

Awareness and Curricula Integration of Sustainable Development Indices in University Programmes in Nigeria

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Introduction

The very essence of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) makes it imperative for any developing nation to put in place the where- withal not only to adopt and implement the resolution of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) in order to meet the challenge of its products ability to fit into the third Industrial Revolution of the globalized 21st century world, but also to make sure that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are achieved before the 2015 which automatically translates to accelerated economic growth and development.

Since the ESD enables people to anticipate and meet the challenges that threaten their very existence as citizens of nations and planet earth, Nigeria being a developing nation has realized that education is the most important key to be used in opening the door to economic growth and development and this she enunciated in her development programme- the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS).

According to the National Planning Commission (2004), NEEDS recognizes education as the vital transformation tool and a formidable instrument for socio-economic empowerment. In as much as the educational sector is crucial to achieving the objectives of NEEDS, it also happens to be the sector it seeks to reform. And one of the strategies of this reform is to update the instructional curricula of education to meet the demands of the national economy. This is in tandem with the DESD stakeholder strategy of re-orienting the curricula from pre-school to post-university so that through life-long education knowledge, skills and values will be acquired by the citizenry to improve their quality of life as they contribute to the development of their society.

Another strategy is to raise public awareness of the SD concept in order to make it possible to develop enlightened, active and responsible citizenship locally and international.

So this study examined how much of SD indices have been inculcated into higher education (HE) programs of the Lagos State government and the level of awareness of SD indices by the Administrators and students of higher education in Nigeria..

State Nigerian Higher Education

The state of University education in Nigeria reflects the fact that sustainability of the society is not a key feature in its academic programme as the funding situation has affected the quality of the outputs as reflected in underemployment and issues of poor relevance to the demand of the Nigeria markets. That the activities of idle youths in Nigeria has become the greatest concern to government, oil companies and well meaning citizen of this country is no longer in contention. This situation is worsening,

despite concerted efforts by oil companies, government and other social and non-governmental organizations to get these youths productively engaged through various programmes of youth development and empowerment. This may be largely due to the fact that most of these youth development and empowerment programmes are initiated and executed by sponsors, although in good faith, but without a proper understanding of the socio-economic and educational context of youth underdevelopment in the Nigeria (Okorie & Uche, 2006). The quality of infrastructure needed to implement the curriculum is not focused on modern imperatives of the demand of the knowledge economy of 21st century. Most of the development programmes are not student and staff centered (Uche, 2007,). Facilities where available, are not maintained, classroom environment is not conducive for teaching and learning process.

It is a well known fact that no Nigerian University is listed among the top five hundred in the world even though South Africa can boast of three of them in the last 100 and that Nigeria's expenditure on education is slightly above that of war-torn Somalia. These are among the challenges that led to the declaration of Education for Sustainable Development by United Nation, 2002. (UNESCO, 2002). Education for sustainable development is education that enables people to foresee, face up to and solve the problem that threaten life on our planet. It is the education that disseminates the values and principles that are the basis of sustainable development (intergenerational equity, gender parity, social tolerance, poverty reduction, environmental protection and restoration, natural resources conservation, and just and peaceful society). It is the education that highlights the complexity and interdependence of three spheres, the environment, society-broadly defined to include culture and economy. To emphasize the importance and seriousness of ESD to our world and generation, Matsuura, 2005, advised that "education for sustainable development of course must be more than just a logo or a slogan. It must be a concrete reality for all of us-individuals, organizations, governments-in all of our daily decisions and actions, so as to promise a sustainable planet and a safer world to our children, our grandchildren and their descendants"

Awareness.

Active and responsible citizenship can be developed locally if targeted publicity programs are put in place not only to create awareness of the ESD and its goals but also to re-orient the thinking towards creating a sustainable society from the local point of view, then leading them into the international arena of sustainability. Media strategies can be employed in such a way that both awareness and re-orientation can go on simultaneously within an enlightened community. Awareness once created will spin-off into exchanges and sharing of information among local and international stakeholders.

Curricular Integration.

All school curricular especially that higher education must be rethought and reformed in order to meet the challenges of achieving the goals. Of recent the Ministerial roundtable on Education and Economic Development (2007) issued a communiqué, and stated that there is need to strengthen linkages between education and economic development so that the curricula will respond to the new demands of the global

market and knowledge economy which requires the capabilities to identify, produce, process, transform, disseminate and use information to build and apply knowledge for human development. They continued that education for sustainable development is a theme in learning and content and curriculum planning across level and types of education be based on scientific evidence.

Problem.

So the questions of the study were how aware are the administrators and students of Higher Education in Nigeria of the sustainability Development indices? Have the indices of SD been inculcated in the curricula of General studies in Higher Education in Nigeria?

Methodology.

Two checklists were constructed: Awareness Level Checklist (ALC) which examined the level of awareness among the administrators and students of Higher Education in Nigeria. The Curriculum Content Checklist (CCC) examined the curriculum content of General Studies in Higher Education in Nigeria. The sample for the study was randomly selected administrators (50) and students (200) of the Faculty of Education of Lagos State University of Port Harcourt. The data was analyzed using the chi-square statistical tool.

Analysis

Question 1: Are you aware of the Education for sustainable development goals?

Table 1: Awareness/knowledge of the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) goals among High Education administrators and students.

Respondents	Responses/percent.				Total response.
	Yes	%	No	%	
Administrators (H.E.)	41	82	9	18	50
Students (H.E.)	173	86.5	27	13.5	200
Total	214	85.5	36	14.4	250

Table 1 shows that 85.6 percent of the entire respondents involved in the study declared their awareness and knowledge of the education for sustainable development (ESD) goals, while 14.4 percent of them indicated that they were oblivious to the ESD goals.

Question 2: Do you think that the Nigerian Education system can meet the goals of ESD by the year 2015?

Table 2: Observed/expected responses on Nigerian Education System meeting the goals of ESD by the year 2015?

Subjects	Responses				Roll Total
	Yes		No		
	Obs.	Exp.	Obs.	Exp.	
High Edu. Administrators.	13	(11.8)	37	(38.2)	50
High Edu. Students.	46	(47.2)	154	(152.8)	200
Column Total.	59	-	191	-	250

Table 3: Result of chi-square analysis on Nigerian Education System meeting the goals of ESD by the year 2015.

Variable	Education for sustainable development (ESD Goals)					
(2) Nigerian Education System.	X ² -calculated	N	(R-1)(c-1) df	Probs	X ² -critical	decision
	0.1996	250	1	0.05	3.84	No Significance

Table 3 shows that the calculated chi-square value of 0.1996 is less than the critical chi-square value of 3.84, gives 1 as the degree of freedom and 0.05 as the level of significance. This result confirms the inability of Nigerian Education System to meet the goals of the ESD by the year 2015.

Question 3: Are Education for sustainable development (ESD) indices inculcated in the General studies curriculum of higher education in Nigeria?

Table 4: Observed/expected rating of the extent to which ESD indices are represented in the GES curriculum for institutions of higher education in Nigeria.

Education for Sustainable Development Indices.

GES curriculum	Integrated equity	Gender parity	Social tolerance	Poverty reduction	Environmental protection and conservation.	National resource conservation	Just and peaceful society	Education highlighting complexity and interdependence of environment, society and economy.	Row total
Ges 100 comm. Skill in English.	1 (0.6)	0 (0.15)	1 (0.45)	0 (0.45)	0 (0.3)	0 (0.15)	0 (0.45)	0 (0.6)	3
Ges 101 computer appreciation	1 (0.6)	0 (0.15)	1 (0.45)	1 (0.45)	0 (0.3)	0 (0.15)	0 (0.45)	1 (0.6)	3
Ges 102 introd. To logic and philosophy	1 (0.8)	1 (0.2)	1 (0.6)	0 (0.6)	1 (0.4)	0 (0.2)	1 (0.6)	1 (0.8)	4
Ges 103 Nigerian people and culture.	1 (1.0)	1 (0.25)	1 (0.75)	1 (0.75)	0 (0.5)	0 (0.25)	1 (0.75)	1 (1.0)	5
Ges 104 History and philosophy of science. Column total	1 (1.0) 4	1 (0.25) 1	0 (0.75) 3	1 (0.75) 3	1 (0.5) 2	1 (0.25) 1	1 (0.75) 3	1 (1.0) 4	5 20

Table 5: Result of chi-square analysis in the extent to which ESD indices are represented in the GES curriculum for instruction of higher education in Nigeria.

Variable	Education for sustainable development indices				
(2) GES curriculum for higher education.	X ² -calculated	(R-1)(c-1) df	Prob.	X ² -critical	decision
	16.86	28	0.05	41.34	No significance

Table 5 above shows that the calculated chi-square value of 16.86 is less than the critical chi-square value of 41.34, given 28 as the degree of freedom and 0.05 as the level of significance. This result confirms that the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) indices are not fully inculcated in the General studies (GES) curriculum of institution of higher education in Nigeria.

Findings.

The level of awareness of ESD goals among administrators and student of higher education in Nigeria is high. The indices of ESD are not fully integrated into the curriculum of GES of higher education in Nigeria. Administrators and students of higher education in Nigeria think that the Nigerian Education system may not meet the goals of ESD by the year 2015.

Though the level of awareness of ESD goals by administrators and students of higher education is high, other stakeholders such as parents, labour market, government and general public may not be aware of these goals and their contribution towards its achievement. The indication that the ESD indices are not fully integrated into the curriculum of GES of higher education in Nigeria calls for more concern. The GES courses are university-wide courses implying that every student coming to university must take and pass them. This is a very good idea. However if these courses do not contain the appropriate content, students will not get the right orientation for building a sustainable development. They will not be fully prepared to face the society and contribute to its development when they come out of school. The thinking that the Nigerian education system may not meet the ESD goals by 2015, implies that the confidence in the present state of the curriculum content of the higher education is dwindling.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Awareness of a need or problem does not bring solution but planning makes a way for success. For Nigeria to meet the ESD goals by the year 2015, there need to start planning for it. Based on the finding of this study and the implications, the following recommendations are made. There is need to extend the level of awareness on the indices of education for sustainable development to other stakeholders such as planners of the educational system, parents, employers of labour, as well as the general populace. There is need to review the goals and curriculum content of the education system with the view of integrating the indices of ESD into them. There is great need to invest more on quality education for Nigerian youths and secure their future with greater endowment. There is need to give a better orientation and higher sense of value and belongingness by developing a rich curriculum, creating a conducive learning environment and comfortable hostels and showing them love which they will in turn give back to their society.

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