

TEACHERS' AWARENESS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS ATTAINMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BAYELSA STATE.

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Abstract

The launching of the Sustainable Development Goals calls for a multi-stakeholders approach towards the attainment of the goals before 2030. Four years after, the formal education sector in Bayelsa State has yet to implement any visible mechanism towards the attainment of the SDGs. This paper seeks to ascertain the awareness, perception and challenges of teachers towards the attainment of the SDGs in Bayelsa State. The study was guided by three research questions and three corresponding null hypotheses. The study adopted the descriptive survey design using a sample of 240 teachers drawn from six local government areas in Bayelsa State. A structured questionnaire, consisting of 20-items, was used for data collection. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while independent samples z-test was used to test the null hypotheses. Result revealed that teachers in Bayelsa State had a low level of awareness, positive perception and faced significant challenges which limit their contribution towards the attainment of the SDGs. On the basis of this result, it was recommended that teachers be offered opportunities to attend training and workshops so that their knowledge and awareness of the SDGs can be improved.

Keywords: *Teacher, Awareness, Education, Sustainable Development Goals.*

Introduction

How to address the problems facing our world has been a subject of philosophical, religious and academic debate for a considerable length of time. Repeatedly, regional, national and sub-regional efforts have been directed at ensuring that humans live a befitting, functional and satisfying life for millennia. This according to Dabrock (2015) has been the essence of government. Sadly, despite the effort made by individuals, group and national entities, the problem of poverty, child and maternal mortality, environmental degradation, war, civil unrest and global warming has called for a review of the developmental strategies of our world. It has, therefore, become imperative that a synergistic approach is adopted to ensure sustainability.

The issue of sustainable development has occupied the minds of scholars, political activists, local and international civil organizations for many years, with increased emphasis in 2015 when the Millennium Development Goals came to an end. The MDGs were the first global attempt at ensuring equitable distribution of resources and development. The MDGs was a bundle of developmental goals and a target committing 189 independent states including Nigeria and virtually all of the world's main multilateral organizations to an unprecedented effort to reduce multidimensional poverty through global partnership. The Millennium Declaration was signed in the year 2000 in New York and the year 2015 was fixed as the deadline for achieving most MDGs (Kayode and Adeniran, 2012). The MDGs have specifically eight goals: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and women empowerment; reduce child mortality; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability; and develop a global partnership for development (Lawal, Obasaju and Rotimi, 2012).

A review of the MDGs showed that while moderate gains have been achieved, there remained considerable challenges confronting the world. Green (2018) reported that while extreme poverty has declined to a third of its value in 2000 to only 11% of the world's population about 783 million people were still living on less than \$2/day, with more than half of the world's extreme poor living in sub-Saharan Africa, while about

one-third live in Southern Asia. As of 2015, about 5.6 million children die each year to preventable diseases. Furthermore, gender equality continues to be a mirage with many girls being married off, instead of being sent to schools. From the dimension of the environment, the period between 2013-2017 experienced the highest average global temperature rise costing the world billions in dollars.

From the Nigerian perspective, Ajiye (2014) concluded that indicators such as universal primary education, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and ratio of girls to boys in primary education has shown an encouraging trend in Nigeria and there are prospects that they will be achieved by 2015. While primary school completion rates and access to improved water supply and sanitation, show poor trends and deviate widely from the targets. The MDGs have been hindered by lack of reliable and consistent data, huge funding gaps, human capacity challenges and weak governance and accountability environment and poor coordination between the tiers of government. Corruption and cultural diversity, lack of local participation and empowerment, loss of focus on sustainability, the difficulty or lack of measurements for some of the goals are some issues that stand as threats to the realization of MDGs.

As the countdown to the deadline of the MDGs approached, it became clear that there is an urgent need to revisit and reconsider a wider scope of human development. Thus the development of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs was launched in September 2015 when the United Nations, alongside world leaders officially, launched the 17 goals and 169 targets to be met at the end of 2030 which it refers to as the Global Goal or Agenda 2030. According to the United Nations (2015), the Sustainable Development Goals and targets are integrated and indivisible, global in nature and universally applicable, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities. Targets are defined as aspirational and global, with each Government setting its own national targets guided by the global level of ambition but taking into account national circumstances. Each Government will also decide how these aspirational and global targets should be incorporated into national planning processes, policies and strategies. It is important to recognize the link between sustainable development and other relevant ongoing processes in the economic, social and environmental fields. The 17 goals are:

Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture,

Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.

Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all:

Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.

Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries.

Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

The development of the goals, as well as the implementation, follows a multi-stakeholder approach, requiring the inputs of not only governments but also non-governmental actors. One area that needs exposure is the role of certain public institutions especially knowledge institutions and their role in the implementation of these goals. This paper focuses on assessing teachers' awareness of the sustainable development goals and their centrality in the provision of information and knowledge and how this, in turn, can be used in the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the national and local level. Teachers hold a special position towards advancing the attainment of these goals because they localize content knowledge that brings about positive behavioural change in people, especially the younger generation.

Teachers are fundamental to the development of any nation because they are an effective catalyst in the process of lifelong learning, which is fundamental for the attainment of any goal, especially the global goals. They mediate between educational content and the learners. It is in this regard that they are truly the yardstick that measures the achievements and aspirations of the nation. The worth and potentialities of a country get evaluated in the work of teachers. It was in this direction that Musa, Jimba and Ogundele (2015) argued that the people of a country are the enlarged replica of their teachers because the teachers are the real nation builders.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2009) confirms this by stating that "no nation can rise above the quality of its teachers". In this connection, it can be safely inferred that no meaningful transformation can be achieved in Nigeria without the teachers playing their roles. Therefore the task of achieving any societal goal ably rests on teachers because they are responsible for effecting attitudinal change in the learners

Before the SDGs was launched there has been a great concern to what the meaning of "Sustainable Development" really means. There are many definitions of sustainable development, but the definition given from the World Commission on Environment and Developments in the paper titled *Our Common Good* (1987) has been adopted for the purpose of this study. According to the commission, sustainable development is that development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. What this literally means is that the needs of the future depend on how well we balance social, economic, and environmental objectives or needs when making decisions today. As a public institution, schools and their links to global goals are immediately apparent, and their potential importance as purveyors of development and information comes to the front.

This position was clearly captured by Inna Bokova, , the immediate past Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2015: 4) who averred that there is no more transformative force than education – to promote human rights and dignity, to eradicate poverty and deepen sustainability, to build a better future for all, founded on equal rights and social justice, respect for cultural diversity, and international solidarity and shared responsibility, all of which are fundamental aspect of our common humanity

This need has therefore advanced the call for teachers to become ambassadors for the attainment of the SDGs. However, no meaningful impact can be made by teachers and the larger educational system if empirical evidence is not gathered to identify the level of teachers' awareness of the SDGs, as well as impediments against teachers' active participation in the attainment of the SDGs. To localize this challenge, the present paper seeks to investigate on teachers' awareness and the attainment of the sustainable development goals in secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

Statement of the problem

Teachers by reason of their profession are rightly positioned to share information and knowledge on Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDGs). At a time like this, when the focus of Nations, organizations and institutions are tilted towards ensuring a sustained development prior to the United Nations' global agenda, teachers are uniquely positioned to provide information for attitudinal change that motivates their students to become advocates for the SDGs. Over the years the Nigerian government has come up with various programmes and initiatives aimed at making life better for the citizens, in some of these cases, the federal government has aligned itself with global initiatives that emanate from the United Nations. In spite of the benefit associated with most of these laudable initiatives, it seems that most developing countries hardly realize these goals. Specifically, Bayelsa State has had problems meeting these goals as the state is educationally backward, has a high level of poverty, unemployment and environmental degradation. These factors have contributed towards making the attainment of the SDGs difficult compared to other states. For education to contribute meaningfully towards the attainment of the SDGs, teachers need not only be aware but become more aligned to be advocates of the goals. This study, therefore, is set to bring to the fore through empirical evidence the awareness of the SDGs among teachers in Bayelsa State and the possible challenges for their attainment in the State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the awareness of secondary school teachers in Bayelsa State about sustainable development goals. In specific terms, the objectives of this study are to:

1. examine the level of awareness about the sustainable development goals among secondary school teachers in Bayelsa State.
2. ascertain the perception of secondary school teachers in Bayelsa State about sustainable development goals
3. identify factors limiting the effective contribution of secondary school teachers in Bayelsa State towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Research Questions

In line with this, the following research questions were raised:

1. What is the level of awareness about Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among secondary school teachers in Bayelsa State?

2. What is the level of the perception about Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among secondary school teachers in Bayelsa State?
3. What are the factors limiting the effective contribution of secondary school teachers in Bayelsa State towards the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance to further guide this study:

1. There is no significant difference in the level of awareness of Sustainable Development Goals between urban and rural public secondary school teachers in Bayelsa State.
2. There is no significant difference in the level of perception about Sustainable Development Goals between urban and rural public secondary school teachers in Bayelsa State.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of factors limiting urban and rural public secondary school teachers towards contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals in Bayelsa State.

Review of Related Literature

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are seventeen goals and 169 targets that show the eagerness of governments globally to reduce poverty and hunger and to tackle poor quality education, ill-health, gender inequality, environmental degradation and empowerment for peoples of the world. These goals respond to the world's most development challenges. It is argued that the purpose of development is to improve people's lives by expanding their choices, freedom and dignity (Omole, and Ozoji, 2014).

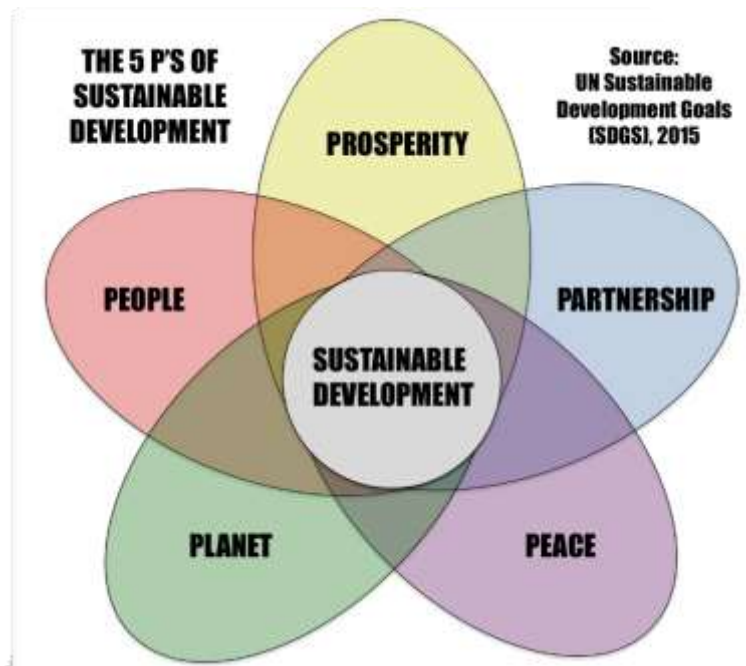
The SDGs were designed to improve upon the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that expired with the year 2015. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are intended to be universal in the sense of embodying a universally shared common global vision of progress towards a safe, just and sustainable space for all human beings to thrive on the planet (Oshborn, Cutter and Ullah, 2015).

Amacker (2011) is of the opinion that sustainable development is a concept that at its core is revolutionary, yet unfortunately incredibly difficult to pragmatically define. The history behind sustainable development is one that is not far-fetched. Tensions that can be found within the concept of sustainable development are numerous, ranging from its ambiguous and vague definition to the failure of attaining a universal pragmatic and operational framework. The great challenge that lies ahead with sustainable development is not only the need to educate it to the people but to first define it in a way people will understand it.

It was thus merely seen on quite a basic level, at the time of its coinage in 1987 when the paper *Our Common Future*, was published by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED). The document set the loose foundation of sustainable development with a widely quoted definition, which states "sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". The document, also frequently known as the Brundtland Report, has since been taken up by almost every international institution, agency and NGO. The Brundtland Report became the first document to support sustainable development as a multi-disciplinary field, as it explained that the economy, society, and the environment were key to sustainable development.

Building upon this definition in September 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals was launched by the United Nations, with support from international, political, developmental and multilateral organizations. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is the successor to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and is more officially known as Agenda 2030, with reference to the end year by which the SDGs should have been attained globally (United Nations, 2015). The MDGs, while it lasted was a focal point of the world's developmental agenda and brought about novel and innovative partnerships and considerable development to both developing and developed countries. The SDGs represents a more comprehensive agenda than the MDGs with 17 goals, 169 targets and well over 200 indicators.

The SDGs involves a five "Ps" agenda: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership and these five "Ps" are for all countries and peoples of the world (United Nations, 2015).



People: The goals are determined to end poverty and hunger, in all their forms and dimensions, and to ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment.

Planet: The goals are determined to protect the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change, so that it can support the needs of the present and future generations.

Prosperity: The goals aim to ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature.

Peace: The goals aim to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence. There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.

Partnership: The goal is determined to mobilize the means required to implement this Agenda through a revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focused in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people.

Global consultations among various bodies/sectors including governments, civil society organizations, the private sector, scientists, academicians and individual citizens were made before the SDGs were put in place. Thus, the educational sector was not left out of its formulation.

African countries, including Nigeria, were reported to have had a very slow start to the MDGs and this was a major impediment to the achievement of the MDGs (Oleribe & Taylor-Robinson, 2016). Furthermore, other factors attributed to the poor attainment of the MDGs, which if not addressed through awareness creation may lead to poor achievement of the SDGs include wrong assumptions about the state of Nigeria's economy, education and healthcare; absence of true and validated baseline data; lack of formative, and proper end-line evaluation; regular workers strike, and recurrent Boko Haram and militant insurgencies. Perhaps the slow start to the MDGs was probably not unconnected with the low level of awareness and knowledge on the MDGs initially among the populace. It is plausible that if the level of societal awareness is high, various stakeholders from varying sectors can challenge governments to implement global development plans nationally.

When these limiting factors are localized to the context of Bayelsa State, one can further appreciate the obstacles that await the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. Specifically, Bayelsa State has been a hotbed of militancy since its creation in 1996. Despite the effort from successive military and democratic government, Bayelsa State is a haven of poverty, with a simultaneous low standard of living and well-being. Despite contributing about 30% of Nigeria's oil and gas production, the state still suffers from neglect from the central government, evident in the poor standard of education, healthcare, and the economy. The state has remained a perennial member of the less-educated states in Nigeria (Funds for Peace, 2015). The difficult riverine terrain of the state has made it difficult for developmental efforts to reach the nooks and crannies of the state, with many individuals in the rural areas still exposed to poor sanitary and environmental conditions.

These realities urgently call for a unique approach towards the implementation of the SDGs in the state. The first point of call for this is the younger generation of students, thus the need to start from the secondary school level.

Secondary schools offer this opportunity for attitudinal change. It is therefore imperative that the level of awareness and knowledge about the SDGs be explored in a setting like Bayelsa state where previous developmental efforts were not successful so that possible gaps can be identified and addressed. Teaching and learning about the SDGs are thus important in the school setting, not only to staff and students but also the immediate environment since it contributes to an improved standard of sustainable living, especially within the context of a state like Bayelsa State.

Methodology

The survey research method was used as the design for the study. The survey research method was used for this work because it enabled the researcher to reach out to the study population in their different locations. In addition, the survey method was adopted because the work is mainly interested in describing certain variables in relation to the population, without establishing a cause and effect relationship. The sample for the study was drawn using the multi-stage sampling technique. In doing this, the state was divided into three senatorial zones with two local government each drawn from the zones. From each local government, 40 teachers were drawn using the convenience sampling technique which resulted in a sample of 240 teachers.

The instrument used for data collection was a 20-item instrument developed to assess the awareness, perception and challenges of teachers regarding the knowledge about the SDGs in Bayelsa State. The instrument was constructed using a four-point Likert Scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), and Strongly Disagreed (SD) scored 4, 3, 2, and 1 point(s) respectively. The instrument was adequately assessed for validity by giving the instrument to test experts. Reliability analysis of the instrument yielded an alpha value of 0.78 using Cronbach Alpha Method. For data analysis, mean and standard deviation were adopted with the obtained results displayed using tables as shown below. To determine if an item on the questionnaire was accepted or rejected, a criterion mean of 2.50 was utilized. This was based on the individual sum of the ratings (4 + 3 + 2 + 1) divided by 4. Therefore any item with a mean greater than 2.50 was accepted, while any item with mean less than 2.50 was rejected. For testing the null hypotheses, independent samples z-test was used with a chosen alpha of 0.05 level of significance.

Result Presentation.

Research Question One: What is the level of awareness about Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among secondary school teachers in Bayelsa State?

Table 1: Awareness about SDGs among secondary school teachers in Bayelsa State

s/n	ITEMS	Mean	SD	C.M	Decision
1	I have heard about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	2.34	0.81		Rejected
2	I know what Sustainable Development Goals is all about	2.29	0.72		Rejected
3	SDGs are 8 goals given by the United Nations	2.61	0.68		Accepted
4	The SDGs are meant to end in 2030	2.43	0.75		Rejected
5	I have attended conferences and workshop about Sustainable Development Goals	1.97	0.87		Rejected
	Grand Mean	2.33	0.77		Rejected

As shown from the result displayed in Table 1, item 1 (I have heard about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)) had a mean of 2.34 (SD = 0.81), item 2 (I know what Sustainable Development Goals is all about) yielded a mean value of 2.29 (SD = 0.72), item 3 (SDGs are 8 goals given by the United Nations) resulted in a mean value of 2.61 (SD = 0.68), with item 4 (The SDGs are meant to end in 2030) showing a mean value of 2.43 (SD = 0.75), while item 5 (I have attended conferences and workshop about Sustainable Development Goals) revealed a mean value of 1.97 (SD = 0.87). On the basis of the criterion mean guiding the study, the result shows that with the exception of item 3, teachers Rejected with the other items. Furthermore, for item 3, the teachers were wrong because the SDGs has 17 goals, as against the eight they accepted. This means that the teachers do not know much about the SDGs Generally, with the grand mean of 2.33 (SD = 0.77), the teachers have a low level of awareness about the SDGs. The answer to this research question, therefore, is that there is a low level of awareness on the SDGs among secondary school teachers in Bayelsa State.

Research Question Two: What is the level of the perception about Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among secondary school teachers in Bayelsa State?

Table 2: Perception about SDGs among secondary school teachers in Bayelsa State.

s/n	ITEMS	Mean	SD	C.M	Decision
6	The sustainable development goals can enhance human development.	3.38	1.05		Accepted
7	The knowledge of Sustainable Development Goals is required to be effective in teaching.	2.95	0.83		Accepted
8	The Sustainable Development Goals are not achievable within the time frame of 15 years in Bayelsa State.	2.74	0.76		Accepted
9	The Sustainable Development Goals will be used as a strategy for the embezzlement of government fund.	2.81	0.77		Accepted
10	It is a waste of time and resources to the secondary school teachers' involvement in SDGs	2.29	0.69	2.50	Rejected
11	SDGs is a positive development for development continuity	3.48	0.92		Accepted
	Grand Mean	2.94	0.84		Accepted

Table 2 shows that item 6 (the sustainable development goals can enhance human development) had a mean rating of 3.38 (SD = 1.05), item 7 (The knowledge of Sustainable Development Goals is required to be effective in teaching) had a mean of 2.95 (The Sustainable Development Goals are not achievable within the time frame of 15 years in Bayelsa State) with a standard deviation of 0.76, while item 9 (The Sustainable Development Goals will be used as a strategy for the embezzlement of government fund) yielded a mean value of 2.81 (SD = 0.77). Furthermore, from item 10 (It is a waste of time and resources to the secondary school teachers' involvement in SDGs) and item 11 (SDGs is a positive development for development continuity) mean ratings of 2.29 (SD = 0.69) and 3.48 (SD = 0.92) respectively were obtained. The mean values obtained with respect to research question two showed that all items were accepted, with the exception of item 10 which was rejected. Furthermore, the grand mean value obtained was 2.94 (SD = 0.84) which was greater than 2.50. This result, therefore, indicates that secondary school teachers in Bayelsa State have a positive perception about the SDGs.

Research Question Three: What are the factors limiting the effective contribution of secondary school teachers in Bayelsa State towards the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

Table 3: Challenges of effective contributions of teachers towards the SDGs in Bayelsa State.

s/n	ITEMS	Mean	SD	C.M	Decision
12	Negligence of the teaching profession by government	2.91	0.81		Accepted
13	Lack of funds to attend conferences and workshops	3.07	0.75		Accepted
14	Lack of interest in the part of the secondary school teachers	2.36	0.63		Rejected
15	Poor publicity of the Sustainable Development Goals	3.31	0.88		Accepted
16	Nonchalant attitude of Nigerian policymakers towards education	2.79	0.84		Accepted
17	High level of corruption/misappropriation of funds	3.39	0.76		Accepted
18	Lip services to development programmes by government	2.90	0.79		Accepted
19	Poor lobbying and advocacy skills among secondary school teachers	2.61	0.72		Accepted
20	Low level of private sectors interest in teaching service	2.42	0.83	2.50	Rejected
	Grand Mean	2.86	0.78		

Table 3 shows that item 12 (Negligence of the teaching profession by government) has a mean value of 2.91 (SD = 0.81), item 13 (Lack of funds to attend conferences and workshops) resulted in a mean value of 3.07 (SD = 0.75), item 14 (Lack of interest in the part of the secondary school teachers) yielded a mean rating of 2.36 (SD = 0.63), with item 15 (Poor publicity of the Sustainable Development Goals) having a mean rating of 3.31 (SD = 0.88). Furthermore, from the above table, item 16 (Nonchalant attitude of Nigerians policymakers towards education) and item 17 (High level of corruption/misappropriation of funds) had mean values of 2.79 (SD = 0.84) and 3.39 (SD = 0.76) respectively, with item 18 (Lip services to development programmes by government) having a mean rating of 2.90 (SD = 0.79). It was finally shown that item 19 (Poor lobbying and advocacy skills among secondary school teachers) had a mean rating of 2.61 (SD = 0.72), while for item 20 (Low level of private sectors interest in teaching service), a mean value of 2.42 (SD = 0.83) was obtained. This result, therefore, shows that all items, with the exception of items 14 and 21, had mean values greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. Thus, they were all accepted. Finally, a grand mean of 2.86 (SD = 0.78) was obtained

which indicated that the teachers considered the various challenges as significantly limiting their contributions towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the level of awareness of Sustainable Development Goals between urban and rural public secondary school teachers in Bayelsa State.

Table 4: Independent samples z-test of urban and rural teachers on their level of awareness of the SDGs

Location	n	Mean	SD	df	z-cal	p	α	Decision
Urban	156	6.71	1.96	238	6.75	0.001	0.05	Reject H ₀₁
Rural	84	4.94	1.89					p<0.05

From the result displayed in Table 4, it is shown that when the mean values of teachers in urban (6.71) and rural (4.94) areas on their level of awareness of the SDGs were subjected to independent samples z-test, a z-value of 6.75 was obtained at 238 degrees of freedom, with a corresponding p-values of 0.001. Since the obtained p-value obtained was less than the chosen alpha of 0.05, it, therefore, indicates that urban teachers have a significantly greater level of awareness about the SDGs than rural teachers. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the level of perception about Sustainable Development Goals between urban and rural public secondary school teachers in Bayelsa State.

Table 5: Independent samples z-test of urban and rural teachers on their perception of the SDGs

Location	n	Mean	SD	df	z-cal	p	α	Decision
Urban	156	9.67	2.68	238	4.88	0.001	0.05	Reject H ₀₂
Rural	84	7.97	2.36					

As shown in Table 5, when the mean values of teachers in urban (9.67) and rural (7.94) areas on their perception of the SDGs were subjected to independent samples z-test, a z-value of 4.88 was obtained at 238 degrees of freedom, with a corresponding p-value of 0.001. Since the obtained p-value obtained was lesser than the chosen alpha of 0.05, it, therefore, indicates that urban teachers have a significantly greater level of perception about the SDGs than rural teachers. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of factors limiting urban and rural public secondary school teachers towards contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals in Bayelsa State.

Table 6: Independent samples z-test of urban and rural teachers on factors limiting their contribution towards the attainment of the SDGs

Location	n	Mean	SD	df	t	P	α	Decision
Urban	156	11.91	1.86	238	7.37	0.001	0.05	Reject H ₀₃
Rural	84	13.83	2.04					

As shown in Table 6, when the mean values of teachers in urban (11.91) and rural (13.83) areas on the factors limiting their contribution towards the attainment of the SDGs were subjected to independent samples z-test, a z-value of 7.37 was obtained at 238 degrees of freedom, with a corresponding p-values of 0.001. Since the obtained p-value obtained was less than the chosen alpha of 0.05, it, therefore, indicates that rural teachers faced a significantly higher level of challenges compared to urban teachers in contributing towards the SDGs. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the data collected and analyzed for the study, the following are the major findings: From the result obtained from the study, it is shown that there is a low level of awareness about the SDGs. Although some teachers reported that they have heard about the SDGs, the mean rating was less than the criterion mean. Furthermore, it was rejected by respondents that they know what the SDGs is all about. This result could have been obtained due to the fact that some teachers are yet to establish a distinction between the MDGs and the SDGs, and because many of them have not been offered opportunities to attend workshops, seminars and

conferences related to the SDGs. With this level of awareness four years after the launch of the SDGs campaign in the state, it is doubtful that much will be achieved with respect to the SDGs realization. Furthermore, as shown from the testing of the corresponding hypothesis, teachers in rural areas have a significantly lower level of awareness on the SDGs than those in the urban areas. This implies that there is a deficiency in the rate at which these teachers might be able to instruct their students towards the realization of the SDGs.

From research question two, it was revealed that teachers were positively disposed towards the SDGs. From the total mean rating obtained, most teachers reported that the SDGs can enhance human development and it is a force for improved community development. Sadly, the challenges of corruption which Ajiye (2014) suggested was a factor that limited the actualization of the MDGs was still mentioned. This result may have been obtained due to the teachers' experiences. Most teachers in Bayelsa State have experienced repeatedly developmental programmes that have been washed down the drain through massive corruption. From a personal perspective, this researcher has observed that many of such programmes ended at the launch, with little or no genuine effort made to implement them. This has killed the noble objectives of such programmes. Therefore, while commendable in intent and plausible on paper, the SDGs in Bayelsa State will follow similar channels unless genuine effort is made to limit the effect of corruption as obtained from this finding.

Finally, the result from research question three and the corresponding null hypotheses showed that significant obstacles remain against teachers' active participation towards the attainment of the sustainable development programmes. Negligence of teachers by successive governments on matters of developmental policy and lack of funds to attend conferences and workshops may have made teachers uninterested in issues related to the SDGs. Similarly, corruption and misappropriation of funds remain a perennial problem limiting the active participation of teachers in developmental programmes including the SDGs.

Conclusion

Based on the data analysed for this study, it can be concluded that secondary school teachers in Bayelsa state have low-level awareness about the Sustainable Development Goals. This low level of awareness is an issue as many misunderstood the SDGs for the MDGs which has been phased out. Perhaps what we should be concerned about is their perception level. Despite their awareness, their perception has hindered the possible progress of the secondary school teachers towards the achievement of the SDGs. It is therefore hoped that secondary school teachers will learn or gain advocacy skills that can improve the chances of attaining the SDGs. This is because at this level of awareness it is difficult if teachers can provide the required level of motivation for their students to understand their environment and contribute to the achievement of the sustainable development goals.

Recommendations

Arising from the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. School management should ensure that the secondary school teachers attend conferences and workshop related to SDGs so that they can improve their knowledge and have a positive perception as regards the SDGs.
2. Periodic training should be encouraged for every secondary school teachers, to equip them with necessary update/information i.e. training and re-training.
3. There should be an avenue where the secondary school teachers can educate their students on the importance of the SDGs and showing them their part in the achievement of the SDGs as it will place the school as a veritable tool for the attainment of the SDGs.
4. Secondary school teachers should find a way to increase their advocacy skills, as school advocacy has been known to be a more and better effective way to bring governments' attention to the plight of students.
5. Schools should partner with NGOs that support the SDGs and look for ways for collaboration, in this way; teachers will be creating policies and influencing policies of governments.

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