Sustainability & Ethics: Higher Education contributing to World Challenges

An Address presented at GUNi International Conference held at Catalonia, CosmoCaixa Science Museum in Barcelona (Spain) November 19-20, 2018

By .

Moji Taibat Bakare-Odunola

Professor of Pharmaceutical Chemistry, FSAN

University of Ilorin, Ilorin

University of Ilorin

Location of Ilorin/Kwara State/Nigeria

University of Ilorin

Courtesies

- The Global University Network for Innovation supported by UNESCO, the United Nations University (UNU) and the Catalan Association of Public Universities (ACUP)

- Director of the Global University Network for Innovation (GUNi), Josep M. Vilalta and the members of Executive,

- Professor Peter A. Okebukola, the President GUNi - Africa,

- Professor Is-haq O. Oloyede, the Registrar/Chief Executive, Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), Nigeria; and other dignitaries too numerous to be mentioned.

University of Ilorin

Preamble

o Education is a social service with multiple objectives in mind. Sustainability, in broad terms, is anything that helps protect an organization's ability to operate continuously.

o It originated in natural resource economics, but has since gained broader meaning in terms of sustainable development.

o Ethics is a crucial component of individual and group behavior and is at the heart of organizations' responsibilities.

o It is the principles, standards, rules, and norms of conduct.

Outline of the Presentation

- World Challenges

- Roles of Higher Education

- Ethics and Sustainability

- Conclusion

- Recommendations

- References

- Acknowledgements

University of Ilorin

World Challenges

o   Global health, Social and cultural issues

o   Global Education and Employment

o   Global Insecurity and Global Environmental issues

o   Global Misuse of Technologies

University of Ilorin

Global Health, Social and Cultural Issues

o Health challenges are on the increase with more frequent outbreaks of diseases, epidemics and pandemics such as Ebola, Zika and MERS.

o Drug addiction and suicidal tendency are also on the increase.

o Many infections are difficult to treat due to resistance.

o Urbanization is a major global challenge especially in developing countries.

o Consequences of urbanization include but are not limited to:
  > Carbon emission,
  > water insecurity, and
  > lack of adequate city planning.

o The values and attitudes, customs and behavioural pattern of a society form a distinct culture of that society.

o Advances in technology coupled with the pace and speed is posing insecurity and may negatively affect the society.

University of Ilorin

Global Education and Employment

o Globally, it takes an average of 19 months to complete the transition from school to a stable or satisfactory job?

o Youth unemployment is a global problem, especially in developing and emerging economies. One of the reasons for this is the mismatch between employable skills and current approaches to education.

o job[ILO, Global Employment Trends for Youth 2015, p.3, http://goo.gl/QPhyAv.

University of Ilorin

Global Insecurity

o Food, poverty vulnerability, conflicts and energy form the key components of global insecurity in this context.

o Security has been fundamentally undermined by policies promoted by the key institutions of globalization.

o Extreme poverty can be tied to population problems.

o Globalization has been linked to the generation of structural violence across national boundaries (Ahmed, 2004)

University of Ilorin

Global Environmental Issues

o Major causes of environmental issues can be narrowed down to two key things
  - Release of Green house gases into the atmosphere
  - Destruction of the ozone layer

o Human activities contribute to ozone depletion (Ramey, 2012; UNEP, 2016)

o Every energy production, oil, coal, natural gas, and many other energy sectors pollute the environment causing gradual inconsistent increase in the temperature of the world's atmosphere and oceans (Tropical Science Research Institute, 2015).

University of Ilorin

Global use of Technologies

o In a positive sense, Technological advancement has simplified the way things are done.

    o Saves time, increases production, simplifies communication, has improved healthcare and educational environment.

o Technological advancements have almost always been two-sided. They helped in one way but hurt in another.
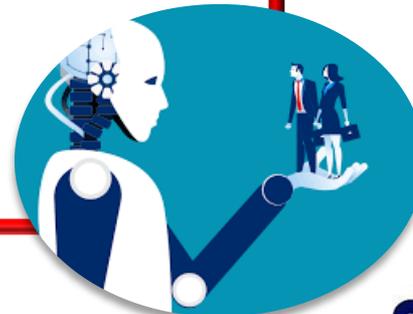
Weapon engineering

Examination malpractice

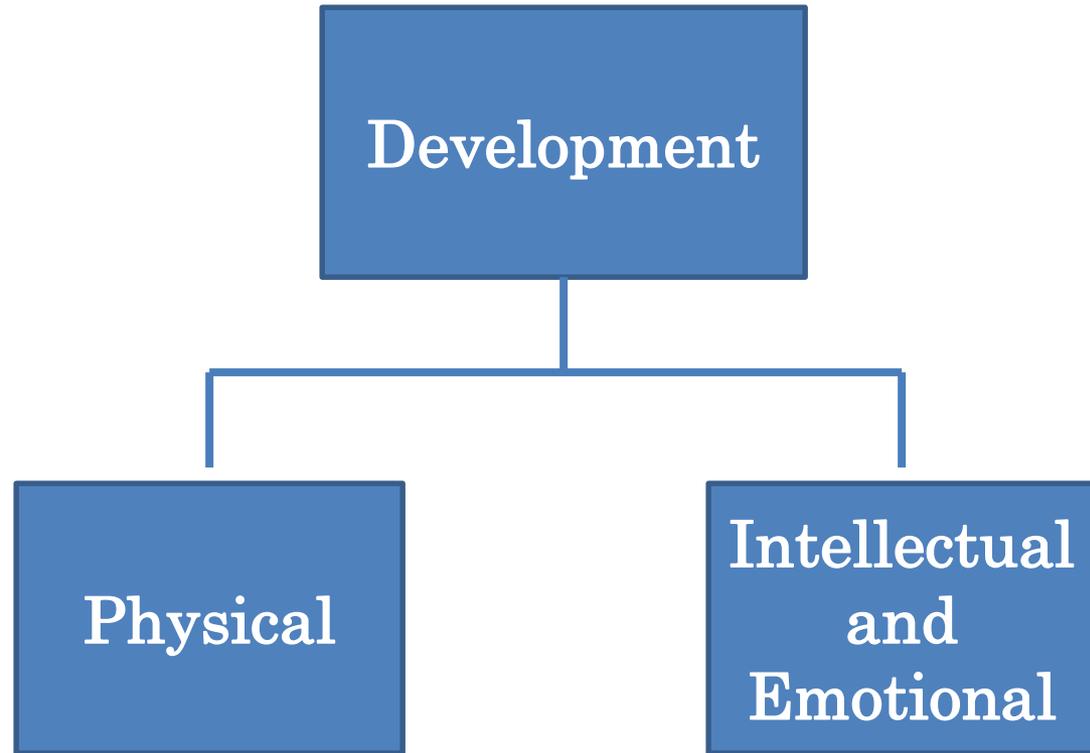**Transportation**
(Mutekwe, 2012; Ramey, 2012).

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

University of Ilorin

Purpose of Education

The main purpose of education is to develop an individual so that he/she can be useful to himself / herself, his family, and the society as a whole

Development

Physical

Intellectual and Emotional

Education is therefore designed to empower, strengthen, change, invigorate, orientate, socialize, mould and package the individual in preparation for useful living (Ijaiya, 2012).

o Traditionally, activities within the tertiary education system gravitate around:

Research

Teaching

Community service

Okebukola, (2000).

Higher Education

- Engineers economic and social development of any nation.

    – Advancement of globalization, increased availability and transfer of information, and robust growth of knowledge in every facet of human endeavours.

- Encourages a broad-based education.

o University leaders are leaders of future leaders. The currently high reputation of academic institutions is being threatened and needs to be remedied.

o The cheating culture (Callahan, 2004) is on the increase, academic fraud (Eckstein, 2003) and plagiarism is becoming more frequent than in the past (Marsh,2007), academic integrity is seriously challenged (Okebukola, 2015) and corruption in educational institutions (Heinemann , 2017) has become so pandemic.

o The integrity and ethical values of educators, institutions and of the curricula of higher education are crucial in building trust and credible professionals.

o Research into agriculture, food production and the curriculum to address SDGs and to integrate STEM and Humanities in the Universities are desirable.

o Research into ways of lowering the birthrate is also pertinent.

Ethics and Sustainability

∞Ethics is an evaluation of the consequences of an action—what benefits or otherwise are brought about by the action? An evaluation of the context within which actions take place.

∞Support or undermine the system.
  ∞Being able to continuously perform the action without constraints is "sustainability"—not undermining the prerequisites of what one is doing, living on the land without ruining it, using without using up, limiting how much you draw from the reserves so that you do not deplete faster than you replenish.

University of Ilorin

- "Good governance" in Higher institutions reposes on the two pillars of academic values,
  - Academic freedom and institutional autonomy
  - in order to exercise democratic governance and to protect students and teachers in their pursuit of truth and knowledge (Kohler, 2004)

o But, additionally, in many universities and schools around the world, fundamental values and virtues are violated: cheating, plagiarism, unethical research, nepotism in staff recruitment, corruption in exams, and sexual harassment.

o Sustainability is as complex as life itself: The concept of sustainability is related to the social, economic, cultural, ethical and spiritual domain of our existence.

Conclusion

o World challenges are threats to sustainability.

o As humanity forms its collective response to these threats, it is my conclusion that Higher Institutions as producers, disseminators and custodians of knowledge have important roles to play, not only in technical innovation, but also in achieving good global character.

Recommendations

o Availability of expertise in all fields of competence.

o Serious promotion of Ethics in citadels of learning and in higher Education.

o Promoting inter and multi disciplinary research and fostering partnerships.

o Advancing students exchange programmes between universities in different countries.

o Researching innovations in water management.

o Promoting probity.

o The need for proactive measures in advance of epidemic outbreaks and swift response system.

Acknowledgements

o   I commend the efforts of Alicia Betts, the Head of projects and Victoria Gomez, the project officer.

o   I appreciate the advice and editorial input of Prof. Nike Y.S. Ijaiya, Prof. G.A. Olatunji, Dr. R. Ogunade, Dr. M.A. Adedimeji, Prof. Taiwo O. Abioye, Prof. O.A. Mokuolu, Dr. M.O. Amali, Dr. I.A. Jawondo and Dr. S. Njinga.

References

- Callahan D. (2004). The Cheating Culture: Why more Americans are doing wrong to get ahead, Orlando: Harcourt
- Combi M. (2016) Cultures and Technology: An Analysis of Some of the Changes in Progress—Digital, Global and Local Culture. In: Borowiecki K., Forbes N., Fresa A. (eds) Cultural Heritage in a Changing World. Springer, Cham.
- Cunha, A. (2017) Genomic technologies—from tools to therapies. Genome Medicine. 9:71 https://doi.org/10.1186/s13073-017-0462-9
- Eckstein, M. A. (2003). Combating Academic Fraud: Towards a Culture of Integrity, Paris: International Institute for Educational Planning.
- Gitelman, L. (2008). New Media Users. In Always Already New: Media, History and the Data of Culture. (pp. 59-86, 167-171) Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Griffen, E., (2012). Communication: A first look at communication theory. McGraw Hill Company, chap 10 (pp. 125-137). New York.
- Heinemann S.P. (2017). The Concern with Corruption in Higher Education, in
- Creating the Ethical Academy: A Systems Approach to Understanding. www.globethics.net/publications. Retrieved November, 2018.
- Ijaiya, N.Y.S. (2012). Management that matters: Key to sustainable education.The one hundred and thirteen lecture delivered at University of Ilorin, Ilorin. University Press PP. 1-75.
- Jackson,J.D., Nielsen, G. & Hsu, Y. (2011). In Mediated Society: a Critical Sociology of Media. Oxford. Oxford University Press.
- Kohler, J. (2004), "Prevention, Management, and Moderation: Ethical Frameworks of Governance", Higher Education in Europe, Vol. 29, No. 4, pp. 481-489

- Marsh, B. (2007). Plagiarism: Alchemy and Remedy in Higher Education, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press; Creating the Ethical Academy: A Systems Approach to Understanding Misconduct and Empowering Change. Taylor and Francis. Kindle Edition, 2011, 10.
- Mutekwe E.(2012) The impact of technology on social change: a sociological perspective. Journal of Research in Peace, Gender and Development (ISSN: 2251-0036). 2(11) pp. 226-238
- Ogunade R. & Zaccheaus G. (2018). Areligious Survey of Technological Oddity. Humanoid as a case study. In:Rethink Securities in an Emergent Technoscientific New World Order. Edited by Munyaradzi Mawere & Artwell Nhemachena. Langas Research & Publishing CIG. Mankon, Bamenda. Pp1-383.
- Okebukola, P. (2000). Trends in Tertiary Education in Nigeria. In The State of Education in Nigeria. Edited by UNESCO Abuja office. Nigeria. Publisher Excellence system Limited. Lagos, Nigeria. Pp. 84-102
- Okebukola, P. (2015).Elevating Academic Integrity In Tertiary Institutions In Nigeria.Keynote Address presented at the Workshop on Academic Integrity in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria, Held at the Anti-Corruption Academy of Nigeria. July 6-7, 2015
- Ramey, K. (2012).Technology And Society – Impact of Technology on Society https://www.useoftechnology.com Retrieved August 2018
- Tropical Science Research Institute (2015). Institute, Jabalpir
- United Nations Environmental .
- United Nations Environment programme. Division of Technology, Industry and Economics.

University of Ilorin

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING