

# *Improving the Provision of Education by Borrowing Policies and Practices from a Foreign Country*

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**Abstract - Many developing countries have been borrowing educational policies and practices from abroad. These nations need foreign programs in efforts to improve teaching, learning, and students' performance. Educators aimed at learning and adopting educational policies and practices from countries and systems that demonstrate excellent educational provisions. They expect to acquire education programs to achieve quality education in their home countries. This article provides knowledge regarding the borrowing process. It discusses the process, principles and states why educators should accomplish the task. It gives some insights regarding the accurate ways for borrowing. Based on these perspectives, the article presents the model of borrowing and features and suggests the perfect methods to carry out the borrowing properly.**

**Keywords - Transnational transfer, Borrowing process, Educational policies and practices, Provision of education.**

## **I. THE BORROWING OF POLICIES AND PRACTICES FROM FOREIGN NATIONS**

The scientific work of Marc-Antoine Jullien underpins the fast development of recent interest in transnational transfer studies. It is the umbrella term design for ways in which policies and practices move from one national setting to another (Schweisfurth, 2015). Also, it includes the movements of scholars across national boundaries to do research on the foreign national educational systems (Little, 2010). Transnational transfer connects to comparative education that explains about educational borrowing. This concept is one of the more frequently discussed and controversial phenomenon that has had an old history in comparative education literature. According to Phillips and Ochs (2004) and Schweisfurth (2015), borrowing refers to policies or practices relocation from one national context to another. It clearly enunciated as an intention to adopt a way of organizing and performing educational practices as how it is done in a foreign nation. This process is indispensable in education because it gives a chance to countries to borrow

policies and practices that are expected to improve educational process and provision. It is organized at various levels of an education system that requires good progress.

Phillips and Ochs (2004) added that educational policy borrowing literature has applied a range of synonyms such as policy transfer, copying, appropriation and importation to describe a process in which ideas/programs are adopted from a foreign country by local authorities, institutions, agencies, nations and regions. Policies, ideas and practices are exported when educational programs and approaches transfer across national borders. It may occur in many ways including in-country training, education in a foreign country, educational study tours, exchange programs, distance learning, cross-national educational institutions and policy borrowing. The education policy borrowing executes four major goals such as solving internal problems, minimizing the uncertainty of new policies, delivering political actions and seeking assistance (Chow, 2014). The motivation for these activities varies but includes the expressed desire to improve and innovate or ameliorate

policies and practices. Therefore, the value of policy borrowing still remained as a contemporary issue which shows the benefit in mapping the ideas of other nations for facilitating the development of policy, implementation and specific approaches to solving problems in another country (McDonald, 2012).

Similarly, Alexander (2000) showed that there is an established strategy among educators watching abroad to reference their societies in learning and borrowing effective educational policies and practices. Countries have been borrowing educational policies and practices from abroad because they discovered to be effective for teaching and learning process. The process of borrowing accompany with an intention to adopt effective ways of doing things as observed in a foreign country (Phillips & Ochs, 2004). The foregoing view gets support from Schriewer and Holmes (1992) who opined that only by seeing the uniqueness in the way others carry on education can one genuinely appreciate the distinctiveness of education at home (p.9). The aim is to observe and adopt specific principles that help to achieve a quality education. One of the strategies to accomplish this view is through the policy interventions that will result in the improvement of the school system. It is facilitated by focusing on educational aspects such as revising curriculum, reviewing teachers' remunerations, building technical skills of teachers, assessing students learning and using student data to guide delivery (Raffe, 2011).

The process of borrowing has been associated with globalization. In this case, the concept of globalization is considered as the most significant externalizing potential that encourages borrowing (Chow, 2014). It has created an increase in the adoption of new ideas in different national and cultural contexts. The process ensured no country exists in isolation and connected various fields including education. One of the consequences is the occasions of borrowing educational policies and practices that generated identicalness across national contexts (Phillips & Ochs, 2004; Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2008). The forces of globalization increase communication and travel between countries. This process opens several opportunities for interactions, exchanges, and discussions among educators. The activities build a broad understanding of educational policies and practices carried out in various countries. They increase the chance of borrowing suitable programs that are fitting for educational provision.

Edwards *et al.* (1973) reported that if the education system encounters problems educationists from one country turn to other nations for a solution. Various scholars believe

that learning from overseas and their education systems are necessary to determine and understand the basic factors of problems at home for the purpose of resolution. It allows educators investigating their own system of education and analyzing societal values and attitude (Dedea & Baskanb, 2011). Usually, educationists borrow education policies/practices to solve education problems in their home countries (Chow, 2014). Therefore, experts should work by conducting research and identify areas and factors that need modifications to improve education provision. It is demonstrated beyond doubt that research and evaluation help to discover appropriate methods and principles for accomplishing quality education.

Furthermore, the process of borrowing has motivated educational policymakers to observe and learn from countries performing best in international assessment tests. Good examples, in this case, involve nations such as Finland, South Korea, Singapore and Shanghai-China (Schweisfurth, 2015). Recognizing educational policies and practices in these countries is important because it helps various education systems to modify and improve the provision of education and students' performance. Scholars have mentioned the factors that account for good performance. They involved wide series of educational reforms and changes, best education systems and policies, hard work by students and learn more, students' positive attitude and successful engagement, the emphasis on academic success by schools, well-resourced schools, well-trained teachers, and favorable working conditions in schools (Mullis *et al.*, 2012; Mullis & Martin, 2013; Schweisfurth, 2015).

Moreover, the literature revealed the presence of the exportation of educational programs from Western culture to the Non-Western culture (Sears & Hughes, 2005). The idea of exporting these programs was raised because scholars of comparative education judged the economy of a country by looking at how students perform in the examinations. Their thinking is that a healthy economy leads to good performance. For the most part, it is true since good performing countries normally have healthy economies that improve educational components and features. Based on this fact, some countries borrow educational policies and practices from countries that are more successful in their economies (Alexander, 2000). This article agrees on one hand with the preceding assertion because a healthy economy generally contributes to good performance. Healthy economy improves and supports the essential components that formulate education system. It creates a learning environment that promotes teachers and

students' welfare and teaching. However, caution need to be taken by not considering this view as a regular principle that might apply to all cultures. It is said so because experience shows that there are countries that are good economically, but they experience poor performance. On the contrary, some countries are poor economically but they lead in international assessment.

Educators have been reporting that Western/European educational structures, policies and practices of schooling have transferred, borrowed and implemented in many societies (Edwards *et al.*, 1973). A good example is the transfer or borrowing of policies advocating competence based curriculum and learner centered teaching. This approach and its practices have been recommended by educators to be very effective for educational provision. This article agrees with the idea of borrowing the education policy guiding constructivist theory and learner centered teaching since they intend to improve the provision of education and students performance. However, it has reservations on the way in which these paradigms are borrowed, adopted and implemented in the recipient nations. For example the implementation of the learner centered teaching in various nations has been indicating various challenges which cause poor implementation. This is connected to the fact that, policy development and implementation in the new context have identified as being problematic. This is because there is a perceived disconnection between policymakers and educators interpretation, understanding and practice of educational programs. Also, the relationship between the context of educational phenomena and transfer, the movement of educational ideas, policies, practices from one country to another show a challenge (Cowen, 2006). Furthermore, Chow (2014) found that the requirement for any education policy and practice borrowing is the teacher preparation and training. Insufficient training and development support make borrowing decision problematic. Likewise, educators' perspectives and implementation of the policy and practices are perceived to be inadequately understood. There is possibility for local consultation, adaptations, resources, ownership and professional development to be overlooked and this may cause policy rejection, antipathy or questioning (Phillips & Ochs, 2004; McDonald, 2012).

Scholars as cited in Chow (2014) presented an analysis that show some areas in which the borrowed policy conflicts with the local context, goals, and the actual implementation. There are problems of simplistic uncritical transfer of educational policy and practice from one social-cultural context to another. The model of borrowing makes no

distinction between developing and developed countries. Moreover, it is found that insufficient attention to differences in social and ideological contexts between the borrower and recipient countries lead to policy failure. Sometimes the resistance can happen to show that the policy was not thoroughly reviewed and tested for adaptability and suitability to the local context. To avoid the foregoing, educators should pay attention to differences in political, legal, economic, social, cultural and technological factors between countries. They should be critical when assessing foreign education systems and to consider their limitations from theoretical, contextual and cultural dimensions. They should continuously reflect, evaluate and make corrections as possible.

Another challenge that encounters the transfer is the lack of evaluation of how policies and practices are integrated smoothly into the new learning contexts. It results in the poor implementation of these aspects in the classrooms. In addition, the problems of educational policy borrowing occur on the relationship among the context, the local, social embeddedness of educational phenomena and transfer, the movement of educational ideas, policies, practices from one place to another (Cowen, 2006 as cited in Lor, 2014). In some cases, the force exhibited in the context from which the borrowed policy/practice is taken is very different from the context that is to be adopted then borrowing might be failing. Borrowing has serious implications and fundamental influence on how education takes place in the recipient nation. Also, the social, political, economic, and cultural background of the source country and recipient country can affect the implementation and outcomes. Based on the preceding information, this article establishes that effective evaluation might be achieved by analyzing and applying the ideas explained in the borrowing model.

In addition to the same perspective, Schriewer (2012) viewed that educational policies and practices could be transferred from one nation to another but it needs first to be scrutinized in more detail. This view is based on the idea that the borrowing process is not similar to copying. The countries borrowing education policies and practices should analyze the process and not just acquiring every characteristic as it is. It needs to examine and see how to fit in these aspects. The educators should carefully appraise the nature and content of policy before borrowing. The public opinions from education stakeholders can have a vital impact on how policy is decided. A successful policy is constructed by a consolidation of factors coming from various stakeholders (Chow, 2014). In fact, the countries should borrow policies and practices that work positively on

the system of education. Raffe (2011) reported that educators did not consider contextualization when searching for appropriate policy interventions. Skipping this stage was not a reliable way of guiding the borrowing process. It shows that the borrowing process is not performed entirely. Therefore, the analysis of the borrowing process is indispensable. The four stage model is a useful framework to analyze the borrowing cases.

## II. THE MODEL OF PROPER BORROWING

This article explains the model of policy borrowing. The model considers being appropriate for helping educators to borrow, adopt, and implement overseas policies and practices with an open mind. It gives instructions that guide how the borrowing process proceeds as it should be. It describes the stages of analyzing policy borrowing, the importance of context, and the factors to investigate. The model is fundamental since it guides educators on the necessary steps, and thus it alerts to borrow policies and practices reasonably. It provides a logical model for examining educational borrowing and the context of education reform. Based on the foregoing ideas, the article requires educators to study and gain an extensive understanding of the model and thus carrying out borrowing successfully. The purpose is to build an accurate understanding so that the recipient countries receive and implement educational policies and practices that work effectively.

Nevertheless, the experience has shown that educational stakeholders in various countries do not possess knowledge identified in the model. They lack strategies that might be employed for effective borrowing. This observable fact could be the reason causing poor educational borrowing as well as its implementation. In this case, several overseas educational policies, practices and their implementation have been failing. It is from this perspective that the above-mentioned model is essential. It has a logical and sequential structure built on an assumption that the policy process is linear, rational and top-down (Chow, 2014). The model controls problems of educational borrowing and provides guidelines for effective borrowing. Therefore, educational professionals are required to learn and understand the appropriate knowledge, skills, and strategies described in the borrowing model. Educators stressed that contextual factors influence policy/practice borrowing decisions and affect the development and implementation process. The borrowing model has four principal stages that are stated as Cross-national attraction, Decision-making, Implementation, and Internalization/Indigenization. They are summarized

below with reference to the work cited from (McDonald, 2012; Phillips & Ochs, 2004, pp.778-779; Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2008, pp.96-97).

### 1.1 Cross-national attraction

The first stage of the model starts with the impulses that spark off the cross-national attraction. Impulses in the recipient nations act as issues/conditions that motivated the interest for change and thus attract policy changes. Impulses influence the borrowing process. They are regarded as the causes for educational professionals in the beneficiary nations searching for foreign educational policies and practices. They act as stimulating factors that pressurize educators in a certain country looking for assistance from another country. Impulses may be caused by various issues/conditions that can be described as follows:

*Internal dissatisfaction:* On the part of parents, teachers, students, inspectors, and others.

*Systemic collapse:* Failure of some structures of the educational provision.

*Negative external evaluation:* It could be obtained from the international studies of student attainment. Good examples are the studies carried out by TIMSS and PISA.

*Economic change or competition:* The sudden changes in the economy or new forms of competition create extra needs in training.

*Political and other imperatives:* The need to turn around policy as voters become dissatisfied.

*Novel configurations:* Include globalizing tendencies, effects of supranational education and training policy, and various international alliances.

*Knowledge or skills innovation:* Failure to exploit or to use new technologies.

*Political change:* New directions due to a change of government.

### 1.2 Decision-making

In this stage, there are types of decision-making that fall into various categories. It depends on the situation that occurs based on a number of characteristics. The decision-making put the agreement to proceed with an emphasis upon implementation feasibility. It is recommended that transparency, credibility and experience guide this stage. The decisions to implement are based on categories such as:

*Theoretical:* The government might decide on policies and practices as broad as choice and diversity.

*Realistic/practical:* Isolating measures that have clearly proved to be successful in a particular location without being the essential product of a variety of contextual factors that would make them not susceptible to introduction elsewhere. The main considerations in making decisions are feasibility and instantaneity.

*Quick fix:* A dangerous form of decision-making in terms of the use of foreign models. It is the one applied when politicians turn at times of immediate political necessity. It refers to decision made to solve an urgent problem.

*Phony:* Incorporate enthusiasms shown by politicians for aspects of education in other countries for immediate political effect but without thorough consideration.

### 1.3 Implementation

Implementation depends on the contextual conditions of the borrower country. The speed of change depends on the attitudes of major actors with the power to support or resist change. This stage should be undertaken carefully to avoid emerging resistance. The implementation is more effective in a decentralized system, the one which transfers implementation responsibilities to the local authorities.

### 1.4 Internalization/indigenization

The policy is contextualized and becomes part of the system of education of the borrower country. This occurred when the borrowed policy/practice become adapted, synthesized, internalized in the systems of the recipient nation. It involves four steps explained as follows:

*The impact of the imported model on the existing system or modus operandi:* It examines the original motives and objectives of the policymakers in conjunction with the existing system.

*The absorption of external features of imported model:* It involves close examination of context that is essential to know how and to what extent features from another system have been adopted.

*Synthesis:* Is the process through which educational policy and practice become part of the overall strategy of the borrower country.

*Evaluation:* Internalization requires reflection and evaluation to discern whether the expectations of borrowing are realistic or not. The results of evaluation might start the whole process again to put right perceived deficiencies.

The borrowing model describes the essential procedures that follow the stages, the policy and practice implementation and internalization that lead to a new status quo that causes impulses for extra change. It seeks to

provide an analytical model for an examination of the processes of educational programs borrowing and the context of education reform. The model allows for undergoing further development as possible. For example, the series of four steps in indigenization/internalization can move back to the first stage in the form of impulses. This indicates that the movement which follows four stages (refer to the model explained above) can occur and produce impulses continuously which instigate the borrowing of educational programs.

In addition to the same perspective, another scholar presented ideas related to educational transfer. According to Beech (2006), the concept of educational transfer is defined as the movement of educational ideas, policies, and practices across international borders with the purpose of changing, modifying, perfecting and improving education systems in the beneficiary nations. There is a benefit in mapping the ideas of other nations for facilitating the development of policies, practices, implementation to solve problems in another country. The transfer is carried out by following a pattern that includes activities such as the local problem is identified, the solutions are sought in foreign educational systems, and the tested educational policies and practices are adapted to the new context and subsequently implemented. The foregoing activities provide a guide that can be applied for successful borrowing and implementation of foreign educational programs. Many underdeveloped nations should put effort to gain ideas connected to the borrowing processes. The preceding descriptions demonstrate that the model of borrowing and related activities could be the appropriate solutions in different national and cultural contexts. Thus, educational stakeholders who are specialized with the transfer or borrowing of educational policies and practices have to orient and familiarize with the accurate methods of transfer and borrowing.

Despite the stated strengths, the borrowing model was also criticized by scholars, policymakers and practitioners. In this case, the criticisms have been explained by experts as can be seen in Chow (2014): Black (2001) argues that the borrowing model overlooks the fact that policy process can be random and decisions are regularly made in an ambiguous environment involving multiple actors with different viewpoints and incentives. It makes no distinction between developing and developed countries which may have totally different social ideologies. Steiner-Khamsi (2006) describes the key problem of most comparative studies is that they are biased toward the developed world and their models are of limited relevance to developing

countries. The model relies too heavily on historical information. It stresses analyzing past events and learning from prior failures (Rose, 1991). It does not provide any suggestions for improvements in future borrowing decisions. The borrowing model overemphasizes the cross-national attraction stage, while there is not as much depth of research in the other three stages (Phillips & Ochs, 2004).

In addition to the same perspective, Lor (2014) presented features that have been formulated from various models to form a simple framework that can be consulted and applied in the policy transfer/borrowing processes. They connect to significant components needed for the transfer/borrowing processes. These features that accompany various lessons assist educators in conducting policy transfer/borrowing successfully. They should be described as follows:

*Source countries:* Which is the source (lending, transferring) country? (Lesson-be aware of the source of the innovation and of its possible ideological implications).

*Intermediaries:* There may be a multi-stage process; ideas can be transferred using various countries. (Lesson-the policy offerings should be scrutinized critically).

*Recipient countries:* Which is the recipient (borrowing, receiving) country? Is more than one country involved? Where are the recipients located? What is their development status?

*Relations between countries:* Ideas can spread between countries due to various reasons and relationships that exist between them. What relationships of political and economic power exist between countries? (Lesson-be aware of the power relationships between source and recipient countries).

*Modalities of transfer:* This leads to a consideration of the modalities of transfer. What are the modalities of transfer and who initiates a search for an innovation. Is the transfer imposed or voluntary? (Lesson-understand whose initiative sets the transfer process in motion. It is better if the recipient country takes the initiative).

*Agents:* Policy transfer can be seen in primarily structural terms as inevitable movements between more highly and less highly developed societies. One should find individuals who can serve as change agents to facilitate adoption of new ideas. (Lesson-identify and understand the key individuals/networks that promote policy transfer in the source and the recipient countries).

*Motivations:* What are the motives that can be imputed to the source country, the recipient country or agents involved? (Lesson-scrutinize and understand the motives that promote policy transfer in the source and the recipient countries).

Seek to maximize the benefits and minimize the risks of what is offered).

*The innovation:* What is transferred or disseminated? What are the characteristics of the innovation? What is the nature of what is transferred? (Lesson-carefully analyze the nature of the innovation that is proposed. Any innovation entails changes in entities both above and below in the hierarchy).

*Beneficiaries:* Who are the beneficiaries of the innovation or new policy? (Lesson-identify the ultimate beneficiaries and ask whether they are the ones who most deserve the benefits of the proposed innovation).

*Context:* Policy transfer requires that there should be congruence between the source and recipient contexts. From which sector, institution, organization in the source country and from what context (cultural, social, economic, political etc) does the innovation come? (Lesson-analyze the context of the proposed innovation both in the source and in the recipient country. The better the match between them, the better the prognosis).

*Timing:* The contexts and circumstances of the source and the recipient countries change from time to time. (Seize the space-gate moment but be aware that the future is uncertain and present circumstances in the recipient country may change quickly. Beware of introducing innovations that are already out-of-date or questioned in the originating country).

*Process:* There are many ways of looking at the transfer process. (Lesson-know enough about the transfer/borrowing process to be able to understand and interpret events, reactions, positions taken, and the discourse around the innovation at various points in the process. Seek to identify and evaluate the forces for and against the innovation).

*Outcomes:* The outcome of a transfer process is not necessarily adoption of an innovation. The effects of innovations can be direct/indirect, intended/unintended, beneficial/harmful. An innovation may be successfully indigenized, leading to the transformation of recipient system. Policy transfer can result in unqualified success, partial failure, or costly total failure. Some learning should take place based on the outcomes. (Lesson-policy transfer initiatives can result in unqualified success, partial failure (the most likely outcome in policy transfer) or costly total failure. But even in cases of total failure, some learning takes place).

Despite good intentions to improve the education systems, the reports in different countries revealed that there are various obstacles regarding borrowing of policies and practices. The trend to adopt educational programs caused confusion and controversy in several countries (Cobern,

1996). In connection to that, McDonald (2012) warns against blind borrowing and be short of borrowing knowledge. Scholars question the gullible adoption of Western programs into the recipient countries. Others opined that it is the local context that adapts to the new ideas/approaches. If the sustained change is to be achieved then local ownership should be considered. Attention should have been drawn to the issue of policy borrowing and the need to promote a process that recognizes the importance of contextualization ownership. The scholar noted that what is needed is a valuing of relationships between the donor and recipient personnel to facilitate the contextualization. The literature underscores the importance of contextualization when policy occurs. Also, it is often the case that training or professional development is required to strengthen the implementation of the borrowed policies/practices. So it is important cultures of the recipient nations be embedded in the planning of borrowing and its implementation.

### III. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Education borrowing is connected to the process of finding effective educational policies and practices from abroad in order to support the improvement of the education system at the recipient nation. So policymakers in many countries have actively looked at the education aspects of different countries to borrow useful policies and practices and transfer them to their local contexts. They adopt these educational aspects with the desired objective of improving their own educational systems and educational provision. The model of transfer/borrowing, related activities and the features presented in this article might relieve nations from experiencing the challenges of introducing and implementing educational policies and practices from foreign countries. This is to say that, working appropriately on the instructions described in this article could help educators execute the transfer/borrowing process accurately. This is based on the fact that the borrowing model and its features and principles will open the mind of educators regarding the appropriate borrowing process. The present article facilitates the same purpose because educators from various countries really need appropriate knowledge, skills, and understanding of the accurate transfer/borrowing processes. The information will enable educational policymakers and practitioners performing borrowing successfully and thus improving education provision at home countries.

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