INFLUENCE OF EDUCATION ON YOUTHS FOR DEMOCRACY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
When young adults lack the appropriate education that promotes active participation in democratic life they tend to lose interest in politics. It therefore becomes necessary to equip young adults with the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes required for development, active citizenship, respect for human rights of every person, sustainable and inclusive society. This study assessed how educational programmes and activities can be used as a tool to prepare young adults for active and appropriate participation in democratic life for sustainable development. Three research questions and two hypotheses were raised for the study. The descriptive research design was adopted to assess 1,200 respondents randomly sampled from a population of 12,000 from the university of Lagos post graduate studies using proportionate stratified random sampling technique. Questionnaire titled Education, democracy and sustainable development in Nigeria (EDSDQ) was used to elicit data from respondents. Research questions were answered using mean, while the research hypotheses were tested using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. Findings of the study include that; teaching and learning of the right values, skills and attitude enhance young adults' participation in democratic life; education to be inculcated into the lives of the young adults include; respect for life, social and work ethics, integrity, responsibility, respect for laws and regulations, productivity, punctuality and change of attitude towards work, national and sustainable development; conclusively, there is significant correlation between education, democracy and sustainable development. It was therefore recommended that decision makers and curriculum developers should include comprehensive and appropriate policies and curricula in schools that will promote and sustain civic education to enhance sustainable development in Nigeria.

Keywords: Education, Democracy, Development, Sustainability, Participation

Introduction

Education is very crucial in the transmission of cultural knowledge and development of attitudes towards democratic activities and sustainable development of any nation. In the past, family and schools have been the only source used to promote societal values, beliefs and ways of life of any society. Pirsl, Marusic and Pokrajac-Bulian (2007), stated that our young adults need to understand how

democracy works and how they can help to keep and improve it. This is because good civic education and human rights is necessary to assist every young person in acquiring knowledge, understanding and skills pertinent to efficient functioning as an individual and as a citizen in a local setting, national society and the world community.

Education according to Nnabuo and Asodike (2009), is defined as power and a process of acquiring knowledge, skills, ideas that shape and condition man's attitude, actions and achievements. Therefore, education is important as a tool to be used to equip young people with potentials such as literacy, confidence and attitudes that they need to promote active participation in democratic life. This implies application of knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired in a free and effective manner as influenced by values and motivation for personal fulfilment, development, active citizenship, inclusive society as well as sustainable development. Though it could be difficult to visualise exactly a sustainable world, one can at least understand what is unsustainable in our societies in terms of what constitutes problems in our society. These include abuses of human rights, corruption in all areas of life, inefficient use of resources at our disposals, among others.

Education and Democracy

Democracy in modern day is seen to be the most supported political tool for development and social change in the society of any nation. Democracy is based on equity and justice, the rule of law and the preservation of human rights. Fundamental elements of a thriving democracy are usually a strong civil society, an active and free press, strong and fair legal system, checks and balances on power, and free and fair elections. Democracy as a system of governance, assumes that every individual is capable of enjoying a set of basic liberties and opportunities, including the capacity to participate in democratic government and hold public offices. Several prominent scholars have linked increase in education with improvements in democracy (Dahl, Friedman, Lipset as cited in Eduardo and Yeaji 2015). This is because education is supposed to promote democracy by influencing the competence and cognitive orientation of individuals, and by providing experiences that instill democratic values. The challenge facing societies and humanity today in terms of achieving appropriate democratic strategies for sustainable development is how to motivate people to change basic behaviours and activities that are problematic to our environment.

Shechtman, Winfield and Manning, Kincal and Isik,(as cited in Subba, 2014) identified some democratic values, beliefs or principles which include: freedom, equality, justice, autonomy, cooperation, shared decision-making, sense of community, respect of life, justice, self-esteem, tolerance, responsibility, safety, peace and development. Establishing democracy mostly depends on the understanding, skills and attitudes of people which would be the primary responsibility of education. Abdullahi, (2007) posited that in any democratic society, education remains at the core of national stability, security and an instrument for

political and economic growth and development. This is because schools have the essential role in this process as they maintain structured and formal educational programmes. Howe and Covell, cited in Subba (2014) claims that democratic values must reflect in both the formal curricula and through unambiguous teaching. Therefore, to be recognised as a democratic institutions and systems according to Westall (2015), the society must have popular controlled environment, inclusiveness, adequate information and understanding of the position of others and transparency in decision making.

In spite of its widespread acceptability, democracy is still struggling to develop in Nigeria. This is because it is assumed that democracy has not been able to enhance the provision of basic human needs and equal distribution of available resources that sustains development of a nation. The question according to Carr (2008) is, do our educational systems encourage, support, and cultivate a democratic experience for students? Hence how do we understand the word democracy and how it is taught in schools throughout the formative years of these young adults? This is because it has become an obvious factor that institutions have an important role to play in cultivating and shaping the democratic experiences for students in relation to their present and future attitudes, behaviours, belief system and commitment regarding democracy. To this end, it has become important to identify and put forward strategies for enhancing civic knowledge, skills and active participation in democratic activities.

There is the need to equip the populace with change of attitude, action and participation towards democratic activities by acquiring relevant education and skills in order to promote developmental efforts in our nation. Efforts to promote democracy for sustainable development involve training and information aimed at building and equipping the populace to abide by the following principles which include: social and work ethics, integrity, responsibility, respect for laws and regulations, productivity, punctuality and change of attitude towards work and national development. This implies not only providing our youths with knowledge, laws and regulations but also to impact the necessary skills needed to promote, apply and sustain these values and attitudes in their daily life. In the study carried out by Eduardo and Yeaji (2015), using an expanded data set on educational attainment that covers most of the post war era, the study findings indicate that increases in level of education improve levels of democracy. The study also reveals that democratizing effect of education is more forceful in poor countries.

According to UNESCO (2015), other fields that are related to and supportive of education for democratic citizenship and human rights education are global citizenship education, education for mutual respect and understanding, peace education, education for sustainable development and intercultural/multicultural education. These areas are essential in order to prepare young people to be active, responsible and caring participants in their communities and the nation for sustainable development. Furthermore, UNESCO (2015) asserts the need for competence-based

curriculum approach with learner outcomes to include knowledge, attitudes, skills and the development of dispositions and capacities among young people to be able to apply the appropriate democratic principles in their daily lives. At a point, the ideas of sustainable development and democracy overlap and are interdependent. Common to both sustainable development and democracy is participation (Westall, 2015). Participation in terms of commitment by all stakeholders to tackle some of the global challenges and also ensure that the differences between the two ideas are resolved to ensure that current political democratic systems adapt in the direction of achieving sustainable development. He stated that the justice, legitimacy and transparency achieved by democratic contests and safeguards can also make the achievement of sustainable development fairer, more widely justified, and acceptable. Hence sustainable development can be seen as a process and a set of desirable outcomes. In other words, sustainable development is a pre-requisite for thriving democracies.

Education and Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is a continually evolving concept, therefore, difficult to define. The Brundtland Commission and Ugwu and Ijah (2011) defined "sustainable development" as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs. According to the commission, sustainable development is believed to have three components: environment, society, and economy. The well-being of these three areas is intertwined, not separate and a society relies on the resources available to ensure a healthy environment. There is the need for the appropriate education that will improve understanding of social institutions and their role in change and development; increase awareness of resources availability and effects of human activity on the environment and climate change; and to create sensitivity to the potential and the limits of economic growth and its impact on society and the environment. Therefore, education directly affects sustainability plans in areas like imbibing the culture of implementing the informed sustainability goals, good community-based decisions which will affect social, economic, and environmental well-being; and improves the quality of life of its citizenry. The National Town Meeting on Sustainability (Rogers, 1999) believe that sustainable development means new technologies and new ways of doing business, which allow people to improve quality of life without prejudicing the ability of future generations. The goal of educational system according to Onyenemezu (2012) is to provide a balanced individual capable of surviving in an environment and contributing meaningfully towards peace co-existence of the society to which they belong. The culture of peace fosters sustainable development since it is aimed at helping people cope resiliently and creatively with ethical, cultural, political, environmental and other social transformation. What is needed for a culture of peace is an integrated, comprehensive education covering human rights, democracy, international understanding, tolerance, non-violence, multi-cultural and other values conveyed through the coordinated behaviour as presented in a school environment

(Onyene, Ikeche, Okafor & Iriobe, 2015). These can be achieved through re-examining curricular at all levels (pre-school to professional education) to address the need for sustainable development.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria became a constitutional democratic nation since 1999, but today with over 180 million populations, the nation is characterised by a very weak political and economic system, persistent ethnic and religious conflicts which have given rise to fear of insecurity, disunity, national instability, rising inequality among others. When young adults lack the appropriate education that promotes active participation in democratic life they tend to lose interest in politics. It therefore becomes necessary to equip young adults (25-35years) with the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes required for development, active citizenship, and respect for human rights of every person, sustainable and inclusive society. This study therefore, assessed how educational practices and activities can be used as a tool to prepare young adults for active and appropriate participation in democratic life for sustainable development in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this study is to:

1. Determine the extent to which educational policies and implementation programmes influence young adults active participation in democratic activities in Nigeria;
2. Ascertain the effectiveness of the current educational programmes for sustainable development;
3. Identify strategies for promoting appropriate democracy and sustainable development needed in Nigeria.

Research Questions:

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do educational policies and implementations influence young adults' participation in democratic activities in Nigeria?
2. How effective are the current educational programmes for sustainable development in Nigeria?
3. What are the strategies for promoting appropriate democracy and sustainable development in Nigeria?

Hypotheses:

1. There is no significant relationship between education and democracy in Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between education and sustainable development in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework/Conceptual Framework

This study is based on open-systems theory. The systems theory focuses on the arrangement of and relations between the parts which connect them into a whole. The System approach in any field of human endeavour is that which emphasizes a functional integration of parts, components and subsystems into a workable whole using as one of its major means, effective communication and information flow, (Ejiogu 1990). In essence system theory in the context of education as a means for democratic and sustainable development views every educational institution as a coordinated network of people, materials and events organized for optimal achievement of the nation's democratic and sustainable development. Thus the system approach takes into consideration and emphasizes the interactiveness and interdependence of all the components of education and the larger society, which is it's supra system. This is depicted in the model below.

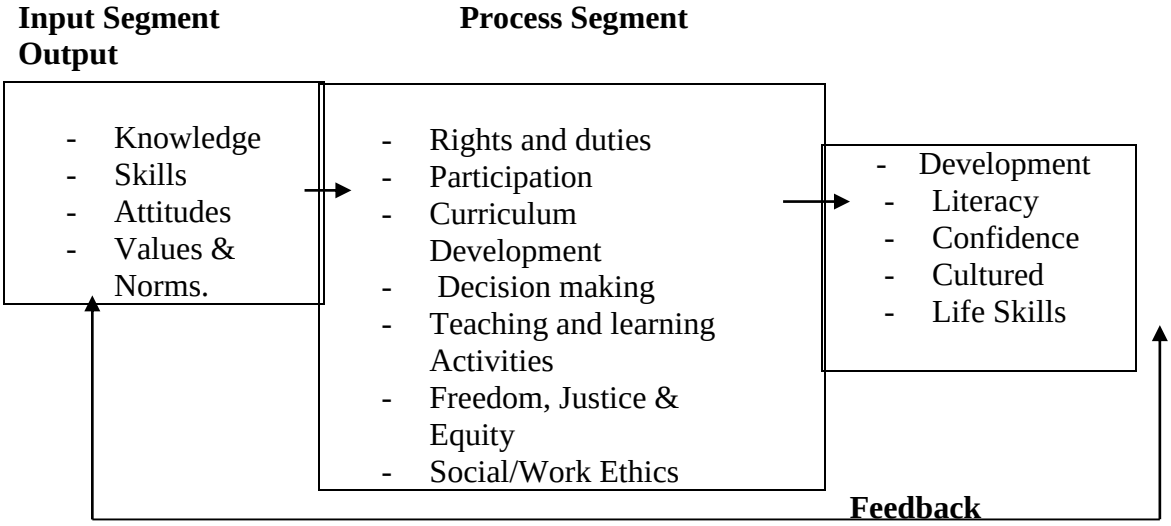

Fig. 1: An Integrated Model of Education, Democracy and Sustainable Development Adapted from Okafor, 2015.

Education is perceived to be a tool for acquiring knowledge, skill, experience, values and attitudes for development. To guarantee democratic and sustainable development, education must interact with the principles and values of democracy and sustainability in terms of freedom, justice and equity, team work, respect for human rights among others to ensure a civilized, refined, cultured, and educated society.

Method

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The study population included all post graduate studies students of University of Lagos numbering 12,000. A sample size of 1,200 was drawn out of the 12,000 population of post graduate students of University of Lagos, Akoka. The sample was drawn using simple random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was titled Education,

Democracy and Sustainable Development Questionnaire (EDSDQ), and was validated by four academic staff of educational administration and experts in educational management. This is to ensure face and content validity. The Cronbach alpha was used to determine the reliability of the study instruments and reliability coefficient of 0.80 was obtained. Responses to the items were adapted on the 4-point Likert type of SA- Strongly Agree, A- Agree, D-Disagree, and SD-Strongly disagree. The 4-point rating scale was reduced to two with Strongly Agree and Agree merged together as 'Agree' and Strongly Disagree and Disagree merged together as 'Disagree'. The criterion mean value of 2.5 was set; all items below this value are considered to be on disagreeing affirmation, while items above the value are on affirmative side. Mean scores were used in answering the research questions.

Data Analysis and Result Presentation

Research Question 1: To what extent do educational policies and implementations influence young adults?

Table 1: Educational policies, implementations and democratic activities in Nigeria

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	Std Dev
1.	My formal education has no influence on my attitude to democratic activities.	2.85	1.04
2.	The only time I am engaged in democratic activity is when I vote on election day.	2.71	0.98
3.	Our lecturers modeled democracy every day in classroom activities.	2.88	0.78
4.	Lack of democratic education in schools hinders political literacy among the students.	2.76	0.99
5.	I lack willingness to participate in a peaceful demonstration.	2.45	0.96
6.	I could be more active by voicing out my concerns, but I am not interested.	2.92	0.98
7.	My school organizes training sessions aimed at building and equipping the students to abide by democratic principles	3.07	0.84
8.	School authority does not interfere in student union activities	2.69	0.71
9.	Projects are assigned to students in groups to encourage team work	2.76	0.81
10.	Student unionism in my school is structured in a way that encourages active participation in democratic activities	2.07	0.93
	Grand Mean	**2.72**	**0.90**

Table 1 above shows the mean distribution of educational policies, implementation and democratic activities in Nigeria. The table revealed that eight out of the ten items of the study, the respondents agreed to the items with a mean score value above 2.5 criterions mean indicating positive response. Respondents with a mean score of 3.07 agreed that school organized sessions aim at building and equipping the students with democratic principles, With a mean score of 2.88 the respondents agreed that lecturers model democracy on daily basis in class activities, The respondents agreed with a mean score of 2.85 agreed that formal education has no influence on their attitude to democratic activities. On the other hand, respondents with mean score of 2.07 disagreed on the issue that student unionism in school is structured to encourage active participation in democratic activities. Also respondents with mean score 2.45 disagreed that they lack willingness to participate in a peaceful demonstration. From the table it is deduced that educational policies and implementation influence young adult participation in democratic life with a grand mean of 2.72.

Research Question 2:
How effective are the current educational programmes for sustainable development in Nigeria?

Table 2: Current educational programmes and sustainable development in higher institutions in Nigeria

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	Std Dev
1.	Curriculum content of my programme in school encouraged appreciation of customers and communities as part of social responsibility of a business Those engaged in activities harmful and poisonous to an environment must be forced to pay compensation	2.10 2.04	0.80 0.95
2.	Resource management should be part of our school curriculum	2.81	0.87
3.	My involvement in teamwork exposed me to appreciate the benefit of co-existence.	1.82	0.83
4.	Educational activities help to expose students to access information to improve and protect our environment.	2.95	0.82
5.	I have learnt that there must be co-ordination and mutual collaboration in implementing ethnic and regional policies.	3.04	0.77
6.	My active participation in club activities responsible to promote social inclusion has influenced my attitude towards good governance	2.36	0.92
7.	Lack of clear and easily accessible complaint mechanism hinders national development	3.23	0.89
8.	Lack of effective communication flow between the citizens and the government hinders national interest in politics	2.83	0.99
	Grand mean	**2.58**	**0.87**

A look at the above table shows that respondents agreed to the statements that: lack of clear and easily accessible complaint mechanism hinders national development with a mean of 3.23, there must be co-ordination and mutual collaboration in implementing ethnic and regional policies with a mean score of 3.04; lack of effective communication flow between the citizens and the government hinders national interest in politics, with mean score of 2.83; and resource management should be part of our school curriculum with mean of 2.82. Meanwhile respondents disagreed that their involvement in teamwork exposed them to appreciate the benefit of co-existence, with mean score of 1.82; those engaged in activities harmful and poisonous to an environment must be forced to pay compensation, with mean of 2.04 and through the curriculum of activities in school they learnt to appreciate customers and communities as part of social responsibility of a business with mean score of 2.10. With a grand mean of 2.58, it is deduced that our current educational programmes are effective for sustainable development in Nigeria.

Research Question 3

What are the strategies for promoting appropriate democracy and sustainable development in Nigeria?

Table 3. Strategies for promoting appropriate democracy and sustainable development in higher institutions in Nigeria

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	Std Dev
1.	Team work	2.65	0.74
2.	Improved access and quality of education	3.46	0.59
3.	Public understanding and awareness of sustainability goals	3.01	0.80
4.	Re-orienting existing education to address sustainability	3.25	0.87
5.	Adequate training related to sectors of the economy	3.14	0.89
6.	Use of technology to learn, live and work	2.81	0.82
7.	Demonstration of global literacy	2.87	0.92
8.	Demonstration for civil and community engagement in sustainable programmes	2.79	0.81
9.	Ensure critical and analytical thinking among the students	2.71	0.74
	Grand Mean	3.02	0.86

In discussing the strategies for promoting appropriate democracy and sustainable development in higher institutions, table 3 shows that respondents agreed to improved access and quality of education with mean of 3.46; re-orienting existing education to address sustainability with a mean of, 3.25; the need for public understanding and

awareness of sustainability, with mean of 3.01; demonstration of global literacy, 2.87, with the least mean score being 2.71 on ensuring critical and analytical thinking among the students.

Hypotheses 1:

There is no significant relationship between education and democracy in Nigeria.

Table 4: There is no significant relationship between education and democracy in Nigeria.
Education and Democracy

Variables	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**	**df**	**r-cal**	**r-crit**	**Sig**	**Inference**
Education	1200	23.200	9.453	1998	0.631	0.195	0.00	Sig
Democracy	1200	27.143	3.037					

Table 4 shows that the mean score of democracy of 27.143 is greater than the mean score of education of 23.200. In addition the calculated value of r- cal = 0.631 is greater than the table value of r-crit = 0.195. This is significant at 0.05%. The hypothesis stated above is therefore not accepted. This implies there is a significant relationship between education and democracy in Nigeria.

Hypotheses 2:
There is no significant relationship between education and sustainable development in Nigeria.

Table 5: There is no significant relationship between education and sustainable development in Nigeria.
Education and Sustainable Development

Variables	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**	**df**	**r-cal**	**r-crit**	**Sig**	**Inference**
Education	1200	23.200	9.453	1998	0.887	0.195	0.00	Sig
Sus. Dev	1200	23.825	9.0251					

Table 5 shows that the mean score of sustainable development of 23.825 is greater than the mean score of education 23.200. In addition the calculated value of r-

0.887 is greater than the table value of r- 0.195. This is significant at 0.05%. The hypothesis stated above is therefore not accepted. This implies there is a significant relationship between education and sustainable development in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The result of the study reveals positive influence of educational policies and implementations on young adults' participation in democratic activities in higher institutions with an average mean score of 2.72. This is because respondents agreed that lack of interest among young people most time is caused by the school not modelling democratic activities, lack of capacity building and unwillingness of the students to participate in peaceful demonstration due to lack of structured student's unionism. The consequence has reduced active participation of young people in democratic activities during and after school. The result of the study in research question one and hypothesis one revealed that there is a significant relationship between education and democracy in Nigeria with the co-efficient values of r-cal =0,631 is greater than the value of r-crit = 0.195. Respondents agreed that lack of democratic education in schools hinders political literacy among the students with a mean score of 2.76. This is in line with the study carried out by Eduardo and Yeaji (2015), on educational attainment and democracy level. Their finding indicates that increase in the level of education improve levels of democracy. The study also reveals that democratizing effect of education is more forceful in poor countries. However, with adequate knowledge and capacity building on democratic education for sustainable development, young people would be more dedicated in participating in democratic activities.

The finding of the study also indicates that there is positive effect of the current educational programmes on sustainable development in higher institutions. This contradicts the report by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) statistical year book and the World Education Report which reveals that in the United States more than 80 per cent of the population has some post-secondary education, and about 25 per cent of the population has a four-year degree from a university yet their per-capita energy use and waste generation are nearly the highest in the world (Hopkin and Mckeown, 2002). From this example, more education has not led to sustainability. The report has shown that it is not just about higher level education but acquiring the appropriate and adequate education needed to solve national sustainable practices. However, with a grand mean score of 2.58, the respondents agreed that the current educational programmes and practices have helped minimally to create awareness and enhance sustainable development practices in Nigeria. This is because with a mean score of 3.04 the respondent agreed that they have learnt that there must be co-ordination and mutual collaboration in implementing ethnic and regional policies. The results of the study in research question two and hypothesis two revealed that education and sustainable development are significantly related with the co-efficient values of r-cal = 0.887 and r-crit =

0.195. Respondents agreed that lack of clear and easily accessible complaint mechanism hinders sustainable and national development with a mean score of 3.23.

The result of the study also reveals that the strategies for promoting appropriate democracy and sustainable development in higher institutions are significant and positive with a grand mean of 3.02 and standard deviation of 0.80. The findings in table 3 revealed that all the items on the table that include team work, improved quality of education, increased awareness, adequate knowledge, capacity building, development of creative and analytical thinking, re-orientation of the students and useful application of technological tools are very important strategies for promoting appropriate democracy for sustainable development in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The study was to determine the extent to which educational activities can be used to prepare young adults for active and appropriate participation in democratic life for sustainable development. The study reveals that educational activities in higher institutions have positive influence on democratic participation of young people and in ensuring a sustainable development. Despite the various educational programmes and activities initiated by the government, young people are yet to develop positive attitude towards active participation in democratic activities. Therefore, there is the need to increase awareness through trainings to instil sustainable values and practices among young people.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommend as follows:

1. Given that one of the challenges facing the society today in terms of achieving appropriate democratic strategies for sustainable development is how to motivate people to change basic behaviours and activities, it therefore becomes necessary for the reorientation of young adults for sustainable development.
2. There is need to integrate sustainable development programmes into the school curricula at all levels of education to imbibe the culture.
3. Decision makers and curriculum developers should include comprehensive and appropriate policies and curricula in schools that will sustain and promote civic education to enhance sustainable development.

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