WEST AFRICAN JOURNAL ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Strategies for Attaining the 4th Goal of Sustainable Development in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

Ndidi Loretta Okeke (PhD)
Department of Educational Management and Policy, Faculty of Education
Nnamdi Azikiwe University
on.loretta@unizik.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

The study investigated the strategies used by teachers in attaining the 4th goal of sustainable development in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Sustainable Development Goal 4 is a broad objective that ensures that every child irrespective of creed, gender, and social status gets quality primary and secondary education. The aim of the study was to find out the strategies employed by school teachers to ensure that every student in their schools acquires quality education for lifelong learning. The descriptive research design was used for the study, and the study population comprised 6402 secondary school teachers in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study and the multi-stage sampling technique was used to select 994 teachers. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection and validated by three Education experts. The reliability of the instrument was done using Cronbach alpha which yielded a Coefficient value of 0.85. Mean scores and standard deviation were used to analyze the data collected. The findings revealed that teachers rarely use inclusive teaching and guided learning strategies in achieving sustained development goal 4. The study recommended that teachers should be trained and retrained on the act of inclusive teaching and learning for quality education.

Keywords: strategies, sustaining development, inclusive education, quality education, school teachers.

Introduction

Development is an integral aspect of our world, man has through resilience and hard work improved his standard of living by using technology to make life better. Unfortunately, development comes with a price. Man has unbalanced the ecosystem through various activities such as the destruction of wildlife for farmland, degradation of aquatic resources, overpopulation, overconsumption, plastic production, emission of carbon dioxide, production of black carbon which increases global warming, overhunting and overexploitation (Mutuku, 2023). All these activities of humans have led to the depletion of the earth's resources and there is a great need for sustainability of development.

Sustainable development is a call to action to end the earth's degradation and ensure that the earth is protected. The Brundtland Report of 1987 describes sustainable development as the development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the likelihood of the future generation to meet their own needs. Its objectives among many others are to discourage and minimize the use of products and services that compromise the earth's well-being; create a vibrant economy and give quality and inclusive education to all (UNESCO, 2015). Rabinowitz (2021) also agreed that sustainable development is aimed at mobilizing people to change their actions, attitudes, and behaviors towards providing a safe sustainable future for the coming generations. Human beings are to ensure that future generations will have access to clean air, water, food, and every other resource that will make life livable. It is quite obvious that the rate at which man is depleting available natural resources could be detrimental to future generations.

Sustainable development is anchored on 17 goals aimed at transforming the world by ending poverty, and inequality, protecting the planet, and assuring that everyone enjoys good health, justice, and prosperity (WHO, 2015). Quality education which is goal no 4 has been identified as having a connection with all other goals (Muller et al, 2022). This is to say that education is key to the achievement of all the goals of sustainable development, a sine qua non. Education has the power to free the mind by giving it the right kind of knowledge, skills, values, and behavior that could generate transformative changes for achieving sustainable development goals (Walsh, 2022).

Specifically, in Anambra State, a commercial city where people work hard with limited

resources. The researcher has observed cases of people involving themselves in activities that endanger the environment and are hazardous to human life in a bid to make it big. It is the researcher's thesis that the transformative changes brought through education, if well directed will regenerate individuals in these communities with the right attitude towards the environment right from primary through secondary education. Education will help to devoid their minds of the wrong notions and practices of making money illegally and inform them on basic skills and the right attitude to fruitful living.

Goal 4 of the United Nations SDGs is an enabler. It aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education that promotes lifelong learning. It is essential for acquiring knowledge and developing capabilities that would enable a person to live and work in dignity, improve the quality of their lives, and help them make informed decisions for sustainable development (Oyeyinka and Adamolekun, 2021). The lack of quality education limits people from accessing the right information and this is a disadvantage to their livelihoods (Tonegawa, 2022).

Inclusive education is defined as the process of responding to the diversity of all learner's needs (including learners with disabilities) by increasing their participation in the learning process and reducing exclusion from education (UNESCO, 2003). In essence, no one should be excluded from being educated. The goal of inclusive education is to ensure that education is made available for all boys and girls to complete their basic education. In the United States of America, inclusive education is seen as the practice of educating special children in regular schools (Bryant, Smith, and Ryant, 2008). Many researchers have defined inclusive education in relation to special needs children (Anupriya and Salim, 2014). However, in this study inclusive means both physically challenged students and unimpaired ones should have access to quality education. The impaired students should be allowed to learn in regular classrooms to help boost their confidence, while unimpaired ones should learn to accept and co-exist with them (Kusimo, Chidozie, and Amoo, 2019). This will help foster good neighborliness among students and peers.

Access to quality education is also a human right and an enabler of sustainable development. Tonegawa (2023) described it in four categories: conducive school environment; educational attainment, learning achievement, and acquisition of non-cognitive skills. These four concepts are

prerequisites for quality education in any teaching and learning setting. In addition, are the quality of teaching, social and emotional skills of the teachers, the teachers' subject knowledge, and their entry behavior.

Equity is also an aspect of inclusive education and it is referred to as the state of achieving equality in the educational system. It can also be defined as the different educational treatment given to people in different environments to achieve equality (Nishimura and Sasaoka as cited in Tonegawa, 2023). Equality is best identified as gender equality, geographical conditions, income status, language, and disability (UNESCO, 2017). While Schleicher (2014) interpreted it in terms of fairness and inclusiveness. Hence education is regarded to be fair when people are not restricted from accessing it on the basis of gender, ethnic group, and social status.

Equally important, are teachers, without whom sustainable development Goal 4 will hardly be achieved. Unfortunately, many teachers are not aware of what inclusive education is all about and as a result treat it with levity. Inclusive education requires an inclusive teaching strategy; it is a methodology in which teachers are empowered to recognize the experiences and abilities of every student in their classes and embrace the idea that each student's learning capacity is open-ended (UNESCO, 2020). Inclusive teaching can be achieved through:

- Identification of each learner's needs
- Equal access to learning materials
- Creating a conducive learning environment for all learners
- Giving all students a sense of belonging in class
- Creating time to listen to all the students
- Teachers support all learners and encourage them to work with others
- Valuing learners' diversity and engagement of students (UNESCO, 2020).
- Adhering to a scaffolding approach to learning (breaking instructions into manageable units) (Ryan, 2022)

In addition, is also the practice of using guided teaching and learning by teachers, this approach involves students working collaboratively with their teacher in a group setting. Teachers guide students' learning by asking questions, providing prompts, giving explanations, and feedback (Anderson, 2020). Guided teaching provides opportunities for students to develop cognitive and social skills for long-term

learning. Furthermore, a study was carried out by Hushman and Marley (2015) on how instructional guidance could improve elementary pupils learning and self-efficacy in science. Findings revealed that guided instruction helped pupils to design a greater percentage of experiments correctly and self-reported greater changes in science self-efficacy than children in other conditions. Guided teaching has been proven to be a wonderful technique for teaching students who desire to work jointly with their teachers and it is excellent for students with disabilities (Ssebikirndu, 2020)

Statement of problem

Goal 4 of United Nations Sustainable Development contains an agreement by member countries to ensure that their citizens have access to inclusive and equitable education by 2030. In support of this objective, the Nigerian government instituted policies such as universal basic education, girl child education, special needs education, vocational education, and nomadic education as a prove of their commitment to achieve inclusive education in the country by 2030. However, these laudable policies have failed to promote quality and inclusive education in the country. Recently, Nigeria was rated the country with the highest out-of-school children in Africa, which shows that inclusive education is yet to take place in the Nigerian educational system. Equally in some schools in Anambra State, the researcher has observed vision impaired students struggling to learn in the same condition with abled students. It is against this backdrop, that the researcher aimed to find out the strategies teachers use to attain goal 4 of sustainable development in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to determine the strategies teachers use to attain the 4th goal of sustainable development in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, the study is determined to find out the extent teachers use:

1. Inclusive teaching strategies to attain the 4th goal of sustainable development in Public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. Guided learning strategies to attain the 4th goal of sustainable development in Public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do teachers use inclusive teaching strategies to attain the 4th goal of sustainable development in Public secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. To what extent do teachers use guided learning strategies to attain the 4th goal of sustainable development in Public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Methods

The descriptive survey design was used for the study with the aim of investigating the strategies teachers employ to attain the 4th goal of sustainable development. The population of the study comprised 6402 school teachers in Anambra State. The multi-stage sampling technique was used to select 994 teachers. The first stage involved clustering the study area into six clusters of educational zones comprising Awka, Ogidi, Onitsha, Aguata, Nnewi, and Otuocha. The second stage was selecting three educational zones through a simple random sampling technique. Eight schools were further selected randomly from each educational zone, and 16% of the population selected from the 24 schools and used for the study. This gave us a sample size of 994 teachers. A structured questionnaire titled "Teachers Strategies to Attain Sustainable Development Goal 4" (TSASDG4) was used for data collection and validated by three Education experts. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach's alpha and yielded a Coefficient value of 0.85. Mean scores and standard deviation were used to analyse the data collected.

Results

Research Questions 1

To what extent do teachers use inclusive teaching strategies to attain the 4th goal of sustainable development in Public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 1: Respondents' Mean Responses on Teachers inclusive teaching strategies to attain the 4th goal of Sustainable Development (N=994)

S/N	Item Description:	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	Teachers create a classroom environment that works for all the students.	2.05	0.76	Low Extent
2.	Teachers give every student equal access to learning materials	2.42	0.84	Low Extent
3.	Teachers discourage discrimination against students on the basis of disability.	2.81	0.83	Low Extent

4.	Teachers avoid comparing students' progress	2.03	0.96	Low Extent
5.	Teachers modify difficult assignments for students to understand	2.50	0.85	High Extent
6.	Teachers model the act of respect among students	2.62	0.71	High Extent
7.	Teachers support student learning with praise and reward	2.22	0.66	Low extent
8	Teachers encourage friendship among students in their classrooms	2.62	0.71	High Extent
	Cluster mean	2.40	0.79	Low Extent

Table 1 revealed that teachers rated low extent to items 1, 2, 4, and 7, while items 3, 5, 6, and 8 rated high extent with mean ratings ranging between 2.03 to 2.62. The standard deviation scores of 0.66 to 0.96 indicated homogeneity among the scores. The cluster mean of 2.40 shows that teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State do not use inclusive teaching strategies to attain the 4th goal of sustainable development.

Research Questions2

To what extent do teachers use guided teaching strategies to attain the 4th goal of sustainable development in Public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 2: Respondents' Mean Responses on Teachers Guided teaching strategies to attain the 4th goal of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (N=994)

S/N	Item Description:	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	Teachers observe student engagement during instructional delivery.	2.61	0.88	High Extent
2.	The teacher encourages students' collaborative work on projects on sustainable development.	2.42	0.76	Low Extent
3.	The teacher uses guided reading to assist students in comprehension.	1.57	0.52	Low Extent
4.	The teacher uses questioning to initiate discussion among students on environmental friendliness.	2.54	1.03	High Extent
5.	The teacher uses formative assessment to provide students with feedback on their learning.	2.78	0.84	High Extent

6.	The teacher uses prompts to initiate student reasoning on complex learning issues.	2.03	0.61	High Extent
7.	Teachers provide advice to assist students during class discussions	2.51	0.85	High Extent
	Cluster Mean	2.35	0.78	Low Extent

Table 2 revealed that teachers rated high extent to items 1, 3, 4, 5, and 7 while items 2, 3, and 6 rated low extent with mean ratings ranging between1.57 to 2.78. The table further revealed a cluster mean of 2.43 rejecting all items. This indicated that teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State do not use guided teaching strategies to attain the 4th goal of sustainable development. The standard deviation scores of 0.52 to 1.03 indicated homogeneity among the scores.

Discussion

Findings in research question 1 revealed that inclusive teaching is not among the teaching strategies used in public secondary schools in Anambra State to attain the 4th goal of sustainable development. This finding is in tandem with the findings of Ryan (2022) who noted that inclusive teaching provides equal access to learning opportunities to students. In addition, inclusive teaching avail opportunities for students with different abilities and learning styles to participate effectively in class activities (Amitkumar, 2018).

Findings in research question 2 with the cluster mean of 2.43 indicates that teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State do not use guided teaching and learning strategies to attain inclusive education. There is a possibility that the failure to use these strategies could be one of the reasons why the State has yet to achieve education for all. Guided teaching assists students' progress towards independent learning. This finding is in agreement with Anderson (2020) who noted that guided teaching helps students to develop social skills and cooperation. These skills help prepare students for successful adult life and equip them to be useful to the society.

Conclusion

The study showed that inclusive and guided teaching strategies are proven vehicles for the attainment of the 4th goal of sustainable development, which is inclusive and quality education for all. This indicates that

employing teaching strategies that will provide students the opportunities to participate in the learning process will help in the attainment of quality education for all. However, teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State have not mastered how to use these strategies in the learning process. It, therefore, behooves teachers to embrace the art of inclusive and guided teaching and learning in their various educational settings.

The findings of this study imply that teachers need a paradigm shift in their teaching approaches to be able to meet the demand for education. Teaching materials should be prepared with the mindset of giving quality and inclusive learning to all the students in the classrooms. In addition, Teachers' preparatory programs should pay serious attention to equipping teachers with various teaching strategies that will accommodate all learners.

References.

Anupriya, M. S. & Salim, D. (2014). Including children with special needs primary stage: Department of education of groups with special needs. New Delhi: National Council of education research and Training

Anderson, J. (2022). Guided vs independent learning: How to strike the perfect balance. Retrieved from www.thehighlyeffectiveteacher.com

Amitkumar, S. G. (2018). Role of teacher in inclusive education. *Aayushi international interdisciplinary research journal (AIIRJ) v (1), 229-232*

Hushman, C & Marley, S. C (2015). Guided instruction improves elementary students learning & self-efficacy in science. *The Journal of educational Research 108 (5); 371-381*

Kusimo, A. O & Chidozie, F. C. (2019). Cogent arts and humanities; 6(1), https://doi.org/10.1080/2331983.1684175

Mutuku, S. (2023). Various human activities that affect an ecosystem. Retrieved from www.conserve-energy-future

Muller, U; Hancock, D. R; Wang, C; Stricker, T; Cui, T & Lambert, M. (2022). School leadership, education for sustainable development (ESD), and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic: Perspectives of principals in China, Germany, and USA. *Educ. Sci. 12(12), 853;*

https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci1212 0853

Oyeyinka, B. & Adamolekun, L. (2021). Education as enabler of development. 66th anniversary webinar of free universal Basic Education. Organised by Obafemi Awolowo foundation. Retrieve fromwww.tribuneonline.com

Ryan, O. (2022). How to create an inclusive classroom: 12 tips for teachers. Retrieved from www.planbee.com

Rabinowitz, A. (2021). What is the importance of sustainable development? Retrieved from www.interfaithsustain.com

Schleicher, A. (2014). Equity, excellence and inclusiveness in education: policy lessons from around the world. OECD publishing, Paris

Ssbikirndu, L. (2020). Guided vs. Independent practices. Retrieved from www.teachhub.com

Tonegawa, Y. (2023). Education in SDGs: What is inclusive and equitable quality education? In : Urata, S; Kuroda, K; Tonegawa, Y (EDS) Sustainable Development Goals series: Springer, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-91-4859-6_4

UNESCO (2017), Global education monitoring report summary: accountability in education. UNESCO, Paris

UNESCO (2020) Global Educational monitoring Report: Inclusive teaching: Preparing all teachers to teach all students. Retrieved from www.en.unesco.org

UNESCO (2003). Overcoming exclusion through inclusive approaches in education: A challenge and a vision UNESCO. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net

United Nations General Assembly (2015). Transforming our world: The 2030 agenda for sustainable development. Retrieved from https://sdgs.un.org

Walsh, P. P. (2022). Education is te enabler for sustainable development. Retrieved from www.sdg.action.org

World Health Organisation (2023). Sustainable development goals. Retrieved from https://www.who.int