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# SUSTAINABLE TEACHER EDUCATION AND ITS ROLE IN COPING WITH THE CHALLENGES OF GLOBALISATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY NIGERIA

**TERFA JATO & DR. PATRICIA IORDYE**

Tel.: +2348140457475; Tel.: +2348051101780
Email: sonofman-@outlook.com; Email: patriciaiordye@yahoo.com
Department of Educational Foundations
Faculty of Education
University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria
;

## ABSTRACT

*Globalisation, which denotes an accelerated compression of the contemporary world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a singular entity, is throwing up new challenges. These include xenophobia, acculturation, technology illiteracy and poor negotiation skills. Overcoming these challenges for an evolution of a sustainable Nigeria urgently compels a redefinition of teacher education programmes on a competency-based approach. This paper discusses some challenges associated with a sustainable teacher education in Nigeria, and these are identified as the speed of technological change; teacher education programmes' inability to attract the brightest candidates; lack of learner-centred approach to teacher education; lack of teacher professional development programmes in teacher education institutions; and the third world realities of Nigeria as part of the international system. The paper recommends, among other things, that teacher development in Nigeria should include greater support for teacher ability to integrate ICT into the classrooms in order to aid the professionalism of teachers in their roles as motivators, leaders, administrators, life coachers, planners, performers, and negotiators.*

**Keywords:** Globalisation, Teacher, Teacher Education and Education

## Introduction

We live in an increasing hyper-connected global environment – thanks to the "creative developments in [transportation,] electronic media and the distribution of digital knowledge [that are dismantling the] traditional conceptions of distance" (University of Victoria, 2018, para. 1). This hyper-connectedness means that the world has evolved into a "global village" – a term that denotes inter-connectedness amongst humans on the planet where the barriers of national and international boundaries become less relevant and the world, figuratively speaking, becomes a smaller place (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, 2010). There has been a phenomenal increase in the speed at which people around the world communicate and share each other's cultures very easily

through travel and trade, and the speed at which they transport products around the world in hours or days. People are now in a huge global economy where something that happens in one part of the world can have knock-on effects on events in other parts. The increase in the breadth and depth of connections between individuals, companies, nations, and regions has changed the lives of billions of people around the world. These changes have ushered in a new era. Countries that were previously cut off from the global economy have become integrated into production chains that span all of the world's human-inhabitable continents.

The subtle evaporation of the constraints of geography on the activities of humans across the globe means that we live in a world that is constantly on the go (Jato, 2022). Every day, cargo ships and aircraft transport goods across oceans and borders as people make millions of purchases in large and small quantities across borders. Earth-orbiting satellites transmit television signals to viewers in many different parts of the world simultaneously. The earth as a planet with different parts seems to be just one planet with different parts in terms of land, water, and sky divided into 195 territorial states (Jato, 2022). "Interconnectivity of technologies" (Ransure & Joshi, 2012) around the world is increasing. The consequence of this is that people, including those in Nigeria and other developing countries, increasingly find themselves, consciously or not, in a web of complex relationships that extend beyond inter-governmental relationships. All this provides a rough indication of the meaning of "globalisation" – a term used by the Peterson Institute for International Economics [PIIE] (2018) to describe the growing interdependence of the world's economies, cultures and populations, brought about by cross-border trade in goods and services, technology and investment flows, people and information. Globalisation, according to Faulconbridge and Beaverstock (2010), can be understood as those spatiotemporal change processes that sustain a transformation in the organisation of human affairs by linking and expanding human activity across regions and continents.

Globalisation and 21st century skill requirements are dictating the need for teachers to acquire and implement appropriate skills in teacher preparation and professional development programmes (Ntuli, Nyarambi, Agamba & Ntuli, 2016). In the midst of the world evolving as an increasingly connected world, Nigeria, as a part of the global environment, requires adequate human and material resources to improve its social organisations, preserve the cultures of its peoples, accelerate economic development and initiate reforms in its political system. Educational processes, with teachers at the forefront, hold the key central to the development of quality workforce and the creation of wealth. Therefore, teachers have an integral role to play in adequately preparing young people for their roles in society in order to achieve nationally set goals (Ogunyinka, Okeke & Adedoyin, 2015).

Since Nigeria is part of the increasingly hyper-connected world, teachers in the country need to be on the evolutionary path from their traditional role as mere "transmitters of knowledge" into a worthwhile role as "mediators in the construction of knowledge", facilitators, and, even at times, social workers as a bulwark against such challenges which a lack of global skills and education generates as xenophobia, cultural imperialism, hegemony, and dysfunctional classrooms with social behaviour challenges (Ntuli, et al, 2016). Playing the role of a "mediator in the construction of knowledge" entails effective teaching, a term related to teacher quality, which is the single most important school-related factor influencing student [engagement and] achievement (Rice, 2003 and Australian Government, 2016). With the downgrading of the concept of national citizenship by the phenomenon of globalisation in favour of planetary oneness, the teacher occupies an integral position at the centre of any enterprise critical the generation of learning experiences that provide learners in Nigeria with the support needed to cope with the realities that are in constant evolution in this hyper-connected world.

The teacher's ability to perform effectively as "mediator in the construction of knowledge" goes beyond a successful transmission of information and/or impacting of skills in a particular area of study. It is related to also ensuring that this superficial approach to learning is replaced by deeper, student-driven approaches to learning that analyse, develop, create and demonstrate understanding. Students need to initiate learning and maintain engagement during learning in their development as independent lifelong learners (Federation University Australia, 2016). The role of the teacher in this Information Technology Communication (ICT) era – an age of phenomenal rise in the homogenisation of cultural traits and of unprecedented spread of capitalism across the world – is therefore less about transferring knowledge and more about facilitating a learning process. A successful transition, therefore, of the teacher from her traditional role as a mere "transmitter of knowledge" into a worthwhile role as a "mediator in the construction of knowledge" requires proficiency in the use of different methods of instruction and a technical familiarity with various technologies to support instruction. This calls for a qualitative programme of training and continuous training of teachers – and sustainable teacher education is it.

**Sustainable Teacher Education**

We live in an era where the concept of national citizenship is being downgraded in favour of planetary oneness in view of the proliferation of complex relationships among individuals across the globe. National borders are being caught in an ever-growing wave of evaporation under the hot sun of ever-growing interconnectedness of people. Students therefore need more than the transmission of information to them by their teachers to cope with emerging realities. The realities of the world today demand more from teachers than helping students to report

mere gains on standardised test. Students need to be helped to become ethical global citizens and to be able to stand for what is universally right – e.g. empathy, integrity, respect, compassion. They need to be able to overcome the challenges which a lack of global skills presents: xenophobia, acculturation, technology illiteracy, poor negotiation skills, disruptive social behavioural patterns, little or no motivation to learn and discord in social-cultural relations (Ntuli et al, 2016). They need to develop a sense of self and appreciation of cultural diversity, affirmation of social justice and human rights, as well as building peace and actions for a sustainable future at different times and in different places. Sustainable development is out of the question for a country with low levels of – let alone without – peace, stability, human rights and effective governance, based on the rule of law (United Nations Development Programmes, 2019).

According to Chauhan & Sharma (2015), the American Commission on Teacher Education observes that the quality of a nation depends on the quality of its citizens; that the quality of its citizens depends, not exclusively but in significant measures, on the quality of their education; and that the quality of their education depends, more than on any other single factor, on the quality of their teachers. Teachers, therefore, whose roles do not take them beyond a mere divulgence of information to their students are in no position to their ability to cope with the realities of the present world. Sustainable teacher education is therefore needed to develop teacher proficiency and competence that would propel students not just to the attainment of specific learning objectives but also to the attainment of such broader goals as having the ability to think critically and being able to analyse, evaluate, and synthesise complex ideas**.** It is apparently in the light of this that Cochran-Smith (2005) descriptively speaks of teacher education as having entered a "new era".

Teacher education" and "teacher training" are two terms employed to speak of "any of the formal [programmes] that have been established for the preparation of teachers at the elementary- and secondary-school levels" (Taylor, 2018, para. 1). In some countries, educational policy-makers speak of "teacher training". In others, the formal term is "teacher education". The terms "training" and "education" signify different pedagogical cultures: the former "practical", the later "learned". “Training of teachers" implies proficiency in mechanical performance of set pedagogical tasks. "Education of teachers" on the other envisages teaching based "on scholarship and disciplinary knowledge applied to a variety of situations" (Stephens, Tønnessen & Kyriacou 2004, para. 10). In Nigeria, the terns "teacher education" and "teacher training" tend to be used in place of each other – i.e. interchangeably.

Teacher education can be defined as referring "to the policies and procedures designed to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and skills they require in performing their tasks

effectively in the classroom, school and wider community" (Kumar & Parveen, 2013; cf. Adewuyi & Ogunwuyi, 2002). Though this definition excludes practising teachers from "the policies and procedures designed" to develop teacher effectiveness in the performance of pedagogical tasks, it aptly recognises the fact that if students, for example, must acquire the proficiency to demonstrate mastery in a body of knowledge and skill in each discipline and attain a development in them of a sense of self and appreciation of cultural diversity, affirmation of social justice and human rights, as well as building peace and actions for a sustainable future, the teacher must have the knowledge, the skills, the character, and the attitudes that relate to these desired learning outcomes. According to Hunt (2011), teacher profficiency is encompassed in knowlewledge, attitudes, and performance. "Knowledge" envisages the excellency of teachers at verbal and written communication skills, a thorough knowledge of the subjects in which they help to implement the curriculum and their ability to select and make resources that are appropriate to learning activities. "Attitudes" have everything to do with teachers respecting their students irrespective of their background, language, or ethnicity and their receptivity to the involvement of parents and community members in their classrooms. "Performance" implies, for example, that teachers' classrooms are well-organised, teachers provide an environment that fosters an interest in learning and that teachers actively engage all students in daily lessons that require critical thinking about complex, worthy ideas, and problems.

Sustainable teacher education should be seen as related to "the policies and procedures" designed to develop the mastery of both prospective teachers in knowledge and skills and their excellence in attitudes and behaviours that maximise learning outcomes in students. The world today as a global village represents a new era for teacher education in Nigeria, as well as for other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, as it does for teacher education in other regions of the world. Nigeria being a region of Third World realities is challenged by many issues having to do with the ability to evolve an enduring framework of sustainable teacher education. Lack of effective teacher education means the status quo persists with particular reference to values and beliefs, and prospective teachers are likely to employ the techniques through which they received instruction in the implementation of the curriculum which might not be relevant and effective in this fast-paced world (Verspoor, 2008). Effective teacher educators are therefore needed in Nigeria for prospective teachers to acquire a knowledge base and pedagogical practice superior in terms of sophistication to the experience they had as students.

## Challenges to Sustainable Teacher Education in the Era of Globalisation in Nigeria

1. **The Speed of Technological Change:** The last couple of years have been characterised by the "speed of global technological change [that]

is transforming contemporary society, impacting the understanding, distribution and advancement of knowledge in all disciplines" (University of Victoria, 2018, para. 1), with innovative "advances in computing, medical, educational and military technology [...] continually reshaping the cultural and political organisation of society" (para. 1). Changes in technology are potentially great in the support that technology can provide for professional development of teachers (Jakobsdóttir, Sigurdardóttir, Thayer, Thorsteinsdótti & Pétursdóttir, 2010). However, variations in levels of accessibility and the limited availability of ICT infrastructure in the developing regions of the world imply a great likelihood that innovative advances in teacher education in Nigeria are equally limited. Much of teacher development in Sub-Saharan Africa excludes support for teacher ability to integrate ICT into the classrooms, which means that "the teaching process is [likely to be] dominated by traditional methods" (Stošić, 2015, p. 111). A technology-integrated classroom provides teachers with creative ways to help students to do their own learning. Technology provides an environment appropriate to learning being more hands-on. A successful integration of technology into subject areas transforms "teachers into roles of adviser, content expert, and coach [with the consequence that] teaching and learning [become] more meaningful and fun. Students are also able to collaborate with their own classmates through technological applications" (Wantulok, 2015, para. 8). All these advantages elude a country, like Nigeria, where teacher development excludes adequate support for teacher integration of technology into the classroom (Osokoya, 2012 as cited in Ogunyinka, Okeke &Adedoyin, 2015).

2. **Teacher Education Programmes' Inability to Attract the Brightest Candidates:** Teaching, though not inarguably, is the most challenging profession in the world and, in years long gone by, it was viewed as a profession that deserved the utmost respect (Beane, 2005). But that was in the past. Today, teaching has become a profession of disincentives, particularly in Nigeria, with the result that high-achieving students are not inclined to choose the teaching profession over other competing professions considered much more prestigious. Teachers' working conditions are poor and their salaries tend to be low in regrettable relation to those of equally qualified personnel in other professions (cf. Akindutire & Ekundayo, 2012 and Oke, Ogundele & Mainoma, 2017). This observation is supported by Rust

& Dan (1990) according to whom "teachers' efforts to improve the quality and efficiency of education around the world are often seriously under-mined by the pay, status and self-esteem and the condition of service of teachers" (p. 151). The variations in the levels of esteem that teachers and similarly qualified personnel in other professions have, the low salaries of teachers, the poor conditions in which they work, the lack of professional progression, among other factors, militate against the power of teacher training programmes to attract the best candidates for prospective teachers and, in many cases, have generated a flight of individuasl with a high levels of intellectual resources to better-paid professions. This is starkly different from what is well established in developed countries such as Finland and South Korea, where students admitted to university training programmes tend to be among those at the top rung of the achievement ladder (Barber & Mourshed, 2007).

3. **Lack of Learner-Centred Approach to Teacher Education:** The dynamics of the global environment call for teacher education programmes to lay heavy emphasis on approaches to teaching characterised by learners taking responsibility for their own learning, motivated by constant feedback and affirmation of their worth. This approach to teaching seeks to discourage the propensity of teachers to be wholly responsible for carrying out learning activities for pupils. In a typical school in Nigeria, a teacher asks the questions, calls on pupils to answer them, and proceeds to embellish their answers with details. Teachers give examples and organise the content. They do the preview and the review. "On any given day, in most classes teachers are working much harder than students" (Weimer, 2012, para. 2) doing all the learning activity thereby ultimately depriving their student access to the advantages accruable from the learner-centred approach – "how to think, solve problems, evaluate evidence, [analyse] arguments, generate hypotheses – all those learning skills essential to mastering material in the discipline" (para. 3). According to Stutchbury (2015), teacher educators in Africa (including Nigeria) are full of knowledge about the theoretical underpinning of student-centred education, "including constructivism and dialogic learning. The same applies to pre-service teachers and young teachers, who have recently been through four year rigorous training programmes" (p. 6). The problem, however, is that there is a disconnect…

> "…between theory and practice and this should be a priority for those of [those]

involved in designing teacher education programmes. Teacher education is rarely learner-centred and can perpetuate models of authoritarianism. For face-to-face providers of pre-service teacher education, programmes need to be designed that give a high priority to practicum and learner –centred approaches need to be modelled, reinforcing what it means to construct knowledge through social interaction" (Stutchbury, 2015, p. 6).

4. **Lack of Teacher Professional Development Programmes in Teacher Education Institutions:** "Professional development" is a term employed with reference to "a wide variety of [specialised] training, formal education, or advanced professional learning intended to help administrators, teachers, and other educators improve their professional knowledge, competence, skill, and effectiveness" (The Glossary of Educational Reforms, 2014, para. 1), and can be defined as "formal [in-service] training to upgrade the content knowledge and pedagogical skills of teachers" (Quint, 2011, para. 1) for the purpose of improving pupils' learning (Guskey, 2000). Teacher development is an important component of teacher education and on-going professional development of teachers provides an effective way to dismantle barriers to meaningful learning. Scientific materials estimate that human knowledge increases almost by 100% every eight to ten years. Teacher education programmes in Nigeria "do not provide in-service training that suffices to keep teachers' knowledge adequately updated" (Osin, 1999, p. 3; cf. Akindutire & Ekundayo). With such a situation, "many topics which students encounter in the media and arouse their intellectual curiosity – which would be ideal subjects for class discussion – will be avoided by the teacher, who feels insecure about them, and does not want to lose face in front of the students" (Osin, 1999, p. 3).
5. **The Third World Realities of Nigeria:** Education systems of most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa including Nigeria are characterised by ineffective leadership, poor administrative acumen or/and limited budgets – all these, in some cases, attributable to monumental corruption in the affairs of state (Ebegbulem, 2012 and Afegbua & Adejuwon, 2012; cf. Anazodo, Igbokwe-Ibeto & Nkah, 2015). Many of these countries are deficient in economic strength to provide adequate remuneration and decent working conditions for teacher educators. In most of these countries

there is often a lack of "qualified personnel who can help teachers to master content or research, such as proven instructional or assessment strategies. And they lack systems and incentives to encourage and help teachers improve their practice" (Burns, 2015, para. 3).

## Conclusion

To meet the challenges of life in the era of globalisation, curricular reforms in teacher education appear necessary for teachers to be able to prepare individuals for a workplace where paradigm shifts are occurring in responsibilities, where networking is increasingly replacing vertical management, where information goes through multiple and informal channels, where initiative-taking takes precedence over obedience, and where strategies are especially complex because of the increasing internationalisation of markets across the globe. The acceleration in the evolution of today's societies necessitates the acquisition of new skills from individuals not just in Nigeria but also in other developing countries. These were summarised in a report presented by the UNESCO in 2011 as **learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together** and **learning to be:**

1. **Learning to know,** which implies learning to learn by strengthening one's concentration, improving one's memory skills and developing the capacity for logical thinking so as to be able to consider multiple perspectives and also in order to be able to evaluate, analyse and synthesise complex ideas;
2. **Learning to do,** where the emphasis is on knowledge and skills application to practical, novel and meaningful tasks;
3. **Learning to live together**, acquired through an understanding of others in terms of their history, their respective geographical places, their cultural values, their religious orientations, their sexual inclinations, and through an appreciation of our shared humanity and the value of interdependence in the spirit of respect for the values of peace, pluralism and mutual understanding; and
4. **Learning to be,** through a purposeful effort that integrates the intellectual, emotional, physical, spiritual and ethical components of growth for the development of an individual into a whole person as a functional and responsible member of their family, their community, their country and the whole wide world.

These urgently require a redefinition of teacher training programmes on a competency-based approach. This implies that teacher training curricula should centre on the teacher's ability to maximise student performance with particular reference to a set of clearly defined skills or competencies – reflective of **learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together** and **learning to be** – at the end of each stage of schooling.

**Suggestions**

1. Teacher development in Nigeria should include greater support for teacher ability to integrate ICT into the classrooms in order to aid the professionalism of teachers in their roles as motivators, leaders, administrators, life coachers, planners, performers, and negotiators. An incidental benefit of this would be in the form of the ability of classrooms to provide a globally-oriented atmosphere where students could communicate ideas effectively with diverse audiences thereby bridging linguistic, geographical, ideological and cultural barriers.
2. Teacher education programmes in Nigeria should be attract high-achieving students, which can be achieved where the teaching profession is socially recognised and respected, and where those in the profession receive monetary rewards in equal relation to employees in other professions. Therefore, addressing issues having to do with remunerations for teachers and the conditions in which they work and career progression should be attention atop the scale of priorities.
3. There should be comprehensive teacher education curricular reforms that potentially give teachers the ability to maximise the development in learners of a sense of self and appreciation of cultural diversity, affirmation of social justice and human rights, as well as building peace and actions for a sustainable future at different times and in different places.
4. Collaborative relations with fellow teachers, parents, other professionals and stakeholders should be an essential aspect to be addressed in teacher education programmes. Students can learn relational skills from these collaborative relations, which would stand them in good stead in their day-to-day interactions with people from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds.
5. Learner-centred approaches - as opposed to approaches strictly centred on lecturing - should be adopted for teacher education programmes to potentially ensure that teachers rely on learner-centred techniques for instruction deliveries.
6. Teacher training programs must also be able to train teachers who can develop students understanding of other cultures, the history and geography of different countries and peoples, and on-going events in various parts of the world. In particular, teachers need to be trained to be able to help students understand these things and how each culture is interconnected with other cultures. They should also receive training on how to maximise positive values and help students take responsibility for their actions and see themselves as global citizens who can contribute to

a more peaceful, just and sustainable world.

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