:

• use social media and technology, such as YouTube clips, in the classroom as a means to show the increasingly interconnected world and the access that students can have to the experiences of youth in other countries

• incorporate books written in other countries (many offer both English and native language translations) and books that demonstrate unique cultural experiences around the world when using bibliotherapy in the classroom. Where Children Sleep by James Mollison (2010), for example, offers insight into experiences around the world by showcasing photographs of children's bedrooms in various countries.

• introduce international current events to the curriculum to serve as a focal point for psycho education about respecting alternative points of view, appreciating ethnic and cultural diversity, or nontraditional career opportunities.

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