

Globalization and Its Implications for Vocational Education in Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper presents the concepts of globalization as well as vocation-technical education. It proceeds to discuss some of the implications of globalization on Vocational-technical education. The paper concludes with some of the changes that vocational education in globalization era could bring for the improvement of the economy and the technological advancement of Nigeria.

Introduction

One of the phenomena identified as the major dynamics of change in the 21st century is globalization. And, as identified by Baylis and Smith (1997), the term globalization precisely describes the process of increasing interconnected between societies such that events in one part of the world more and more have effects on peoples and societies far away. Thus, a globalized world is one in which political, economic, social, educational and cultural events become more and more interconnected, and also one in which the impacts of these events in one society affect extensively the lives of people in other societies.

The objective of this paper is to precisely state the concepts of globalization as well vocational-technical education and examine the implications of the terms globalization and vocational-technical education on the improvement of Nigerian economy and technological advancement.

Scholte (2000) as cited by Popoola and Oni (2005) established five distinct definitions of globalization that are in common usage. Though the definitions overlap and are related, the elements they highlight are significantly different. In the first instance, globalization is equated with internationalization. In this context, globalization is viewed simply as an adjective to describe cross-border relations between countries. It describes the growth in international exchange and interdependence. Therefore, with growing flows of trade and capital investment, there is the possibility of moving beyond an international economy, (where 'the principle entities are national economies') to a 'stronger' version – the globalized economy in which distinct national economies are subsumed and re-articulated into the system by international process and transactions.

In the second set of definitions identified by Scholte (2000) and cited by globalization is observed as liberalization. In this direction, globalization refers to

‘a process of moving government-imposed restrictions on movements between countries in order to create an “open”, “border less” world economy, (Scholte 2000). Those who have argued with some success for the abolition of regulatory trade barriers and capital controls have sometimes clothed this in the mantle of ‘globalization’.

The third set of definitions considers globalization as universalization. In this link, the word ‘global’ is used in the sense of being “worldwide” and ‘globalization’ is seen as the process of spreading various objects and experiences to people at all corners of the earth. A classic example of this would be the spread of computing, television and so on.

The fourth concept of globalization depicts the term with westernization or modernization. In this regard, globalization is understood as a dynamic, whereby the social structures of modernity (capitalism, rationalism, industrialism, bureaucratism, etc.) are spread the world over, normally destroying pre-existent cultures and local self-determination in the process.

Scholte’s fifth concept of globalization as discussed in Popoola, et al equates the term as deterritorialization. In this direction, globalization entails a “reconfiguration of geography” so that social space is no longer wholly mapped in terms of territorial places, territorial distances and territorial borders.

Of the five definitions of globalization, Scholte argued that it is only the conception of globalization as deterritorialization that offers the possibility of a clear and specific concept of the term. The notion of supraterritoriality (or trans-world or trans-border relations), the author proclaimed, provides a way of appreciating what is global about globalization.

From the foregoing, a general concept of globalization can be stated as the intensification of worldwide relations linking one part of the globe with other parts in ways that what happens in one place is haped by events occurring in other distant places (Okrah, 2004). In this sense, globalization is seen as the complex interconnectedness of peoples’ present and future – a phenomenon which is becoming the dominant character of the world’s political, cultural, economic and natural environments (Khan, 2003).

Conception of Vocational-Technical Education

Vocational-technical education is that aspect of education that gives its recipients an opportunity to acquire practical skills as well as some basic scientific knowledge (Nigerian National Policy on education, 1981).

Puding (1994) defined vocational-technical education as that type of education which fits the individual for gainful employment in recognized occupation as semi-skilled workers or technicians or sub-professionals.

Vocational education could be regarded as that aspect of education which provides the recipients with the basic knowledge and practical skills needed for entry into the world of work as employees or as self-employed. Vocational education nurtures skills that are necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development and thus builds a self-reliant nation. In effect, vocational education is the education that is focused on building a self-reliant society.

In America, the signing of the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917 justified and encouraged vocational education as an integral part of the individual total education, with programmes related to Agriculture, Home economics, Trade and Industrial Occupations (Lazerson, 1979). As part of general education, vocational education, according to Oranu (1992) and Okoro (1993), constitutes any form of education which primary purpose is to prepare people for useful employment in recognized occupation. Aderemi (1997) depicted vocational education as that aspect of the total education process that focuses on individual occupation, while Olaitan (1986) explained vocation education as that type of education which is considered with the development of skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for success to any occupation.

Vocational education according to Oni (1997) includes technical education. while vocational education provides for the training or retraining designed to prepare individuals to enter into a paid employment in any recognized occupation, technical education on the other hand, in common practice, is composed of theoretical and practical instruction. Such instruction is usually given to those who need to be employed in commerce and industry or in any type of enterprise which involves the use of tools and other machinery for their operational service (Adetoro, 1985).

Implications

Two of the aims of vocational-technical education as stated in the Nigerian National Policy on Education (NPE, 1981) are:

1. to give training and impart the necessary skills leading to the production of craftsmen, technicians and other skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliant, and
2. to enable Nigerian young men and women to have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology (NPE, p.28).

The above aims of vocation-technical education were stated about two and half decades ago. Today, the nation still lack quality vocation-technical education programmes in technical institutions. There is need to establish good vocational-technical institutions to provide the required training and impart the necessary skills leading to the production of craftsmen, technicians and other skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliant. Quality vocational-technical education is also essential in Nigerian institutions to sustain the nation's populace where quality of life is still very poor.

It is important for Nigerian technical institutions to adequately train vocational teachers so that such trained teachers can in turn provide necessary training for technicians who are required for the sustenance of manpower and technological development in the country. This type of training can be accelerated through the process of globalization. In other words, the term globalization in this direction is a process by which Nigeria as a nation will be interconnected and be adequately provided with relevant information on vocational-technical education training and development programmes. The implications of such globalization process are:

- (1) It will foster manpower and technological development of Nigeria and other nations, particularly as regards the transfer and exchange of middle-level manpower training and development;
- (2) Improves the social-cultural development of Nigeria and other interconnected nations;
- (3) Foster the political advancement of Nigeria and other nations, and
- (4) Allows for an-exchange of adequately trained vocational teachers between Nigeria and other interconnected nations. That is, competent vocational teachers can travel from Nigeria to other nations or from other nations to Nigeria to participate and contribute to each other's manpower and technological training programmes.

Conclusion

If information on vocation on vocational-technical education training and development of a particular nation become globalized, other nations will have the privilege to borrow from it and possibly use the relevant portion(s) borrowed to build on their own programme(s).

Certainly, globalization process as regards vocational-technical education programmes will provide substantial opportunities for the economic, manpower and technological advancement of Nigeria as well as other developing nations.

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