

The Effects of Globalization on African Culture

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Abstract: For several decades, globalization has increasingly become a fascinating topic. It is a concept that aims at making the world a global community through interconnectedness and mutual interdependent relationships among participating nations. It is believed that through this global connectivity, ideas and information will become easily accessible to people anywhere in the world. However, some scholars (mostly of the African extraction) have divergent views. They argued that the extension of globalization to Africa has negative effects on cultural values. Using the method of analysis, this paper examined the concept of globalization and its impact on African culture. The researcher argued that globalization should not be discredited totally as it has inherent tools necessary for socio-political and economic development. The paper therefore articulated ways for Africans to retain their cultural identity in the process of global integration.

Keywords: Culture, Globalization, Values

1. Introduction

Globalization aims at making the world a global community. In practice, this aim has been achieved as politics, culture and economic ideas are accessed and exchanged globally without crossing borders. It has also made it possible for business transactions to strive globally without people stepping out of their immediate environment. Nevertheless, globalization even with its salient features is perceived by some scholars as a deceptive means of disintegrating cultural values in Africa. To this end, this study will examine whether the above claim is the case by exploring the impact of globalization on African culture, its effects and consequences.

2. Conceptual clarification

Globalization: This refers to the “process of change which underpin a transformation in the organization of human affairs by linking together and expanding human activity across regions and continents” (Held et al, 1999 cited in Scheurman, 2018) It is an ideology that moves “around international economics and political regime and supposed to have emerged out of consensus of national governments and the elites of the world” (Chesnais, 2004 cited in Tijan, 2011).

3. Culture

Culture is commonly seen as people’s way of life. It is embedded in normative principles that regulate people’s behaviours and beliefs. In the African sense, it is perceived as “a total way of life that embraces what people ate and what they

wore; the way they walked and the way they talked; the manner in which they treated death and greeted new-born” (Rodney, 1972).

Values: Values imply those criteria which determine a thing desirable, important and worthwhile. It means a standard or ethical principle to conform to in making judgments of right or wrong. In the African sense, values are perceived as the norms that are shared by group of people with respect to one another’s behaviour (Okediadi, 2008).

4. African culture and the effects of globalization

African culture is rich and value loaded. It is a culture rooted in communal interest. Hence, everyone belongs to all and every one draws his/her identity from all. It is a culture of hospitality. For this reason, strangers are valued and received warmly. This warm reception is still valued till date. This is why Africans are friendly to foreigners (Ekwuru, 2011) However, some scholars argued that the extension of globalization to Africa has affected these cultural norms and has over time lessen the effectiveness of cultural identities of developing nations(Chulu,2015) Regarding economic growth, its application has discouraged locally made goods by infecting the people with the notion that foreign products are of high quality than locally manufactured goods because of fascinating TV advertisements that promote these products. These products are sold at cheaper rate than those produced by local manufactures compelling them to go out of business (Manenji, 1998) Globalization instead of making Africa to be recognized in the global economy, regrettably its acceptance has crippled economic growth in Africa (Nissanke and Thorbecke, 2008). Regarding the effect of globalization on African indigenous language, Negash (2005) frowned at the eroding of African language across the continent due to western influence.

He opined that:

Indigenous African languages are largely eliminated, and marginalized from use. Instead of investigating in and using their linguistic, cultural, and human potential, African governments and the elite still continue to channel away their resources and energies into leaning ‘imperial’ languages that are used by a tiny minority of populations.

The above situation has become worrisome as the younger generation tend to be proficient in speaking foreign languages than their native languages. In most African nations, foreign languages are the major means of communication. In schools,

parents prefer their children to communicate in foreign languages. It is feared that such a development may make indigenous African languages to go into extinction in the future. According to Leonard (2005) “the united Nations estimates half of the world’s estimated 6000 languages will disappear in less than a century. Roughly a third of those are spoken in Africa...”

However, some scholars argued differently. They identified globalization as a key mechanism that promotes global economy through inventions such as social network and cellular network. These service innovations have enabled international business to strive like never before as “trade has grown remarkably in transforming the global economy over the last two centuries” (Esteban, Diana and Max, 2014). Globalization has also promoted world peace and friendship. Nations through global interests depend on each other for augmentation of world happiness and prevention of harm. It is in the spirit of globalization that nations condemn and participate actively in the fight against terrorism which in recent times is seen as a hydra-headed monster threatening peaceful human co-existence (Singh, 2006). In addition, it has helped people to receive quality services from experts abroad by removing barrier that hinders global connectedness (Duncan, 2018). Furthermore, colonialism which is a form of globalization has made it possible for people to speak foreign languages proficiently (Bayer, 2001).

5. Conclusion

Having examined various opinions of scholars on the effect of globalization on African culture, there is no gainsaying that the import of globalization has on one side aided development in Africa and on the other hand has adverse effect on cultural values through exchange in culture. It is sad to note that Africans no longer appreciate the beauty of some cultural values that make them unique.

However, the impact of globalization in promoting global friendship, trade, financial investment, security and good governance cannot be over emphasized. In other words, Africans stand to benefit more if they key in to the global ideology and integrate sound values it has to offer and the same time protect and retain sound values in African culture that make Africa the envy of the world.

6. Recommendations

This paper recommends the following measures that should be adopted for African culture to maintain its relevance in the face of global influence:

- Africans should design a school curriculum that will reintegrate sound moral cultural values and skills which Africa is known for before the colonial conquest.
- In tertiary institutions, disciplines on African culture should attract low tuitions.

- Cyber operators should be monitored and websites that corrupts the mind should not be accessed by all, especially teens and young adults.
- In the past, television stations have days they project to viewers’ cultural dances and traditions in Africa. Such programmes should be aired daily as this will awaken the consciousness of the younger generations to the values in the African culture.
- The government and custodians of culture should meet regularly to evaluate cultural practices in Africa and put an automatic stop to cultures that are fetish, barbaric and baseless.
- Africans should value their identity and be proud of who they are anywhere.

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