The Role of Democracy and Good Governance Education in a Globalized Environment: Implications for Sustainable Development

Salihu Ibrahim

Abstract

Democracy has assumed such a global recognition that nations not practicing it are seen as uncivilized. Similarly, governance has in more recent times become of greater concern to the governed. However, the practice of democracy and governance is faced with the serious challenge of poverty of proper and adequate education in our society hence the inability for sustainable development. Literatures on the twin concepts of democracy and governance as well on globalization and education abound but non-directly treat the subject as a topic of unique discussion. This paper aims at discussing the importance of a globalized education for democracy and governance for the purpose of sustainable development of our society. The research is designed based on qualitative method and data is collected from both primary and secondary sources. An oral semi-structured interview with five people is conducted and information gathered is corroborated with the secondary data obtained majorly from the internet and libraries. The research is significant as it sheds light on the need to educate our political environment on democracy and governance. It will contribute to existing works on political education. It will also sensitize the public on the meaning and nature of democracy and governance.

Keywords: Democracy, role, governance, environment.

Introduction

Gross poverty of education has inhibited on our perception, conception and practice of democracy and governance. The word democracy is probably one of the most commonly used in public parlance. Traditionally, it is defined as government of the people by the people and for the people (Tansey and Jackson, 2008). Governance is popularly viewed as "trendy but complicated term that can be used in diverse ways (Rhodes, 1996). The twin terms democracy and governance have become erroneously misused and to a large extentaffected the ways we practice them. This is simply due to lack of education which is the means through relative change in behaviour of people can be inculcated. The major challenge for our society has to a large extent been that 68% of the (Nigerian) populace is still ignorant of what democracy and governance mean. It is a common thing that large portion of the society has become Politian because it is presumed that we are in a democratic era in which as defined above is a government of the people… Therefore, people talk carelessly, behaves in uncultured manner, and above all dabble into the affairs of governance senselessly. Rule of law which is a major tenet of democracy is eroded thereby presenting the picture of a society of political barbarians characterized by old and young restiveness and disregard for the established law and order of the state.

This paper aims at discussing the importance of a globalized education on democracy and governance for the purpose of sustainable development of our society. Education is the forum via which socialization takes place. An enlightened society is a more advanced one than that which is not. It is not only by going into the four corners of the classroom that one becomes educated even

through the informal means such can be achieved. However, educating the populace on what they most cherish to do is of great imperative.

Literature on democracy (Tansey and Jackson, 2008: Garner, Ferdinand and Lawson, 2012; Tilly, 2007; Mounk, 2018; Dahl,2020)and governance (Anthony Anghie, 2000; Katsamunska 2016) as concepts are profuse but on the subject of globalized education for sustainable development is still fallow.Galang (2018) defined globalized educationis a broader focus on the attitude, values, challenges, similarities and differences of other cultures and how we're all interdependent on one another. At the end of receiving a global education, the hope is to have developed globally competent people who can appreciate different cultures, embrace other perspectives and be successful and responsible global citizens.It is education that opens the eyes and minds of people to realities of the globalized world and awakens them to bring about a world of greater justice, equity and human right for all (http://www.iuventum.org/download/GE.pdf). Policy makers, educators and administrators as well as the general public will find it valuable.

Conceptual Framework

The term democracy has been conceptualized variously by both individuals, society, institutions and even regions. This has produced many types ofdemocracy, and their diverse practices which have produce a similarly varied set ofeffects. The specific form democracy takes is dependent upon acountry's socioeconomic conditions as well as its well-established statestructures and policy practices (Schmitter& Karl, 1991). It is a set of institution build around the competitive election/selection that enables all adult citizens to choose and remove their government leaders (Stoker, 2006). Salihu (2022) defined democracy as the periodic election of political public office holders for a constitutionally approved period of time.

To the Western world (Europe & America) the concept of democracy is synonymous with freedom and that has been acculturated in their histories since the 18th and 18th centuries revolutions down to the 20th transformations in the Spanish and Italian politics (Hoover, Sabouratam and Schouenborg, 2011). In the words of Tansy and Jackson (2008) competitive free election alongside free economy in some sense therefore become background for a modern state and it is the combination of representative democracy and capitalism that is often referred to as liberal democracy. Tansey and Jackson further stressedthat in Europe, for instance, members of the European Union are all in practice of these types of democracy and those states that have intension to join must be committed to democracy, free market capitalism and a minimum standard of social policy. Modern political democracy is therefore, a system of governance in which rulersare held accountable for their actions in the public realm by citizens, acting indirectly through the competition and cooperation of their electedrepresentatives (Schmitter& Karl, 1991).

Governance is another commonly but wrongly used word that equally lacks rigid definition and can be used in a variety of ways (Rhodes, 1996). It according to Keman (2002) refers to the process of making collective decisions that have biding significance. This could encompass decision making in our market, by network of voluntary co-operation and bargaining by government. Most commonly, it emphasizes the implementation of public policy through network of organizations (Rhodes, 1996). Kooiman, Bavinck, Jentofi and Pullin (2005) opined that the term was in use even before the World

Bank popularized it in the 1990s with the introduction of the norm "good governance" to international development. Consequently, it became a focal concept in scholarly works emphasizing the role of other actors other than the state in governing at local, national and international level.

The term governance has different meanings for different people. In many cases, this revolves around the perceived role of the state (Kooiman, Bavinck, Jentofi and Pullin, 2005). They maintained that government have often failed in their promises and expectations thus resulting in the analysis of weak, unstable, or failed state. The scholars defined governance as:

> the whole of public as well as private interaction taken to solve societal problems and create societal opportunities. It includes the formulation and application of principle guiding those interaction and care for institutions that enables them.

From this definition it is clear that interaction is an important part of governance hence the involvement of different actors in the process of removing obstacles in human life. Thus, arise the question of good governance which World Bank (1989) viewed as a concept closely connected to World Bank's efforts to express political rejuvenation in terms of increasing political legitimacy as a precondition for sustainable development. Education is central to human capital development, it is traditionally defined as whatever happens to a man from the time of his birth to death (Farrant, 1977). It is also referred to as the process of receiving or gaining organized instruction, especially in a formal school setting. Barry (2022) defined education as a purposeful activity directed at achieving certain aims, such as transmitting knowledge or fostering skills and character traits.

The aims of education are sometimes categorized into epistemic goods, like; knowledge and understanding, skills like; rationality and critical thinking, and character traits, like; kindness and honesty (Lani, 2016). Some theorists focus on one overarching purpose of education and see the more specific aims as means to this end (Robin, 1981). This can take the form of socialization, in which accumulated knowledge is transmitted from one generation to the next with the goal of helping the student function as a regular citizen in society. To this effect it is understandable that education by whatever means or type is central to acquisition of requisite knowledge, skill and character for attaining meaningful or desired life in the society.

Globalization is the process of international integration arising from the exchange of world views, products, ideas, and other aspect of culture. Salihu (2014) puts it as the process that have to do with the increase in world-wide exchanges of national and cultural resources. The world has become a global village as such interdependence in terms of knowledge, skill and culture is a common phenomenon. The knowledge of such globalized modern culture like democracy has therefore become imperative in our lives.

Sustainable development is one of the 21st century concepts popularized by theUN and World Bank through the MDG platform. Sustainable development has been defined as that which satisfies the needs of the present without conceding needs of the future (Brundtland, 1987). For Aina (1992) and Banerjee (2002) it is the process by which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investment and orientation of technological development and institutional changes are all in harmony and enhance both present and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations. Zakariah (2002)

observed that sustainable developmentattempts to reconcile economic growth and environmental maintenance.

Theoretical Construct

The question of democratic education is particularly relevant in our momentdespite the different historical and philosophical accounts of democracy, existing Western democracies have their roots in both liberalism and democracy (Macpherson, 1977). Liberalism is often defined as a political doctrine that aimsto guarantee separation of powers, individual liberty, and the rule of the law. Democracy is more frequently associated with equality and popular sovereignty.

In liberal democracy, the liberal and the democratic tradition merge. From thisperspective, democracy is both morally and instrumentally appealing. It offersdignity to its citizens and it is often advantageous in terms of providing stability, prosperity, and peace (Runciman, 2018). During the better part of the 20th century, democracyor more accurately, liberal democracywas offered as a universal aspiration. After, the democratic crisis of the 1930s (Runciman, 2018), differentinternational organizations such as the United Nations (UN)unequivocally committed themselvesto the promotion and defense of democratic values and practices (UnitedNations, 2005) and this obligation spread following the end of the Cold War. Atthe close of the 20th Century, approximately half of the population lived under therule of some form of electoral democratic system (Isakhan&Stockwell, 2012).

The links between democracy and education are implicit in most historicaland philosophical accounts of democracy. The theoretical founders of liberaldemocracy conceived education to be instrumental for the ideal society in whichcitizens would develop their own potential (Barber, 1994). This conception hada strong influence in the design of worldwide education systems, particularly inthe universalization and the purposes of formal education (Biesta, 2007). After Dewey inaugurated the debate on "Democracy and Education", thestruggle for democratic education has been central to key approaches and philosophiesof education such as child-centered and critical pedagogies. The questionof democratic education has expanded to the extent that education as adiscipline is shaped by questions such as: Who, in a democratic society, shoulddecide educational policies? (Gutmann, 1996) And what would a democraticcurriculum look like? (Apple, 2011).

Democratic education scholars currently draw on these previous debates toexamine potential "antidotes" to present challenges. Different versions of democraticeducation permeate educational scholarship, suggesting possible ways inwhich education could address democratic threats and/or contribute to the democratizationof countries. With different (and sometimes competing) democraticaspirations in mind, democratic educators examine and make recommendationsfor educational policy and practice. Also, perhaps in a long time, critical voiceshave been raised against democratic education and its contemporary perils (Pennington, 2014).

The elitist version of democratic education is linked to elitist discourses ofdemocracy. Advocates of democratic elite theory follow Joseph A. Schumpeter's and Walter Lippmann's understandings of elitist democracy (Buck &Geissel, 2009; Fallace, 2016), and propose that politics should be inthe hands of a small elite who would guarantee the stability of democratic societies. In this perspective,

elites are conceived as more politically activeand, consequently, to have a greater understanding and commitment to democraticvalues (Ho, 2012).

Educational Consequences

Generally, authors describe two different forms of democratic education:one orientated to the elites and another orientated to the masses. Liberalism is likely the most powerful discourse shaping the meaning ofdemocratic education. Liberal democracy is often considered to be the dominantversion of democracy (Carr, 2008). Liberal democracy functions as atacit social contract between individuals and the state in which representativenessand plurality are key features (Buck &Geissel, 2009; Schoeman, 2006).As elitists, liberals argue for the division of society into those who govern andthose who are governed (Feu, Serra, Canimas, Làzaro, &Simó-Gil, 2017);however, in contrast to elitist views, they defend the equality of citizens as thestarting point and affirm the primacy of the individual over the social (Walzer,2012).Liberals privilege freedom over any other democratic value (Buck &Geissel,2009; Walzer, 2012). The question of freedom, however, is controversial evenwithin this framework. Democratic educators often use Isaiah Berlin's distinctionbetween negative and positive liberty (Alexander, 2007; Carleheden, 2006; Covaleskie, 2006). Elitists recommend different educational practices for students conditionedby the social role that each student will pursue. For instance, in Singapore, three distinctive citizenship programs exist, one for the elite of cosmopolitanleaders, one for mid-level workers, and one for "local" followers (Ho, 2012).

Educational Implications of Proponents of liberal democratic education include Duarte (2016), Msila (2013) and Şanlı and Altun (2015). For them, education is essential for political, epistemological, and moral reasons. Political equality can only be guaranteed in asociety of knowledgeable and rational citizens, and so democracy demands theuniversalization of education (Msila, 2013) to guarantee equal opportunities ofself-realization (Belcastro, 2015). Mass schooling policies worldwide, currentlyacknowledged in the Declaration of Human Rights and in the UNESCO'sEducation For All program (Okoth&Anyango, 2014), have (at least partially) their roots on this conception (Duarte, 2016).

Liberal educators also advocate for an education for democratic citizenshipbased on knowledge and reason (Biesta, 2007; Gibson & Grant, 2012). In termsof knowledge, liberal educators worldwide recommend that students shouldacquire knowledge of democratic institutions and procedures. Particularly, theyemphasize knowledge of local and national political and juridical systems andgovernments (Biseth, 2009; Burgh &Yorshansky, 2011; Sabia, 2012; Walzer,2012), of democratic values (Sabia, 2012), and of individuals' rights and duties (Gibson & Grant, 2012; Waghid, 2009). Liberal educators also recommend thatstudents study the history of democratic institutions and practices (Burgh &Yorshansky, 2011; Gibson & Grant, 2012; Walzer, 2012) and examine the potentialstrengths and weakness of democratic systems when compared with otherforms of government (Biseth, 2009). Cosmopolitan liberals advocate the need fora cosmopolitan democratic education that examines the ethical basis of humanrights (Aguilar & Molina Zavaleta, 2012; Ho et al., 2011). History and social studiesare identified as subjects that are particularly helpful for these examinations (Duarte, 2016; Gibson & Grant, 2012; Şanlı&Altun, 2015).

Rational citizens, in this liberal framework, also require the ability to thinkcritically (Abowitz&Harnish, 2006; Duarte, 2016). Since social ills are consideredto arise from irrational living (Sibbett, 2016), the content of democraticeducation programs, Şanlı and Altun (2015) argue,"Should be based on scientifictruths and should reflect scientific knowledge correctly" (p. 5).Liberaleducators recommend that teachers should focus on helping students develop anability to weigh evidence, evaluate views and potential truths, detect contradictions,form and articulate opinions, and respond to those who disagree (Abowitz&Harnish, 2006). Educating these critical thinking abilities becomes an educationalpurpose across all curricular areas including mathematics education (Aguilar & Molina, 2012).

Methodology

The research is designed based on qualitative method which is a study result expressed from a non-numerical perspective Creswell (2014); Bhattacherjee (2012). Both primary and secondary source materials are employed in process of gathering information hence to that effect, face to face interview was conducted with five (5) teachers to corroborate secondary data available literature. Descriptive approach is utilized as instrument for data expression as it goes in line with Kothari, (2004) and Punch (1998) who among other researchers maintained that survey research is better described from its natural perspective. The research is useful as it in the first place filled the literature gap in the subject of study, it illuminates on the basic concepts and the need for a globalized education particularly in our environment (Nigeria).

Findings

Item 1: What is democracy and good governance education?

IntervieweeA: It may imply liberality and diligence to educational pursuit. It means freedom to seek knowledge while educational administrators responsibly govern its affairs.

Interviewee B The concepts concern the liberalization of education and definitive purposeful pursuit of the attainment of national goals and aspirations of education in line with global needs.

Interviewee C To this respondent it means democratizing education at all levels while good governance caters for the maintenance of standard and fair play in its administration.

Item 2: To what extent has good governance helped in the democratization of education in Nigeria?

Interviewee **A:** In Nigeria one can speak of liberalization of education in the sense that schools at all levels are available across the country but, the degree of being democratic is a relative term based on individual perception.

Interviewee B: The kind of education provided in Nigeria is that which the government dictates for the schools but public and private but recent developments show that there are private institutions in the country that operate different curriculum such as U.K and U.S.A standards. The difference is that those foreign syllabus are prepared to suit their home countries like wise ours but in terms of content delivery we need to approach issues from a more globalized perspective.

Interviewee D: According to the respondent it is the inculcation of democratic tenants in thesyllabus and the teaching such that connotes democracy in education whereas, good governance is about

accountability, non-tolerance to corruption and a focus on globalized environment towards sustainable development. He went further to maintain that, the public schools in Nigeria lack the much needed fund as such the level corruption is relative when compared with other sectors of the society.

The interviewee further asserted that teaching democratic values in our schools is imperative as the world itself is democratizing. The knowledge will help strengthen democracy and enhance good governance which will bring about sustainable development.

Interviewee E: Sustainable development literarily mean something that last or exist over a considerable period of time. Therefore, the concept of democracy and good governance in a globalized environment have to do with employing democratic ideas and good governance in the management of our education so as to attain the much desired sustainable development. The teaching of such subjects as those of humanities like; History, Civic education, Government, Social studies etc to a very large extent help in the inculcation of such knowledge as about democracy and good governance.

Item 3: What are the educational implications of democracy and good governance in a globalized environment?

Interviewee A: A globalized environment rest on universal knowledge therefore if Nigerian receive the kind of education that can make them useful and acceptable members of any human community it means the system meet the desires of the nation.

Interviewee B: The respondent maintained that it is necessary to provide democracy and good governance education so that the philosophy can be sustained and the society will enjoy being part of the new world order.

Interviewee C: The implications for our education is that it will set our curriculum at equal standard with that of other parts of the world and that will make our society a much better environment and sustainable.

Discussion

From the foregoing, it is explicit that democracy and education have much in common and that the former is built on the later. The general view of the interviewees is that basic knowledge of democracy and good governance must be taught in our schools this confirm the position of Barber (1994); Biest (2007) on the universalization of education for global purpose. Interviewees also asked who should formulate the curriculum as it was observed some schools operate foreign version. Similar question was raised by Gutman, (1996) while what the curriculum should look was of concern to Apple (2011).

The question of democracy and good governance education in a globalized environment is quiet apt especially now that the major trend across the globe is about this subject therefore the need as observed for the teaching such subjects that will enhance the appropriate development in our learner basic knowledge for sustainable development.

Conclusion

The paper observed that democracy and good governance education in a globalized environment occupies wide space in the literature and is a necessity for the sustainable development of our society. It is a concept that concern liberalization of education so that the society can be so transformed. In Nigeria the educational system is 'strictly' under the control of the state hence the curriculum and syllabus are prepared by the agencies of the country. The implication is that though there are subjects that teach democracy and good governance in our schools but private institution operate based on foreign curriculum. The question still remained how should our curriculum look? What should it do? The paper suggests that for the purpose of sustainable development in a globalized environment, there is the need to enforce the teaching of these concepts and also enlighten the larger society so that the gains of democracy and good governance can be better achieved.

References

Anthony, A. (2000). *Civilization and commerce: The commerce of governance in historical perspective* (see tablet)

Apple, M. W. (2018). *The struggle for democracy in education. In struggle for democracy in education (pp. 1-19).* Routledge.

Bernadette G. (2018). Global education: Definition, purpose & history. *Retrieved from https://study.com/academy/lesson/global-education-definition-purpose-history.html. on 2/11/2023:8:06am.*

Brundtland, G.H. (1987). The U.N. world commission on environment and development: *Our common future.* Oxford University Press.

Chazan, B. (2022). "What Is "education"?". Principles and pedagogies in Jewish education. *doi:10.1007/978-3-030-83925-3_3S2CID 239896844.*

Chichilnisky, G. (1997). What is sustainable development? *Land Economics, 467-491.*

Dahl, R. A. (2020). *On democracy*. Yale university press.

Dewey, J. (2021). The challenge of democracy to education. *In America's public philosopher (pp. 30-39).* Columbia University Press.

Haack, R. (1981). Education and the good life. *Philosophy. 56 (217): 289–302. doi:10.1017/S0031819100050282. ISSN 0031-8191. JSTOR 3750273. S2CID 144950876. Archived from the original on 7 April 2022. Retrieved 13 May 2022.*

Mounk, Y. (2018). The people vs. democracy. In *people vs. democracy*. Harvard University Press.

Polya Katsamunska (2016). *The concept of governance and public governance theories* (see tablet).

Riddle, S. (2019). Democracy and education in contemporary local-global contexts. *International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives, 18(1), 1-6.*

Sant, E. (2019). Democratic education: A theoretical review (2006–2017). *Review of Educational Research, 89(5), 655-696.*

Saward, M. (1998). *The terms of democracy*. Polity Press.

Schmitter, P. C., & Karl, T. L. (1991). What democracy is... and is not. *Journal of Democracy, 2(3), 75-88.*

Tanimu, T. Zakariah (2022). Environmental education for sustainable development in Nigeria. in A. Godwin, Ashituabe & I.A. Kolo (Eds), *Education for sustainable development in Nigeria. Book of Reading 11.* Niger State College of Education, Minna.

Tilly, C. (2007). *Democracy*. Cambridge University Press.