

The Role of Local Educational Policies in Educational and Human Development of Developing Economies in the Era of Globalization – Nigeria and China as Case Studies

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Abstract: The impact of globalization has been felt in every aspect of life and economy as it has presented an opportunity for borderless interaction and information dissemination. However, just like any other phenomenon, globalization comes with its demerits which if left unchecked by its adopters can in the long run undermine all benefits it earlier provided. This paper examines globalization in education in the context of global educational policies in developing economies. It attempts to justify the importance of local educational policies in developing economies and why these economies must take the extra step of re-contextualizing the global educational policies to create local educational policies tailored towards achieving knowledge economy results that first benefits the immediate local economy and human development. It achieves this by comparing the national educational policies in a developing economy like Nigeria with the national educational policies in a fast-developing economy such as China in a comparative analysis of information available in the public domain and in research articles and clearly outlines how local educational policies of China have assisted her in forging ahead in education and human development even in the era of globalization. This research concludes by suggesting local educational policies that align with global educational policies but will ultimately protect developing economies from knowledge erosion resulting from globalization in education while bringing the standard of their education to par with those obtainable in developed economies.

Keywords: educational policies, globalization, human development, knowledge erosion, developing economies.

1. Introduction

Globalization is a phenomenon that has facilitated the meeting and mixing of people, ideas, and resources across local, national, and regional borders in cultural development, politics and policy making, economic practices and technology advancement [1]. While globalization is not an entirely new phenomenon, it has been perceived to increase in intensity and scale during the late 20th and early 21st centuries and is also believed to have made the world a small village. This has been achieved by bridging the time and space gaps through novel technologies that have facilitated long distance interconnectivity [1]-[3]. However, there is currently a backlash

against globalization arising mostly from globalization skeptic actors and populists in liberal democracies [4], [5]. This backlash is not directly a result of the associated vulnerability that accompanies globalization but has arisen as a result of its over politicization and unequal revenue distribution which has mostly favored the elites and the rich and has penalized the ordinary citizens [4]-[6].

A. Globalization in Education

In education, one of the earliest contributions of globalization to education is the adoption of the mass schooling of children by several non-Western communities where traditional education has been limited to small scale apprenticeship and religious trainings during the colonial and imperial era [1], [7]. This contribution however, was not directly made in an effort to develop the local communities but as a foreign intervention for global empire maintenance or social control [1]. Ultimately, this contribution has been associated with the loss of indigenous language, knowledge production, moral and political inculcation, and with the spread of English and French as an elite language of communication across the globe [8].

Nevertheless, with the emergence of organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), The World Bank, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) post World War II, better advocacy has been made towards the enhancement of access to education around the world. This has been achieved through policies such as; the facilitation of the transnational distribution of educational resources, establishment of education as a global human right, promotion of international transferability of educational and teaching credentials, development of educational achievement measurement metrics across countries and regions, and extensive support towards national and regional, scientific and cultural developments [9], [10]. These policies have to certain extent produced reasonable results [1] but current educational trends such as global

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corporatization and the economization of education are undermining these results as they shift the major concernment of education from important ideologies like civic participation, human rights protection, and environmental consciousness to economic growth and corporate employment [11].

B. Concept of Educational Policies (Global and National)

The principles and policy choices that affect the field of education as well as the body of laws and regulations that control how educational systems are run make up educational policies [12]. Global educational policies (GEPs) are captured in global frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) and the Education For All (EFA) global movement which attempts to factor in developing economies into the global knowledge economies. These frameworks are facilitated via international policies such as the Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Competency-Based Education (CPE) [13], [14].

National education policies establish goals, set rules, provide resources and specify how outcomes should be evaluated within the educational systems of a nation [15]. These policies should be re-contextualized and tailored to suit the specific needs of the nation towards achieving a knowledge society that first benefits the nation and then the global community. However, this is rarely the case, as nations that are incredibly diverse in terms of culture and economic development are adopting similar education policy norms and a common set of education policy jargon [14]. To this end, individual development has been stalled as the educational policies adopted are not well suited to the current position of the nation, culture or economy.

C. Research Aim

In this study, I will further contribute to knowledge by highlighting the role of local educational policies towards achieving a sustainable and beneficial knowledge economy which stems from the reforms in the educational policies. I will achieve this by comparing and contrasting the national educational policies in a developing economy (in this case Nigeria) with that of a fast-developing economy (in this case China).

D. Scope and Objective of Research

The main objective of this research is to establish the importance of re-contextualized local educational policies towards the achievement of a sustainable knowledge economy by developing countries. This research limits its scope to comparing the national educational policies in a developing and a fast-developing economy. This distinction in economy is made using data from the Human Development Index (HDI) [16].

Figure 1 shows the growth rate comparison between the HDI of Nigeria and China between 2002 and 2019. It can clearly be seen that China has consistently increased steadily over the years adding a consistent amount of growth rate while Nigeria has not been very consistent with its growth. While China is still generally considered a developing economy, its growth rate characterizes it as a fast-developing economy.

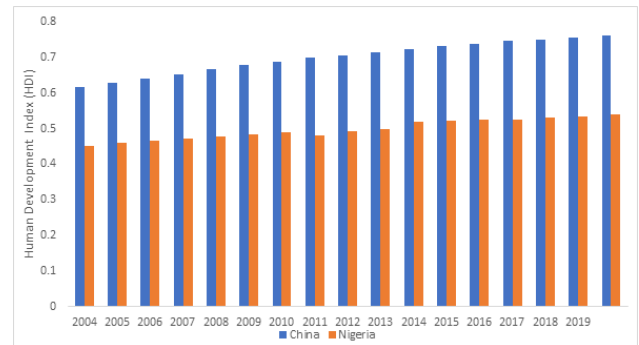


Fig. 1. Human Development Index for China and Nigeria between 2004 and 2019. Source: UNDP, 2022

Another distinction can be seen in Figure 2 which shows the Multidimensional poverty index for Nigeria and China. China while significantly having a higher population has a lower MPI than Nigeria. In this wise, it is sufficient to categorize Nigeria as a developing economy and China as a fast-developing economy.

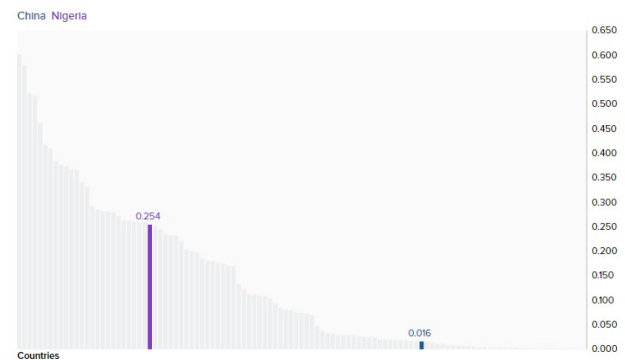


Fig. 2. Multidimensional Poverty Indices for Nigeria (Purple) and China (blue). Source: UNDP, 2022

2. Case Studies

In this section, the National educational policies in China and Nigeria are discussed and compared with each other in a comparative analysis.

A. National Educational Policies in China

One of the greatest proponents of National educational policies in Modern China can be traced to the speech of the People's Republic of China's leader Deng Xiaoping in 1977 during which he noted that the country is about 20 years behind developed countries in education, science and Technology and for her to catch up, she must pay special attention to education while improving its standard and also popularizing it to as many people as possible [17]. This development further led to the Reform and Opening up Policy in 1978 which injected several fresh ideas into the education in China.

Several projects adopted by China to improve its educational sector include the "Two exempt and one" subsidy policy designed to improve the situation of rural compulsory education, the 211 project for higher education levels which mandates all relevant universities to perform reforms in administrative and the operational mechanism, so as to cultivate

and attract the first-level talents and 985 project which necessitates the intention of China to build several world-class universities and a set of world famous high level research universities [18]. In the area of government expenditure on education, China's government expenditure on education as percent of GDP is 4.26% in 2015, compared to 3.01% in 2006.

In recent years, China has formulated and put into effect Education Law (1995), Vocational Education Law (1996), Higher Education Law (1998), Law of Promoting Private Education (2002), Teachers Law (1993), as well as a series of administrative regulations by the State Council, such as Implementing Regulations of Compulsory Education Law, Teacher Qualifications Ordinances and Implementation Measures of Teacher Qualifications. The Compulsory Education Law (1986) which was amended in 2006. These laws, rules and administrative regulations constitute the basic framework of the Chinese educational system [19].

B. Education Equity

If The prospect of educational policies in China tend to allow equal rights to education for all citizens regardless of location and social status. This is entrenched in the Chinese education Law as well as in the 10th Five-Year Plan for China's Educational Development issued in 2001 stipulated that education equity is the guideline and principle to direct the development and reform of education. "China shall adhere to the equity and equality of socialist education, shall give more attention to disadvantaged groups and try to provide citizens with opportunities of lifelong education." [20].

While the common entrance examination remains the primary mechanism of students to access higher education, overtime, this system of enrollment has continued to favor the rapid developing costal eastern areas of China while the locals and the west are being left behind. In fact, local students are sparingly admitted into Ministry of education affiliated universities sited in developed areas and are more likely to attend local universities in their communities. This is because local universities are partly sponsored by the state as well as the local government and thus the local students benefit more from the enrollment policies in local universities than in ministry affiliated universities.

1) Special policies and projects for disadvantaged groups

Several measures are made available in China to assist students with financial difficulties. They include: Specific scholarships, student loans, work-study program, special difficulties allocation, "Two Exempt and One Subsidy" Policy – which exempted students from central and western rural areas from paying tuition and miscellaneous fees, and provided living allowances for those staying in dormitory in the compulsory education policy.

Other policies approved by the governing state of China to improve educational condition in the poor vast western, rural and poverty-stricken areas by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) include:

1. the "Hope Project" initiated in October 1989 by the China Youth Development Foundation in Beijing, which has rescued more than 250 out-of-school children, built

more than 9,000 primary schools and donated a large number instructional material;

2. the "Spring Buds Program advanced by the All China Women's Federation and was initiated by the Youth Foundation to help girls enter school and have enabled 1.05 million girl dropouts from poor areas to return to school under the compulsory education scheme;
3. The Plan of University Students Serving the Western Voluntarily which encourages new graduates to work in western areas on the ground floor, to develop education, public health and other social undertakings in the poor regions of western China.

Others include the "China Project Pillars" and the "Lighthouse Project" aimed at the needs of rural education and organizes volunteers who have a good education from cities to work in the remote rural schools so that the children in the remote rural areas, could enjoy the advanced education available in the cities.

C. National Education Policies in Nigeria

To give education a definable focus after the transition from the education managed by colonialists and European missionaries, a national policy on education became extremely necessary in Nigeria. The National Curriculum Conference in 1969 set the groundwork for what will become a national education policy after educational experts expressed dissatisfaction with the existing education structure. In a follow up seminar in 1973 after the conference, a draft nation policy was developed and was later published in 1977 as the first national policy in Education. Since then, this policy has been revised in 1981, 1998, 2004, 2007, 2013 and 2014.

The national policy on education revision of 1998 detailed the country's commitment towards promoting the teaching on Nigerian languages and the diversification of the curriculum with prevocational and vocational technical. It was also characterized with the 6-3-3-4 system of education which required every student to pass through 6 years of primary education, 3 years of junior secondary education, 3 years of senior secondary education and 4 years of tertiary education. The reforms proposed by this policy were however badly implemented as it was heavily impacted by so many debilitating factors. In 2004, the national education policy was revisited and reformed again. The main changes made in this reformation include the transition form the 6-3-3-4 system of education to the 9-3-4 system under the universal basic education scheme which now requires the student to undergo 9 years of basic education which is compulsory and free for all students of school age [21].

One of the important reforms by the 2014 reform of the national education policy is that it further extends the basic education duration to 10 years in order to capture one year of pre-primary education for pupils in the early child care and development age. It also furthers mandates students receiving post basic education to compulsory take on trade and entrepreneurship subject in addition to the four compulsory subjects required for passing the senior secondary certificate examination [22].

1) Education Equity

Under the universal basic education scheme, the realization of educational equity for all students of school age is well spelt out in the national education policy [22]. However, problems such as low girl child education rate and high dropout rate for boy child are always the major issues of concern in remote and rural areas. Special programs are also encouraged to be developed by the state and local governments for the provision of education for special needs children such as the children of pastoral nomads, hunters, fish farmers and children in apprenticeship. While the methods of achieving this by the state are not clearly spelt out in the policy, it is safe to say provision are made for them.

In other to acquire tertiary education, students must successfully pass on of the senior secondary certification examinations available as well a unified tertiary examination.

2) Special policies and projects for disadvantaged groups

It is expected that all children of school age benefit from the universal basic education scheme. However, for children of disadvantaged nomadic population in the country, 6 years of nomadic education is provided for them to make them literate, provide them with skills that will help them increase their productivity and improve their societal values.

To capture adults, youths and children of formal schooling age outside of the formal school system, Mass literacy, adult and non-formal educational policies are provided in the National educational policies of Nigeria [22].

3. Comparative Analysis

The SDG 4 mandates that by 2030, complete, free, equitable and quality early childhood, pre-primary, primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes [23]. In this wise, the comparative analysis between

the national educational policies in China and Nigeria will be compared in a tabular form.

From the comparative analysis in Table 1, it can be seen that China has selectively tailored its national policies to capture peculiarities pertaining to its economy and educational needs. For example, seeing that UPE scheme of free basic education is failing in rural areas due to the additional costs of textbooks, accommodation and other schooling materials which the parents of children from these areas cannot afford, it went a step further to exempt these children from paying these additional costs. Also, as it is unable to justify the importance of the early childhood part of the scheme, it did not explicitly capture it in its policy. It also put in place measures to enforce policy adherence in educational institutions within the education sector as several policies are adopted as laws. Finally, activities of NGOs are encouraged and tailored to disadvantaged groups with little focus on students from already developed areas.

4. The Way Forward

The benefits of tailoring global education policies to the peculiarities of a country and capturing them in the national educational policies of the country cannot be undermined. This is because it is poised to bring forth good proceeds of national and human development in the nearest future as can be seen in the developmental pace of fast developing economies like China. Developing countries like Nigeria must begin to re-contextualize global education policies when adopting them in their economies so it captures the various peculiarities arising from the position and place of their economy in the era of massive globalization in education. Using China and other fast developing economies as case studies, Nigeria and other developing economies can begin looking towards solutions such as;

Table 1
Comparative analysis of the national educational policies in China and Nigeria

S.No.	Comparison Metric	National Educational Policies in China	National Educational Policies in Nigeria
1	Adherence to free and compulsory early childhood and preprimary education	This is not explicitly captured in the educational policy	This is captured for in the national education policy and is expected to be free and compulsory.
2	Adherence to free and compulsory nine (9) years basic education for children of school age	Full adherence in national policy. This also include the provision of free textbooks and the exemption of parents from rural areas from paying basic fees such as textbook fees	Full adherence in national policy as regards free tuition and lunch feeding. No provision is however made for payment exemption for textbook fees by students from poor localities.
3	Higher institution entrance examination	Single and structured common entrance examination which determines eligibility.	Multiple senior secondary certification examinations followed by a join tertiary examination which further determines eligibility
4	Sponsorship of universities in rural areas	Join sponsorship by the State Ministry of Education and the local communities	Complete funding by state government for state institution and the role of the Federal government is not completely defined.
5	Educational Policies for disadvantaged groups	The major disadvantaged group which includes poor and financially constrained students from rural area from the western parts of the country are well catered for by the educational policies through scholarships, student loans, work-study programs, etc., to improve education equity	The major disadvantages groups which are the illiterate youths, adults as well as Nomads are well catered for in the educational policies. However, educational equity which maximizes the inclusiveness of children from poor background is not captured in the policy.
6	Inclusion of Non-Governmental Organization in Educational improvement in disadvantaged areas	While this is not explicitly spelt out in the national policies, inclusion of NGOs in educational improvement is encouraged and targeted towards disadvantaged areas	Inclusion of NGOs in educational improvement is also encouraged but is not necessarily tailored towards disadvantaged areas
7	Enforcement of National educational policies	Institutions not complying with policies are penalized greatly by funding reduction and other serious penalties until compliance is achieved	Penalties are not well spelt out in the educational policies and thus enforcement is not measurable

1. Exempting poor students from the additional fees which might discourage them from fully engaging in the free, compulsory education scheme provided by the government.
2. Popularizing the importance of children and youth education among all citizen adult while tailoring mass literacy programme and the education of older (uninterested) adults towards sustainable development and skill acquisition which will be cheaper and beneficial.
3. Scholarships and financial assistance should be tailored to exceptional students from disadvantaged groups.
4. Mandating NGOs to tailor their educational intervention programmes towards the improvement of education by poor and disadvantaged groups
5. Developing and entrenching the measures to enforce educational policies by educational institutions in the policies so as to discourage partial enforcement.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, the role of reconceptualizing global educational policies to capture the economic and educational sector peculiarities of developing economies in order to foster fast economic and human development in the era of globalization has been justified. This justification was achieved in a comparative analysis of the national educational policies in China (a fast-developing economy) with those in Nigeria (a developing economy). It can be concluded that while global educational policies are well meaning and comprehensive, it is imperative for developing economies to tailor them to the peculiarities in their regions if they are to expect speedy educational and human development. Also, several recontextualized policies which can be adopted by developing economies towards improving the standard of education and by extension the human development in their region has been suggested in this paper. The effectiveness of this approach however depends on the willingness of policy makers who are key to the development and enforcement of these policies.

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