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## AWARENESS OF VALUE EDUCATION BY SOCIAL STUDIES STUDENTS AND ACTUALIZING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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### Abstract

Actualizing the Sustainable Development Goals in many countries have been met with many challenges and problems, hence this study is an attempt to examine Social Studies students awareness level of value education and then relate it with achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Five hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. Correlational Research Design was used for the study. A sample size of 880 Basic 8 students from 36 secondary schools were drawn from a population of 48,095 Basic 8 students in Edo and Delta states in Nigeria. Purposive and random sampling techniques were used to sample the schools and respondents respectively. The instrument of data collection was a researcher's constructed and validated questionnaire titled "Students Awareness of Value Education and Actualizing the Sustainable Development Goals Questionnaire" (SAVEASDQG). The reliability of the instrument was established with Cronbach-alpha reliability technique, with a reliability coefficient index of 0.75. After the collection of data, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test all hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The following results/findings were reported, there was significant relationship between awareness of value education on the one hand and "clean water and sanitation"; "responsible consumption and production"; "decent work and economic growth"; "sustainable cities and communities" and "affordable clean energy" on the other hand. Following these findings, the researcher recommended that value education should be adopted as a powerful tool for empowering young Nigerians at the Basic School level, on cultivating environmental friendly and responsible values, behaviours and attitudes towards the environment as this can assist in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**Keywords:** *Awareness, Value Education, Social Studies, Actualizing, Sustainable Development Goals.*

A sustainable society is built on good set of values such as respect, care and compassion for one another and for the environment, as human values are linked to satisfying man's many need. However the level of value decadence among humans in today's society is inexplicable. This position is predicated on the alarming rate moral values are rapidly deteriorating in contemporary Nigerian society. Therefore we need value re-orientation through value education more now than ever before. Atubi, (2021) defined value education in general term as the effective values that constitute some of the basic legacies the current educational system can bequeath to the Nigerian child for his/her future development. A major task of value education is to help young people identify those things or concepts which are considered important and then reflect, on what they do (Norris, 2016). One way we can do this is by asking students to recall information about an individual or group, and then offer explanation as to why they think; such behavior occurred and also make inferences about the values of the individuals involved.

Atubi (2019), affirmed that the development of values occupies a vital place in Social Studies education and education in general. This position has been aptly reflected in the national policy on education which among other things espoused the inculcation of some fundamental values and attitudes which are considered necessary for effective citizenship, national unity, stability and sustainable development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004).

The theoretical basis of values in Social Studies education reiterates the need for teachers to use appropriate instructional strategies in enhancing the value acquisition skills of learners. Some suggested strategies for value education includes questioning, inquiry, problem solving, discussion and values clarification. The implications of effective teaching of values on specific aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria are highlighted with appropriate recommendations from various stakeholders in education (Nwaubani, 2021).

However, according to Nwabauni (2021) a major area of neglect in majority of Social Studies lessons is value education. As much as Social Studies emphasizes on knowledge and skill acquisition, it is a subject that is really

value laden when in Nigeria. Consequently, Social Studies cannot shy away from value education. A number of reasons have been advanced for the apparent or near neglect of value education in Social Studies. Some teachers regard the question of value as essentially a private matter with which they shouldn't interfere. In addition, a number of parents and other forces in the community do often resist incorporating controversial issues that borders on values. Others feel that values can be grasped along the line and not something to be taught. They also argue that social institution like the church, mosque and families are in a better position to deal with matters of values. There are some persons who feel that teaching values would amount to brain-washing and indoctrination (Atubi, 2021).

According to Daboer and Umaru (2021) some teachers hold the view that their primary task is to convey the content of the subject and not values. All humans engage in valuing in one way or the other therefore, value education is unavoidable whether in Social Studies or in education generally. Social Studies teachers have an obligation to help young people to acquire learning inquiry skills and to encourage questioning and intensive interaction concerning social and issues which centers on values. This will lead to a teaching process that avoids both indoctrination and value relativity (Saka, 2021). There should be deliberate attempt to teach values, teachers should ask themselves whether they want values to develop haphazardly in students, without any conscious and specific involvement on the part of teacher or whether they intend to help students make efforts at arriving at value awareness?

### Value Education Awareness and the Sustainable Development Goals

Value education awareness means having a good knowledge of skills, habits and values, it is a task which involves the inculcation of values that can equip learners to live a life which can result in decent work environment and economic growth (Mahendra & Mohani, 2019; Atubi, 2020). Both spiritual leaders/philosophers and educationists have all canvassed for the role of value education in the character development of humans. The sustainable development goals 2030 agenda was adopted in the 70<sup>th</sup> session of the General assembly (United Nations, 2015). Values can be used as fundamental principles and standards that guides the action and judgment of people towards achieving these goals (Mahendra & Mohani, 2019).

Naqi (2005). Posited that values gives strength and meaning to the behaviour of a person, therefore values can act as nourishment to SDGs, hence life without "values" will be disastrous and chaotic for the achievement of SDGs. Value education will help in sharpening the understanding, motives and attitudes of individuals towards the environment which can propel the actualization of the SDGs (Grachev et al, 2017). Mahendra & Mohani 2019 stated that

*"A value is a guide, a norm, principle ..... and must be chosen freely from many alternatives. after due considerations of consequences. A value must be performed ..... becomes a pattern of life and publicly affirm. Value inculcation is building of the values in our inner core (Mahendra & Mohani, 2019 .... P ... 50).*

According to World Educators Forum (2015) an awareness of value education in students, will make them develop respect for the environment, give them a balanced personality and make them understand critically and have the consciousness of the need for a clean environment. This awareness will enhance the provision of clean water and sanitation, make people to be "responsible in their pattern of consumption and production" as well as the achievement of affordable clean energy. These awareness and synergy will all work together for the achievement of the SDGs. The awareness of value education in working towards the achievement of the SDGs will help provide a realistic and broad based understating of human/environmental values. Secondly, it will train students towards becoming responsible people in their personal/group behaviour towards the environmental aspects of the SDGs (El-haddadeh et al, 2022). In the long run, value education will assist in environmental protection, preservation and conservation, it will promote a culture of environmental protection, because it will help students to distinguish between the good, bad, right or wrong disposition towards our environment and the SDGs in general.

Komarova & Starova (2020), carried out an experimental study on majority values of school biological education on the context of the Sustainable Development Goals and explained that value education is a potential and fundamental element to be considered in the realization of the SDGs. The study hinted that the implementation of value education for actualizing SDGs is a vector of enlightenment of people in the area of human capital development. This is required in order for the cultural and environmental heritage of the planet to

be preserved for generations. Hence it is of utmost relevance to teach value education through social studies for students to be able to analyze, draw conclusion and envisage a sustainable future model through value based activities.

Arbuthnott (2018) carried out a study on how value/moral education can be used for sustainable development goals. The study design programs that can achieve sustainable development through change in attitude and values towards the natural environment. The population of the study was the entire undergraduate's population of Campion College/University of Regina, Regina Canada. The methodology included reviews and survey. A sample of 120 participants took part in the study. Findings revealed that a positive correlation between values, behaviour and personal habits towards the environment. Also the study reported that environmental sustainability must be valued to ensure that changes are undertaken.

Muijen (2017) integrated value education into the SDGs, the pilot study focused on organizational dynamics and the value education learning process and how environmental sustainability can be integrated into the broad education curriculum. The aim was to orient the students towards becoming moral, reflective and responsible scientists. According to El-Haddadeti, (2022) an awareness of value education improves the integration of SDGs into value learning with regards to ethical and reflective competencies on environmental issues. Ethical perspective on issues of clean water and sanitation offers practical and scientific knowledge on ways through which water supply can be sustained through ethical behaviour (Asif et al, 2020). The implications of this discourse is that ecological, social, moral and values of people in a country will determine the constant supply of clean water and sanitation activities.

Muijen (2017) posited that there seems to be a problem in value education and the problem is general; students tend to perceive the ethical dimension of value education to be more subjective than objective. Asif et al (2020) revealed that moral/value education is a paramount factor for the achievement of the SDGs. The study which took place in China and Pakistan promoted a system of education that equips learners with moral values, competences and skills for community positive changes. A mixed method research design was used to select 12 teachers of tertiary institutions. Seven themes were used to categorize teachers to practice in classrooms with the use of validated questionnaire. The result showed that Pakistani teachers many of them have a conservative mindset to values. While Chinese teachers promoted political ideology, collectivism and social approach with social and family values being the most relevant. The study provided evidence into how teachers' belief and attitudes can pattern value education in actualizing the SDGs.

Tasevski and Skopje (2020) affirmed that values are core aspect of any educational process and it is very important in educating people on how to achieve the SDGs, as the school plays the major role of value inculcation. Therefore awareness of environmental values should be carefully selected and included in school curriculum to present a palette of life outside the school and in the communities/environment. The awareness of environmental values by young children who are in school increases the possibility for promoting sustainable development of the environment which has a far reaching effect of the SDGs.

Values such as love for the environment, preservation, creativity, open-mindedness, curiosity, self-regulation, appreciation of beauty, environmental kindness etc. are key values which students should have towards the environment if SDGs 2030 must be actualize. Accordingly, this study aims to investigate how important awareness of value education of students in social studies is to actualizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is in order, to overturn the decomposing pattern of our environment as an essential component of comprehensive procedures aimed at re-educating people and putting the environment on its way to restoration for the SDGs.

## Research Procedure

The study adopted the correlational research design, five hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. A sample size of 880 Basic 8 students from 36 upper basic schools were drawn from a population of 48,095 Basic 8 students in Edo and Delta states. Purposive and random sampling techniques were used to sample the Schools and respondents respectively. A diligently structured questionnaire was developed as the instrument for data collection. The instrument was titled Students Awareness of Value Education and Actualizing the Sustainable Development Goals Questionnaire (SAVEASDGQ) and it collected data on the relationship between students' awareness of value education and the Sustainable Development Goals. The reliability of the instrument was established with Cronbach-alpha reliability technique, a reliability coefficient index of 0.75. The instrument was administered by the researcher with the help of the Social Studies teachers in the 36 schools. At the end of the administration of the instrument, data was analyze with Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at 0.05 level of significance.

## Presentation of Results

**Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between the mean score on social studies student's awareness of environmental values and "clean water and sanitation" of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**

**Table 1: Correlation between Social Studies student's awareness of environmental value and "clean water and sanitation" of the Sustainable Development Goals**

		awareness2	sust2
awareness2	Pearson Correlation	1	.324**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	880	880
sust2	Pearson Correlation	.324**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	880	880

**$\alpha = 0.05$**

awareness2= student's awareness of environmental value

sust2="clean water and sanitation" of the Sustainable Development Goals

Table 1, showed the Correlation between Social Studies student's awareness of values and "clean water and sanitation" of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The result reveals that the correlation coefficient  $r$  is .324, which indicates that there is a positive relationship between Social Studies student's awareness of environmental values and "clean water and sanitation" of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while the significant level is .000, which is lesser than the alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between the mean score on social studies student's awareness of environmental values and "clean water and sanitation" of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was rejected. The conclusion was reached that, there is significant relationship between the mean score on social studies student's awareness of environmental values and "clean water and sanitation" of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between the mean score on Social Studies student's awareness of environmental values and "responsible consumption and production" of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**

**Table 2: Correlation between Social Studies student's awareness of environmental values and "responsible consumption and production" of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**

		awareness4	sust4
awareness4	Pearson Correlation	1	.643**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	880	880
sust4	Pearson Correlation	.643**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	880	880

**$\alpha = 0.05$**

Awareness 4 = student's awareness of environmental value

sust4 = "responsible consumption and production" of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Data in table 2, reveals the Correlation between Social Studies student's awareness of environmental value and "responsible consumption and production" of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The result reveals that the correlation coefficient  $r$  is .643, which indicates that there is a positive relationship between Social Studies student's awareness of environmental value and "responsible consumption and production" of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while the significant level is .000, which is lesser than the alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between the mean score on social studies student's awareness of environmental value and "responsible consumption and production" of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was rejected. The conclusion was reached that, there is significant relationship between the mean score on social studies student's awareness of environmental value and "responsible consumption and production" of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between the mean score on social studies student’s awareness of environmental values and “decent work and economic growth” of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**

**Table 3: Correlation between Social Studies student’s awareness of environmental value and “decent work and economic growth” of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**

		awareness6	sust6
awareness6	Pearson Correlation	1	.437**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	880	880
sust6	Pearson Correlation	.437**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	880	880

**α =0.05**

awareness6 = student’s awareness of environmental value

sust6 = “decent work and economic growth” of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Data in table 3, reveals the Correlation between Social Studies student’s awareness of environmental values and “decent work and economic growth” of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The result reveals that the correlation coefficient r is .437, which indicates that there is a positive relationship between Social Studies student’s awareness of environmental values and “decent work and economic growth” of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while the significant level is .000, which is lesser than the alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between the mean score on Social Studies student’s awareness of environmental values and “decent work and economic growth” of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was rejected. The conclusion was reached that; there is significant relationship between the mean score on Social Studies student’s awareness of environmental value and “decent work and economic growth” of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**Hypothesis 4: There is no significant relationship between the mean score on social studies student’s awareness of environmental values and “sustainable cities and communities” of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**

**Table 4: Correlation between Social Studies student’s awareness of environmental value and “sustainable cities and communities” of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**

		awareness8	sust8
awareness8	Pearson Correlation	1	.529**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	880	880
sust8	Pearson Correlation	.529**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	880	880

**α =0.05**

awareness8 = student’s awareness of environmental value

sust8 = “sustainable cities and communities” of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Data in table 4, reveals the Correlation between relationship between student’s awareness of environmental values and “sustainable cities and communities” of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).The result reveals that the correlation coefficient r is .529, which indicates that there is a positive relationship between student’s awareness of environmental values and “sustainable cities and communities” of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while the significant level is .000, which is lesser than the alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between the mean score on Social Studies student’s awareness of environmental values and “sustainable cities and communities” of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was rejected. The conclusion was reached that; there is significant relationship between the mean

score on Social Studies student's awareness of environmental values and "sustainable cities and communities" of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**Hypothesis 5: There is no significant relationship between the mean score on Social Studies student's awareness of environmental values and "affordable clean energy" of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**

**Table 5: Correlation between student's awareness of environmental values and "affordable clean energy" of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**

		awareness10	sust10
awareness10	Pearson Correlation	1	.474**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	880	880
sust10	Pearson Correlation	.474**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	880	880

$\alpha = 0.05$

awareness10 = student's awareness of environmental values

sust10 = "affordable clean energy" of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Data in table 5, reveals the Correlation between relationship between student's awareness of environmental values and "affordable clean energy" of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The result reveals that the correlation coefficient  $r$  is .474, which indicates that there is a positive relationship between student's awareness of environmental values and "affordable clean energy" of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while the significant level is .000, which is lesser than the alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between the mean score on Social Studies student's awareness of environmental values and "affordable clean energy" of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was rejected. The conclusion was reached that; there is significant relationship between the mean score on Social Studies student's awareness of environmental values and "affordable clean energy" of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## Discussion of Findings

Hypothesis one results revealed a positive correlation between Social Studies student's awareness of environmental value and "clean water and sanitation" of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This result indicates that awareness of value education can result to a general behavioural change towards environmental components especially water resources and proper sanitation. This findings are not different from the findings of El-Haddadeti et al (2022); Asif et al, (2020) and Adepoju (2014), which established a link between environmental sanitation, personal hygiene and the availability of safe drinking water. Also El-Haddadeti et al, (2022), submitted how value creation can promote the actualization of the SDGs, of which clean water and sanitation is one.

Findings from hypothesis two, reported a high correlation between Social Studies student's awareness of environmental value and "responsible consumption and production" of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This findings indicate that responsible consumption and production pattern of the environmental resources can be achieved when the people are well educated on the values of resource preservation for the present and future generations to come. This is in tandem with Muijen, (2017), Naqi (2015) and Kamarova & Stavara, (2020).

The third hypothesis reported a strong relationship between Social Studies student's awareness of values in value education and "decent work and economic growth" of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This result implies that human capital development is a vector for capital development; character development through values is a requisite for a decent working environment and economic growth. Value education will propel a decent work place that can act as a catalyst for economic development. This findings is related to findings of other studies in this regard, such as Bakurin, (2016); Muijen, (2017); Arbuthnott, (2018) and Komarova & Starova, (2020). These studies established that value education is paramount to socio-economic development, education for attitudinal change for achieving the SDGs.

Hypothesis four results reveals a significant relationship between student's awareness value education and "sustainable cities and communities" of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Therefore, the knowledge of values can help protect the land, air and water in our cities and communities. It will affect how people treat the environment in our cities and communities by preventing many negative attitudes such as blockage of natural and man-made drainage channels, improper waste disposal and disallowing pollution. These attitude and behaviours



will help in breaking many complexities associated with achieving the SDGs. Findings arrived at here are in line with Naqi (2005); World Educators Forum, (2015); Mahendra & Mohani, (2019); Tasevski & Skopje (2020); Komarova & Starova, (2020); Atubi, (2021b) and El-Haddadeti et al (2022).

Finally, hypothesis five, did not report any different result from the rest as the study reveals that student's awareness of environmental values is related to "affordable clean energy" of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This means that proper management of energy resources will lead to affordable and clean energy and will help in achieving the achieving SDG in that aspect. Therefore, value education should be promoted in that area and domestic energy consumption should be regulated to achieve this. People should be taught to put off electrical appliances when not in use, to make them become responsible energy consumers. World Educators Forum, (2015); Gobierno, (2018) and Nwaubani, (2021), reported similar results and findings that affordable clean energy can be achieved through positive trend in the production and consumption of clean and renewable energy.

## Conclusion

The study, concluded significant relationship exist between Awareness of Value education, "clean water and sanitation"; "responsible consumption and production"; "decent work and economic growth"; "sustainable cities and communities" and "affordable clean energy" of the SDGs.. This conclusion was reached because environmental values gained from value education can result to a general behavioural change towards environmental components especially water resources and proper sanitation. The conclusion also indicate that responsible consumption and production pattern of the environmental resources can be achieved when the people are well educated on the values of resource preservation. Human capital development is a vector for capital development; character development through values is a requisite for a decent working environment and economic growth. Therefore, awareness of values can help protect the land, air and water in our cities and communities. It will affect how people treat the environment in our cities and communities by preventing many negative attitudes such as blockage of natural and man-made drainage channels, improper waste disposal and disallowing pollution. These attitude and behaviours will help in breaking many complexities associated with achieving the SDGs.

## Recommendation

Awareness of value education, should be inculcated through proper Social Studies pedagogy at all school levels. The campaign of actualizing the SDGs should be vigorously taken to the classrooms with strong emphasis on value education awareness.

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