

INTERNATIONALIZATION OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: A PROGRESSIVE APPROACH

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Abstract

The main variables of the theme were examined to bring out their indebt meanings. The term internationalization was traced from “international” which is an adjective qualifying nouns like Trade, Market, School, while internationalization is a process of having two or more nations controlling a phenomena. To fully understand the concept internationalization, some theories, models and strategies were discussed out of which that of Uppsala was adopted as a working tool. The concept education was also defined according to the perception of different authors. The educational growth and development was traced from the post-independence of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in October 1961 to the present day. The 1969 Curriculum Conference that formed the haul mark of the Educational change from the post-colonial Government to the advent of the National Policy on Education was discussed. The 6 – 3 – 3 – 4 and the subsequent developmental strategies were also examined. Some strategies for the progressive approach were emphasized. Finally, seven recommendations were made.

Keywords: International, Internationalization, Education, Progressive, Approach.

Concept of Internationalization

Internationalization is a term coined out from the word international, while internationalization is a noun and referring to a process. International is an adjective that comes before a noun to qualify its position eg. International Trade, International Markets, School, Students, Stadium to mention but a few. The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, (2015) defined internationalization to be something brought under the control of many nations. The term is better conceptualised when defined according to disciplines because it has been difficult to have a comprehensive definition.

However, it is better understood when defined according to disciplines, for example in Economics, it is the process of increasing involvement of enterprises in the international markets (Stromquist 2007). In commerce, its defined as the growing tendencies of corporations to operates across national boundaries (Kreber 2009). In Marketing and Computing is regarded as an approach to designing products and services that are easily adaptable to different cultures and languages (Stier 2006).

For over some decades now, the definition of this concept has become a subject matter for discussion even in households especially with the advent of globalisation. Infact, the term internationalization may not be as new and strange as it is being conceived. It is worthy to note that this term has been used for centuries in Political Science and Governmental Relations. (Varghese 2008). Though less emphasized in Education then, it has also become popularised in recent time.

Internationalization has become increasingly important in Education because in the recent past, Education has been likened to an industry producing abundant qualityinternationally consumable

products and services. Based on this, there is the need to evolve an encompassing definition that must accommodate the already existing concepts of Education like Comparative Education, Global Education and Multicultural Education.

Internationalization was brought up to accommodate other 21st century terminologies like Transnational Education, Borderless Education, Cross Border Education, Distance Education, Offshore Education, and E – Learning Education which have no geographical boundaries and consequences. The term Borderless Education first appeared in Australian and United Kingdom Reports (2000) to address the unprecedented growth in Distance and E – Learning Education.

The most succinct and nuanced definition for now, is that provided by Knights (2003:2 and 2005:13) who said, “**Internationalization is the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimensions into the purpose, functions, or delivery of post-secondary education**” The content of this definition makes it more encompassing and acceptable in the Education sector like every other discipline of human endeavour. By this, it is therefore imperative to abide by its integrative nature and process. The integrative nature in this definition denotes that all other aspects, past and present be included in it, while the process refers to the continuous inclusion of the necessary information as it is required.

The definition ended up with post-secondary education excluding the lower levels of Education. I think this beautiful definition will be more inclusive if it incorporates the other levels of Education to read thus: Internationalization is the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimensions into the purpose, functions and pedagogics of the education industry.

Theories of Internationalization

Some theories were evolved that guided Internationalization as a concept right from its emergence. The early theories were:

- Penrosian Tradition Theory by Penrose 1959

It is a traditional marketing approach with a strong focus on the market. It dealt with the idea of having a compensating advantage to overcome the cost of foreigners (Hollensen 2007).

- Verno Product Cycle Hypothesis by Ramond Verno 1988

This sequential model was introduced to explain internationalization as going through different phases of penetration into the target country. It also brought into the concept to clarify the idea between standardized products and product differentiation and where manufacturing could be located.

- The Transaction Cost Approach by Buckley and Casson 1976

This was evolved to focus towards decisions and the firm’s own operation and licencing.

- Innovation, Relation, and Internationalization Model by Cavusgil 1980

Here, Internationalization is considered as an innovation for firms. All firms have to develop new tactics and skills etc; for global market (Anderson 1993).

- Dunning Eclectic Approach by Dunning 1988

This approach explained that Ownership – Location – Internationalization framework are locational variables for consideration. The setting of an industry or a firm is a function of its success.

- Uppsala Network Model by Christofor 2008

This model presents a four step of gradual engagement during internationalization. In the first phase, the firm has no regular exports activity at all. The next step, the firm engages in direct exporting. The third phase it establishes a sale agency and in the fourth phase the firm sets up a wholly owned foreign subsidiary office.

- Overpass through stages of the process is referred to as the establishment chain. The selection of the target country depends on the so called psychic distance which means the psychological perceived difference between home and the target countries that the managers may have. It consists of factors that make it difficult to understand foreign environment (Johanson and Vahlne 2009). These factors can be language, political systems, level of education and industrial development. All internationalizing firms seek to find nation whose physic distance is low.

Summary, the theories are geared towards a gradual and systematic approach to globalization using the expected skills, experiences, strategies and funding procedures.

Concept of Education

The term education is amorphous and difficult to define. Many authors, who attempt it, do so according to their own perceptions. No matter from which angle, the authors tend towards the same direction when they all perceived education as constituting a change in behavior to a positive direction in the recipients. Adiele (1972), defined education as the process undertaken through teaching and learning or a desirable change in human behaviour towards a better existence. Leonard (1967) said, "To learn is to change and education is the process that changes learners behaviour to a positive direction. Ukeje (1973) claimed that the process of education occurs whenever any influence produces a change in the physical or mental behaviour of the learner. Tabotndip 2010 defined education as the process of acquiring knowledge that begins from birth to death.

The Cambridge English Dictionary (2017), defined Education as the process of teaching or learning especially in a school or college. [Http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/education](http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/education). Education is the process of facilitating learning or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/education>.

Most interesting is the definition of Education for the 21st century that emphasizes the technological domain of education which is the ingredient for faster growth and development of nations. One of such succinct definition by Zolfaghari (2009) says that Education must provide at its core the modern technology which aims to improve educational practices because technology facilitates learning processes and increases performance of the educational system.

Evolutionary trend of Internationalization of Education in Nigeria

Internationalization of Education in Nigeria has not been totally absent from the Educational System of the Federal Republic Of Nigeria. A cursory look at the Nigerian Educational System takes us to the National Policy on Education 1977 revised 1981, 1998, and 2004 (FRN 2004). This policy document has been a blue print upon which the process started. The National Policy on Education is one of the best prepared plan document to take the country to the greatest height in educational matters. Its content and structure was a product of a cross section of people from all walks of life in Nigeria. For the content, the National Policy on Education considered the following vital areas:

- The Philosophy for the nation.
- The Objectives for the nation.
- The Curricular for the nation.
- The Levels of the Education for the Nation.
- Linguistics, Languages and dialects to be applied in the education sector.

Since its inception, the National Policy on Education has continuously been updated to meet the dynamics of social change and demand on education. This exercise led to innovations and changes in the following areas.

- Off – lifting of the superior order on Open and Distance Learning programmes by Government
- Revitalization and expansion of the National Mathematics Centre (NMC).
- Establishment of Teachers Registration Council (TRCN)
- Introduction of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into the school system
- Prescription of French Language in the Primary and Secondary School curriculum as a second official language.
- Prescription of a Minimum number of subjects to be taken by SSCE Candidates.
- The introduction of Basic Education in the programme of Quaranicschools to ensure equal opportunity and effective planning of UBE
- Repositioning Science, technical and vocational education in the scheme of national education for optimum performance.
- The general contextual change to reflect the state of professional practice in education, among others.

In order to realize the content of the NPE, the Federal Government of Nigeria constituted an Implementation Committee to translate the policy into workable blueprint that would guide the bodies whose duty it was to carry out the assignment. The bodies were charged with the responsibilities of monitoring the various projects. These bodies include the State Universal Basic Education Commission, National Universities Commission, National Commission for Colleges of Education, National Board for Technical Education to mention but a few.

The above information underscores the fact that the National Policy on Education is the basement for processing education in the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the Global market.

• **Operational Status of Education in Nigeria**

The Educational System in Nigeria is subdivided into levels beginning from the pre-primary, the primary, the secondary and the tertiary levels. Other special areas like the Mass Literacy, Adult and Non – Formal Education, Special Education and Nomadic Education were captured. Teaching and learning is taking place at all these levels using the prescribed curricula and the necessary pedagogics. At the tertiary level teaching, learning, research, as well as community services are going on systematically. The challenging jobs are done by the staff of these institutions under very stressful conditions caused by the following factors.

(a) Inadequate and decay of infrastructural facilities and equipment

Infrastructural facilities and equipment which assist in the teaching and learning experiences are either inadequate, absent or totally obsolete for the exercise. Oluremi and Olubukola (2012) opined that facilities have great impact on academic performances of students and inadequate facilities translate to poor performance. Ahmed (2003) lamented that in most secondary schools in the country, teaching and learning, take place in unconducive environment, lacking the basic material, thus hindering the fulfilment of educational objectives. Central Bank of Nigeria (2014) observed that equipment and facilities in the Nigerian Educational System are not only grossly inadequate but in a state of decay.

(b) Funding problems

The Nigerian Educational System has the problem of poor or inadequate funding. It is interesting to note that education is always fortunate to appear on the highest echelon during a budget preparation and presentation. But it is unfortunate to find a miraculous disappearance of this industry from that height at the implementation stage on the same budget package. Whatever actually happens to this indispensable sector, no one is accountable for it. For years, education has suffered this fate that has made it a mediocre facet of the Nigerian Economy. The intentional neglect of this viable industry has been disastrous to the nation. Every human being knows that it is this industry that has caused a debut in many nations of the world and hence, the classification into G8, G20 or first world, second world, and third world. Unfortunately, Nigeria with its might in population and natural resources is still loitering at the lowest ebb of the third world nations.

(c) Human resources development

This is a very crucial issue at all the levels of the educational sector which needs proper attention. It is a true and known to all, that the worker needs to be groomed to meet the ever changing conditions at his or her job schedule. They need training and retraining to perform efficiently on the job. In many Nigerian tertiary institutions, majority of the workers sponsor themselves to higher heights, even with advent of sponsorship bodies like Tertiary Education Trust Fund. This body which was put in place for this purpose, does not work in many institutions because of the rigorous nature of accessing it. Okosa (2016) lamented that instead of waiting for funds from the institutions, it is better to attempt self sponsorship and avoid all the challenges involved in what may turn out to be a wasteful venture and time. Ahmed (2015) opined that TETFund is the saviour for staff development in the tertiary institutions though it's difficult to access, due to the stringent measures surrounding it.

Another aspect is that workers in the industry who naturally are the intellectual bank of the nation are not considered as valuable when it comes to emolument and welfare packages. This had been the sole cause of strikes by the unions like Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) College of Education, Academic Staff Union (COASU).

(d) Brain drain

This refers to the exodus of trained manpower from one geographical area to another in search of greener pastures. It can also be referred as intellectual flight to different geographical areas for some very obvious reasons. When intellectual movement is mentioned, the first thing that comes to mind is the education industry that houses the intellectuals. The incidence is consequent in the Nigerian Educational System because of the conditions prevailing on campuses across the nations in Africa. Sarpong (2000) concluded that the problem of brain drain has reached quite disturbing proportions in certain African Countries with Ethiopia ranking first in the continent in terms of rate of loss in Capital, followed by Nigeria and Ghana. ECA (2000) lamented that "the emigration of African professionals to the West is one of the greatest obstacle to Africa's development". In the same vein, Barka (2003) said "African Governments have a great responsibility to ensure that brains remain in the continent otherwise in 25 years time Africa will be empty of brains". Ofori in (2004) commented that failing to offer greener pastures for its own intelligentsia, Africa is committing suicide.

(e) Appointment into leadership positions in educational institutions

There exist three levels in the educational system in Nigeria and they are the Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Institutions. At the Primary level the Head Teacher is in charge; at the Secondary level, the Principal is in charge. In the Polytechnics and Colleges of Education, the Rector and the Provost are in control while in the Universities, the Vice Chancellors are at the helm of affairs.

In Nigeria, the appointment into Leadership positions are yet to have a criteria, except years of experience and office duration of 5 years tenure. It is believed that the appointments are based on merit through interviews concluded by experienced academics and other people who constitute the council (FGN- 1993). By the performances of these appointed academic personalities, a lot has been seen to be at variance with the expected. This has created and still creating tumultuous times on campus across the nation.

(f) Accreditation of programmes

Accreditation is the process of monitoring and evaluating the existing structures, curricular, and the staff that perform different job schedules in the various institutions. This exercise is imperative at all the levels of the educational system to ensure standards. It is these standards that can sell among nations. The Accreditation exercise is more emphasised at the tertiary institution neglecting the primary and the secondary schools. Even at the tertiary institutions where it seems to be serious, a lot of gimmicks play down the exercise to little or no essence. It is very common to find a drifting exercise by academic staff from one institution to another to fill gaps for posterity. Equipment and facilities are refurbished or hired to meet the expectation of the accreditation team. The truth is realised after the accreditation team has returned to base.

The movement of staff and equipment from one institution to another presents a blurred picture of what the institutions are. It also portrays the inefficient production process going on in those institutions. At the end of the exercise the institutions rejoice over positive results as if they were actually merited.

(g) Private partnership participation

The Nigerian Educational system accommodates private partnership into its activities though there is no policy declaration about it in the National Policy on Education. At the tertiary level, the private sector is formidable indeed and performing excellently well to the state of emulation. The healthy competition between the public and private sectors is attracting attention. The two sectors are under the surveillance of the National Universities Commission.

But the incursion of the private sector into the pre – primary, primary and secondary, in this sector is becoming a nuisance. Proliferation in this sector is at its acme. Thanks to the State Universal Basic Education Commission which continuously attempts to regulate these excesses at the pre – primary, primary and the Junior Secondary school levels. The Senior Secondary level is left at the mercy of the different State Governments and having no commission of its own. It has become an all comers affair.

The Approach to Internationalization by Nigeria

At the dawn of independence in October 1st 1961, the Nigerians while jubilating for a self-ruled nation also remembered the education was a force for national development that needed a total overhaul. The Pre – Independence Education was not only imported but irrelevant to the people and the nation. The

reason was that the nation needed an educational system that will drive it to greater heights. Consequently in Sept, 1969 a National Curriculum Conference was held in Lagos where a cross section of Nigerians from all walks of life chatted a course for the present educational System.

This conference gave birth to the National Policy on Education in 1977 revised 1981, and 2004. (FRN 1977, 1981, 2004) At the instance, 6 – 5 – 2 – 3 system was changed to 6 – 3 – 3 – 4. Relating to the American System of Education which Japan copied in 1945 and succeeded in developmental strides of its nation. According to Gusau (2008) the likely prayer in the lips of Nigerians was “Oh Lord, shall we succeed as Japanese did?”. The major focus was a scientific and technological education. This was the haul mark of 6 – 3 – 3 – 4 referred to as the Universal Primary Education (UPE). Unfortunately the poor implementation strategy killed it at infancy. It reincarnated with the name State Primary Education Board in Sept 30th 1999 only to remain stunted like a child with distorted hormones for growth. Until now, this is not only ornamental but bedridden. An attempt to resuscitate it, culminated to another name called 9 – 3 – 4. Despite this move, the system is still not finding its feet.

In this state of melancholy, so many rivals have infiltrated the system leading to high degree of proliferation of private institutions at this level of educational system. Many of them, if not all, tag the word ‘**international**’ before their names seeking for notice from parents, guardians and sponsors as well as give the impression of belonging to the global market. They operate varied curricula, pedagogic, and strategies, uncontrollably, especially that some operate clandestinely.

- The Senior Secondary School Level was placed in the hands of the State Governments to manage and control for the benefit of the states and the nation as a whole. This was quite an expedient arrangement indeed to manage only three classes of the Secondary Education. It was also a good idea for this unfortunate sector which had no board or commission at the Federal Level. Until now, it is still a broken bridge between the primary school and the Tertiary institutions. The encroachment by the private sector into this level is tremendous. The return of secondary schools to the former owners by the State Governments was not only alarming but a disastrous policy that has become an incurable virus in the fabrics of the tertiary institutions.

- The minimum qualification for teachers at the primary school was pegged at the National Certificate on Education sliding away from the Teacher Grade II Certificate. In Colleges of Education and the Polytechnics the minimum was set at the Bachelor Degree but later on raised to the Master’s Degree. At the University level it was pegged at the Master’s Degree and later on raised to a Doctorate Degree. Despite the progression there came a distortion where the National Teachers Institute started producing the Teacher Grade II Certificate again.

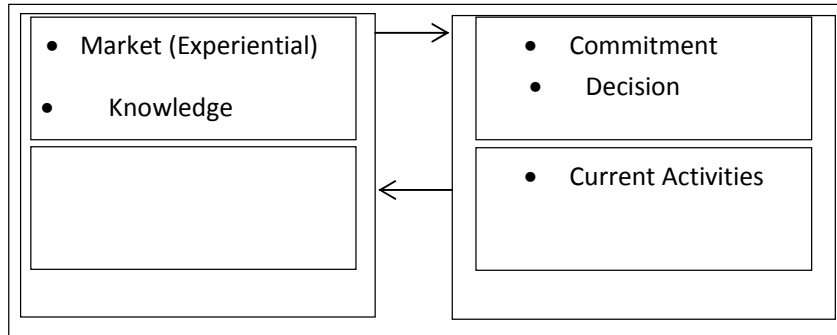
In the universities, the programmes have been expanded to accommodate the dynamics of time. New ones have been included into the curricular such as Entrepreneurship, Computer Education, Conflict and Conflict Resolution, Nigerian People and Culture to mention but a few. This expansion is congested with population of students and staff hence the need for enough infrastructure, equipment and facilitates to achieve the set objectives.

To meet the funding expectations, the Education Trust Fund was put in place and later on subdivided to have a board particularly for the Tertiary Institutions hence Tertiary Education Trust Fund. This Board has funds available for Staff Development but the problem is to access these funds, because of retirement problems contrived by the institutions.

A Progressive Approach

All that has been outlined above, is the effort of Nigeria towards attaining internationalization. The efforts have been futile due to mismanagement, unsystematic approaches raided by ignorance, corruption, greed and avarice. The proper approach for any nation to succeed entering the global market is to follow the tested theories, and models of internationalization. In this circumstance the theory of Uppsala (1975) was adopted to exemplify progression in the global market.

Uppsala Theory of Internationalization



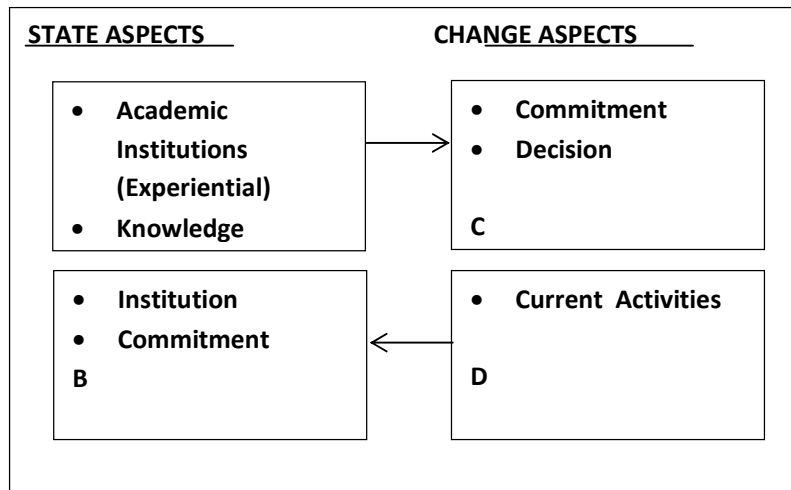
Source: Johnson and Vahlne (2009): The basic mechanism of Internationalization of firms

The above model has two change mechanisms that make it dynamic. First the firms change by learning from experience of their current activities in the foreign markets. Secondly, they change through the commitment and decision made for strengthening their position in the foreign market. Thirdly, experience increases firms market knowledge which in turn influences decision about the level of commitment and activities that later grow them (Johnson and Vahlne 2009)

Consequently, they mean that, lack of knowledge concerning foreign market is the main barrier to internationalization.

Whitelock (2002) opined that to develop knowledge is crucial to firms. Thirdly, Internationalization and especially that knowledge that grows out of experience in current operations are decisive in the learning process.

Relating this Model to the Educational system any nation hoping for Internationalization the diagram could be substitute to this:



Source: Tabotndip (2017) Basic mechanism of internationalizing the educational systems (evolved from Uppsala model).

- A.** Academic Institutions should learn from the experiences of their current activities or operations with a view to meeting the current international dispensation
- B.** The Institutions should move to the next level of commitment which stimulates more learning, research, pedagogics and hence performance.
- C.** The Institutions have to make vital changes through heightened commitment and decision making for strengthening their position in the foreign competition or market.
- D.** The experiences acquired in their current operations is quite decisive to further learning processes which are very important for the nation to stay profitable in the foreign market or global context.

Conclusion

Internationalization of Education is cardinal to all nations that desire to be abreast with the globalization trend. For any nation to get on board the train of globalization, it must package its educational system relevantly to the internationally accepted standards. To achieve this demands, a strong and committed political will of the leadership of the nation is needed. Therefore, if Nigeria must process its educational system to the acceptable international standard, it needs to develop a political will that will jettison, corruption, nepotism, tribalism, greed avarice and focus sincerely on the relevance education matters.

Recommendations

1. The Federal Republic of Nigeria should retrace its way back to its National Policy on Education and attempt accurate implementation of the policy statements as necessary.
2. Funding the Educational System should be considered much more than any other facet of the economy because it is the source of all human knowledge.
3. The Secondary School Education sector should be given a commission at the Federal Level like the other two levels. Only this can save the sector out of its predicaments.
4. Accreditation exercise should take place at all levels of the educational system in Nigeria. This should be properly conducted to obtain useful result that benefit the system and the nation

5. More criteria for appointment of leadership in the Educational system in Nigeria should be evolved to give credence to merit hence expected standards.
6. The Government should be realistic in the treatment metted to academic staff in order to avoid brain drain that does no good to any system.
7. The Government should stop the proliferation of Universities and other tertiary institutions in order to conserve funds to manage properly the existing ones.

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