

## **The Impact of Globalization on Youth Development and Early Childhood Education in Nigeria**

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### ***Abstract***

*Globalization is a technology driven process that has brought about the shrinkage of the world into a global village, thereby expanding connectivity of all forms of interactions. The concept is being promoted by the Western industrial nations and scholars as capable of increasing global wealth, peace, reduction of poverty and inequalities within and among nations. However, its implementations have had series of consequences – some good, some bad and some unintended. The developing regions of the world are yet to maximally benefit from the promises of globalization. Its negative impact outweighs the positive sides. The paper explores different perspectives about globalization and its implications for youth development and early childhood education in Nigeria. The aim of the study is to examine the impact of globalization on youth development and childhood education in Nigeria. Basically, this work is primarily qualitative, utilizing mostly secondary sources of data such as books, journal publications, among others; all considered relevant in understanding the concept of globalization and its impact on youth and early childhood education in Nigeria. The findings reveal that the youths and children are being affected negatively by globalization and thus, recommends, that the education policy makers and curriculum planners should construct an adequate and appropriate global curriculum to enable learners have a solid education foundation that will equip them with what it takes to acquire a global based knowledge. Again, the government should embark on aggressive job creation and improvement of positive access to information to widen their skills.*

**Keywords:** Globalization, Impact, Youth Development, Childhood Education, Nigeria.

### **Introduction**

One of the developmental changes in world history that is threatening to unify the world by pulling down the national borders of states and ensuring an unrestricted movement of capital, technology, goods and services across national boundaries is globalization. The activities of globalization affect many nations' cultural, political, social and economic developments and the impact on the development of youths and children especially in the developing countries are massive. Globalization has been given positive connotations by those who promote and advocate greater economic integration across national borders, while it has been fiercely opposed and criticized by those who perceive it as a threat to social cohesion and as the advancement of unfettered capitalism, which undermines the traditional roles of the states.

For instance, scholars from Western persuasion according to Okolie (2003), see globalization in terms of natural and inevitable part of history which has the potency of increasing global wealth and enhancing the development of world economies, while some scholars mostly from the developing nations see globalization as a smokescreen for a more rapacious and unabashed capital exploitation. It should be noted that the citizens in the developed nations also feared some of the anticipated outcome of globalization, thus, a meeting of world leaders on the issue of globalization, held in December, 1999 at Seattle, USA, was disrupted by demonstrators who feared that there could be negative effects of globalization on the people and the economic growth of the people.

To be sure, globalization tends to transmit the dominant socio-economic cum cultural patterns of the developed countries to the rest of the world. This accounts for the reason why Gidley (2001) views

globalization as a development model foisted upon ‘developing’ world by the West, in the name of modernization and has been regarded for decades by many non-western scholars and activists as cultural imperialism. Again, the UNDP (2002) alleges that globalization has intensified the integration of people and nations, it has impacted on different countries and people in an unbalanced manner, marginalizing some and rewarding some, with unequal distribution of benefit and losses. It is therefore not by accident that globalization has been called ‘the imperialism of the 1990s’ (what differentiates imperialism and globalization is just the latter’s speed of expansion).

While much has been written in the last few years about the impact of globalization, particularly on the developing countries like Nigeria, the discourse with regard to globalization, youth development and childhood education are yet to be fully explored. Our focus in this study is to examine the impact of globalization both the positive and negative effects on youth development and early childhood education in the developing regions such as Nigeria. We shall start our discussion on the concept of globalization in order to clarify the conceptual ambiguities associated with it.

## **Conceptual Clarification**

### **Globalization**

Globalization is one of the most widely contested phenomena by scholars because of its complexity, elusive nature and attribution for its positive and negative outcomes. Globalization can be defined from political, cultural, economic, and even environmental perspective. The political dimension of globalization discusses political interactions around the world which began immediately following the II World War. The formation of such entity like the United Nations brought most of the world’s independent countries together and it triggered off the fight for independence for African, Asian and Latin American countries. The economic aspect of globalization relates to economic

interaction around the world and the movement of goods from one country to another. The cultural perspective looks at the movement of human beings from one country to another, while the ecological dimension investigates the aspect of things like, climate change, population growth, world food supply, and environmental degradation (Ibe, Eko-Nweke and Agu, 2020).

The definitions of globalization are still controversial because of the many faces, various impacts and interpretations. To some critics, according to Norberg and Cheru (2008), globalization is seen as a promiscuous concept, one that cries out for more analytical precision and empirical rigour. Asobie (2001) also sees globalization as a contested concept, its meaning in contention, its character is a point in dispute, its history mired in controversy. Although its ideological implications are relatively free of serious contestation, its implication for the international system constitutes a moot point. Asobie (2010) has in the above assertion captured succinctly the problem one encounters when dealing with globalization either as a concept, process or a phenomenon.

Owugah (2003) maintains that globalization is a technology-driven process which breaks down national borders to ensure an unrestricted movement of capital, technology, goods and services across national boundaries. Owugah (2003) and Okolie (2003) mentioned the agent or promoters of globalization as the industrial economies, Transnational Corporations (TNCs), International Financial Institutions (IFIs), governments of the industrialized capitalist economies and World Trade Organization (WTO). Bertucci and Alberti (2001) identified four main driving forces behind increased interdependence as: (a) trade and investment liberalization; (b) technological innovation and reduction of communication cost; (c) entrepreneurship; and (d) global social networks. Although many believe that technological innovation and entrepreneurship are the main

forces behind globalization, these factors cannot alone explain the process of enhanced economic integration.

To be sure, globalization has been identified to have occurred in three phases. The first phase of globalization occurred in the distant past probably during the “Victorian Era” when the Europeans started exploring the world for goods especially spices. One cannot talk of globalization without laying emphasis on trade. It was this primacy of trade that made the 19<sup>th</sup> century writer, Richard Cobden (1864) to assert that “free trade ... will act on the moral world as the principle of gravitation on the universe, drawing men together, thrusting aside antagonism of race, and creed, and language, and uniting us in the bonds of eternal peace.

The second phase of globalization which is always termed the “Keynesian era of globalization” saw a rise in trade of manufactured goods between the industrialized economies of Western Europe, North America, and Japan. The new trade involved an exchange between industrialized countries of manufactured goods for manufactured goods. It is during this period that countries like Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore joined the industrialized countries in exporting goods (Thomas, 2017).

The third phase of globalization is called the Neoliberal globalization. Thomas (2017) notes that Neoliberal globalization makes “barge economics” a reality. The barge is built on a complex of organizational and technological change that rests on a legal and policy infrastructure which supports off-shoring and foreign out-sourcing of production. Trade, Thomas maintains remains central because goods must cross borders, and hence the need for trade agreement.

However, one thing scholars seem to agree on concerning the concept, globalization, is that, the key factors driving it are the ever increasing tides in science and technology. The classifications reviewed by Adil, David and Mark (2011) provide an understanding of at least five broad definitions of globalization:

*Globalization as Internationalization:* Here, the word “global” in globalization is viewed “as simply another adjective to describe cross-border relations between countries”. It describes the growth in international exchange and interdependence.

*Globalization as Liberalization:* This is the removal of government imposed restrictions on movements between countries.

*Globalization as Universalization:* It is the process of spreading ideas and experiences to people at all corners of the earth so that aspirations and experiences around the world become harmonized.

*Globalization as Westernization or Modernization:* The social structures of modernity (capitalism, industrialization, urbanization and others) are spread the world over, destroying cultures and local self-determination in the process.

*Globalization as Deterritorialization:* The process of the reconfiguration of geography, so that social space is no longer wholly mapped in terms of territorial places, territorial distances and territorial borders.

Although most scholars like to pitch their tent under some of these broad stems, while others employ the fusion of two or more of these concepts. Whatever the case, it is important to understand that all these perspectives are all useful depending on the context in which they are deployed (Ilesanmi, Olusoga and Adedeji, 2015).

## **Youth Development**

Youth development according to NCWD (2005) is a process that prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences that help them to become socially, morally, emotionally, physically, and cognitively competent. Youth development

experiences are connected to positive outcomes in youth, including decreases in negative behaviours (such as alcohol and tobacco use and violence) and increases in positive attitudes and behaviours (such as motivation, academic performance, self-esteem, problem-solving, positive health decisions, and interpersonal skills).

Youth is best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence. The United Nations, for statistical purposes, defines 'youth', as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States. In its first definitive statement of the impact of globalization on the situation of youth, the United Nations (Youth Information Network 2000) takes a rather cautious view on the impact of globalization to the youth thus:

Intensified evidence of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion ...Furthermore, the trade imbalances between developed and developing economies, favouring the more developed economies, place development at risk in many countries.... Hundreds of millions of people are negatively affected by these factors. Young people are particularly affected, because it means that their transition to adulthood is made difficult.

One of the difficult transitions of the youth to adulthood as was noted by the United Nations is unemployment. Youth unemployment has become a topical and thorny issue in Nigeria. Oladeji (1994) reports that unemployment rate amongst Nigerian youth is alarming. For the youth to develop into positive, healthy and responsible adulthood, the Konopka Institute (2000) suggests that there must be a strong partnership among the critical stakeholders in the society such as the family, the school and the community.

The Konopka Institute believes that families can promote healthy youth development when they:

- i. provide support;
- ii. have positive family communication;
- iii. are involved in their adolescent's school;
- iv. have clear rules and consequences and monitor their adolescent's whereabouts;
- v. provide positive, responsible role models for other adults, adolescents, and siblings;
- vi. expect their adolescent to do well; and
- vii. spend time together

Schools promote healthy youth development when they:

- i. expect commitment from youth;
- i. have a caring school climate;
- ii. have clear rules and consequences;
- iii. provide positive, responsible adult role models; and
- iv. expect youth to do well.

Communities promote healthy youth development when:

- i. adults advocate for youth;
- ii. neighbors monitor youths' behavior;
- iii. adults model positive, responsible, and healthy behavior;
- iv. youth model positive, responsible, and healthy behavior; and
- v. youth programs are available (Konopka Institute, 2000).

### **Early Childhood Education**

Early childhood education according to Wikipedia (2016) is a branch of education theory which relates to the teaching of young children (formally and informally) up until the age of about eight, wherein a child's brain is highly sensitive to the environment around them. It consists of activities and/or experiences that are intended to effect developmental changes in children prior to their entry into elementary school. This time of "remarkable growth" requires a specialized



educational approach to ensure that children learn skills and foundational concepts to prepare them for later life.

Early childhood education is focused on the critical developmental milestones, skills, and the concepts that children attain during this period of their lives, from social-emotional skills to the beginnings of numeracy, literacy and critical thinking. In recent years, early childhood education has become prevalent public policy issue as local government, states and federal lawmakers consider funding of preschools, though, it is in the hands of private operators in Nigeria.

Early childhood education focuses on learning through play based on the research and philosophy of John Piaget, which posits that play, meets the physical, intellectual, language, emotional and social needs of children. Children's curiosity and imagination naturally evoke learning when unfettered. Thus, children learn more efficiently and gain more knowledge through activities such as dramatic play, art, and social games (Winner, 2009). To be sure, the goals of an early childhood education programme can be split into four main development themes:

- i. Social
- ii. Emotional
- iii. Physical and
- iv. Intellectual and academic

Early childhood education has developed theories that help the branch of knowledge explain reality, through the postulations of the Euro-American experience or abstract designs postulated for general application. Some of the theories are: The Development Interaction Approach which is based on the theory of Jean Piaget, Vygotsky's socio-cultural learning theory, Piaget's constructivist theory and Kolb's experimental learning theory. Piaget(1997) believes that learning comes from within: Children construct their own knowledge of the world through experience and subsequent reflection. He said that "if logic itself is created rather than being inborn, it flows that first task

of education is form reasoning”. Within Piaget framework, teachers should guide children in acquiring their own knowledge rather simply transferring knowledge.

According to Piaget’s theory, when young children encounter new information, they attempt to accommodate and assimilate it into their existing understanding of the world. Accommodation involves adapting mental schemes and representations in order to make them consistent with reality. Assimilation involves fitting new information into their pre - existing schemes. Through these two processes, young children learn by equilibrating their mental representations with reality. They also learn from mistakes (Piaget, 1997).

### **Impact of Globalization on Youth Development and Early Childhood Education**

If globalization is intensified and driven by technology flows between countries which produce cross-border integration of a number of economic, social and cultural activities, then, its impact on early childhood education will also be enormous. There are positive and negative influences of globalization on the developing countries like Nigeria and the youths and children are also exposed to both the positive and the negative impact.

#### **The positive influences include**

- i. Globalization of education via the internet has enabled the Nigerian youths to engage in programmes in reputable tertiary institutions outside the country while still in Nigeria. This form of education is becoming a trend amongst the students from all over the world.
- ii. Globalization has enabled our youths in different higher institutions to access information which would have been only possible in reputable first generation universities in Nigeria. Students are able to view scholarly publications or studies via the internet – these are

publications that may cost lots of money if one is to buy the hard copies.

- iii. Globalization has enabled our youthful students to communicate effectively and efficiently with their peers globally. Communication is made easier via the internet and other social media platforms.
- iv. Globalization encourages researches for Nigerian youths that are focused since one can access websites of different authors, organizations and companies across the world.
- v. The revolution in ICT has made it possible for the early-childhood teachers and their kids to be more pro-active by fostering the kids' desire to complete tasks for short and long-term goals, thereby, developing logical reasoning.
- vi. Early exposure to technology can help kids develop skills they can use in high-powered, well-paying jobs in the future.

### **The Negative Influences of Globalization**

It is not only teachers that are affected by globalization; they must also deal with children who come to the classroom with visions of a very different world than that of the parents. It was this revolution that made Gupta (2008) to report the impact of globalization in pre-schools thus:

Children are being exposed to a lot of animated media (games), which is making them more aggressive and their interest in reading books is being affected. With the western culture being brought to developing countries, the value system of respect and thoughtfulness is gradually disappearing....They try to copy that culture and parents are pressurized in this whole process.

Globalization also affects the lives of families with young children. Myers (2001), for example, notes that programmes for child-care are nested in local, community, national, and cultural environments that affect the way children are cared for through various policies and laws, as well as through sets of beliefs about the way children are to be raised. Majority world national and cultural contexts

are in turn immersed in and influenced by globalization, through aid programmes sponsored by international organizations such as UNICEF, the World Bank, and Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Globalization thus stands to have impact at the local level on the pre-schools and other institutions that are established for the care and early education of children.

It is now much easier to be bullied in the internet than physical bullying which the youth were used to and experienced in physical contact environment. Some youths react to their fellow youths' comments in the internet, Facebook and other social media platforms violently and in a harmful way. Therefore, the rate of youthful bullying has tremendously increased as a result of globalization enabled networks.

Insomnia is another rising health challenge which the youths are facing as a result of the technology driven globalization. Insomnia is a sleeping disorder that is known for its symptoms of unrest and the inability to sleep. Most Nigerian youths hardly sleep in the night because they are engaged in using the internet wrongly and fraudulently. Globalization according to Didigwu (2015), tends to transmit the cultural pattern of developed countries to the rest of the world. In Nigeria today, our youths imitate the European and American consumption patterns, modes of transport, modes of dressing, method of communication including their music. They are at the verge of neglecting our cultural heritage.

Again, the globalization of the information and communication technology has led to increased social addiction among the youths in Nigeria. Drug abuse was the major addiction the youths faced in the past, but recently, the youths not only source their drugs online, they also get addicted surfing the net. Trafficking in persons, which the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2001) describes as "the underside of globalization", is one of the greatest human rights challenges of our time. Some of our young girls are kidnapped or lured

into following the perpetrators abroad of no defined destination with the plan to position the girls as sex machine with little remuneration. For instance, these trafficked persons, women, and girls are placed in brothels, street corners, tourist establishments and private homes where they are forced to offer sexual activities for money (Didigwu, 2015).

### **Conclusion**

This paper have argued that globalization is a paradoxical concept that is filled with a lot of contradictions. The western nations who are the chief promoters of globalization had promised the world of global stability, development, prosperity, peace, reduction of poverty and inequalities within and among nations and a higher standard of living, if only they could open up their borders for unrestricted movement of capital, privatize and deregulate their economies; the painful reality is that the developing nations are yet to maximally benefit from all these promises. Speaking on behalf of the African nations and other third world regions, Mandela (1999) reminded the western leaders that:

Where globalization means, as it so often does, that the rich and powerful now have new means to further enrich and empower themselves at the cost of the poorer and the weaker, we have a responsibility to protest in the name of universal freedom.

It was this assertion made by Mandela that made Ajayi (2004) to warn the Nigerian leaders that globalization cannot be halted or ignored but that the government has the duty to provide the necessary tools that will make the citizens to cope with the demands of globalization. The worrisome aspect of this phenomenon lies in the fact that our leaders are yet to evolve policies that will launch Nigeria into the realm of great beneficiaries of globalization.

Though the impact of globalization has not been the same amongst nations, its negative impact on the youth development and early-childhood education in Nigeria are visible in the gradual disappearance of our value system of respect, non-fluency in our local languages and

dialects; indecent dressing and increase in the cyber crime. As a matter of fact, Nigerian leaders should not rely wholly on the policy designs of the developed nations of the West which are in most cases against the development of the weaker nations; rather, they should consider and encourage local production and the development of indigenous man-power.

If the youth are well mobilized, they can effectively impact on the state of the Nigerian socio-economic conditions, and we recommend: (a) the education policy makers and curriculum planners should construct an adequate and appropriate global curriculum to enable learners have solid education foundation that will equip them with what it takes to acquire a global based knowledge. (b) the education policy makers should strive to develop knowledge-producing institutions and industries to enhance skills and abilities that will improve human capital (Ibe, Eko-Nweke and Agu, 2020), (c) aggressive job creation (d) increase the access of the youth to productive resources and appropriate technology and (e) improve their access to information and widen opportunities to use their skills (Taiwo 2004). How our leaders and teachers in Nigeria respond to this impact will go a long way in saving the youth development and childhood education from the negative impact of globalization.

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