

## Understanding Globalization And Its Challenges For Human Development Through General Studies Programmes (GSP) In Nigerian University Education

Anthonia O. Uzuegbunam

### Abstract

Understanding globalization and its challenges for human development will be better achieved in Nigeria through the programme of general studies taught in Nigerian universities. This study aims at finding out the extent of globalization awareness, examining the effects and challenges and analyzing the general studies roles. Through a cross-sectional survey, with stratified random sampling of 900 respondents from six geo-political zones, data were collected. The findings include high level of awareness and effectiveness of general studies as a medium in understanding globalization. Compulsory inclusion of globalization tenets in the curricula plus regular and adequate evaluation of the programme recommended.

**Key words:** Globalization, Development, Challenges and General Studies Programme.

### INTRODUCTION

The world has come to grip with the process of integrating regional economics, societies and cultures through a global network of communication, transportation and trade. This process is referred to as globalization, and it is being driven specifically by a new wave of information in the history of mankind. From literature, a good many with liberal minds seem open to welcome the wind of change coming in as fruits of globalization if the barriers and boundary of unification of the whole universe are effectively managed. The unification has obviously brought the world to a state of family hood and merchandised village (Okoye, 2011). With one language of development, globalization produces avenues and opportunities for marketing development of ideas and strategies for advancement, with a view to prompting the developing countries to raise their standard of living (Okoye, 2011:6).

But the success of the exchange of ideas depends on the degree of contributions from the globalizing nations. However, this aspect of contribution of development ideas and strategies accounts for the inequality in consideration and respect accorded to each globalizing nation (Okoye, 2011). The above scenario explains the existence of the groupings into developed and under-developed, the respected and the marginalized which made some individuals and groups to construe globalization as a process of creating a capitalist universe and therefore seem not to welcome globalization (Akinboye, 2008).

Yet, the irreversibility of globalization has made it imperative for every nation to embrace it for sustainable development. What does globalization mean to the common man in the street especially in developing countries like Nigeria? Does globalization have any implications on developing economy of Nigeria and beyond? Can globalization benefit any developing economy like Nigeria? What are its challenges to human development? How

best can Nigeria as a developing nation cause an effective understanding of globalization in all its ramifications so that the benefits will be maximized?

Emphasis on the current wave of globalization ought to be centered on how best the people of Nigeria and beyond can understand globalization in all its ramification so as to be able to reap the fruits of it and jettison whatever that is found unfit. This paper is consequently premised on the approach to the understanding of globalization by the people of Nigeria through the teaching of General Studies Programme in Nigeria university education.

The work is thus discussed under the following:

- Background of the Study
- The Objective of the Study
- Conceptual and Theoretical Base
- Study Design
- The Summary of globalization, effects and challenges
- General Studies Programme in perspective
- Discussion of the findings
- The Way Forward

### **Background of the Study**

The inevitability of globalization as a world's concept and process today has become a great concern to most developing nations like Nigeria. It offers extensive opportunities for truly worldwide development, but it is not progressing evenly. Historically, early globalization started during Hellenistic Age through exchange of trade and culture around China, Spain, India and Other Asia nations. It progressed from that date through age of Discovery in the 15th century as it entered the Horn of Africa across America by the 16th century to the modern globalization in the 19th century (Wikipedia, 2011). Thus, countries that have been able to understand and embrace it are becoming integrated into the global economy more quickly than others. Those countries that have integrated are experiencing faster growth and reduced poverty. For instance, outward oriented policies make for dynamism and greater prosperity as it is the case in East Asia where the nations have transformed from areas of one of the poorest nations of the world 50 years ago (Quattara, 1997). Their living standards and progress were made on democracy and economic issues like the environment and work standards (Castela, 1998). In the same vein, meaningful and relevant understanding of globalization in Nigeria and Africa must go beyond the myths and ideologies of globalization to the confrontation with the diverse but actual processes. As the processes unfold, they will articulate the relationships between them and other social and economic relations and dynamics (Aina, 1996). Such an understanding must also recognize the complex but varied history of the processes being studied. However, the understanding must reject any neo-liberal confrontation of globalization which were regarded as inimical to the human development of Nigeria and beyond.

Therefore, Nigeria and Nigerians should endeavor to understand the concept, process and the tenets of globalization. Based on the foregoing, the General Studies Programme (GSP) of Nigeria's university education is heavily challenged.

### **Objectives of Study**

The general objective of this study is to examine the relevance of General Studies Programme of Nigerian Universities in the achievement of effective understanding of

globalization for sustainable development. Specifically, the study pursued the following specific objectives:

- To determine the extent of globalization awareness among Nigeria's people;
- To examine the effects of globalization on developing economy of Nigeria;
- To investigate the challenges of globalization on human development of Nigeria and
- To determine the role of General Studies Programme of Nigeria university education in effecting the understanding of globalization among Nigerian people.

### **Conceptual and Theoretical Base**

Globalization as a concept reflects various meanings as it is a process of regional, societal, economic, cultural and political integration through a global network of communication, transportation and trade. The word 'globalization' was first employed in 1930, to describe a holistic view of human experience in education (Machenzie, 1930). The 1st description of globalization in writing was in 1897, by Charles Taze Russell as he called it 'corporate giants' but it was not widely used by economists and other social scientists until the 1960s. So it is not a new phenomenon in the world's history but has wide range of definitions depending on the author and the situation of description.

Saskia Sass describes it as that which contains an enormous variety of micro-processes which denationalize what had been construed as national like policies, capital, political subjectivity, urban spaces, temporal frames etc (Sassan, 2006).

Globalization is again defined as "the diminution or elimination of state-enforce restrictions on exchange across borders and the increasingly integrated and complex global system of production and exchange that has emerged as a result (Palmer, 2008). Though not new in the world society, globalization today has been considered as a process of integration and interdependence that is further, faster, cheaper and deeper, the earlier experiences of it (Wikipedia, 2011). For example, the volume of world trade since 1950 has recorded an increase of 20 times over from 1997 – 1999 and flows of foreign investment has nearly doubled for \$468 billion to \$827 billion (UNDP, 2001). Again, globalization is perceived as a systematic trend manifesting the market economy's grow-or-die dynamics as a result of rapid expansion of corporations (Fotopou, 2011).

Theoretically, the subject of globalization differs fundamentally depending on the ideological conviction of the scholars. The phenomenon of globalization has, in general terms, been perceived from two contrasting paradigms namely; globalization as interdependence and globalization as imperialism. Scholars of globalization as an interdependence are of liberal thought. The liberalists perceive the concept as a framework of complex and progressing interdependence among nations. This integration of socio-political and economic nature is seen in the context of interdependencies that has restructured the world in a new and all embracing social order. The school of thought relates globalization with economic liberation as a policy option for the development of the rest of us through a process of free trade, investment and capital flows between nations.

In contrast, the scholars who view globalization as imperialism contend that the phenomenon of globalization as it is today is nothing but capitalism and imperialism par excellence. The proponents of this view include among others Ali Mazrui, called it "the new global imperialism"; Claude Ake, referred to it as a "capitalist project for the perpetuation of under developing Africa, and other third world countries" and their follower, Madunagu who alluded to the conception of globalization and called it, "a rapid expansion through giant

multinational corporations of capitalism” (Madunagu, 1999). Modern globalization to these scholars is globalization of capitalism and not globalization of a ‘neutral’ economic system and nothing more. To them the development of computer technology, telecommunication and transportation are mere vehicles to serve the capitalist master. Whatever the stand of scholars in this debate, suffice it to say that the two schools have offered theoretical base to challenge everyone to understand globalization so as to be able to hamper or determine development.

However, because we are concerned in this study to determine the relationship between the challenges of globalization and the general studies programme, we thus, settle for the social mobilization theory. Social mobilization or social resource mobilization is an aspect of social movement theory. Chief proponents of this theory remain McCarthy and Mayer (1977) who felt that social resource mobilization needs organizations first and foremost. Organizations can acquire and then deploy resources to achieve their well defined goals (MacCarthy & Mayer, 2010). In this case the understanding of globalization challenges for effective utilization is the movement and what the organization requires is the university where general studies programme is given. The numerous number of students and their teachers plus the non-teaching staff are the resources. Since the students come from all nooks and crannies of Nigerian society, they represent the Nigerian population. The application is that the globalization programme and contents will be incorporated into the university GSP education curricula like what the Peace and Conflict Resolution, Entrepreneurship and the Social Resources Mobilization. Five types of resources are delineated, namely

- Material (money and physical capital)
- Moral (solidarity, support for the movement goals)
- Social organization (strategies, social networks, block recruitment)
- Human (volunteers, staff, leaders)
- Cultural (prior activist understanding of the issues involved, collective know how).

### **Study Design**

The design adopted was the cross-sectional survey research of 12 months duration where research questions were validated and construed. Data were collected on a stratified random sampling of 900 hundred respondents from six universities from six geo-political zones of Nigeria, and comprising of students and staff of the six universities. Out of 900 questionnaires given to the respondents only 750 were returned and 50 were not properly completed. So the analysis was based on 700 only. Frequencies, percentages and chi-square test statistics were employed in the analysis.

### **Globalization: Effects and Challenges**

#### **Effects:**

Globalization in ideology and process affects the world in several ways. Its effects are varied namely;

- Economic – The greatest impact on the world is on the economic world production markets on products for consumers and companies, movement of materials and

goods increased more up to 12 trillion since 1955. China's trade with Nigeria or Africa rose sevenfold in the period of 2000 – 2007 alone (Wikipedia, 2011).

- Financial – emergence of worldwide financial markets with better access to external financing for borrowers of the 21st century. This fast movement also created financial instability and crises of 2007 – 2010 (Wikipedia, 2011).
- Health policy – Health becomes a commodity. Health policy is directed to technological advances and innovative medical trade.
- Political – Globalization is used by some nations to regulate relationship among governments and social globalization. The US has enjoyed a position of power among the world powers. It is also projected that by 20 years, reallocation of power among the world leaders may occur if China continues to grow at her present rate of movement (Wikipedia, 2011).
- Information – Increased information flows both geographically and technologically as evidence in greater access to the satellites, internet, telephone etc.
- Language – the languages especially English, French, and Spanish have increased both in spoken and written languages across the world, with English as most commonly used.
- Ecology – the advent of global environment poses serious challenges that could be solved especially in climatic change, cross boundary, water and air pollution.
- Competition – survival in the global village calls for competitive spirit from the business companies to upgrade the quality and quantity of their products and services.
- Culture – emergence of the growth of cross-cultural contacts as shown in cultural diffusion where some adapt to new technology and practices of foreign ideas and participate in world culture. There is also great travels and tourism especially in the use of planes daily.

### **Negative Effects:**

Globalization has also generated international opposition over concerns that inequality and environmental degradation have increased. For instance, the quality of life in mid western United States as a result of competitive edge in industry and agriculture. Other negative effects include;

- Loss of national culture – the importation and exportation of culture may result in bigger countries like America over running smaller cultures causing the loss of customs and values of the smaller countries.
- Relocation of sweatshops – where low wage earners are employed in sports shoes factories. These may be replaced by decent working conditions in favour of globalization (Wikipedia, 2011).
- Global financial crisis – the neo-liberalization of interconnectedness of economy has led to global financial crises as the subprime mortgage market in the U.S collapsed government deregulation and failed regulation in restaurants banks contributed greatly to the collapse and crisis of the mortgage (Ghana Textile, 2007).

Again, the flood of customer goods like television, radios, bicycles into US, Europe and Japan increased greatly the economic (Asia Times, 2008), expansion of the Asian Tigers economics, making China to increase the trade of textile and clothing. This attracted

criticisms from US, Europe and Africa countries. In South Africa alone, 300,000 textile workers lost their jobs (Wikipedia, 2011).

- Brain Drain – opportunities in richer countries drive talent away from poorer countries leading to brain drain. British drain has caused the African continent over \$4. 1 billion in the employment of 150,000 expatriate professional annually, same with Indian students going abroad for their higher studies cost India a foreign exchange out flow of \$10 billion annually (Asia Times, 2009).
- Environmental degradation – the environment is also degraded. The report from dailies said the world’s ecological capacity is simply insufficient to satisfy the ambitions of China, Japan, Europe and US as well as the aspirations of the rest of the world (BBC News, 2006).
- Food security – it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain food security as the world is beset by a confluence of peak oil, peak water, peak grain, peak fish etc. The growing population will contribute to the danger of food security. Prediction is that remain the world may run out of wild catch sea food by 2030 and 2048 (Perial, 2007).
- Disease – Globalization also helped spreading some of the deadliest. Infectious diseases known to humans eg Black death of Asia and Europe, small pox of America, AIDS/HIV flow across America and Africa through immigration exercise. Even Tuberculosis (TB) rate among foreign born persons in US was recorded at 9.5 times that of U.S born persons (Chicago, 2008).

### **Challenges:**

At this juncture, let us examine the forces of globalization. Three main powerful forces propel globalization in contemporary global environment can be seen as technological revolution, economic liberalization and democratic governance.

The computer technology has remained a veritable instrument of the increasing information technology along with the evolution of low cost global communication system. This in itself constitutes major challenges that will dominate and essentially shape developments in the 21st century (Kwanshie, 1999). Furthermore, the revolution through computer technology has enhanced high level of information transmission and business transactions across the global system. This has brought about tremendous improvement in all human endeavours.

Economic liberalization, as a force of globalization, has been embraced by many countries and major international institutions within the global system. Its major characteristics of unobstructed or restricted economic activities has facilitated freedom of economic activities and dominance of private enterprises as well as tending towards divorce of the state from the economy. Easy and free inter-penetration and inter-state access were also achieved.

Democratic governance with its inherent features like rule of law, active participation, probity, integrity and transparency, is the preferred system of governance. It is also attractive because it posits and insists that power sprigs from the people and as such belongs to the people. The emphasis is an free and fair election, active participation in administrative and decision making machinery, equality of all before the law, supremacy of the law, independent judiciary and, respect of fundamental human rights.

Having examined the propelling forces of globalization, we embark upon analyzing the challenges of these forces to Nigeria in particular and Africa as a whole. The challenges facing the developing countries like Nigeria is to design public policies that will enhance the maximization of the potential benefits embedded in globalization phenomenon as well as minimize the downside risks of destabilization and/or marginalization. It is observed that most African countries have been implementing these policies because they are not new in the world society. The Sub-Sahara Africa, in particular, has made substantial progress toward macroeconomic stability. For instance, there has been continued improvement in the overall growth performance. On the average, many countries have achieved single digit inflation rates and countries have reduced their internal and external imbalance.

However, African countries and Nigeria in particular need to achieve greater progress in some areas in order to speed up their participation in globalization system since they have not struggled sufficiently enough to maximize the benefits and minimize the risks there in.

- Acceleration of structural reforms – urgent action to maintain economic stability and re-inform the implementation of structural policies.
- Reinforcement of financial system – the heavy dependence of most African and especially Nigeria on crude oil exports exposes the economy to the boom and yet experience unstable volume of revenue.
- Ensuring economic security – Nigeria and beyond should establish right framework for activities to ensure economic security.
- The transparency, predictability and impartiality of the regulating and legal systems must be guaranteed.
- Achievement of Good Governance – Democracy is another challenge that globalization poses to developing countries like Nigeria. It has become an acceptable and preferred form of governance in the world system. Authoritarian or dictatorial governance is no longer fashionable and as such not allowed in any environment. That is why UNDP in its report on National Human Development that every government should strive to eliminate corruption and inefficiency and reach out for accountability, integrity and transparency.
- Partnership with civil society – Nigeria and Africa should encourage the partnership of the civil society, the different groups in the population so as to seek support for the policies that emanate from the understanding of the objectives, process, effects and challenges of globalization for effective maximization of its benefits and management/elimination of its risks. Hence, the promptness of the general studies programme of Nigeria university education to disseminate information and participation in globalization.

### **General Studies Programme in Nigerian University Education**

General studies programme, formerly referred to as general education at its inception in Nigerian higher education, is conceived as a broad spectrum of knowledge or general education based on indigenous culture (Ashby, 1960). It is that education capable of molding a child into his culture.

The philosophy and aims of general studies are rooted on the conception that from the cradle to adulthood, the child is exposed to various aspects of knowledge with the result that by adult hood, the child's interest in one or two areas are noticed. The community



therefore, recognized the individual in those specialized areas. Thus, all the ingredients of inculcating and acquiring values in the traditional home and society were categorized into four units of the general studies programme. Such units include Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and the Use of English. Such grouping of academic problem would facilitate the formulation of what is learnt in the early formative years of the child at home, into academic disciplines. These descriptions are as such rooted in the students' cultural milieu (GSP Handbook, 2010).

The often glossed over dimension is the erosion of the Nigeria culture by colonialism and hence students' need for self-realization and self-expression based upon their culture. Though belated, the Nigeria government sent a clarion call to all the universities on January 23, 1978, to embark on a compulsory course on National awareness in the university curriculum, stating as one of the reasons:

*wide spread ignorance among Nigeria groups about each other and about themselves will be remedied by instituting a compulsory course on culture and history of our various peoples. The award of degrees will be made conditional upon the passing of the paper in this course.*

Further, the government needed information on how each university would incorporate the course into the curriculum. This lack of National Awareness was lamented by some well-meaning people. Thus, University of Nigeria reacted by taking steps in 1961 to fill the gaping chasm through its general studies programme. Against this background, the aims of General Studies Programme therefore stem from its philosophy and seek to formalize, as academic disciplines, those rudiments of knowledge in different areas acquired in the home and taught in primary and post-primary schools. In the same vein, all the other Nigerian tertiary institutions developed their general studies programme accordingly.

The term "higher education" is all embracing in learning activities. It includes all organized learning and training activities at tertiary level. Conventional post-secondary institutions like monotronics and polytechnics; schools of nursing, hygiene, forestry and agriculture, colleges of education, conventional and specialized universities, offer these learning and teaching activities referred to as higher education. There are also included in the list of institutions as the military, secretarial studies and other programmes that draw their students from a variety of forms of secondary education.

### **Understanding of Globalization Challenges and General Studies Programme in Nigeria Society:**

It is important to note that the greatest influences in embracing globalization as a phenomenon are education, economic conditions and leadership of the individual, within the society. It is difficult for anybody to embrace what one does not understand. Thus, the understanding cannot be over-emphasized. It is through education that the implications are made explicit. Through education, one is fully equipped with the knowledge of one's environment and phenomenon.

Hence, the wisdom in opting for general studies programme in Nigerian universities and other tertiary institutions as a veritable medium for the task of creating awareness and understanding of globalization.

If globalization as a challenge is made compulsory in the general studies programme in Nigeria university education just like similar current issues like Peace and



Conflict Studies, Entrepreneurship, Information Technology, Leadership Training to mention just a few, the understanding of globalization will be facilitated. This is because, many students will receive the information and disseminate the information to all and sundry. This will in turn enhance the most needed partnership and support from civil society for effective reaping of the benefits of globalization while rejecting the downside risks and problems therein.

The attitudes of the leaders and followers will change and the economic conditions, especially of the individual families will be improved. Thus, the general studies programme as stipulated by its root in Nigeria tertiary institution aims at producing a total man through broad based education. The inclusion of the challenges of all these current phenomenon on human development like globalization, Peace and Conflict, Entrepreneurship, Leadership Training and education for living and sustainability was not by accident but by design. It is clear therefore that the first objective of the general studies programme is the learner and society centred.

**Results**

**Research Question One:** Are you aware of the phenomenon of globalization in the society?

**Table I:** Summary of Respondents’ opinions on the awareness of the phenomenon of globalization by level of year of study

YEAR OF STUDIES	YES	NO	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
Hundred Level	170 (24.28)	30 (4.29)	200	28.57
Two Hundred Level	190 (27.14)	10 (1.43)	200	28.57
Three Hundred Level	255 (36.43)	45 (6.43)	300	42.86
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>615 (87.85%)</b>	<b>85 (12.15%)</b>	<b>700 (100%)</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** As analyzed in the Questionnaire, Question 6.

Results obtained in table I show that for the 170 (24.28%) hundred level student have heard about globalization while 30 (4.29%) claimed not to have heard about it. 190 (27.14%) two hundred level student are aware of globalization while 10 (1.43%) of them are not aware of the phenomenon. 255 (36.43%) have the knowledge of globalization while 45 (6.43%) claimed not to be aware of such a phenomenon.

Thus, we conclude that many students in the Nigeria universities have heard about globalization, but whether they understand it clearly or not is what the programme of general studies will determine.

**Table II:** Summaries of Mean Scores, Standard Deviations and Chi-Square on Effects, Challenges and Relationship between Globalization Effectives and General Studies Programme.

Item No	Description of Elements	Level of Opinions on Acceptance to Succeed						
		Accepted	Unaccepted	No Idea	Undecided	No of stds	Mean Score	Std Devt
1	2	3	4	N	X	S	X <sup>2</sup>	

2 Effects of Globalization on developing economy

like Nigeria	453 (64.7%)	136 (19.4%)	56 (8.0%)	55 (7.8)	700 (100%)	1.77	0.73	21 (calculated) 15.507 (tabulated)
3 Challenges of Globalization for Nigeria and Africa	492 (90.3%)	94 (13.4%)	34 (4.9%)	80 (11.51)	700 (100%)	1.72	0.75	144.41(calculated) 12.59 (tabulated)
4. Relationship Between General Studies Programme (GSP) and Understanding of the Globalization Challenges	436 (62.3%)	167 (23.9%)	24 (3.4%)	72 (10.3%)	700 (100%)	1.61	0.76	48.57 (Calculated) 9.488 (tabulated)

**Source:** As Analyzed in the Questionnaire, Questions 7, 8 & 9.

Thus, the results in table II show that item 7-9 each scored more than 50 percent acceptance to support the understanding of the effects and challenges of globalization for effecting better management of globalization for better Nigerian society. The mean scores are all less than 2.5 and as such the difference in the opinions is statistically insignificant.

## CONCLUSION

Globalization has acquired considerable force. Some view it as a process of immense benefits to humanity both at present and in the future economies, while some conceive it as an extension of capitalist movement to maximize profits. The world economic development has promoted it as both inevitable and irreversible.

It is clear that globalization moves toward more integrated world markets and has opened a wide potential for greater growth. This will help to raise the standard of having of Nation states. Yet, its negative impact and challenges stare the developing countries like Nigeria at the face. Hence the challenge facing Nigeria and other developing Africa countries is to design public policies that can assure the maximization of the potential benefits of globalization and reduction of risks of destabilization and marginalization.

## THE WAY FORWARD

Having realized the effects and challenges of globalization, Nigeria government, through National Universities Commission (NUC) should call for compulsory inclusion of the phenomenon, globalization into the university education general studies programme curricula. This will enhance the understanding of globalization to many people in Nigerian community. The staff and students of many universities in the country will spread the news. If this is well planned, implemented, monitored and evaluated, the supports received from the students, staff and civil society will equip the leaders with rightful mind to forge ahead.

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