

INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION

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Abstract

There is a paradigm shift in the globalization of education process from the usual trend of encouragement and nurturing of national citizens to world citizens. This paper i) discusses the concept of internationalization in the field of education; ii) explores internationalization of the teaching profession in Africa; iii) explains how teachers are change agents in internationalizing the field of education; iv) addresses the justification for internationalizing teacher profession; v) enumerates the merits of internationalizing the teaching profession; vi) delineates required mechanisms and strategies for internationalization of the teaching profession; and vii) expounds the challenges and drawbacks of internationalization of the teaching profession. The paper presents a succinct conclusion that internationalization of the teaching profession helps to make and execute instructional decisions that promote broad-mindedness and mutual understanding in classrooms.

Keywords: Globalization, Internationalization, Teaching Profession, Strategies

Introduction

The world is not static; development and inventions have wide-ranging influence on economies, goods and services, information and technology, knowledge explosion, cultural practices, social issues, legal matters, and political activities across national borders and cultures. This trend translates to world interconnectedness and interdependence where there is similitude of trade, technology, knowledge expansion, and socio-cultural influences in all parts of the world. These phenomena is called globalization.

Presently, there seems to be a paradigm shift in the globalization of education process from the habitual trend of encouragement and nurturing of national citizens to world citizens. The likelihood of actualizing world citizenship through curricula that exclusively promote an absolute indigenous perspective cannot be guaranteed unless the curricula accommodate global perspectives and inclusion of many more content that

covers both Western cultures of autonomy, individual freedom, democracy, and personal achievement and Eastern cultures of familial ties, collective harmony, respect for authority and societal obligations. The incorporation of the African, Western and Eastern cultures which reflect in their social behaviour, lifestyle, beliefs and values, and communication styles into any country's national curricula makes the curricula international.

Balagtas et al. (2013) expound that in this century, technology has turned the global space into a global village where people's migration and information generation have increased sporadically. Countries keep in touch with other countries for economic, political, environmental, and educational purposes. The education industry is not left behind in charting the course of globalization. One of the concepts that have begun to make waves in the field of education before the era of globalization is internationalization. De Wit (2002) affirmed that internationalization has a

historical reference to a national orientation and function that could be traced to the 18th and 19th centuries. Internationalization is not a strange term, but it is an established concept that rather has impacted activities embedded in social, economic, political, and academic aspects (Dimici, 2023). The concept of internationalization is not a clear and well-defined one; rather, it has been defined by different scholars in diverse fields to mean different things (Abraham & Von Brömssen, 2018; Zeleka, 2019).

Internationalization of the teaching profession could cut across all the levels of education: primary, secondary and tertiary, teacher education programme inclusive. Internationalization, as a process, has come to stay. Therefore it is expedient that education providers at all levels—primary, secondary, institutional, national and international levels, agencies, and government should understand its practicability. These levels could determine the impact of internationalization through policy, funding, programmes, and regulatory frameworks (Nyatuka et al., 2016). Olorunyomi (2018) affirmed that the definition of internationalization is contingent on student, academic discipline, faculty member, private sector, government, and communities of interest. The variance in the viewpoints generates justifications for many programme approaches to internationalization at all the levels of education.

Internationalization of the teaching profession at primary education level, at both local and global level, increases international awareness of pupils, strengthens research and knowledge production, and fosters international cooperation and solidarity (Olorunyomi, 2018).

Internationalization of a higher education institution is defined as a “change process from a national higher education institution to an international higher education institution leading to the inclusion of an international dimension in all aspects of its holistic management in order to enhance the quality of teaching and learning and to achieve the desired competencies” (Soderqvist, 2002, p. 29).

Internationalizing teacher education is the act of integrating different international aspects in the field of education through the process of curriculum and instructional modifications that accommodate international perspectives into course content, rather than adding it to the course syllabus as an isolated topic, extra-curricular, or coursework. Internationalizing teacher education prepares teachers for a culturally-diverse and interdependent world (DeCuir, 2017). Internationalization is a continuous effort made to include intercultural, global dimension into the curriculum, goals, teaching/learning, research and service functions of a higher education system. Intercultural dimension focuses on country home while global dimension provides the sense of worldwide coverage (Knight, 2004; Nyatuka et al., 2016). As a citizen of any country, internationalization equips individual with the knowledge of the larger world and be capable to act rightly in any situation and place. Internationalization involves given serious consideration not only to one’s native land, but also to other part of the globe.

Holmarsdottir et al. (2023) observed that in most of the countries of the world, the teaching profession and the teacher educators have focused on developing understanding, skills, and attitudes appropriate for teaching in local

schools without given attention to global competence and intercultural understanding. However, the present challenges ravaging the world is not limited to local communities but the entire world. The global community is bedeviled by growing challenges like incessant upsurge human migration caused by social, economic and environmental factors. The world grapples with environmental issues such as global warming, inadequate sanitation, deforestation, climate change and various forms of pollution (Jimola & Omodun, 2023). A number of these quagmires demands global solutions from teachers and teacher educators on the relevance of global competence. A means to achieve this could stem from educating young people to become better local and global citizens, helping learners possess a global mindset and taking a more active role in fostering that mindset in the classrooms.

DeCuir (2017) observed that citadel of learning such as universities and colleges play vital roles in the production of skilled professionals who are trained to excel in an interdependent and competitive world or become antiquated in an age of digitization. Dimici (2023) emphasized the importance of the integration of internationalization in teacher education as a crucial necessity because of the innumerable benefits that it will offer prospective teachers to gain internationalization experience. One of the means of internationalizing the teaching profession is to review education curricula, spell out the course objectives, and compare and align these objectives with acceptable standards of different countries.

Internationalization of the curriculum is the inclusion of foreign and intercultural aspects, international

perspectives and subjects, and the perspective of different racial, gender and cultural groups in the content of a curriculum's learning and teaching processes, teaching, research, and service elements, and support systems of an institution (Knight & International Association of Universities, 2006; Leask, 2009). DeCuir (2017) explained that learning styles, curriculum development, instructional differentiation, and cultural diversity are areas that are open to internationalization in teacher education programmes. However, most teacher educators are aware of the significance of getting the prospective teachers ready for future classroom tasks that deal with linguistic and cultural differences, but deficient at understanding how to incorporate the study of the global community as a curricular focus in teacher education (Roberts, 2007).

Internationalization of the teaching profession takes into consideration not only the evolution and sustainability of our local values and issues, but also the essentiality of both the local and global dynamics suitable for the developmental process of learners without entertaining inferiority complex, discriminating against learners because of their respective differences in terms of racial, cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic status or learners losing his identity. Internationalization of the teaching profession enables teachers and learners to understand broad global patterns and the impact on their local environment and ultimately propels them to inject it into teaching and learning process. Internationalization of the teaching profession is easily achieved when the curriculum is made to be more reflective of international and global dimensions while ensuring that internationally competent teachers,

students and researchers are produced (Holmarsdottir et al., 2023).

DeCuir (2017) affirmed that internationalizing curriculums or courses in teacher education can be successful when teacher educators learn how to harmonize the needs of local educational system and educational professional agencies with their aspirations, integrate a pedagogical approach of intercultural training courses that call for guided interactions and learning activities among learners from diverse cultures across the world which promote global competence. Dimici (2023) noted that internalization of the teaching profession encompasses curriculum change which is the new dimension in the changing world rather than an additive. This dimension change can transcend course content, skills, awareness and behaviour.

European University Association (2020) noted internationalization is an all-encompassing concept whose target of internationalization should not be limited to language and mobility issues, rather, it should be targeted at preparing students and teachers ahead on how to handle and proffer solutions to global challenges by equipping them with a proper perspective, appropriate attitude, skills, and competences as well as providing measures to develop them through course content and teaching methods. Dimici (2023) analysed the prospective teachers' perceptions of internationalization of teacher education curricula. Although findings from the study revealed that the curricula in the countries of the respondents are insufficient for internationalization and incapable to provide prospective teachers with a global perspective, yet the respondents have a favourable perceptions of internationalization and clamoured that international aspects

should be added to the teacher education curricula and teacher educators use more interactive teaching methods.

Internationalization of the Teaching Profession in Africa

The term internationalization is not novel for African universities, however, Andoh and Salmi (2019) narrated that before the late 1990s, the agenda of internationalization of African universities was not fully explored mainly because of the target of "Africanization" of university curricula and leading activities in pursuit of the nationalists' agenda of decolonization, regionalization, and localization of African universities and knowledge production (Zezeza, 2019). Andoh and Salmi (2019) explained that in the year 2002 during the emergence of the world university rankings, African universities began to pursue international agenda. Since the early 2000s, a number of universities in Africa (Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Tanzania) have developed their internationalization agenda and which have produced positive results in research area, joint master's and doctoral degrees with international partner universities. In spite of the benefits of internationalization, Andoh and Salmi (2019) disclosed that in an attempt to contribute to African's national and regional development, the first established public universities in Africa (flagship universities) are confronted with the problem of associating their mission and vision with internationalization activities.

Zezeza (2019) reported that for African scholars and universities, internationalization remains a point of clash where indigenization and internationalization traditions have continued to compete for supremacy in

which the African higher education system exhibits non-complementary tendencies. Nonetheless, Africans should not lag behind at pushing forward the frontiers of internationalization. The reason why Paul TiyambeZezeza, Professor of the Humanities and Social Sciences, and Vice Chancellor, United States International University-Africa, Nairobi, Kenya in 2019 gave a speech on how to make Africa, internationalization and the global context work. For internationalization to work, African continent needs to:

to construct models and modalities of internationalization that eschew the historic patterns of external institutional and intellectual dependency; that bridge rather than exacerbate the yawning divides in the global education space; that promote knowledges addressing the continent's and world's pressing problems and crises including climate change, growing social inequalities, rising nationalist populisms and xenophobia, and the massive economic and social disruptions of the 4th industrial revolution; that appropriately leverage the potential of information technologies for new internationalization; and that effectively mobilize the African academic diaspora for mutual benefit (Zezeza, 2019, p.7).

Teachers: Agents of Internationalization

Teachers are instrumental to global change in the world. They are key actors of change within programmes and projects on global learning. They are change agents within the classroom, within the wider school, and within

society as a whole (Bourn, 2016, p.63). Hence, teachers need to get involved in the process of global competent teaching which is intertwined with internationalization of the teaching profession. Global competent teaching requires that teachers get involved in continuing practice of evaluating themselves as political, social and political beings positioned in local and global settings. This means that teachers are to be socio-culturally alert to students' milieus for enhanced teacher-student relationship, students' modes of thinking and self-identity in the global setting. If teachers have myopic thinking about their identity, if they possess vague awareness of the worldviews and harbour socio-political biases about the world, they may be incapable to outgrow self-confinement of borderland prejudice and may conceive distorted interpretations and judgements of global issues. By this, teachers will be blind to the ways in which their social location and worldviews shape the manner in which they approach global education (O'Connor & Zeichner, 2011, p. 525).

According to O'Connor and Zeichner (2011), the components of teaching practices of globally competent teachers are authentic pedagogy, cooperative learning, interdisciplinary teaching, and the use of multifarious teaching methods. The first phase of authentic pedagogy is the pedagogy of critical global education which includes construction of knowledge, disciplined inquiry and value beyond school. Globally competent teachers who construct knowledge in classroom do not act as a sage on the stage, rather, they act as guides on the side. Teachers who are guides place students at the centre of learning, get students involved in learning activities that help knowledge construction and production, rather

reproducing knowledge. This kind of teachers accommodate and engage students from different clans and climes.

The second phase of authentic pedagogy is the aspect of disciplined inquiry which fosters learners' higher-order, critical thinking and problem-solving development skills, comprehensive understanding, and analytical skills. Students' engagement in disciplined inquiry in classroom assists learners to possess the skills, knowledge and information needed to tackle the challenges of transforming the world.

The third phase of authentic pedagogy explains that learners' academic activities and intellectual competence are not meant for classroom confinement. Learners are expected to put into action the knowledge, skills and information garnered in school to address global issues and transform the trend of social injustice, systemic discrimination, cultural marginalization, structural inequality, dominant power dynamics, and other forms of oppressive systems out the school which could be locally and internationally, this is called value beyond the school.

Another teaching practice expected of globally competent teachers is the teaching techniques that harness the strength of having a classroom of learners from different backgrounds and mixed races to unanimously engage in team work fueled by collaborative or cooperative learning. A global competent teachers ensure that the esprit de corps learnt in the classroom is transferred to the outside world, where attention is given to social and economic equity rather than unhealthy competition.

Interdisciplinary teaching permits learners to learn about a concept or issue from a variety of different points of view. It allows teachers to teach common themes, issues, concepts, or problems

across separate curricular disciplines so as to reveal the interrelatedness of global phenomena affecting the people around the world. The incorporation of global education into all school subjects best fits into this scenario. The use of varied instructional methods in classrooms lends itself to the adaptability of learners' preferences, diverse needs and leaning styles in connection to the issue discussed. Some of the activities of varied instructional methods are collaborative projects, role-plays, simulations, discussions, technology-based learning, and peer learning.

Goodwin (2010) noted that teaching skills and content are vital, however, the teaching profession demands bringing forth globally competent teachers whose targets go beyond mere "covering" a defined set of requirements, completing a certain number of credits, or demonstrating an understanding of specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions". Teachers can provide productive learning experiences to learners through five knowledge domains. These knowledge domains for teaching are: "*personal knowledge/ autobiography and philosophy of teaching; contextual knowledge/ understanding children, schools, and society; pedagogical knowledge/content, theories, methods of teaching, and curriculum development; sociological knowledge/diversity, cultural relevance, and social justice; and social knowledge/ cooperative, democratic group process, and conflict resolution* (Goodwin, 2010, p.22).

Justification for Internationalizing Teaching Profession

DeCuir (2017) carried out a research on how to internationalize courses or curriculum using global content in undergraduate course for

teacher education using pre-service teachers enrolled in an early childhood education program as case study. The findings of the study revealed that through reflective practices such as curriculum focus, course selection, learning objectives, teaching methods, and assessment, teacher education can be internationalized. Also, the findings show that internationalization of the teaching profession is made easy by:

- i) integrating global content into core curricula and academic content that include cultural diversity, culturally-responsive teaching and lesson planning;
- ii) selecting encompassing courses that help teachers teach related topics across school subjects or the choice of topics that are embedded with global content as a curricular
- iii) inclusion of learning objectives that give room for application of learning strategies for teaching subjects, incorporation of state and national curriculum standards for teaching, explanation of culture and features of various groups in schools classes, addition of course objectives that explore the nature and needs of different international students among the groups, description of culturally-responsive teaching strategies for different cultural groups, and application of culturally-responsive teaching strategies in a daily lesson plan that includes curriculum, instruction, and assessment for all students;
- iv) adoption of teaching methods that utilizes technology and web-based formats; conventional method that introduces course content through in-class activities such as cooperative learning and modeling; a hybrid classroom model, scholarly writing, peer teaching as instructional

strategies to deliver course content; and using assigned instructional resources; and

- v) the use of effective assessment strategies that appraise and analyze content accuracy, pedagogical content knowledge, interactive component, writing quality and mechanics, and components of lesson plan.

Knight (2004, p.23) enumerated existing rationales for internalization. The rationales include social-cultural reasons: national cultural identity, intercultural understanding, citizenship development, social and community development; political reasons: foreign policy, national security, technical assistance, peace and mutual understanding, national identity, and regional identity; economic reasons: economic growth and competitiveness, labour market and financial incentives; and academic reasons: international dimension to research and teaching, extension of academic horizon, institution building, profile and status, and enhancement of quality international academic standards.

In addition, Knight (2004) presented emerging justifications for internalization at the national and institutional levels. The rationales at the national level include human resources development, strategic alliances, commercial trade, nation building, and social/cultural development while the institutional level are international branding and profile, income generation, student and staff development, strategic alliances, and knowledge production.

Merits of Internationalizing Teaching Profession

Bernardo (2002) highlighted benefits of internationalizing higher

education institutions which include student and staff mobility; internationalizing curricula through international studies; research collaborations; international networks; transnational distance education; twinning and articulation programs; and international quality assurance. Internationalization of the teaching profession both at the local and foreign scenes:

- i. helps students to learn how to fuse meeting cultures by adopting the essence of foreign culture without losing their own culture;
- ii. broadens research opportunities to the underdeveloped countries and push forward the frontiers of knowledge at the national and international levels;
- iii. makes better the output of education, teaching, research, and learning outcomes attained by learners;
- iv. gives value to the institution and country's image;
- v. gives room for critical thinking and sound comparative analyses about education at home and abroad
- vi. helps students to see the wide world as a small global space where they act as active members to achieve global homogeneity; and
- vii. assists learners to overcome linguistic, academic-related, ideological, socio-cultural, geographical, political, and historical hurdles.

Required Mechanisms and Strategies for Internationalization of the Teaching Profession

Harari (1992) and Kreber (2009) highlighted some mechanisms needed to put teaching profession in a global limelight. They mechanisms are: a) the recruitment of international students, b) the teaching process, through a selection of course content and forms of delivery (including ICT), student mobility,

language of instruction, etc., c) resources—in the form of internationally recruited staff members, use of international course materials (e.g., literature), etc., d) location—offering courses or setting up campuses abroad (Kreber, 2009, p. 7). In addition to the components given above, the following are also important in the process of internationalizing of curriculum:

- i) the infusion of disciplinary courses with international content,
- ii) comparative approaches in teaching and research,
- iii) issue-oriented approaches and interdisciplinary studies,
- iv) area studies and civilizational approaches,
- v) international studies and intercultural studies,
- vi) international development studies,
- vii) the role of foreign languages as an integral part of the internationalization of undergraduate education,
- viii) the internationalization of pre-professional studies and professional schools,
- ix) faculty and staff development and research in the international area,
- x) institutional links and global networking of scholars,
- xi) the involvement of both U.S. students who have studied abroad and of international students, in the international enrichment of the curriculum and the campus,
- xii) the involvement of students and faculty in internships, research and other opportunities in internationally-oriented business firms and other appropriate agencies at home and abroad campus (Harari, 1992, p. 59).

Teaching students about other parts of the world, receptive and productive language skills, and exposing

them to various foreign languages or internationalization of course content are important areas of internationalization which can manifest as areas of study. Some of the means adjudged by Nyatuka et al. (2016) to be effective at integrating international content into a course are to:

- i) collaborate with a faculty member in another country by creating joint student projects so that students learn about another culture through working with members of that group,
- ii) encourage and facilitate both faculty and student exchanges by allowing scholars from other countries and their knowledge of other research traditions to their campuses and
- iii) participate in international research and integrating colleagues, particularly scholars into a conference in other country promote new connections with international peers that may enhance future collaboration in terms of research and publication.

Philippine Normal University (2012) discussed the five strategies that they have strategically put up to internationalize their higher education institutions. The strategies are: i) development of internationalization program that will increase the number and expand diversity of foreign students and faculty; ii) development of an international relations plan to ensure a strategic position within the global teacher education network and academic community; iii) development and production of scholarly work and products that attract international audience; iv) position the university as a hub of academic activities and exchanges relevant to teacher education and basic education to ensure its international presence; and v) participation in international network of teacher

education institutions to promote collaboration and partnership in the conduct of research, extension, and production.

Leask (2009) itemized four tasks requisite for improving interaction between international and home students in the formal curriculum. The first task is to look into the structural issues of the curriculum at the designing stage. Various learning and assessment activities that encourage and clearly measure social participation, interaction, and engagement with cultural diversity and competencies should be explicitly designed. Both international and home students should be assisted to comprehend the objectives and value of the interaction and develop the skills they need for collaboration. Provision of a rich environment and opportunities needed for learners' engagement as well as incentives that commensurate with students' achievements could foster positive outcomes between international and home students in the formal curriculum. The second task demands that the problems associated with intercultural interaction in a learning environment should not be left unattended to.

The third task in the design of formal curriculum is that students through their programme of study should be saddled with structured tasks that they cannot successfully execute without meaningful exchange of cultural information. The fourth task involves teaching staff's knowledge and skills of cultural foundations within their discipline and their ability to manage student diversity in the classroom. It behooves the teacher to "adapt their teaching to an international, culturally diverse teaching and learning environment rather than expecting learners to adapt to a monocultural,

inflexible environment” (Leask, 2009, p.212.).

Challenges and Drawbacks of Internationalization of the Teaching Profession

Some of the problems of internationalization of the teaching profession include language barriers, nationalism, racism, incursion of immigrants, depletion of intellectual and technical personnel, and culture clash that may result into loss of identity. Knight (2004) cited in Nyatuka et al. (2016) highlighted teacher training, ethnic, disciplinary, and academic cultures as challenges and drawbacks of internationalization. The local culture of teacher training are categorized as regions, country and concepts of time; ethnic cultures are related to historical background, geopolitical background or religion; disciplinary cultures includes assignments, examinations and assessments as well as teaching styles; while academic cultures refer to roles of both students and lecturers; mutual expectations; unwritten rules of behavior in class; ethical behavior and expectations regarding group work.

Pachler and Redondo (2015) identified homogenization, hybridization or brain drain as negativities accrued to internationalization. Beltran (2024) identified barriers to Internationalization in teaching profession. The barriers are lack of clear-cut policies about the program which include absence of organizational structure, assessment tools, and particular internationalization plans; financial restrictions; distance learning-related barriers; differences in the global content of the curriculum, equivalences of qualifications, and study program; difficulty in internationally promoting and marketing the institution;

government policies on internationalization; time differences; and visa restrictions.

Conclusion

Internationalization of the teaching profession exposes prospective teachers and teachers on the job to objectivity in teaching, creates an awareness of cultural diversity, accords respect for culture of dignity, and helps to make and execute instructional decisions that promote broad-mindedness and mutual understanding in classrooms. The idea of narrowing down teaching and learning to local context can be considered as myopic if compared with the multicultural school environment and the growing demand for internationalization.

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