

# Conceptualizing Quality Education from the Paradigm of Recognition

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## Abstract

The paper contributes a conceptualization of quality education from the paradigm of recognition to existing approaches. Drawing principally on the two complementary perspectives of the politics of recognition, namely, the social justice and the self-realization, the paper develops a conceptual framework of quality education with an emphasis on securing equal social status and opportunity of self-realization for all learners in culturally diverse schools. This framework under the inputs-process-outcomes model gives an overarching understanding of how quality education is defined in a multicultural society.

**Keywords:** quality education, paradigm of recognition, equal status, self-realization, culturally diverse schools.

## 1. Introduction

Many countries have obtained remarkable achievements in education over the past decade. However, the quality of education has been noted as an increasingly concerned issue for the recent years. Vegas and Petrow (2008) argue that “expansion of educational opportunities has not markedly reduced income inequality, underdevelopment and poverty, possibly because of the poor quality of education”. There exists a big gap between legal obligations and reality. In spite of the strong political commitments over the past decades such as the Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) (World Conference on Education for All, 1990) and the Dakar Framework for Action (World Education Forum, 2000), the fulfillment of the right to education is doubtful in many countries. About 57 million children of primary school age, including 31 million girls, are not in school due to financial, social or physical challenges. In 2013, almost a half of 57 million never set their foot in a classroom. Notably, among those children who attend school, 25% drop out before completing primary. Of the world’s 650 million primary school age children, at least 250 million are not learning the basics in reading and mathematics in order to get decent work and lead fulfilling lives. Out of this number, the majority come from the disadvantaged backgrounds including poverty, immigrant, ethnic minority, disability and so on. As such, the quality of education is pointed out to be the crucial issue of the post 2015 educational agenda worldwide (UNESCO, 2014).

Until now, there have been no universal definitions of quality education. Among current approaches that provide important insights into key dimensions of the concept of quality education, there are two broad salient approaches, namely, the human capital approach and human rights approach (Tikly & Barrett, 2011). Both these two dominant approaches have been seen as the powerful tools for addressing the concept of quality education. Although some scholars define quality education from the social justice perspective and the capability approach like Tikly (2010), Tikly and Barrett (2011), they inadequately touch the rooted ground of a quality education. Through a meaningful insight into the Hmong case, Luong and Nieke (2013) affirm that the unbalanced relationship of power among ethnic groups brings about the inferiority of minorities in social interaction and schooling. This is attributed to the disproportionately poor academic outcomes of the Hmong despite the assumption by many policy makers and scholars about relatively equal effects of policies and educational system factors for all groups. On this account, we argue that a quality education must secure a balance of power among different groups in educational institutions and society. Through emphasizing the role of education in securing an equal status for all learners in both public life and schooling, the paradigm of recognition can provide a deeper rationale for a quality education with a focus on transformation of an educational system than that provided by a human capital approach with its emphasis on economic growth. Through emphasizing the role of education in ensuring equal opportunities of self-realization for all learners, the paradigm of recognition reorients attentions to a fuller focus on the empowerment of “community forces” than that on the role of the state in guaranteeing basic rights by the existing human rights approach. The framework of quality education given in this paper aims at providing the key themes with which debates about the provision of quality education is centered on the

paradigm of recognition. Accordingly, a quality education secures equal social status and fosters equal opportunities of self-realization for all learners.

## 2. Towards an understanding of the paradigm of recognition

In a culturally diverse society, the issues of social justice along with those of human rights require a proper politics of recognition. This secures rights for both minorities and the majority. The conceptual framework of quality education in this paper has been developed on the basis of two salient complementary perspectives of the paradigm of recognition.

First, the paradigm of recognition comes from the social justice perspective. Fraser (2003, 2008) defines justice as ‘parity of participation’. She explains that

“According to this radical-democratic interpretation of the principle of equal moral worth, justice requires social arrangements that permit all to participate as peers in social life. Overcoming injustice means dismantling institutionalized obstacles that prevent some people from participating on a par with others as full partners in social interaction” (Fraser, 2008).

Fraser addresses the institutionalized obstacles in terms of three dimensions: (i) economic structures that deny access to resources that they need in order to interact on a par with others; that is the unequal distribution or maldistribution; (ii) institutionalized hierarchies of cultural value that may deny them the requisite standing; this is a case of status inequality or misrecognition; and (iii) the political dimension centered on issues of membership and procedures is concerned chiefly with representation. At one level, representation is a matter of social belonging. Representation indicates who is included in and who is excluded from the community that is entitled to make justice claims on one another. At another level, representation concerns the procedures that structure public processes of contestation. This is related to the community’s decision rules that accord equal voice in public deliberations and fair representation in public decision making to all members.

Three respective dimensions of social justice are identified by Fraser, namely, ‘redistribution’, ‘recognition’ and ‘representation’. As such, Fraser (2003, 2008) conceives recognition as a matter of social justice that refers to recognizing differences in terms of culture and identity. Recognition, in Fraser’s perspective, is the remedy for injustice when institutionalized patterns of cultural value constitute actors as peers, capable of participating on a par with one another in social life or in other words, obtaining status equality. In this paper, there is an interlacing relationship between ‘recognition’, ‘redistribution’, and ‘representation’. In this sense, recognition is also manifested in the ‘redistribution’ and ‘representation’ dimensions. Specifically, recognition is seen in *the equitable access* to resources which equates with access to inputs of a quality education and *the equal representation* in the decision-making and participation process for the marginalized. In this regard, recognition is made in the ways of equitable distribution of resources among different groups. Resources are sometimes allocated in a bigger share for the disadvantaged in order to ensure an equal status for this group. Meanwhile, recognition is reflected in the ‘representation’ dimension in which claims and power position of different individuals and groups are equally acknowledged by their heard voices and active participation in the decision-making process.

Second, the paradigm of recognition is seen from the perspective of self-realization. Taylor (1994) analyzes Rousseau’s thought of the importance of equal respect and authenticity as voice of nature within us. This has been considered as a constituent of freedom and indispensable element in the discourse of recognition. He stresses the role of equal recognition as the foundation for building a healthy democratic society. The refusal of recognizing a certain culture explicitly hinders or even damages the development of its members. Worse, wrong recognition with inferior and undignified images on other cultures contained implicit oppression. Because these wrongly recognized images are gradually internalized and destroyed its members’ self-identity. Similarly, Honneth’s perspective designates behaviours of non-recognition and misrecognition as forms of disrespect. Honneth (1995) stresses that disrespect not only harms ‘subjects and restricts their freedom to act’, but also ‘injures them with regard to the positive understanding of themselves that they have acquired intersubjectively’.

More explicitly, Honneth describes three groups of experience of disrespect with regard to physical abuse, cultural denigration and social devaluation that destroy basic self-confidence and bring with it a loss of moral self-respect and loss of personal self-concept of those with such experience. The sense of humiliation and shame that is reinforced by the disrespect through misrecognition or non-recognition is a form of serious violation of human rights. Particularly, he also notes that those forms of personal disrespect structurally exclude the individuals from the possession of certain rights within a society. As such, Taylor and Honneth put an emphasis on equal respect and equal dignity among cultures or groups and within culture or group as the principles for recognition. The principle of *equal respect* requires a treatment for diversified groups in a difference-blind fashion for the generality. And the principle of *equal dignity* commands a treatment in a difference-responsive manner for the particularity. The affirmation of uniqueness ensures the equal opportunity of development and empowerment of minorities' voice (Taylor, 1994). When such politics of recognition are adopted in education, it needs to secure a balance between diversity and unity in both policies and practices. On the one hand, the provision of education must provide opportunities for all cultural and ethnic groups to entrench their community culture. On the other hand, it has to construct a national shared education in which diverse groups are structurally included and to which they feel allegiance.

The two complementary perspectives of recognition are considered as key for the conceptualization of quality education in this paper. Accordingly, quality education secures equal social status for all learners by removing structural barriers and setting up democratic institutionalization that emancipates learners to act on a par with their peers. At the same time, quality education safeguards equal opportunities of self-realization known as 'fundamental rights' and fosters the sense of self-confidence, self-concept and self-respect of learners.

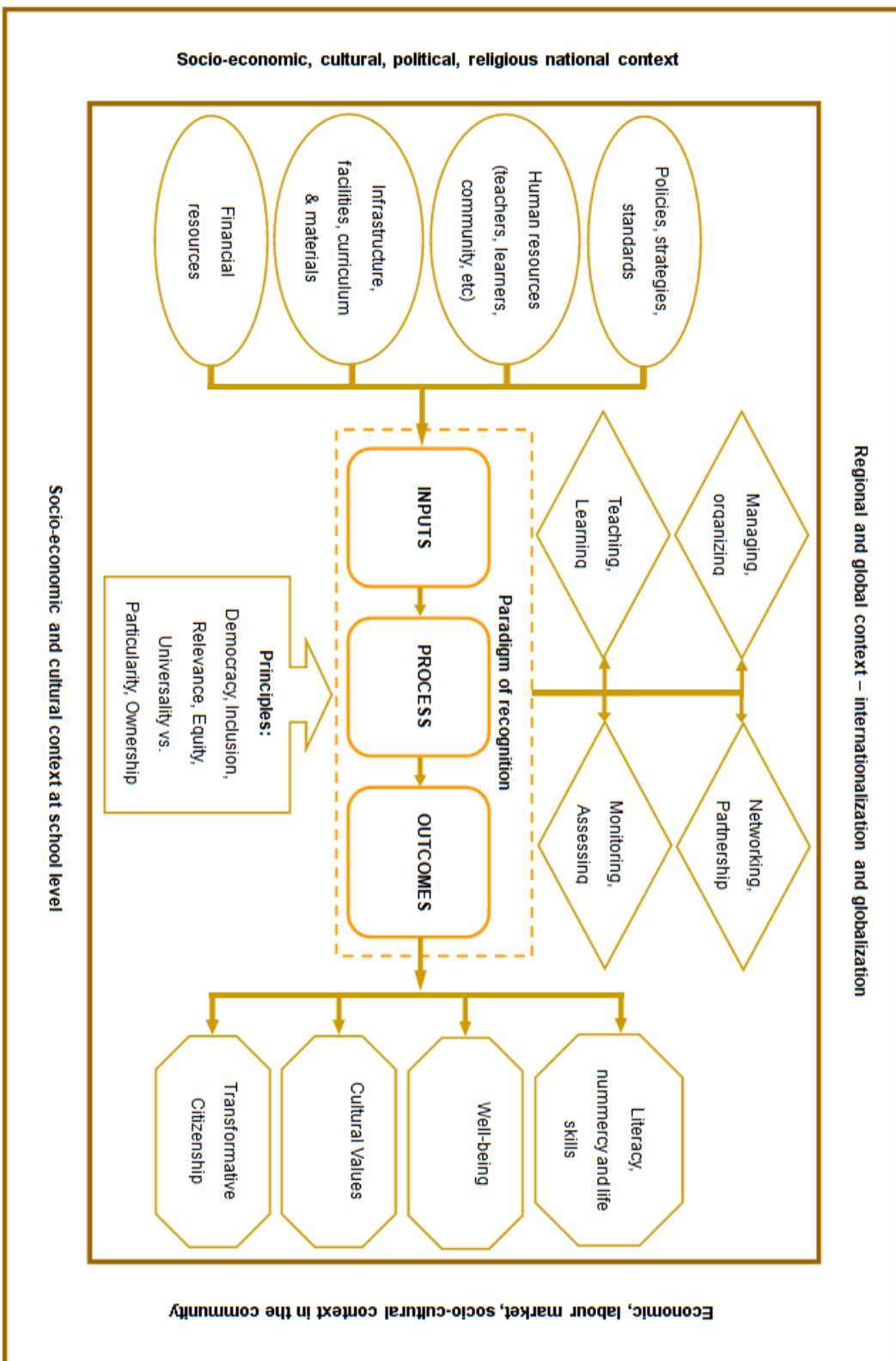
### **3. Conceptualizing quality education from the paradigm of recognition**

The conceptual framework shows the paradigm of recognition is embedded in the inputs-process-outcomes model under the multiple contexts (Figure 1). Within this framework, all the themes center on ensuring learners to have equal social status and opportunity of self-realization in school. The framework also highlights that the provision of quality education is influenced and directed by the school, community, national, regional and international contexts.

#### *3.1. Inputs for education*

The paradigm of recognition is manifested in four major components of the inputs including policies, strategies and standards; human resources (administrators, teachers, learners and community); infrastructure, facilities, curriculum and materials; and financial resources that determine the quality of education.

The development of policies, strategies and standards in the paradigm of recognition aims at the equal development opportunities and entitlements for learners from culturally diverse background, different living conditions and capabilities. Policies, strategies and standards serve as a means for educators to enable all learners to have adequate access to quality education and to develop their full potential. Some policies are often noted such as the establishment of schools near learners' living home, the provision of free or affordable education to all, the availability of appropriate resources and equipment for children with disabilities (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2007). In addition, making teaching quality a national priority is stressed in the policies of countries towards a quality education (UNESCO, 2014). In this respect, the policies on teacher education and development are very important. In multicultural societies, teachers need to be properly trained to adopt the culturally responsive teaching. As such, they can create a democratic, caring and belonging learning environment to learners from culturally diverse backgrounds (Gay, 2010). The legitimacy of languages and culture of minorities in policies and in educational institutions is also considered as a key to effective learning of these groups. UNESCO (2008) indicates the significant improvement of academic outcomes of minority learners by the mother tongue based bilingual education program in Mali, Papua New Guinea, Peru and the United States.



**Figure 1: Framework of quality education from the paradigm of recognition**

Human resources (administrators, teachers, learners and community) are key actors whose competence determines the operational process of education. Each group plays its own roles in and takes certain responsibility of supporting the provision of quality education. Therefore, they need to have adequate professional knowledge and skills, strong awareness of responsibilities, professional ethics and sufficient ability of taking appropriate actions (Nieke, 2012) so as to involve in securing equal status and fostering the sense of self-realization for learners.

The location of schools, infrastructure, facilities and learning materials are crucial elements that directly affect the provision of quality education. They must be accessible, safe and adequate. For example, schools should be located in a physically accessible distance for children who live in the remote or disadvantaged regions. Learners, particularly children from the poor families, have equal access to textbooks that are freely provided or supported by government at low prices. Curriculum and learning materials are also critical issues of quality education. They need to be designed in the principles of universality and particularity in order to promote equal participation of all learners. As universal standards, basic literacy and mathematics as foundation skills must be acquired. Additionally, transferable skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and advocacy and conflict resolution are also needed (UNESCO, 2014). In this sense, curriculum and materials are developed with an emphasis on “learn to live together” for learners (Delors et al., 1996). Markedly, Banks (2010) indicates that a mainstream-centric curriculum is one major way in which racism, ethnocentrism, and pernicious nationalism are reinforced and perpetuated in schools and society at large. It reinforces a false sense of superiority for mainstream learners and gives them a misleading conception of their relationship with other racial and ethnic groups. On the other side, it deprives mainstream learners of the opportunity to benefit from the knowledge, perspectives, and frames of reference as well as to view their culture from the perspectives of other cultures and groups. Moreover, the non-recognition of languages and cultures of minority learners in curriculum and learning materials gradually internalizes a sense of inferiority in them that exacerbates their academic performance. Gay (2010) states that learners are more highly motivated and learn best when their experiences and perspectives regarding learnt concepts are mainstreamed in curriculum and learning materials.

Financial resources are equitably distributed among groups of learners in the principle of satisfying needs and equal development opportunities for all. On this basis, a greater expenditure is distributed for learners with special needs, e.g., the group who are hardest to reach such as the poor, those who live in remote locations, members of ethnic and linguistic minorities, and those with disabilities (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2013).

### *3.2. Process of education*

The educational process consists of four major groups of activities, namely, managing and organizing, networking and partnership, teaching and learning, and monitoring and assessing. The paradigm of recognition permeates in each group of activities.

#### *3.2.1. Managing and organizing:*

Representation of ethnic groups in the managing and organizing process of education is shown in terms of proportionate number of positions for minorities in the managerial and teaching force and a shared decision-making in an educational institution. A full representation significantly improves social status for minorities and greatly reinforces their sense of self-confidence, self-concept and self-respect. Howard (2010) reviews the rationale for race-matched teaching on the basis of international research. In this literature review, he indicates that “teacher from minority language and cultural backgrounds can impact positively on minority learners’ self-esteem and academic performance”. Further, the Carnegie Taskforce on Teaching as a Profession (1986) states that:

“Schools form children’s opinions about the larger society and their own futures. The race and background of their teachers tells them something about authority and power .... These messages influence children’s attitudes toward school, their academic accomplishments, and their views of their own and others’ intrinsic worth”.

In addition, a shared decision-making in school management provides opportunities for real participation. The nature of participation refers to functions and decision-making powers that assume by teachers, administrators, parents and learners. As such, the meaningful participation of parents and community in this process fosters their sense of power and self-realization. Naidoo (2005) indicates that real participation of subordinate groups promotes democratic governance in education with rational decision-making. This also creates greater accountability in the educational system as well as increased parental and community voice that underlie a sound development of quality education for all, particularly for the disadvantaged (Tikly, 2011).

### 3.2.2. Networking and partnership:

Networking and partnership enhance contribution and participation of and cooperation among varied stakeholders in education. This aims at effective contribution of varied resources and shared ownership, strong promotion of social cohesion, community empowerment and high satisfaction of evolving needs for social and global development. Lanzi (2007) notes that networking allows an educational system to effectively interact with the economic and social system. This makes a full use of the human capital and defines, negotiates roles of each involved actors (public sector institutions, enterprises and civic bodies) within a network system. Each partner can contribute its asset complementarities, share specific knowledge or expertise, and promote cooperation in education. Besides, networking and partnership soften hierarchies and enhance bottom-up planning and organization. All concerned actors involve in the educational planning, managing and monitoring and assessing in order to make the best use of existing resources. In a multicultural society, networking and partnership comes to the fore with an emphasis on promoting a mutual understanding between schools and learners' parents/community, and among groups from culturally diverse backgrounds and different social status (Banks, C.A., 2010). This process recognizes an equal role and participation of different groups in education. The involvement of learners, parents and community in the provision of education creates opportunity for them to integrate their needs in the educational process. Further, this gives them opportunity to affirm their equal status in education and to strengthen their capacity (Tikly, 2011). As noted, parents' or community's involvement in schools makes learners self-regard for their culture, identity and status. As such, networking and partnership significantly empower involved stakeholders to engage in the educational process. Lanzi (2007) asserts the role of networking and partnership in terms of intrinsic motivations, local learning processes, community empowerment and shared ownership or local participation. Notably, engaging government agencies in open, constructive dialogues and participatory process of educational provision builds their capacity and enhances their accountability. Thus, this can effectively make legislative and policy changes, allocate resources in response to changing needs for social and global development. This is known as an evidence-based advocacy (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2007).

### 3.2.3. Teaching and learning:

The teaching and learning process directly affects equal social status and opportunity of self-realization of learners in classroom. These two goals can be achieved by making curriculum and instructional contents relevant and inclusive to all groups of learners, adopting appropriate knowledge constructing method, promoting equal and respectful interaction, encouraging constructive feedback and critical thinking. Teachers assume tasks to directly translate national policies into practice. In the implementation of educational policies, every child must be included and respectful in schools. As such, the delivery of a quality teaching and learning is greatly dependent on the commitment, enthusiasm, creativity and skills of teachers (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2007).

Apart from acquisition of standard professional knowledge and skills, teachers need to possess a knowledge base of different learners. In a culturally diverse society, teachers need to understand the ways in which race, ethnicity, language, and social class interact to influence learners' behaviors. Banks et al. (2001) state that teachers are trained to have appropriate attitudes toward racial, ethnic, language, and cultural groups; to acquire knowledge about the histories and cultures of the diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and language groups within the nation and within their schools; to recognize the diverse perspectives that exist within different ethnic and cultural communities; to understand the ways in which institutionalized knowledge within schools and popular culture

can perpetuate stereotypes about racial and ethnic groups; and to be able to develop and implement an equity pedagogy. This helps teachers in preparing learners to effectively interact and work in the culturally diverse environment.

Palaiologou (2012) affirms that in the modern times, education needs to be characterized with “belongingness” and humanistic content and aims. In this spirit, teaching needs to give equal opportunity for all learners and to enable them to make their self-realization. Being different in terms of learning capability, learners should be taught in the ways that all learners are enabled to achieve common standards. At the same time, good learners can be facilitated to develop their full potential through high performance standards. Being different in terms of language and cultural backgrounds, learners should be taught in the ways that their cultures and perspectives are valued. First, curricula and teaching and learning processes recognize and value particular histories, lifestyles and pedagogic texts of minority or marginalized ethnic groups (Tikly, 2011; Tikly & Barrett, 2011; Gay, 2010). Second, teaching learners to explore concepts and issues from different and even conflicting perspectives or viewpoints promotes their better understanding of these concepts, fosters their empathy for the points of views and perspectives that are normative within various groups, and develops their ability to think critically. Learners are scaffolded to construct knowledge by themselves and to be able to critically think of the knowledge within the popular, academic, and school communities (Banks, 2006). As such, teaching learners the needed social skills makes them capable of interacting effectively with members of another culture. Learners need to learn how to perceive, understand, and respond to group differences. They also need to be helped to realize that when members of other groups behave in ways that are inconsistent with in-group norms these individuals are not necessarily behaving antagonistically (Banks et al., 2001). Third, learners’ local language, use of different dialects and forms of the instructional language need to be respectfully recognized in classrooms. Tikly and Barrett (2011) say that “using a language in which learners are proficient enables them to access the curriculum, i.e. convert resources into outcomes”. Further, Smith and Barrett (2010) assert that regular use of the medium of instruction in the home and community environment is a good predictor of achievement. No less importantly, engaging parents and community in the educational process, for example, by offering them opportunities to integrate local culture and experiences in instruction significantly motivates minority children to make effort in their learning (Banks, C.A., 2010).

#### 3.2.4. Monitoring and assessing:

Monitoring and assessing are the frequent activities performed by teachers and administrators. Monitoring is vital for ensuring the educational process to effectively operate in achievement of its goals. Assessing aims at examining if learning attains its educational objectives and addressing the ways to improve learning. Based on disaggregated data from monitoring and assessing, the target groups (who need to be supported) and necessary supports (what need to be provided) are identified (Tikly & Barrett, 2011). This process enhances inclusion, relevance, accountability in education by embracing learner diversity. Heritage (2011) notes the self-assessment of learners and peer assessment and assessment of teacher as an approach to teaching and learning. In this approach, learners have a shared power and responsibility of enabling effective learning in supportive learning contexts. Stiggins (2002) posits that a more equitable balance between large-scale standardized assessment and classroom based, more instruction relevant assessments must be considered in the context of the need for accountability. In this regard, differing abilities and learning conditions of learners need to be taken into account so as to motivate learners and ensure equity in education. Importantly, monitoring and assessing hold concerned stakeholders accountable for the access to education, the quality of education for all learners. Linn (2000) addresses assessment as a tool of accountability in educational institutions and served as tool of school reform. Moreover, Tikly and Barrett (2011) stress a need of more qualitative evidence concerning the barriers to achievement faced by different groups of learners along with test results. As such, Banks et al. (2001) suggest that assessment can be made in a combination of observations, performance behaviors, self-reflections, writing assignments, case study analyses, critical thinking, problem-solving, creative productions, real and simulated social and political actions, and acts of cross-cultural caring and sharing. The adoption of a range of assessment strategies gives learners an opportunity to demonstrate their mastery. Otherwise, single method assessment tends to damage the self-esteem and worsen inequity in schooling of minorities.

“Unidimensional and cursory assessments not only delay achievement but can also reduce the

confidence and self-esteem of learners. Evaluating the progress of learners from diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class groups is complicated by differences in language, learning styles, and cultures. Hence, the use of a single method of assessment will likely further disadvantage learners from particular social classes and ethnic groups” (Banks et al., 2001).

### *3.3. Principles of the quality education*

#### 3.3.1. Democracy:

Democratic participation and school autonomy are denoted as two core dimensions of the principle of democracy. Diversified stakeholders - including teachers, learners, donors, multilateral agencies, corporate entities, civil society and advocacy groups - are involved in planning education, developing relevant and inclusive policies, strategies and standards, delivering and implementing educational activities, monitoring and assessing in education. Naidoo (2005) undertakes an empirical research on education decentralization and school governance in South Africa in which he emphasizes that meaningful participation of varied stakeholders in education ensures democratization and transformation in educational institutions. In the specific aspect, Lanzi (2007) also stresses that democratic planning makes it easier to anchor educational policies to social and individual needs. Additionally, all teachers, parents and children need to be aware of policies and know how to make a complaint if they are breached (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2007). Therefore, effective spaces for the participation of these stakeholders raise their awareness and ownership of education. UNICEF (2009) underlines the principle of democratic participation in the process of development of child friendly schools. In this regard, engagement in the educational process creates motives and caring atmosphere for both parents and learners. As a result, positive relationships between teachers, school staff and learners, their parents and community are reinforced. Moreover, the participation of communities in education can hold duty bearers such as teachers, administrators, government officials accountable for the inclusion of all learners (UNESCO, 2005; Tikly, 2011). Meanwhile, school autonomy relates to the power of managing resources, determining the delivery of educational services, democratizing local control of decision making (Naidoo, 2005). Accordingly, schools have authority to undertake the adjustment of curriculum and instructional content, teacher professional development and deployment, financial mobilization and distribution in order to make the provision of education relevant to groups of learners in given contexts. Nonetheless, the transparency and accountability of educational information must be promoted through democratic participation in this regard in order to overcome corruption and abuse of power. As such, a shared decision-making and school autonomy will ensure better quality decisions, more humane work environments, equitable educational opportunities, and improvement in teaching and learning (Malen et al., 1990).

#### 3.3.2. Relevance:

Sustainable livelihoods and well-being for all learners are two major desired outcomes of education. Hence, education must be relevant to needs, cultures and living contexts of learners and fulfill requirements of national and global development. Relevance is shown in policies and strategies, curriculum and learning materials, pedagogy and assessment. The elaboration of policies and strategies need to be relevant to national, regional, and global development goals. UNESCO (2004) asserts that an appropriate set of educational aims largely involves striking a good balance between global or generic and local or more contextual skills and values. Education of each country needs to balance general educational aims that stress global, national unity and identity with those that reflect the needs of particular groups. In this respect, curriculum and learning materials must match requirements of social and global development so that learners can effectively participate in labor market and public life. At the same time, they are required to develop those capabilities and functionings that are valued by individuals, communities and national governments (Tikly & Barrett, 2011). Additionally, they need to be relevant to situation, culture, language, capability and needs of learners. As schools are situated in specific socio-cultural contexts, a quality education must be responsive to living practices and experiences of learners in those contexts (UNESCO, 2004, 2014; Tikly & Barrett, 2011). To achieve this, teachers need to be aware of their responsibility for producing educational outcomes that must be valued by their communities and consistent with national development priorities in a changing global context (Tikly, 2010). Thus, teachers must be able to adopt the culturally responsive teaching when they work with learners from culturally diverse backgrounds (Gay, 2010,



Ladson-Billings, 1995). In practice, diversified stakeholders have differing standpoints about the assessment of educational quality. It is oriented by what they believe to be priority goals assigned to an educational system and the nature of desired outcomes. Therefore, quality education in a given context must ensure diverse interests of multiple stakeholders and respond to their perceptions of relevant education (UNESCO, 2012).

### 3.3.3. Inclusion:

Pigozzi (2004) strongly advocates that children on the grounds of HIV/AIDS status, differing race, ethnicity, religion, early pregnancy should not be excluded by schools. In this spirit, UNICEF (2009) promotes inclusion through the development of 'child-seeking school' in its child-friendly school model. Apart from the physical access to education, the principle of inclusion here focuses on equal access of learners to quality inputs and opportunities for achieving the desired outcomes. Furthermore, this principle highlights the integration of differing educational needs of varied stakeholders in the educational process. In reality, learners require different kinds and levels of resources in order to develop their capabilities. For example, minority learners must receive more supports for removal of language barriers in order to obtain an equal access to learning. Thus, more resources will be allocated for language interventions for this target group. Tikly and Barrett (2011) state that "a nuanced understanding of the different kinds and levels of resource input required by different groups of learners is critical for enabling education planners to target resources and interventions effectively". As stated, equal opportunities for all learners can be created by rational proportion of representatives of different groups in the structure and organization of educational institutions and the promotion of pedagogy and assessment responsive to learners' capability, characteristics, culture and living conditions. Luong and Nieke (2013) point out that poor representation of the Hmong in educational institution deepen the sense of inferiority for the Hmong teachers, learners and community. As such, equal social status can be achieved through due representation of all groups of learners in educational institutions. Besides, UNESCO (2005) asserts that teachers play key role in including learners in schools by building an inclusive environment in which all children are made feel welcome, respected and confident of equal treatments in schools. In particular, teachers need to deliver accessible and flexible curriculum, use a variety of teaching styles and strategies, and involve learners in the assessment and accreditation systems. As noted, a quality education must respond to and value the differing needs of learners. In this sense, it must accommodate differing needs of learners. In some circumstances, disadvantaged learners should be included in education by offering alternatives to formal schools and full-time schooling (UNESCO, 2004). Schools offer flexible timetable schedule in locations where learners are busy with their domestic chores or farming work during the harvest (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2007).

### 3.3.4. Universality vs. particularity:

The universality is seen in shared values, standard objectives, unified curriculum, general policies and strategies and normative standards for all learners. It safeguards a unity or social cohesion as well as equity in education. On the other side, the particularity is manifested in terms of specific ability, culture and language, living contexts and status of learners. This guarantees suitable development opportunity and equal social status for all learners, particularly the disadvantaged. In culturally diverse societies, the unity is promoted in and through the diversity and vice versa so as to achieve the right to education for differing groups.

"The respect for difference and the right to be different in regard to cultural, linguistic and religious identity needs to be reconciled with the universal right to education as part of a broader set of human rights. Approaches to education provision that ensure universal education for all need to be undertaken with due regard for local and regional differences, particularly in regard to language and culture. Failure to do so implies a failure to reach out to all communities" (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2007).

### 3.3.5. Equity:

Equity refers to redressing historical and structural inequalities. Educational inequalities are often shown in

terms of wealth, ethnicity, gender and status. Bush and Salterelli (2000) describe two faces of education, of which the negative face shows itself in the uneven distribution of education that favors the dominant groups, the use of education as a weapon of cultural repression and the production or doctoring of textbooks to promote intolerance. Consequently, the negative side worsens inequity. In this regard, equity in education can be achieved by remedying this negative face. Equity is manifested in terms of access and quality (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2013). First, equitable access ensures that the marginalized and vulnerable have adequate share of available resources. To achieve this, equity is put at the centre of the development of legislation, policies, support services (i.e., financial supports, infrastructure and facilities), and curriculum. Second, equitable quality ensures that all learners, particularly the marginalized and vulnerable, acquire sufficient knowledge, skills, and values for sustainable livelihoods and well-being. In this sense, equity is shown in regard to professional training and teacher deployment, teaching and learning process, managing and organization and monitoring and assessing. As mentioned, Howard (2010) stresses the benefits of race matched teachers for minority learners in schooling. An equitable proportion of representatives from minorities in school organization and structure and meaningful participation of parents and community in schools need to be weighed. This secures the accountability and transparency in school governance (Naidoo, 2005). Of greater significance, equity in teaching and learning process reinforces active participation for all learners. This can be secured by the adoption of curriculum and equity pedagogy that integrates culture and identity of all groups of learners and offers equal opportunity to freely express their particular cultural perspectives (Banks, 2010; Gay, 2010).

### 3.3.6. Ownership:

Ownership is supposed to secure the sustainability of quality education. Ownership is a key principle of enhancing the responsibility of concerned stakeholders for sustaining a quality education. The sense of ownership is built and strengthened through the participation of diversified stakeholders in the decision making process and the provision of educational supports (Naidoo, 2005). Through the process of finding best solutions for access to quality education for all, the capacity and the sense of responsibility of concerned stakeholders are reinforced. In this sense, an ownership of education programs needs to be viewed as an obligation and a right. On the one hand, they are responsible for developing quality education that is seen as a means to reduce disparity and poverty (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2007). On the other hand, they have the right to real participation and shared decision-making in education that is assumed to make a transformation in society and underlie social justice (Naidoo, 2005). As such, ownership implies both the right to and duty for a legitimated quality education.

### 3.4. Outcomes

A quality education regards the achievement of sustainable livelihood capability and well-being for learners. Through education, learners also acquire the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that underlie their realization of transformative citizenship.

Literacy, numeracy and life skills are the primary objective of education. The Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All (1990) and the Dakar Framework for Action (2000) highlight the acquisition of literacy, numeracy and essential life skills of learners at the basic educational level. These outcomes are usually used as the fundamental measures for assessing the effectiveness of education. They lay the foundation for a child's life-long learning, gainful employment and well-being in society. These basic outcomes equip children to enter into life, to face life challenges, make well-balanced decisions and develop a healthy lifestyle, good social relationships, critical thinking and capacity for non-violent conflict resolution (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2007). In social interaction, learners must be able to know, think, feel, believe, and behave in ways that demonstrate respect for people, experiences, issues, and perspectives that are different from theirs. In culturally diverse societies, learners are able to be aware of their own culture and perspectives while understanding others'. These outcomes underlie the development of the skill to "learn to live together" (Delors et al., 1996).

As said, a quality education must develop well-being of learners. Gasper (2007) indicates objective well-being that is known as achievements or functionings in non-feelings dimensions, e.g., physical and mental health, security, and subjective well-being that implies feelings of happiness, satisfaction or fulfillment. UNESCO (2004) stresses key elements that foster a sense of safety and personal well-being. They are safe play, sport and cultural

activities, healthcare, nutrition and sanitation, communication and negotiation skills that act as the foundation for a peaceful and secure society. No physical punishment and abuse of power in school are noted as pivotal conditions for the development of a positive learning environment. In such environment, learners are usually made feel emotionally safe and open. They are educated to express their emotions in healthy and assertive ways.

As noted by Berry (1997, 2006) and Sam (2006), people's behaviors and actions are usually oriented by their acquired values in culturally diverse environments. Hence, a quality education promotes the global and national universal values and those of particular culture of learners. The universal values of an educational system are developed on the basis of the educational policies and strategies of each nation. The global values are usually promoted by the universal educational institutions like UNESCO, UNICEF. For example, the living values education program supported by UNESCO is a part of a global movement for a culture of peace and non-violence. This programme develops 12 values including *Peace, Respect, Cooperation, Freedom, Happiness, Honesty, Humility, Love, Responsibility, Simplicity, Tolerance, and Unity* in order to fulfill the potential of the individual and create harmonious, effective communities. Apart from the universal values, a quality education also recognizes the values of learners' particular cultures. In this sense, cultural values of learners' ethnic group need to be respectfully recognized in curriculum and pre-service and in-service training for teachers who are responsible for passing global and local cultural values down to future generations.

Building the awareness of citizenship for learners and enabling them to take actions to fulfill their duties to the community, the nation-state, and the world as a citizen are also a major goal of a quality education. Quality education contributes to the development of individuals who bear the responsibility to promote equality, social justice and possess the knowledge, skills to act in a just society. Hence, learners must become transformative citizens who effectively contribute to sustainable growth and peaceful societies. They are able to engage with and transform their societies and the world. Banks (2012) defines the transformative citizenship that

“Transformative citizenship involves civic actions designed to actualize values and moral principles and ideals beyond those of existing laws and conventions. Transformative citizens take action to promote social justice even when their actions violate, challenge, or dismantle existing laws, conventions, or structure” (Bank, 2012).

Through education, learners are provided with transformative academic knowledge, skills, information, and values that enable them to take actions to create just and democratic communities and societies. They are educated to develop the decision-making and social action skills with which they are able to identify problems in society, make reflection and analysis of the identified problems and subsequently take appropriate actions. Furthermore, learners need to develop knowledge, attitudes, and skills that will enable them to function in a global society. National boundaries are eroding and a great number of people have multiple citizenships. Learners are educated to develop identity and attachment to the global community. Under this circumstance, learners become cosmopolitan citizens who “view themselves as citizens of the world who make decision and take actions in the global interests that will benefit humankind” (Banks, 2012). As such, learners need to be enabled to participate in the ways that will enhance democracy and promote equality and social justice in their cultural communities, nations, and regions and in the world.

#### 4. Conclusion

The paper aims at adding a new conceptualization of quality education from the paradigm of recognition to the existing diverse approaches. Grounding on an insight into power relationship that determine learners' community forces, in the other words, the patterns of response in social interaction and schooling, the paper highlights that the rationale for a quality education roots in equal social status and opportunities of self-realization for learners in culturally diverse classrooms, schools and society at large. To achieve these two goals, the principles of democracy, relevance, inclusion, equity, universality vs. particularity and ownership permeate the inputs, process and outcomes of an education system in given socio-economic, political and cultural contexts. The conceptualization of quality education varies on the basis of the context and/or the development level of each nation. For the developing countries, the physical access to infrastructure and teaching and learning facilities and materials remains one important element of a quality education (Tikly, 2011). Meanwhile, this is no longer the

priority issue for the developed countries. The issue of inclusion, equity and citizenship in culturally diverse societies is prioritized for the developed countries in which a strong movement of immigration occurs (Gundara, 2012; Onate & Gruber, 2012). As such, the conceptual framework serves as an analysis tool in order to address the priorities that an education system needs to make towards a quality education for all learners.

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