Collaborative Educational Research for National Development

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Abstract
This paper discussed the link between globalization and educational research, and the need for collaboration in research to achieve national development. The paper discussed the importance of research in education and emphasized that educators need to carry out researches in order to revalidate their knowledge, acquire new knowledge and improve educational practices. The paper showed that research in education is also important because it puts the education system in a better position to serve the needs of the society. The paper further maintained that the current globalization requires an education system that could prepare students to meet the challenges posed by globalization. Hence teachers and other educators need to collaborate with other professionals in other institutions and disciplines to enhance the quality of their research. Some challenges of collaboration in research were stated as lack of fund for the research and the inability to get collaborators who have the same research interest. Recommendations made to overcome these challenge include sincerity on the part of the collaborators, funding by the government and the review of promotion guidelines by school authorities.

Key words: Globalization, Research, Education, National Development
Societies are dynamic in nature. As closely knit social groups consisting of diversities of institutions, systems, members of different age, orientation, tribe, ethnic and religious groups, the need for cohesion, equilibrium and stability has been a constant phenomenon in many societies of the world. One of the ways through which societies strive to achieve cohesion and stability is by making constant efforts to meet the needs of members of the society to a considerable level. However, as human wants are insatiable especially in the face of social changes, leading to new ideas, knowledge, desires and social problems, the society is constantly faced with the challenge of devising new and better ways of finding solutions to the problems plaguing man.

Problems that plague members of the society include life’s problem such as human behavior, financial, economic and marital problems, to mention a few. Aside from the personal problems faced by individuals, the society as a whole faces some challenges such as those of insecurity, corruption, terrorism, bad leadership and economic relapse. Answer to these problems might be sought in order to make the world a better place for habitation. The desire to find solution to the problem of man in his society has therefore been the beginning of research and no nation is exempted from this urge or determination to surmount all obstacles which may impede their future development.

Over the years both scientific and empirical researches are carried out by individuals and the results of such researches are relied upon and applied to solve social problems. Such applications are however limited in scope. Moreover, in this age of globalization and the attendant development of new information and communication technologies, individuals need to collaborate to conduct group breaking researches that could provide solutions not only to the problems of a particular locality or nation but the world as a global village.

The Need for Research in Education

Researches are investigations that are carried out for so many reasons. Abimbola (1995) explained research as investigations carried out in order to know what we did not know before or add information to our store of knowledge. Researches are also carried out to analyse or investigation a situation or problem in order to either discover a new fact or consolidate an already established or existing knowledge. One of the institutions in the society where research is necessary is education.

Education, in all its forms has been accepted universally as the key to the emancipation of man and his society from the shackles of ignorance, poverty, hardship, diseases and other problems inherent in the society. Parankimail (2012,p. 1) in his definition and explanation of the functions of education said that education is a systematic process through which a child or an adult acquires knowledge, experience, skill and sound attitude. It makes an individual civilized, refined, cultured and educated.
For a civilized and socialized society, education is the only means. Its goal is to make an individual perfect. Education is a panacea for all evils. It is a process of waking up to life and its mysteries.

Everything a society needs to develop herself and her members and subsequently not be left behind in the global trend of development is embedded in education. The development of individuals therefore leads to the development of the society. This is why education aims at creating a sound mind in a sound body (Aristotle).

Education is a process because it opens the life of a community to all individuals within it and enables them to take part in it. It is also a discipline because it comprises a body of knowledge, skills, values or experiences designed to be learned by members of the society. Education is also an enterprise because it is provided by the society for the citizens to realize their full potentials within the society. It is also a product because it fits a man to perform justly, skillfully and magnanimously all the offices, both public and private, of peace and of war. Education as a system also consists of interrelated parts in the society designed to achieve the desired goal (Ajaegbo & Ibezim, 2011)

The descriptions of education given here, reveals the position of education in the society as a veritable instrument for national development. The functions of education in the society are outlined by Datta (1984, pp. 33-45). These are:
(a) The Conservative Function: Education preserves the culture of the society and passes it on from generation to generation
(b) The Innovative Function: Education is a major source of new ideas and knowledge. These are transmitted to the learners.
(c) The Political Function: This is the transmission of value, beliefs, ideas and patterns of behavior pertaining to the generation, distribution and exercise of power.
(d) The Economic Function: Education leads to economic development and this rests on two assumptions:
i) That education changes behaviors, and
ii) That such behavioural change results in the production of more goods and services.
(e) The selective and Allocative function: The educational system acts as a filtering agency. It is a sieve for selecting and directing people to different areas of specialization and levels of operation.

From the foregoing, it could be understood that education serves the purpose of the society, and since the society is a dynamic entity, education must discover new ways of finding solutions to current life’s problems. Research in education is therefore very important. Field (2011) explained that education professionals are always learning, finding out things, analyzing information, adapting their behavior according to information received, looking to improve and adapting to modern demands. He further
stated that if education is not based on research and evidence then it runs the risks of being based upon dogma, theory, ideology, convenience and prejudice.

Some emergent social problems which affect education include terrorism, increased rate of divorce and percentage of single parent homes, insecurity, new trends in examination malpractice (modern handsets that could be used for the purpose) student cultism, inadequate funding, poor reading habit among students and others. With the advent of information communication technology, some of these social problems have taken a new dimension and thus research into educational issues should be a constant necessity and should be dynamic in nature.

Educational research is therefore a systematic way of gathering information that will lead to the solution of problems relating to the processes and conditions of education (Abimbola, 1995). He further stated some functions of educational research as:

- Increase in knowledge of educational phenomena and practices to enable educators take important decisions about them
- Proffering solutions to social problems
- Improvement in educational practices
- Overall progress and development in the educational sector

Educational research when successful, could be a great asset to the society because no society can rise above its education. The result or outcome of educational research if successfully implemented could therefore be a solution to many social problems in the society, such as problems of bad leadership, corruption, violence, unemployment and the like. This is because improvement in educational practices and overall progress and development in the education sector, means improvement in the development of the human factor (individuals) who are spring board of development in any nation.

Creswell (2002) expatiated further on this by giving a more comprehensive meaning of educational research. He opted that educational research is:

A cyclical process of steps that typically begins with identifying a research problem or issue if study. It then involves reviewing the literature, specifying a purpose for the study, collecting and analyzing data and forming an interpretation of information. The process culminates in a report, disseminated to audiences, that is evaluated and used in the educational community.

Creswell (2002) further outlined some purposes of educational research as

- To add to existing knowledge
- To address gaps in knowledge
- To expand knowledge
- To improve practice
- To replicate knowledge

It is noteworthy to mention that research in education as used in this study cuts across all forms of education (formal, informal and non-formal). This is an inevitable exercise as it...
not only equips educators with updated knowledge in the field of educational practice but also keeps them abreast of current issue of both national and international importance.

Globalization and Education

Globalization could be likened to national integration whereby members of a country, of different ethnic and religious groups are linked together so that they could interact freely, exchange ideas and work together to make their country better. However, while national integration operates within the confines of a nation, globalization cuts across all nations of the world. Muzrui (2001) stated that globalization is a process by which different regions of the world are pulled together through an expanding network of exchange of peoples, ideas, cultures, goods and services across far distances. Globalization also refers to the liberalization and the intensification of international linkages in trade, finance, market and production (Ajayi, 2003)

Nsibambi (2001) in his contribution incorporated five concepts in explaining globalization. He defined globalization as “a process of advancement and increase in interaction among the countries and peoples, facilitated by progressive and military power, knowledge and skills, as well as interfacing of cultural values, systems and practices.

From these submissions, it’s understood that globalization involves interaction that cuts across all areas of human endeavour. It has the capacity of making the world a global village where physical interaction will no longer be the only condition for exchange of ideas, wealth, knowledge or information. Globalization is therefore the increasing interaction of national economics through the removal of barriers “free trade such that people in different parts of the world are being connected to each other like never before such that what happens to people in one part of the world will have direct consequences for others… (Ogunleye 2009, P.89)

Globalization is also described as the trans-boundary movement of capital, people, goods, information and culture (Nyenke, 2004). There is no aspect of human life or discipline that is not affected by globalization. Therefore, as the world is changing, tending towards globalization, so must education (Florin & Hall, 2007). This is because education must go beyond preparing children, young adults and members of the society to survive and participate in the development of their community and nation, to helping and preparing them to participate and survive in inter-connected global community.

Opara and Ochuba (2012) also explained that there is a rise in new learning opportunities beyond the traditional “book teacher” model as a result of the increasing capacity of information and communication technologies. They explained further that the nature of learning and teaching is changing rapidly due, in part, to increasing
interaction from more accessible global telecommunication networks driven by the content of the internet.

There is the need for the teacher to learn new methods of teaching, and acquire new knowledge to be able to participate and survive in the inter-connected global community. Olaoye (2002) explained that the envisioned new educational philosophy of andragogy is different from the old pedagogy where the teacher is the alpha and omega in the teaching-learning process, dominate the classroom scenario, and is regarded as repository of knowledge. He further explained that in the new philosophy of andragogy, education is seen as the out-come of learners participation in teacher-guided community of inquiry. The teachers’ opinion, ideas and stance are also seen as fallible rather than authoritative. The new philosophy of andragogy can be seen as a product of globalization. As a result of exchange of ideas and information, teachers now adapt to the global trend in educational practice.

The Nigerian National Policy on Education (F.R.N 2004, P.8) also stipulated the national educational goals as:
(a) The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity
(b) The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society
(c) The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around, and
(d) The acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competences as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development if the society

The purpose of education in Nigeria is therefore not limited to the preparation of members of the society to be able to survive and also contribute to the development of the Nigerian society. For education to fulfill the purpose of training the minds of Nigerian citizens to understand not only the Nigerian society, but the world, Nigerian educators need to collaborate in research to be able to discover and impact new knowledge that the learners need to be able to survive, participate in national development and also be knowledgeable in events that concern the international community.

**The Need for Collaboration in Educational Research**

Collaboration means working together with someone or some persons to achieve a purpose or to produce better results. It is also the ability to share or exchange ideas, knowledge or resources. Bukvova (2010) explained collaboration as individuals who differ in notable ways sharing information and working towards a particular purpose. It is the coming together of diverse interests and people to achieve a common purpose via interactions, information sharing and coordination of activities (Melin & Persson, 1996 as cited in Bukvova, 2010).
Research collaboration can take place between individuals from same institutions, different institutions even from a different country. It can also connect different disciplines (Bukvova, 2010). Collaboration is also the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa (Giddens, 1990).

Collaboration can be carried out in different areas such as business, projects and research. Benefits of collaboration as stated by Wagers (2013) include:

- Less work for everyone without compromising on results
- Collaborators debate ideas and this leads to creativity
- Collaboration has the ability to bring more experience to bear
- It leads to efficient learning because of the involvement of a team of experts
- Collaboration makes available wider array of techniques
- It involves less risk
- In research, collaboration leads to increased publications,

Collaboration in research also improves the quality of research, and enhances the researchers’ understanding of research users and their needs. Educators need to interact with others both within and outside the country in order to enhance their knowledge. This interaction is essential because as Mead (1934), cited in Oranusi (2002) puts it “… Human life is the essential force for the emergence of human consciousness, the environment and human conduct”. This is made possible through human interaction. In the face of globalization and the attendant social changes such as changes in social structure or culture over time, Reading (1977) observed that there is the need to partner with others for the purpose of innovation and enrichment of knowledge.

Jennifer (2013) also noted that a significant amount of work is required to support research progress in the 21st century. She found out that there is a positive correlation between the numbers of authors on a publication and the impact of a research. Having understood the meaning of collaboration and its benefits, why is collaboration necessary in educational research?

The society which education serves its purpose is a network of relationships. Functionalism, a sociological theory explains this nature of the society. In Haralambos & Holborn (2008), functionalists, for instance Talcott Parsons (1902-1979), August Comte (1798-1857), Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) and Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), viewed society as a set of interconnected parts which together form a whole. They argued that an understanding of any part of the society requires an analysis of its relationship to other parts, and most importantly its contribution to the maintenance of the society. All the institutions of the society for instance religion, family, politics, economy are therefore interconnected because they all contribute to the growth and development of the society.
There is therefore the need for professionals in education to collaborate with others in order to bring about improvement in their research findings. This is because the education system cannot achieve its purpose effectively if it is isolated from other institutions. For a Nation to progress economically, socially and technologically, there is a need for members of the society to acquire new skills, technology and knowledge. Instilling these skills and knowledge in members of the society is the main aim of education, therefore collaboration in educational research is necessary for educators to get more informed on the necessary skills and knowledge that would meet the needs of the 21st century globalization and technological development. This will help educators to prepare students to survive and participate in both national and inter-connected global community which they also belong to.

Education has a very close relationship with disciplines like history, sociology, philosophy and psychology. It also uses all other disciplines in the sciences and arts because the problems associated with the nurturing of the young are not easy to surmount (Ezewu 1985, p.31). Educationists therefore need to appeal to these disciplines by collaborating with them to train the young ones successfully. For instance, if the educator fails to understand the health challenges the child is facing or the environmental hazards that might impede the child’s learning process, his job might not be successfully accomplished.

Though in education, there are applied aspects of these disciplines such as educational psychology, sociology of education, philosophy of education, health education and so on, the educationist may at one time or the other need the input of those who specialize in the main disciplines to be able to carry out quality research in them. This will enhance their knowledge, ideas and the quality of the results of such researches. Collaboration in educational research will help to bring about innovation in educational practices. It will also help educators to learn from other’s experiences and enrich the knowledge of the partners in the research.

Collaboration in educational research will also bring about development in the society. For instance, in Nigeria, it will lead to improvement in the economy of the nation, discovery of better solutions to so many social problems such as insecurity and other health issues. It will also enhance manpower development in the society. Collaboration in educational research could also cut across institutions both within and outside the country, therefore encouraging knowledge transfer. It can also improve the standard of education. Field (2011) emphasized the importance of collaboration in educational research by stating that basing our practice solely on our own learning experiences without reflection means running the risk of being outdated and not being forward-looking.
Challenges of Collaboration in Research
Collaboration in research is faced with so many challenges, some of which are:
- Finding a partner who will have the same research interest.
- Worry over who owns which ideas or information provided in the research.
- Getting enough fund to carry out the research.
- Who becomes the lead author especially where the research publication is used for promotion purpose and points are allocated according to how the names of the authors are presented.
- Getting collaborators who are trustworthy
- Disagreement over the sharing formula for both the tasks and the finance involved.

Conclusion
Research in education is very necessary because teachers and all educators need to get abreast of new ideas, knowledge and methods of teaching that would enhance teaching and learning. For educational research findings to be more qualitative, productive and internationally accepted, collaboration in research is very necessary. This paper has therefore stressed the need for professionals in education to collaborate with professionals in other disciplines and institutions to acquire new knowledge, evaluate the existing knowledge and also transmit these to the learners. It will also put the teacher in a proper position to contribute to the developmental efforts of nations.

Recommendations
To enhance collaboration in educational research, the following recommendations are made:
1) Professionals in education should be open to and willing to collaborate with others to carry out quality researches.
2) Collaborators should be honest in their claims to the ideas and information contributed in the research.
3) Attendance to conference will afford researchers an opportunity to get willing collaborators who share the same interest with them.
4) Promotion guidelines should be reviewed so that equal points are allocated to all collaborators in a research. This will encourage them to be willing to collaborate with others whole heartedly and contribute their ideas to the success of the research.
5) Funds for research should be readily made available to research collaborators by the government and non-governmental agencies. This will encourage researchers, especially those who do not have the ability for self-sponsorship.


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