Adult Education Practitioners’ Conceptions of Globalisation and of its Implication for Policy, Research and Practice in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT This paper explores the understanding of globalisation and of its implication for policy, research and practice in adult and lifelong learning by adult education practitioners in Nigeria. A qualitative methodology was adopted with selected practitioners including students, academics and facilitators in the country. Specifically data gathering was through a combination of interview, policy review and informal interactions with stakeholders. Participants in the research see globalisation as full of opportunities and challenges for their practice. While globalisation is seen as offering prospects and opportunities for access to information and professional development, the sense of competition (especially with those from the advanced world) is still palpable among the participants especially the academics among them. More importantly, the study reveals that Nigerian researchers have really not been strong beneficiaries of the much talked about open interaction and enhanced network which globalisation is supposed to offer professionals across the globe as they are still inhibited by low ICT access and competence. The policy environment is seen as being presently incapable of preparing adult education and adult educator to meet the demands of operating in an era of globalisation. For adult and non formal education practitioners not to be consumed by the on-going globalisation crusade there is the need for a more comprehensive restructuring of the policy environment for adult and lifelong learning to make it more responsive to improved research and practice in this era of globalisation.

Keywords: Globalisation, Adult Education, Adult education Practitioner, Information communication technology, Lifelong learning
Context of study

The world is fast being enveloped by globalisation, a phenomenon whose ultimate end is to restructure the world into a small global village where every inhabitant of the village is supposed to interact freely and without hindrance. To achieve this obviously ambitious goal requires that all the inhabitants are prepared to gain new skills and or improve existing ones to meet the challenges of coping in the evolving global village. Here lies the connectivity of adult and lifelong learning to globalisation. More so education is generally seen to be vital for survival in global community. This fact is not lost on governments as measures including restructuring of the education sector to meet challenges of globalisation are being put in place to get them ready to function in the globalised economy.

Globalisation permeates all the aspects and facets of development in modern society so much so that it may not be an exaggeration to say that globalisation is development and development is globalisation. Whether in the economy, where globalisation is expected to remove barriers to trade and commerce as well as the resulting denationalisation of economies or its effect on international mobility of human resources and people generally, the influence of globalisation is felt in every aspect of human existence on daily basis and as such, no nation seems to have a choice than to participate in the race for globalisation. The influence of globalisation also extends to the area of governance which now sees the emergence of what Held et al., (1999) referred to as cosmopolitan governance, a democratic practice that arises “from and adapting to the diverse conditions and interconnections between different peoples and nations (Held et al., 1999, p. 2) and which makes it incumbent on countries to govern according to internationally prescribed rules and conventions. A typical example is the growing influence of transnational institutions like International Criminal Court (ICC) and International Non Governmental Organisations (like Amnesty International) in the affairs of nations over issues that were erstwhile seen as domestic and for which such states maintained a measure of control and autonomy. The only problem here is that most of these organisations tend to be more visible or are seen to be more active in developing countries particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. Global interdependence now seems to restrict the extent of domestic policy independence. This changing context of governance occasioned by globalisation has been recognised by the OECD (1995, p. 2) when it declares that “Globalisation has changed the context in which governments operate. Even traditionally domestic issues are increasingly influenced by international actors and international events that are beyond national governments’ ability to control, either individually or collectively”.
Driven by advances in information and communication technology (ICT), globalisation represents a shift towards global perspectives on issues affecting nations and breaking down of barriers of interactions among nations of the world (Walters, 1997). Every nation is expected to compete for space in the emerging global village to which globalisation is expected to turn the world to. Hence the domination of the space by nations with the wherewithal and, one of the reasons that probably informed the conclusion of some scholars (especially from Africa and other low income countries) who argue that globalisation may be [arguably] sheer imperialism or Americanisation (See Mojah, 2004; Nderitu, 2005 and Chang, 2008). Also in line with this position is the conclusion of Aina (1996) that in addition to presenting a new way for westernising the whole world, globalisation is a new face of capitalism which is now marked by laying a structure [arguably] for exploitation, wealth accumulation and inequality. As earlier stated, one may be tempted to agree with the likes of Aina and Mojah, Nderitu and others, the position being canvassed however sounds more of a product of emotive intuition and an extreme manifestation of imperialism phobia, which is akin to the popular African saying: 'throwing the baby with the bath water.

The issue of uneven access at starting point of the globalisation race remains a major concern for neo Marxist theorists and some other race participants as the race now seems like a wrestling competition between the ant and the elephants! At the starting point, countries within the global North have the economic resources and other requirements for success in the globalised world and are thus, more advantageously placed (politically, socially and even culturally) to excel in the race. Peter Jarvis has been more succinct on this position when he states that “the combination of the economic institution and information technology points us in the direction of where global power lies, since it lies in considerable part with those who control both” (Jarvis, 2007, p. 41). Though academics of neo-liberal orientation would want to persuade us to agree that globalisation presents a process of creating a village with a haven of opportunities for all, reality however points to the fact that unequal advantage of some nations at the starting point of the race for globalisation seems to create and continue to sustain what Oduaran (2000) described as unintended consequences of globalisation.

Though, the ‘unintended consequences’ of globalisation are of different dimensions but nothing presents greater threat to global peace and stability than the present upsurge in international terrorism. According to Cronin (2006, p. 30), “the current wave of international terrorism characterised by unpredictable and unprecedented threats from non state actors not only is a reaction to globalisation but is facilitated by it. Nigeria is presently having its share of international terrorism in the current Boko Haram malaise which seems to be getting out of control
Meeting the challenges of globalisation or containing the effects of its unintended consequences would require "an informed, literate and active citizenry [which] is only possible by bringing adult learning and education into the centre of policy and action, as a transversal agenda that cross-cuts policy domains and resource allocations (UNESCO, 2009, p. 1).

What all this goes to show is that whatever the goods and the gains of globalisation will require cultivation of knowledge to realise (Ali, 2000; Friedman 2000; Newman et al., 2005). As an economic oriented phenomenon, globalisation emphasises development of human capital. This is one area where the centrality of adult and lifelong education to globalisation comes into focus. It is in the area of skill acquisition and human resource development that the confluence between globalisation and adult and lifelong leaning will be better appreciated. The role of adult education in the development of modern nations has been well explained by the UNESCO Institute of Education (UIE) in its declaration at the Fifth International Conference on Adult-Education, Hamburg when it was declared that adult education is relevant "for fostering ecologically sustainable development, for promoting democracy, justice, gender equity, and scientific, social and economic development, and for building a world in which violent conflict is replaced by dialogue and a culture of peace based on justice" (UIE, 1997a, p. 1).

The import of the current wave of globalisation tendencies and the attendant economic and technological changes is that a culture of continuous or lifelong learning which will allow people access to new knowledge and skills required for participating in the knowledge economy has to emerge and assume a priority status in educational policy making across nations of the world and especially in sub Saharan Africa where the need for skill acquisition is more apparent. Hence the continuing relevance of adult and lifelong adult learning to development.

If adult and lifelong learning is so central to development and globalisation is all about development then adult and lifelong learning can only be one major vehicle that can be central to the attainment of the ideals of globalisation. However adult and lifelong learning can only be effective in performing the essential role of fostering a just and democratic society, providing unhindered access to learning and preparing adults to cope with the demands of living in a globalised world when both practitioners and academics in the field are not only conversant with the nature and ideals of globalisation. They must be willing to learn to act in a globalised world. The question becomes pertinent to ask: to what extent are adult education
practitioners and academics conversant with what globalisation entails and how ready are they to function and be effective in the emerging globalised community of practice?

This paper presents a report on a study designed to examine the understanding of globalisation and of its implication for policy, research and practice in adult and lifelong learning by stakeholders in adult education (scholars, students, administrators and field workers) in Nigeria. The aim here is to map out stakeholder understanding and compare it with literature understanding of the concept. In addition, the study seeks to assess the level of readiness of practitioners to function as professionals in the emerging global society.

The study is significant in many respects top of which is the opportunity it offers in filling the gap created by dearth of literature reporting empirical studies of globalisation in Nigeria. It needs be pointed out that the few available literature on globalisation have been mainly on examination of the opportunities and challenges it portends for the country (see Olaniyan and Obadara, 2006; Echezona et al., 2009). The few attempts that have been made to subject globalisation to empirical scrutiny are largely quantitative (see Ifedili et al., 2007). Efforts have really not been made to research the understanding of the meaning of globalisation by different stakeholders and the level of their readiness to practice in an environment of globalisation. A study of this nature has both domestic and international relevance as it will assist in revealing the existence of gaps (if any) between practitioners’ conception of globalisation and what the phenomenon entails in literature and even in practice.

Conceptions of globalisation in literature

Globalisation is one of the most debated and controversial concepts in the world. As Trebilcock (2005) would say, globalisation is one buzzword of our time without consensus on its meaning. It is continuously contested and as such globalisation remains one area where considerable intellectual energy has been (and is being) dissipated by scholars throughout the world. Globalisation is controversial because it touches virtually every domain of human life—economy, governance, culture, education and communication. As observed by Movious (2010, p. 6), only “few contemporary phenomena elicit such academic and political controversy as globalisation”. Like all controversial concepts, globalisation has been defined in various ways by various authors with each definition reflecting the ideological orientations of the authors in most cases. It needs be stated here that this presentation does not attempt to define globalisation or identify with any particular perspective in the explanation of globalisation. What follows is simply an attempt to explore the
understanding of globalisation by adult education stakeholders in Nigeria.

Globalisation "refers to the widening, deepening and speeding up of global interconnectedness" (Held et al., 1999). According to Giddens (1990, p. 64) globalisation is "the intensification of worldwide social relations, which links distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa". In globalised world, distance is no longer an obstacle or constraint to physical and social interactions as advances in ICT has now eroded all these barriers. Thus with globalisation there is growing homogenisation and uniformisation of the world to such an extent that the world is now becoming a village with individuals and nation states being compelled (by forces of globalisation) to take up a global identity. Advances in information and communication technology which is the major hallmark of the new globalisation has further enhanced the emergence of a world culture and a global economy. Stressing the centrality of communication technology to globalisation Giddens (1999, p.10) declares that “Globalisation is political, technological and cultural as well as economic. It has been influenced, above all, by developments in system of communication, dating back only to the late 1960s”. Culture interchange is made easy with internet, CD/DVD and cable TV facilities. One no longer have to be physically present in a country to interact with people of other culture. Though, this has also implied that the other side of cultures in all parts of the world is easily accessed and assimilated by people of other culture. A typical example here is the issue of terrorism which is now spreading to virtually every part of the world including Nigeria where it has virtually become a daily occurrence in some parts of the country.

Held and his colleagues have identified three perspectives in the explanation of globalisation. The three perspectives are: hyperglobalist, sceptics and transformationist. Though all the three perspectives agree on the fact that globalisation holds a determining influence on the future of the nation-state, each however canvases different status for the nation-state in the globalisation era. The hyperglobalist sees the world as entering a new global age that is marked by declining power of the nation state and eventual emergence of a global village. It is within this context that Beck (2000, p. 11) sees globalisation as “the processes through which sovereign nation states are criss-crossed and undermined by transnational actors with varying prospects of power, orientations, identities and networks”. Beck’s position accords with those of Held et al., (1999, p. 3) when they state that globalization is “a new epoch of human history in which traditional nation states have become unnatural, even impossible business units in a global economy”. Globalisation is thus a threat to the autonomy of the nation state as the emergence of a global culture will ultimately means erosion of the power and authority of the nation state to
exist in the traditional form. To the hyperglobalist, globalisation is real and its effect can be felt in all domains and dimensions of human interaction globally. The ultimate in hyperglobalist conception of globalisation is the emergence of the world with a global culture. This is the view being expressed by Roland Roberson, one of the early globalisation theorists who explained globalisation as "the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole" (Robertson, 1992, p. 8). The major problem of hyperglobalists perspective is that it is too simplistic and unilinear in the explanation of globalisation. Here one is wont to agree with the position of Giddens (1999) when he argued that globalisation should not be understood as a unilinear process but rather as a complex process which operate in different directions and as a result of which its impact is felt differently.

The sceptics doubt the realness of the present globalisation process and further asserts that there is nothing new in the globalisation agenda. The argument is that there has been globalisation before globalisation. As a matter of fact, the sceptics believe that globalisation was even at its peak during the golden era when states were required to subordinate their economic policy and administration to the international rules of the Gold Standard system (Gilping, 2000).

The present globalisation is thus a myth because the so called Multinational Corporations (MNCs) envisioned by globalisation are actually Transnational Corporations (TNC), according to (Hirst and Thompson, 1996). Contrary to the much vaunted claim by the hyperglobalist that trade has assumed a global dimension, the sceptics believe that the major remarkable feat recorded in the present globalisation experience is the integration of some few low income countries into the global economy and that what exists now is mainly regionalisation and not globalisation of trade. Even at this, globalisation is still considered to be less intensive and extensive now than it was in the 1800s when the reign of the market prevailed and all, including state actors were subjected to the dictate of the market forces (Gilping, 2000). The point here is that a process of integration has been in effect before it was interrupted by years of war and depression. The contemporary globalisation is thus only an attempt to re invent the past process of integration (Sachs and Warner, 1995). Much as this argument sounds plausible (at least on the premise of historical facts), the fact still remains that contemporary globalisation is more complex than the integration of the golden era especially with the current domineering influence of ICT in human existence.

The tranformationists offer a bridge between the hyperglobalist and the sceptics by recognising globalisation as the main force that dictates the tone of political, economic and social interactions in the world and at the same time emphasising the fact that the effect of globalisation is complex and contradictory. As a force
of change, all facets of international relations are being determined and shaped by
globalisation and as such a new a world order is emerging. Here Sassen (2003)
sees economic globalisation as a politico-economic process that is partly located
inside the nation states and which is capable of partly denationalising the compo-
nents of state work. Though accepts the reality of globalisation like the hyperglob-
alists, the point of departure here is that the transformationists view globalisation
as a complex process which is more contradictory than linear. According to Gil-
dens (1999, p.3) globalisation is “a complex set of processes, not a single one. And
these operate in a contradictory or oppositional fashion. … Globalisation not only
pulls upwards, it pushes downwards, creating new pressures for local autonomy”. 
This position is also supported by the National Defence University (NDU) when
it states that globalisation is transformational change and, as such its path should
not be linear and sequential (NDU, n.d.)

From our context discussions and brief exploration of literature, the following
five issues are clear about globalisation:

- Globalisation as a concept is associated with diverse meanings. The meaning
  of globalisation is thus multifarious.
- Globalisation is driven by information and communication technology
  (ICT). Good ICT environment is thus a necessary requirement for success
  in the globalisation age.
- The major features of globalisation include international trade liberalisa-
  tion, labour mobility, emergence of transnational corporation and organisa-
  tions as the dominating force that shape global economy.
- For our own purpose in this study, globalisation is refered to the global
  transformation and interconnectivity that shape economic, cultural, politi-
  cal, educational and communication activities and interactions on all levels
  and indeed—within and among nations of the world.

In summary, the major implication of globalisation is that it has altered the world
order in virtually all the facets of interaction at political, economic and social lev-
els. Whichever perspective one chooses to explain globalisation, it will always
come to show that it is a phenomenon no one can afford to ignore as its imprint is
virtually everywhere and in everything and visible at every moment.

The present study borrows from the world culture theory which explains glob-
alisation as a phenomenon that seeks to compress the world and intensify its con-
sciousness as a whole (Robertson, 1992). Located within the transformationist
understanding of globalisation, world culture theory sees the globalised world as
being cut in conflict between two occurring webs; integration versus harmony;
wholeness versus diversity and shared consciousness versus fragmentation. In the
understanding of world culture theorists, individual and nation state would have no choice than to join the globalisation race as it “involves comparative interaction of different forms of life” (Robertson, 1992, p. 27).

Country context and policy environment for adult and lifelong learning in Nigeria

Country Context

Nigeria occupies a land area of 923,768 kilometres and is situated between longitude 30 and 150 East, and latitude 40 and 140 North (CBN, 1998). A West African country with rich natural resources, the last census results released by the National Population Commission (NPC), shows that Nigeria population stands at one hundred and forty million (NPC, 2006) and this makes her the most populous country in Sub Saharan Africa. Nigeria is a country of diverse ethnic, religious and cultural orientation with the dominant ethnic groups being “Hausa/Fulani in the North, the Yoruba in the South-West, Igbo in the South-East and Ijaw in the South -South. In between these big ethnic groups are some 250 other smaller but very important ethnic groups speaking more than 300 languages and dialects” (National Commission for Mass Literacy, 2008, p. 10).

A country with rich natural resources, Nigeria is a major producer of crude oil and natural gas. This is apart from large deposits of some other non oil mineral resources like bitumen and gold as well as agricultural products. In spite of the abundant resources, the country still remains prominent in the league of country with high indicators of poverty. The latest statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reveals that poverty level in Nigeria has risen to about 71%. According to the Statistician General of the Federation (Head of NBS), “It remains a paradox … that despite the fact that the Nigerian economy is growing, the proportion of Nigerians living in poverty is increasing every year,” (Subair, 2012, p. 1) Quality of life of people has not been matched with the quantity of human and material resources at the disposal of the nation. This situation has continued to produce inequality and heighten discontent among the populace. The 0.47 human development index for 2007 ranks Nigeria as number 158 out of 177 countries and below Zimbabwe’s 0.51 (UNDP, 2007). The country did not fare any better in 2008 as HDR for the year observes a worsening inequality in the country (from 0.43 in 1985 to 0.49 in 2008) which ranks the country among those with highest level of inequality in the world. The report also revealed a growing poverty level which, in addition to being a manifestation of unequal distribution of income is also a product of differential access to education and training, basic infrastructures
and job opportunities (UNDP, 2007). These situations are exacerbated by corruption, ethnicity and religious fundamentalism. These situations continue to thwart the State’s efforts to address all the critical areas of concern in national development in the country.

Nigeria’s performance on most education indicators is not encouraging either. Literacy level is particularly discouraging for both youths and adults of both sexes. The report of the 2010 National Literacy Survey (NLS) jointly conducted by the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non Formal Education (NMEC) and the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) indicates that about 3 million representing 8.1% of children of primary school age had never attended any school while a million representing 3.2% of children of that age that ever attended school dropped out of school (NMEC and NBS, 2010). In Table 1.0 below, the youth and adult literacy rates for male and female for year 2010 are presented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Literacy in English</th>
<th>Literacy in any Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male (%)</td>
<td>Female (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>81.0</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>50.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Average</td>
<td>73.0</td>
<td>61.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from National Literacy Survey, 2010.

As indicated in the table, the male fares better than female in all the literacy indicators and this is for both youth and adult. The survey also reveals that the rates are higher for urban dwellers than those in rural areas. These rates can be considered particularly low especially in a country where only 16.7% of adults and children infected with advanced HIV have awareness of antiretroviral therapy and were receiving treatment as at 2008 while only 21.6% of HIV positive pregnant women were on antiretroviral therapy to reduce mother-to-child transmission in 2010 (National Agency for the Control of AIDS, 2010). The literacy rates would sound more alarming when considered against the findings of NLS on adult literacy rates in English Language—the national language and the language of wider interaction in the country. According to the NLS, the national adult literacy rate in English Language stands at 57.9% with the rate for male standing at 65.1% and female 50.6%.
Adult and lifelong learning policy in Nigeria

The Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) has put in place a National Policy on Education (NPE) which is the main policy document that spells out government aims and philosophy on education and the strategies for achieving them. The policy document is a product of several activities including the 1969 curriculum conference and the subsequent National Education Conference Policy which was convened in 1973 (Fafunwa, 1974). The policy was finally published in 1977 and had gone through several reviews (1981, 1987, 1998 and 2004). One theme runs through the initial document and subsequent reviews and that is the acceptance of the education as "an instrument for national development [and] to this end, the formulation of ideas, their integration for national development, and the interaction of persons and ideas are all aspects of education (FGN, 2004, p. 1).

Though education is on concurrent legislative list in Nigeria which means both State and Federal Government can legislate on it, the NPE however provides the framework and benchmark to all education activities and programmes in the country. Envisaging the emergence of globalisation, education in Nigeria is regarded as a tool to “promote inter-African solidarity and world peace through understanding” and among others, the national philosophy of education is based on the provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school system (FGN, 2004, pp. 1-2).

The education policy contains thirteen sections with each section addressing key aspect or issue in education service delivery. Section six is devoted to issues concerning mass literacy, adult and non formal education. There is also section nine which addresses related area of open and distance education. The adult education policy is itself derived from Section 18 of the constitution which makes it mandatory on the government to provide:

1. Free, Compulsory and Universal Primary Education.
2. Free Adult Literacy Programmes among others to its citizenry as means of eradicating illiteracy in the country and
3. Free Secondary Education *(Constitution of the FRN, Section 18)

As stated in the NPE, adult and non formal education includes "all forms of functional education given to youths and adults outside the formal school system, such functional literacy, remedial and vocational education (FGN, 2004, p. 19). The main thrust of the policy measures is to use functional literacy and continuing edu-
cation as a strategy for widening access and participation in education for adults and youths who either have never been participated in the formal education system or dropped out before completion of primary education. Adult education is also about social inclusion as it is also the intention of the policy to use adult and non formal education as a tool for reaching out to the excluded groups. Among the excluded groups in this regard are people with disability, nomads and other migrant families as well as disadvantaged gender. Despite the existence of three broad categories of providers (government, private sector and non governmental organisations) in the implementation of adult and lifelong education in Nigeria (Garuba, 2007), the major issue still remains that of access. Top on the access issue is exclusion of adults from learning. A considerable size of adult population is still excluded from learning opportunities. Of particular interest to us here is awareness of the existence of literacy programme in the country which, as revealed by the National Literacy Survey (NLS) is low with only 30.2% of adult population being aware of existence of any literacy programme while only 32.5% had information on the existence of literacy centre.

Another major access issue in adult and lifelong education, which, of course is both a cause and effect of the exclusion is poverty. In Nigeria, poverty has now assumed an alarming proportion with “more and more people getting access to poverty rather than education” (Amzata, 2010, p. 55).

**Methodology**

This paper reports on an exploratory study designed to map out the views on globalisation from different stakeholders in adult and lifelong education in Nigeria. The stakeholders are categorised into four main groups of academics, students, administrators and field workers. A total of twenty practitioners in adult and lifelong learning were taken as the participants in the study. The participants include five literacy facilitators who constituted the field workers, five academics, seven students and three administrators, all from one of the states in the North Central zone of Nigeria. This is based on Corder (2002) classification of adult education practitioners into three categories of field workers, programmes directors (administrators) and professional (academics). The only addition here is the adult education students who were included as separate group because of their particular relevance to the theme of this study. The procedure for data collection include the use of interview and focus group discussion. Interview sessions were conducted with all the academics, the literacy facilitators and the administrators while a focused group discussion (FGD) was held with students who are final year students offering a course titled “globalisation and adult education in Africa”. The
FGD took place in the first day of lecture on the course. The gender distribution of the participants in the study is shown in table 2 below:

**Table 2: Gender distribution of study participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Groups</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Workers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>14 (70%)</td>
<td>3 (30%)</td>
<td>20 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fourteen representing 70% of the total twenty participants in the study are male. There were no female among the academics and the administrator groups while three out of the seven students were female and two out of the three field workers were male. The academics in the study were junior lecturers from a particular department of adult and community development of the same university and there is no female lecturer in the department of seven members.

**Research Questions**

The following five questions were posed to guide the conduct of the study and presentation as well as analysis of the findings:

1. What is adult education practitioners’ conceptions of globalisation and how do they compare in their conceptions of globalisation?
2. What is the adult education practitioners’ perception of the implication of globalisation on adult education policy in Nigeria?
3. How prepared are adult education practitioners for participation as professionals in the emerging global society?
4. What new skills do Adult Education Practitioners believe they need for their effective functioning in era of globalisation?
5. What are the major fears being entertained by Adult Education Practitioners about Globalisation?
Findings and analysis

The presentation of findings and analysis that follow are guided by the research questions stated above.

Conceptions of globalisation

The focus here is on mapping the understanding of globalisation by adult and lifelong learning practitioners. To this end, participants were asked to explain their understanding of globalisation. The major question asked both at interview and FGD interactions was: what do you understand by globalisation? The responses vary from a simple ‘I don’t know’ to ‘a process designed to ensure interconnectivity among people of the world irrespective of location’. A further analysis of the responses reveal that (as expected) the academics are more informed about globalisation than other groups as their responses were more in tandem with literature understanding of the concept while responses from majority of the field workers indicate low understanding of the concept. As a matter of fact, one of the field workers bluntly stated that he had never come across the word. This calls for further explanation of what the concept entails to some of the participants particularly the field workers. One of the academics claimed he had written a paper on globalisation and adult education in Nigeria. The students also displayed some measures of understanding of the concept. However, two out of the three students disclosed that it was in preparation for the course on globalisation and adult education that they decided to search the internet for literature on globalisation. Reference was made by all the groups of stakeholders to the impact of internet and other ICT structures which have continued to dominate all spheres of human interactions and commitment and without which, they believe, things might not work as expected. The example of GSM [mobile phone] was cited especially how difficult it would have been for people to interact without it.

Perceptions of impact of globalisation on policy and practice of adult and lifelong learning

Three critical issues are addressed here. The first is on participants’ perception of impact of globalisation on adult and lifelong learning policy and their practice as professionals while the second relates to their assessment of how globalisation compliant is the policy environment of adult and lifelong learning in Nigeria and third focused on the specific role of adult and lifelong learning in the globalisation era. To address the first issue, participants were asked to state the opportunities they think globalisation offer them as Nigerian professionals in adult and lifelong learning. Student par-
Participants believe that globalisation allows them to access materials from the internet and that access to the internet has reduced their expenses on books. This opinion is also shared by the academics who also emphasised opportunities like contact with colleagues from other countries being easy than before and possibility of having their works published internationally also being enhanced by globalisation. The academics also get information about conferences and workshops in other countries easily in this era of globalisation. However, only one academic made reference to improvement in teaching ability as opportunity which globalisation offers. For the administrators the major gain is also in access to information about practice in other countries. The field workers also feel globalisation will improve their practice if only they were prepared professionally to meet the challenges. Specifically they would need to be ‘computer literate’ in order to be able to communicate with other people and prepare their reports. The field workers also believes globalisation will help them improve their ability to facilitate well and teach learners better.

Generally, it appears the participants believe that globalisation is real and that there is the need for all professionals especially adult and lifelong learning practitioners to be fully prepared to practice in a global environment. Like the transformationist, there is a display of cautious optimism on the influence of globalisation on their professional practice as the feeling of self inadequacy in the face of competition appears intense among the participant in the study.

In terms of policy environment, most of the participants do not think the present policy on adult and lifelong learning is deficient or incapable of furthering their practice in this era of globalisation, the major problem is for the government to have the political will to implement the policy as designed. This seems to confirm the conclusion of Garuba (1998, p. 193) that “the fact that Nigerian education policy has suffered some implementation setbacks may not be strange to anybody who is conversant with happenings in the nation’s education system but the most worrying aspect of it is that the setback has been somehow pronounced in the areas of continuing education … with most of the provisions in the area remaining on the pages of the policy document”. One of the academics made specific reference to the implementation of basic education law in the country which tends to de emphasise adult literacy education. Here the field workers were also forthcoming as they called for regular training and capacity building to enable them ‘teach well’. The response by Abu (not real name), one of the facilitators is quite relevant here.

"I am only a school cert holder. The Local Government employed me to teach adult education class. I need training in adult education"
Adult Education Practitioners’ Conceptions of Globalisation

so that I can have knowledge on how to teach adult” — Abu.

The experience of Abu in this interview is another case of policy breach. The policy is clear on who should be a facilitator. Where people like Abu who do not have requisite training in adult literacy education is employed, at least an ad hoc training programme should be organised for them.

One common theme runs through all the responses of participants on the role of adult education in the globalisation era and that is to improve the skills of adult learners whether in adult basic literacy or continuing education classes. The facilitators would want the curriculum of adult literacy classes improved to accommodate teaching and learning of basic computer skills.

Readiness of adult educator for practice in the era of globalisation

To determine readiness for practice, such areas as computer literacy and access to computer; contact and mode of contact with colleagues especially from outside the country and; participation in international conference/meeting from outside the country (including virtual participation). About 50% of the participants can be considered computer literate. Literacy here is defined in terms of ability to boot a computer and key in text material using word processors. Three, representing (65%) of the academics can be considered computer literate while only two own laptops. None of the field workers is computer literate while two out of three administrators are computer literate but none has own computer. Only one of the students is computer literate; two have laptops. One of each of the academics and administrators has regular contact outside the country and the mode of contact has been through emailing. Majority (60%) of the academic participants have email address while one of them could not use email without assistance. Only two academics and one administrator could browse the internet without assistance. All the students require assistance to browse the internet while two of them have own email address. One of the academics has had his email box blocked for irregular use.

Participation in international conferences outside the country has been by only one of the academic participants while only one of the participants understands what virtual conference participation entails. It is only one academic participant that has ever used Skype and he uses it to interact with members of his family.

Skills required for practice as professionals in the era of globalisation

All the participants call for capacity building in ICT to enhance their effectiveness
as professionals in the era of globalisation. The participants also called for special intervention by government to provide them with laptops. The academics and administrators stressed the importance of providing them with more opportunities to participate in international conferences in order to make contact with colleagues. In addition, the academics would also want enhanced access to the internet.

Fears about globalisation

The relevant question here is: what fears do stakeholders have about Globalisation? The field workers feel their children are easily exposed to inappropriate habits and foreign culture. This is also shared by majority of the administrators and some of the academics. However, students did not make any reference to it. This fear may be understood especially against the background of the fact that one of the essence of the present globalisation is [arguably] to reshape cultural identity of people in new form especially when considered against the emergence of the global citizen concept. For instance, Hull (1996) and Hoogvelt (1997) have revealed how people have been transformed through migration and diaspora formation to take on new ethnicities. There is also this sense of competition that is palpable among academic. The fear here is that while they are operating from a deficient environment, their works are exposed to and compared with those of colleagues from other developed world. The low awareness and access to ICT is another fear among the academics as they feel this will limit the extent to which they can compete globally. This tends to reinforce a widely held opinion especially among scholars (like Jarvis, 2007) and more especially, others from low income countries that globalisation is not being played on a level playing field.

Limitations and policy implications

A sizeable number of adults in this study are still not literate in the context of modern conception of the term and in the present era of social, political and economic interactions that is more informed by interconnectivity. There is a critical question here; how do we ensure that domestic adult learners are equipped to function effectively in a global society that is dominated by information and communication technology. The problem is more compounded for the country by the fact that those who are supposed to assist these adults are either not adequately informed on globalisation or entertaining some fears about this global interconnection. This then goes to show that Nigerian adult educator needs to be more equipped to practice in the modern day of globalisation. Practitioners would need
further exposure and interactions with colleagues and institutions in other cultures in order to be more effective in addressing international challenges associated with practising in a globalised age.

The findings of the study has contributed to existing literature by revealing the understanding of globalisation by Nigerian adult education practitioners, the small size and scope of the study however call for caution in the generalisation of the results. The sample was from one out of thirty six states in the Nigerian federation and a federal capital territory and all the academics are from only one university while the administrators work in the same organisation. This means that the participants may be affected by factors specific to their environment of works.

The findings have defined the need for a restructure of policy environment and implementation of adult education to ensure sound orientations and preparation of practitioners to meet challenges of globalisation. To this end, the paper will like to offer the following suggestions:

Adult education practitioners need to improve their ICT knowledge and competence and be able to integrate technologies into design and delivery of adult literacy curriculum especially now that the internet is a major gateway for access and participation in the emerging global village. Though access remains a major issue in ICT in the country, but with increasing availability of modem and other internet browsing facilities from virtually all the GSM [mobile phone service] providers, the issue would move from availability to capacity and affordability. The government may want to consider creating a special intervention fund for ICT in education and embarking on serious attempt to bridge the capacity gap.

Related to the above is the need to encourage more collaboration between local institutions and their counterpart from advanced countries. Here, adult education institutions from advanced countries have a role to assist local institutions especially in the area of ICT and capacity building.

The major issue in adult and lifelong education policy making as argued by participant in this study is the widening gulf between policy provision and implementation. Constant policy shifts has remained a major bane of Nigeria education. For instance, in the last three years, Nigeria has had not less than four different Ministers of Education with each coming with his/her policy direction or interpretation of existing policy. The government will have to demonstrate readiness to implement its own policy and remove all inhibitions to effective implementation of adult and lifelong learning policy in the country. Of recent, the Minister of Education inaugurated a committee to revitalise the adult and lifelong learning sector. The Committee has made significant recommendations which, if included in the Government White Paper that is being awaited, will go a long way in repositioning the sector to meet the challenge of globalisation.
There is the need to move away from the present primer based model of literacy education and learning to a social literacy model with its emphasis on relevant literacy. The focus should be on literacy that is relevant to the immediate and future needs of the adults and not mere mechanic process of acquiring ability to read and write as we have it at present. The major issue here is that of personnel preparation and training in adult and lifelong learning. The starting point will have to be the curriculum of adult education institutions which will need to be restructured. For instance there is the need to deemphasise the present curricular arrangement in university adult education in Nigeria which appears more academic than practice oriented. As reported by all the participant groups in the study, there should be more emphasis on ICT literacy in adult education curriculum. The present arrangement where ‘Introduction to Computer’ forms only a part of the General Studies course in University undergraduate adult programme cannot equip students enough to function in a world dominated by ICT. Relatedly, a computer ownership scheme will have to be designed by adult education institutions for academics and students. This will serve to increase computer access and competence among practitioners.

Conclusions

This study explores the conception of globalisation by different categories of practitioners in Nigerian adult and non formal education. The findings have indicated that practitioners have some measures of understanding of globalisation and what it takes to practice in a globalised environment. Though the extent of familiarity with the concept varies across stakeholders with academics displaying a higher level of understanding and familiarity with the concepts, the findings from this study have however shown that the practitioners are willing to adapt to the changing demands of globalisation. What is needed from the Nigerian State is an enabling policy environment that is complemented by strong government support and readiness to implement its own policies.

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