

Managing Innovative Education to Strengthen Global Partnership for Attainment of Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria

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Abstract:

This paper exposes the approaches of strengthening global partnership through innovative education for attainment of Sustainable Development Goals. The modern society demands that every country needs to advance to meet up with the trends of the times. It is the quest of trying to catch up with the emerging global forces of demand and supply that calls for innovations, modern methods and materials in education. However, there has been a search for alternatives to strengthen development. Education has to reach a satisfactory standard to achieve a worldwide quality framework. This is what the agenda of globalization preaches, but analytically, the North (developed countries), with all the hegemonic power, seems not to promote equal opportunities. Contemporarily, much emphasis has been laid on strengthening global partnership through education improvement as a way of maintaining equity, but the wide disparity of North and South (developed and developing countries) seems to create an existing gap, whereas it is agreed that countries should support the collaborative partnership to achieve the 17 stated Sustainable Development Goals. Judging from the movement so far, one begins to ponder on the relevance of this whole exercise on Nigeria as we seem to continuously play the role of followership. This is to say that more should be done in innovating education to avoid staying weak in global partnership. The paper therefore suggests that countries of the South should examine their financial strength before adopting some globalization policies, else they remain perpetual followers in the system despite the innovation adopted.

Keywords: Innovative Education, Global Partnership, Sustainable Development Goals, Nigeria

Introduction

Education remains one of the most powerful drivers of human development, national progress, and sustainable societal transformation. Beyond its traditional role of transmitting knowledge, contemporary education is expected to develop learners' capacity for critical thinking, creativity, innovation, collaboration, communication, and problem-solving, enabling them to respond effectively to the complexities of the twenty-first century. The rapid pace of globalization, digital

transformation, and technological advancement has significantly altered the knowledge economy, requiring educational systems to adopt innovative practices that prepare learners to succeed in an increasingly interconnected and competitive world while contributing to sustainable development. According to Amadi et al. [1], education is the process through which knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values are transmitted from one generation to another. As aptly stated by Kofi Annan, “Education is the premise of progress in every society and in every family” [2]. He further emphasized that education develops informed and responsible citizens, strengthens democratic societies, and drives innovation and technological advancement, thereby promoting economic growth.

Innovative education refers to the deliberate integration of learner-centred instructional approaches, digital technologies, competency-based curricula, research, entrepreneurship, experiential learning, and collaborative teaching strategies that enhance the relevance, quality, and effectiveness of education. Such an approach equips learners with the knowledge, practical skills, values, and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning, productive employment, responsible citizenship, and sustainable socio-economic development. Consequently, educational institutions that embed innovation into curriculum design, teaching and learning processes, research, and institutional management are better positioned to produce globally competitive graduates, strengthen international collaboration, and contribute meaningfully to national development and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. Innovative education is a lifelong approach to teaching and learning that promotes creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, collaboration, and digital literacy among educators and learners [3]. In recent years, it has emerged as a critical driver of sustainable development by preparing learners with the competencies required for the twenty-first century.

According to Udokang, as cited in Damkor-Ikpa [4], innovative education refers to the introduction of new and positive ideas, practices, and trends into the school system to improve educational theory and practice. Similarly, according to Halyma, Oksana, and Serman [5], innovative processes in the system of education provide variation and a personality-oriented trend of the educational process so that the knowledge, skills and abilities of students are transformed into a means of developing their cognitive and personal qualities and competence, to make them subjects of innovative professional activities. Innovative education is the use of the latest pedagogical tools to encourage our students to think out of the box and innovate in and out of the classroom.

The introduction of change and innovation in educational programmes embraces the additions, modifications, subtractions, alterations, substitutions, restructurings, eliminations and re-enforcements that happen within the educational domain [6]. Still in their joint assertion, they further explained innovations in educational programmes as changes in curriculum, instructional materials, and school organizational set-up, innovations in teaching technologies, innovations in school facilities and changes in school personnel management. All these educational innovations hinge on or have their ties to the attainment of sustainable development in the society. These contemporary educational programmes or innovations in education play a pivotal role in a dynamic society as they try to assist in meeting the society's needs, demands and global expectations.

According to the United Nations declaration [7], this policy framework or agenda is a plan of action to announce the new universal agenda. It is to integrate or create balance in economic, social and environmental sustainable development.

This means that the absence of innovations in education simply means no vision, and any society without a vision has a poor understanding. Considering societal plagues like unemployment, examination malpractice, insecurity and poverty, they are indicators or pointers that our educational systems need to be looked into. This is the paramount reason for introducing innovative education into Nigerian education to strengthen our global partnership, so we can be relevant in this contemporary era of globalization. If we don't mimic other nations that have sustained development, how then can we achieve the stated goals? For what the entire nations of the world are preaching now is a progressive society; every society is working hard to catch up with the trend. That is why, for this inclusive agenda to come to reality, education has to witness reforms that will transform pupils, students and teachers, so that what they have acquired is what they can positively influence the society with. Therefore, a nation's educational system holds the key to her development. To support the above claim, Serdyukov [8], [9] agrees that innovation in education is all about rejuvenating things in education for proper recording of growth and development in education and society. But there are other factors affecting the globalization of education in Nigeria, such as inadequate finances and insufficient budgetary allocation given to the education sector. Also, corruption: the little finance provided should be put to good use and not diverted. Judging from contemporary experience (COVID-19), the North were able to continue education through other means, online, zoom, etc., but in Nigeria what do we get? The private institutions with adequate prior knowledge and facilities were able to use such technology, but the institutions sponsored by government are handicapped because of lack of facilities and knowledge [10].

A student who may have the knowledge will not have the enabling facilities and environment, such as low power supply, no internet and no laptops/android phones. Hence, there is a lot to be put in place before education globalization will yield sustainable development goals.

Materials and Method

This paper adopts a qualitative, conceptual and analytical approach based on documentary and literature analysis. It relies on secondary sources, including scholarly books and journal articles on innovative education and globalization, official declarations and policy frameworks of international organizations (notably the United Nations 2030 Agenda and its seventeen Sustainable Development Goals), and contemporary observations of the Nigerian educational system [7], [11]. Through critical review and thematic interpretation of these sources, the paper examines how innovative education can be managed to strengthen global partnership and assess the position of Nigeria within the North–South divide, thereby identifying the conditions under which innovation in education can contribute to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Results and Discussion

Innovating Education to Strengthen Global Partnership

Managing innovative education to strengthen global partnership recognizes the importance of creating inclusive and equitable learning environments, integrating technology effectively and addressing the social-emotional needs of students. The significance of innovative education to strengthen global partnership is positive in the reality that it will certainly improve, enhance and make students marketable in this digitalized world.

This term, innovative education to strengthen global partnership, often refers more specifically to the delivery of education with an international focus, including curriculum, content, teaching

methodologies and students' experiences. It also focuses on developing students' understanding of global citizenship and the skills needed to participate in the interconnected world.

Innovation in education is all-encompassing; it involves online education, changes in teaching style, curriculum and technology. Considering online education as an innovation attached to globalization is because one can be in Nigeria and get a degree from a Ukrainian university. According to Amadi, Isagba and Eghenlen [12], the concept of globalization preaches that all the nations in the international system have to move in trend with the emerging market. Therefore, every organization, including education, is trying to expose itself to international competition for standard. Adiele, Leigha and Abraham [13], in their joint contribution, posited that the only means of minimizing brain drain or parochial or low standard of teaching is to borrow other countries' better level of education to enhance staff or teacher performance. This means that certain strong criteria of innovations have to be in place to support our teaching and learning process, so we can join the race to pursue sustainable development goals. Innovative education is viewed as the catalyst that revitalizes the education process through a series of changes in the entire system to better the obsolete education situation [14].

Crichton [15] supports that education, as a social system, needs the support of innovations to continuously and effectively evolve and progress; if not, education will stagnate, thereby producing mediocrity into the society, which means innovation is a welcome idea as it creates critical thinking, problem solvers and solution workers to project the security forward. But the argument is: what innovations do we really need to support globalization? In the works of Khor [11], there are negative aspects of globalization, such as how the countries of the South could reduce the risks in this practice, as it is policy driven. For better understanding, the world is divided into a bipolarization of North and South, or Developed and Developing nations.

In trying to confront the salient issue, due to interconnectedness, countries are seeking developments in economy and technology, but certain technological developments are difficult or virtually impossible to adopt. For example, the use of electronics and internet for examinations is amounting to much failure among persons that are not used to the device. Judging from the influence of globalization institutions like the United Nations and the Bretton Woods Institutions (World Bank and IMF), globalization practice is an uneven process, with asymmetric benefits. Therefore, one ponders the position of strengthening global partnership as some countries have wealth concentration and others are being marginalized; some countries are the determinants of the globalization agenda and others are compelled to follow. However, the question is: how can we strengthen global partnership in such an unorganized society, when the people to manage the innovations have little or no knowledge of the things they are confronted with, as education managers are yet to follow precisely what global partnership demands? Global partnership has to be strengthened indeed, but we are often weak and remaining weaker because we choose to identify ourselves with developing countries of the Non-Aligned Movement. These are member nations that are not equated to developed nations.

Innovating education as an attempt to obtain a fairer position like the North will yield satisfactory results, as it involves much capital investment before we begin to consider how to sustain the development. Porokwa [16] posits that innovation is just like globalization in education, due to the fact that as the world becomes globalized, more and more unique things are introduced into education, thereby gaining universal outlook or universal interest. In the context of globalization lies the fact that education systems across the globe are trying to maintain a common look, as most

of our indigenous schools now run foreign curricula to satisfy the needs and expectations of the entire world system. However, it is necessary to continue innovating our education system to strengthen global partnership, because this will provide the students, teachers and others continuous improvement to create balance in their philosophy and practices. Undoubtedly, the best way to develop a country is by improving education standards, as it provides remarkable examples in the lives of people. Little wonder Friedman [17] agrees that there is global competition, time is speeding up, and teachers' working requirements are rapidly taking new dimensions due to swift and fierce international competition. Since this is the case, therefore, there is no reason to remain impractical.

Strengthening Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

Over time, there has been a search for alternative options to strengthen globalization practice among developing countries, through an increase in development approaches as bases for sustainable development. However, global policy has it that education has to reach a satisfactory level of development to achieve a worldwide equitable framework. This is what the agenda preaches, but analytically, the North, with all the hegemonic power, seems not to create or promote a symmetric relationship.

In contemporary times, more emphasis has been laid on strengthening global collaboration as strategies to improve equity, but the wide disparity or gap of North and South is what seems to maintain asymmetric goals. Judging from the stated sustainable development goals, nations pledged to foster global support by ensuring that this policy framework is achieved, as stated below.

The Sustainable Development Goals

The seventeen Sustainable Development Goals adopted under the United Nations 2030 Agenda [7] are as follows:

1. Eradicate poverty in all its forms everywhere.
2. Eradicate hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.
3. Ensure healthy living and promote well-being for all age levels.
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries.
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development.
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss.

16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

The Position of Nigeria in the Global Partnership

It is agreed that all countries should act in collaborative partnership to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals [7]. The essence of the Convention was to put into consideration how to achieve what the Millennium Development Goals could not achieve within the adopted time frame of the year 2002 to 2015.

Since the movement so far is to wipe off the tyranny of poverty and low standard of living among the constituent elements, the argument is: what is the place of Nigeria ever since we joined the practice? Taking a cursory look at the recent pandemic of Coronavirus (COVID-19) that plagued the entire world, one discovered that other countries that have sustained development provided supportive measures or social welfare of finance, preventive materials and foodstuffs for the citizens and instructed everyone to stay at home as strategies for managing the plague; but in Nigeria, the experience was not friendly as it was a very difficult moment. The citizens were confronted with inflation and humiliation by law enforcement agencies. One then begins to ponder: of what relevance is Nigeria in this whole exercise of sustaining development to strengthen global partnership? This is to say that more should be done in innovating education to avoid weakness in global partnership.

Therefore, all these claims of strengthening global participation and attaining sustainable development are obtainable through innovating education or improving education standards equal to those of the North (developed countries). This frantic effort of attaining sustainable development could be seen as a way of putting more ties to the practice of globalization.

Conclusion

Based on the fact that our education needs improvement to meet up with what is on board across the globe, the idea of innovation is welcome as a way of bringing in new ideas, structures, facilities and skills to better the obsolete way of education. It is to ensure greater productivity of manpower with the necessary skills, attitudes and knowledge. There have to be innovations in education across nations, since no country wants to be left behind in following the trend of development. Therefore, managing innovations in education is justified as an access that could strengthen global partnership and assist in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals.

This paper therefore, suggests that:

1. Countries of the South (developing countries) should examine their financial and technological strength before agreeing to globalization policies, because some adopted policies have made them perpetual followers.
2. Innovating education should start at the miniature level of education to acquaint us more as we grow to get adapted to the system.
3. Countries should make provision for finance in acquiring the necessary innovations.
4. Innovations in education should correspond to the demands of the society.

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