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FEF believes Nigeria needs a practical, transparent and holistic approach to tackle education-related issues, one that requires result-oriented partnership between and among the government, the private sector, empowerment NGOs and the academia, in order to find lasting solutions to our challenges. This belief informed the choice of topics for the Annual Lecture Series which are often thoroughly dissected by seasoned speakers, and left participants convinced that in the world of pragmatic and competitive science and technology, Nigeria's education must move away from sheer qualitative consideration to functionalism and relevance. Such is the thinking behind the themes of FEF's National Conferences and publication of this journal – **FAFUNWA JOURNAL OF COMTEMPORARY EDUCATION (FAJOCE).**

EDITORIAL POLICY

Preamble

The need to document our past and research into the contemporary and future necessitated the birth of this journal. Fafunwa Journal of Contemporary Education (FAJOCE) is sponsored by Fafunwa Educational Foundations (FEF) in collaboration with the Faculty of Education, University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos. Its primary objectives is the dissemination of empirical and non-empirical research reports in the field of education. It will act as a forum for experts in all fields of Education and human endeavors to disseminate research findings or new issues that will benefit mankind and the process of teaching and learning in particular.

Objectives/ Scope:

The Journal aims to publish new discoveries in Education, which will be contributed by researchers from around the world. It is an international peer reviewed journal that provides avenue for scholars to publish their research findings for advocacy and utilisation. And to undertake enlightenment of readers and experts in their areas of focus.

Fafunwa Journal of Contemporary Education (FAJOCE) has a generalist focus and publishes works specifically in the following areas:

1. Articles on all aspects of Education
2. Review (books/articles etc.)
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Manuscripts should be original, clearly and precisely presented in English. Authors should submit 3 copies of their manuscripts plus an electronic copy (preferably double space and saved in Word Documents).

1. Each submission should not be longer than 7000 words (14 printed pages) in total, including title, author(s) information, tables, figures, and references. Each article should be accompanied by an abstract of approximately 150 words typed on a separate sheet.

2. Preparation of Manuscript: Fafunwa Journal of Contemporary Education (FAJOCE) adheres to a rigorous double-blind reviewing policy in which the identity of both the reviewer and author are always concealed from both parties. All manuscripts are reviewed initially by the editorial board and only those papers that meet the scientific

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

About FEF ..... *v*

Editorial Policy ..... *vi*

1. Functionality of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria **Omaze Anthony Afemikhe** 1
2. Nigeria's Basic Education System: The Way Forward. **Rashid Aderinoye** 17
3. A return to Ilé-Èkó from Ilé-Iwé: A Historical Review of Education Pre- and Post-Universal Primary Education (UPE) in Nigeria. **Paul Akin-Otiko** 24
4. Assessment of Heuristic, Associative Creativity and Community Contact Instructional Techniques in Enhancing Chemistry Learning among Secondary School Students in Osun State. **J. Irinoye, & M. A. Adeleke** 35
5. Harnessing Bilingual Students' Use of Language Learning Strategies for Improved Performance in Composition Writing. **Moradeyo Olaolorun; Nonye R. Ikonta, & A. Oyenike Adeosun** 43
6. Teachers' Experiences of the Introduction and Implementation of Systemic Change in Nigerian Primary School System. **Oloba Peter Babajide** 54
7. Funding of Universal Basic Education and Its Impact on the Incidence of Out-of-School Children in Nigeria. **Olaotan Oladele Kuku & Omowale Micaiah** 70
8. Repositioning Basic Education in Nigeria: Curriculum Issues and Challenges. **Anumenechi, Christabel K.** 82
9. Quality Education for Achieving Sustainable Development **Oyeyemi Aitokhuehi & 'Supo Jegede** 92
10. Teachers' Awareness of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Role of Basic Education in Realisation of Sustainable Development in Kwara State. **Olabisi Adedigba** 101
11. A Theoretical Justification for Progressivism and Perennialism in Pedagogy: The *Ubuntu* Approach. **Irabor, Benson Peter** 114
12. Repositioning Nigeria's Basic Education for Sustainable Development – A Clarion Call for Improved School Infrastructure and Facilities. **C. O. O. Kolawole** 126
13. Assessment of the Language Arts Curricula in the Nigerian Basic Education Programme **Ajibade, Yetunde Adedoyin; Awopetu, Emmanuel Olajide; Odejobi, Cecilia O. & Ajayi, Hannah Olubunmi** 133

14. Influence of Teachers' Creativity on Students' Creativity in the Literature-in-English Classrooms in Lagos State, Nigeria. **A. Oyenike Adeosun & Tolulope O. Adelabu** 142

15. Benefits of Moonlight Play on the Academic Development of Pupils in Irepodun Local Government Osun state. **Eniola Keji Ola-Alani** 150

16. Repositioning Basic Education through Meaningful Engagement of Students **Maryrose C. Mbanefo** 159

17. Investigating Teachers' Methods/Strategies for Fostering Entrepreneurial Skills in Basic Science Classroom: Implications for Functional Science Education. **Toyin Eunice Owoyemi** 170

18. Repositioning Universal Basic Education through Policies and Programme Implementation in Nigeria. **Obiye Florence Ngozi** 177

19. Repetition and Dropout Rates in Public Secondary schools in Atiba Local Government Area of Oyo State (2010-2017) **Idowu, Babatunde Toheeb** 185

20. Gender and School Location in Conceiving Biology Concepts among Secondary School Students in osun state **Folorunso, Ayo-Victor; M.A. Adeleke; & M.O. Salami** 193

21. Effect of Participatory Training Programme on Early Childhood Education Pre-service Teachers' Knowledge of Locally Available Resources for Classroom Instruction in Kwara State, Nigeria **Rachael Ojima Agarry & Olusegun Akinbote** 208

22. Assessment of the Mobile Phone-based Literacy Programme as a Functional Basic Strategy among adult learners in ondo state, Nigeria **Ayelaagbe, Sina O.** 216

23. Using a Mobile-based Online Platform to Mentor Girls: Challenges and Benefits **Abimbade, Oluwadara Ayokunle** 225

24. Impact assessment of Primary Education Project II on Instructional Resources in South West Nigeria: Implication on Repositioning Basic Education **Adebanjo, Margaret Adewunmi** 233

25. Repositioning Nigeria Education for Sustainable Development: Issues for Youth Unemployability. **Oluwole Majekodunmi Toyobo** 240

26. Strategies for Effective Implementation of Personal Security and Safety Education for Students. **Maryrose Chinwe Mbanefo** 252

27. Primary school education system in Nigeria and United States of America: A Comparative and Analytical Study. **Okoro Ngozi Priscilla** 262

28. Repositioning Nigeria's Basic Education for Sustainable Development through Health **Goodluck I. Nwaogwugwu & Uduma Ulu Eke** 273

TEACHERS' AWARENESS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs) AND THE ROLE OF BASIC EDUCATION IN REALISATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN KWARA STATE

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Abstract

This study examined the teachers' awareness of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their understanding of the role of Basic Education in the realisation of sustainable development in Kwara State. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population consisted of all pre-primary and primary school teachers in Kwara State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select eight hundred teachers from six Local Government Areas of Kwara State. Data was collected with Teachers' Awareness of Sustainable Development Goals Checklist (r=0.81) and 'Role of Basic Education in Sustainable Development Checklist' (r=0.86). Two research questions were raised and answered while five hypotheses were formulated and tested. Data collected were analysed with frequency counts, percentage, mean and inferential statistics of linear regression, independent sample of t-test and Analysis of Variance. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The findings showed that teachers' awareness of SDGs and their understanding of the role of Basic Education in realisation of sustainable development is low. The findings also showed positive relationship between teachers' awareness of SDGs and their understanding of the role of Basic Education in achieving sustainable development. Recommendations were given that, governments and school administrators should organise seminars to enlighten teachers about SDGs and the prominence of Basic Education in achieving sustainable development.

Keywords: Teachers' awareness of SDGs, Basic education, Realisation of sustainable development

Introduction

The world faces particular challenges that are socially present in all nations as a result of the rapid changes the world witnesses, some of which are the environmental, political and economic issues. These issues in their own relative manner have effect on the education and overall development of children, most especially at the foundational years. As the environment changes, education in general is considered to have a vital role in limiting the causes and effect of climate change. United Nations Development Goals-UNDP (2015) recognizes that education, especially for the very young, can equip people to adapt when a natural disaster takes away their livelihood. Education has a significant role to play in shaping the values of future generations, redirecting societal preferences and inclinations and instilling the empowering skills to enact them. UNDP concludes that the impacts of climate change and extreme events depend on education, among other factors.

More critical to development and sustainability of a society is the care and development of her children (Adedigba, 2015). No wonder, recognition has been given to basic education in many countries of the world. Basic education is important for any child because it sets the basis of all other levels of education ranging from primary level to tertiary level and any hindrance in a level will affect the other levels. The early experiences given to children at this foundational level have significant influence on their all-round development and determine their later years (Bush, 2001; Ajayi, 2008; Adedigba & Agarry, 2013).

Growth and development of a nation is very imperative and there is a need to obtain sustainable development. Sustainable development recognises that growth must be both inclusive and environmentally sound to reduce poverty and build shared prosperity for today's population, and to continue to meet the

needs of future generations. Sustainable development is described as a process of improving the range of opportunities that will enable individual humans and communities to achieve their aspirations and full potential over a sustained period of time while maintaining the resilience of economic, social and environmental system (Brunold, 2005; Corney, 2006; Borg, Gericke, Hoglund, Bergman, 2014; UNDP, 2015).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were born at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in 2012. The objective was to meet the urgent environmental, political and economic challenges facing our world. The SDGs are a collection of 17 interrelated global goals set out by the United Nations which came into effect in January 2016 and will last for the next 15 years. Each of the broad goals has several targets. The SDGs cover a broad range of social development issues such as poverty, hunger, education, climate change, gender equality, water, sanitation, energy, environment and social justice. Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals specifically mentioned target that concerns basic education. The goal states that countries should "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030. It emphasises that all girls and boys should have access to quality basic development, care and pre-primary education and basic education. The goals were developed to build on the successes of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which was set by the United Nations in 2000 to eradicate poverty, hunger, illiteracy and diseases at the end of 2015. Significant progress was made by the MDGs especially when it came to the goals of eradicating poverty and improving access to education despite the criticisms that they being so targeted, they had left out other equally important areas (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation – UNESCO 2009, 2014; UNDP, 2015).

The need for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) cannot be disputed as this promotes the development of knowledge, skills, understanding, values and actions required to create a sustainable world, which ensures environmental protection and conservation, promotes social equity and encourages economic sustainability. The concept of ESD developed largely from environmental education, which has sought to develop the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and behaviours in people to care for their environment. The aim of ESD is to enable people to carry out actions to improve our quality of life without compromising the planet. It also aims to integrate the values inherent in sustainable development into all aspects and levels of learning (Mckeown, 2002; Brunold, 2005; Huckle, 2006; Hungerhold, 2010).

The current seventeen UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) acknowledge that approaches to sustainability must be multifaceted including quality education, health, gender equity, economic growth, peace and partnerships. Suffice it to say that, the priority of any nation should be the promotion of basic education. Quality education demands that the education is functional. That is, it should be preparation for the future (Fafunwa, 2003). It is in for basic that children often experience the greatest environmental challenges, and it is a time when the foundations of many of their fundamental attitudes and values are first put into place (Hopkins, 2007; Yavetz, Goldman, Pe'er, 2014; UN, 2015).

This therefore indicates that, it takes more than the education for a child's brain to develop a lot more. A developing brain needs multiple inputs - health, protection, nurturing care and enrichment and incorporating these multiple inputs into our basic development efforts, we can foster the developmental potentials of young children. Young children are generally open minded and receptive to taking on new knowledge, attitudes and behaviour. It is actually not the adults of today who desperately need the transformative shift, but the adults of tomorrow who need to acquire the competences that will make them create a better day than what we have done (Higgs & Mcmillan, 2006; Kimaryo, 2011; Borg, Gericke, Hoglund, Bergman, 2014).

At basic education level, the teacher has ample opportunity to model children into acceptable and socially fit citizens. Developing a sense of one's own role in sustainable and inclusive global development sustainable can be best taught at the basic education level. Teachers play a key role in the appropriate education of young people for sustainable development. The teacher's major overall responsibility is seen as the moulding of socially and emotionally well-adjusted individuals (Hart, 2003; Higgs & Mcmillan, 2006). Also, Sustainable Development Goals indicates that quality basic education needs to be accessible to all children; boys and girls alike, but this can only be attained with the adequate and proper understanding of the teacher who is the guiding force behind the education of the children. This statement is further stressed by Yavetz, et.al, 2014; Stevenson, Davis, Ferreira, & Evans, *2014).* Teachers who do not have an awareness of SDGs are likely to be ignorant of the important dimension of their respective role in making basic education functional.

Teachers are powerful agents of change in the lives of young people. Hart (2003), Borg (2014) and Stevenson, Davis, Ferreira, & Evans (*2014*) explained that teachers have the most direct, sustained contact with pupils and considerable control over the knowledge imparted. In fact, they are the key variable in transferring of competences since they are directly responsible for forming the mind of these young ones. Hence, an internationally competent society and labour population as well as the achievements of a population with a sustainable mind set rest almost entirely on teachers. The authors concluded that teachers' awareness of sustainable development goals is essential to make them achievable before 2030.

In educational contexts, as Del Carmen & Sánchez (2010) and Dyment (2015) identified, there is a need to engage in research about how sustainability is understood and enacted alongside competing views of daily realities. Research to date has identified both a knowledge-practice gap and rhetorics-reality gap for practitioners. Moreover, Stevenson et.al, (*2014*) and Yavetz, et.al, (2014) identified the competencies that are required at different levels within the education contexts to promote multidimensional understandings of sustainability. They submitted that teacher educators and pre-service students must understand EfS, and, in the field, on-going professional learning is pivoted to how basic educators think about and enact EfS.

In a study by Hedefalk, Almqvist & Ostman (2005), pre-school teachers perceive ESD as teaching of facts. Some studies have also shown that teacher education especially caregiver education is a necessity for better ECE outcome. Helburn (2004) found classrooms taught by teachers with a bachelor's degree in ECE or advanced training were significantly higher in process quality than those taught by teachers without training. More specifically, teachers with a bachelor's degree in ECE or advanced training were more sensitive and responsive in their interactions with children than teachers with fewer qualifications. According to Howes (2005), a BA in ECE or higher was associated with the most sensitive and responsive teaching skills. The result of this meta-analysis indicates that outcomes in basic classroom are more positive when teachers have higher levels of educational attainment.

While many nations around the world have embraced the need for education to achieve sustainability, only limited progress has been made on any level. This lack of progress stems from many sources. In some cases, a lack of vision or awareness has impeded progress while in others it is a lack of policy or funding. In an attempt to popularise or increase the awareness of SD, the active participation of teachers is highly required (Global Survey, 2016). Having realised that basic education is important and it plays a critical role in realising SDG, the teachers who are the custodians of knowledge and the facilitators of quality education, teachers therefore have a part to play in ensuring that the goals are achieved. The starting point to enable them play their role efficiently in the achievement of SDG is to investigate their understanding of the goals and the role basic education will play in the achievement of these goals. The level of awareness has been described as the backbone of achievement and it is generally believed that

without adequate awareness there can be no attainment as the public will not be able to hold pertinent stakeholders accountable.

There are a range of impediments to understanding the role of basic education in the realisation of the beneficial Sustainable Development Goals as a whole. These include insufficient awareness of the importance of brain development in the early years of life on future wellbeing and of the benefits of ECD interventions, poor resource allocation by policy makers, inadequate political support and long gestation period needed to achieve tangible results (UNESCO, 2009, 2014). To the researcher's view, little if not none has been done particularly locally, to empirically find out teachers' awareness of sustainable development goals and their understanding of the role of basic education in realising sustainable. The research therefore found out the level of teachers' awareness of SDGs and their understanding of the role of basic education in sustainable development and their area of specialisation. It also examined the level of teachers' understanding of the role of basic education in sustainable development based on school type, teaching experience, area of specialisation and educational qualification.

Research Questions

1. What is the teachers' level of awareness of Sustainable Development Goals?
2. What is the level of teachers' understanding of the role of basic education in sustainable development?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for this study:

1. There is no significant difference in the teachers' awareness of sustainable development goals and their understanding of the role of basic education in achieving sustainable development.
2. There is no significant difference in the teachers' understanding of the role of basic education in achieving sustainable development based on their area of specialisation.
3. There is no significant difference in the teachers' understanding of the role of basic education in achieving sustainable development based on school type.
4. There is no significant difference in the teachers' understanding of the role of basic education in achieving sustainable development based on years of teaching experience.
5. There is no significant difference in the teachers' understanding of the role of basic education in achieving sustainable development based on educational qualification.

Methodology

The research design adopted for the study was descriptive survey research design. The descriptive research is a systematic attempt to describe and explain the characteristics of a given population or area of interest factually (Daramola, 2006). The population of this research was all pre-primary and primary school teachers in Kwara State. Out of the 12,849 total population of teachers, through simple random sampling 40 pre-primary and primary schools and 20 teachers from each were selected and the total of 800 teachers were respondents in the study.

Two instruments were used for data collection in this study. These were titled 'Teachers Awareness of Sustainable Development Goals Checklist (TASDGC) and "Roles of Basic Education in Sustainable Development Checklist" (RBESDC). TASDGC was sectioned into A and B. Section A gathered information on demographic data of teachers which limited to the school type, level of education, years of experience and area of specialisation while section B contained (10) items that elicits information on Teachers Awareness of Sustainable Development (TASDGC) it was structured in dichotomy style of Aware and Not Aware. The second instrument, RBESDC was a 25checklist categorised into five measuring

education role, economic role, sociological role, environment role, and the health role of basic education in achieving sustainable development. RECESDC was also structured in dichotomy scale of true or false.

Validity is one of the most crucial psychometric properties of any instrument and it is concerned with whether a test or scale really measures what it is purported to measure. The research instruments were validated for face validity by experts in early childhood and primary education. The necessary modifications were made for final draft. The reliability of the instruments was confirmed using test-re-test and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. TASDGC yielded 0.81 and RBESDC yielded 0.86.

Data collected were analysed with both descriptive and inferential statistics. Research questions were answered using frequency count, simple and mean while formulated hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics of linear regression, independent sample t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The hypotheses were all tested at 0.05 level of significance.

The researcher collected ethical approval to conduct the research in selected schools from her university and the selected schools were visited to take permission and to intimate the teachers with the purpose of the research. The respondents were allowed to respond voluntarily to the items of the instruments as they were also assured that the outcome of the study would be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Results

Research Question One: What is teachers' level of awareness of sustainable development?

Table 1: Table showing teachers' level of awareness of sustainable development.

S/N	Item	Aware	Not Aware	Mean
1	Education for sustainable Development addresses the need for improvement in the quality of education for all children	399(49.9)	401(50.1)	1.50
2	Sustainable Development has been able to improve the physical, social, cultural, political and economic aspects of the Nigerian society	168(21.0)	632(79.0)	1.21
3	Through sustainable development, Nigerian society will be able to maintain her environment from being exploited of renewable resources	234(29.3)	566(70.8)	1.29
4	Appropriate socialisation of young children is essential for sustainable development	418(52.3)	382(47.8)	1.52
5	Sustainable development addresses the need for improvement in the quality of education for all children	384(48.0)	416(52.0)	1.48
6	Sustainable development goals include objectives and economic advancement	98(12.3)	702(87.8)	1.12
7	Sustainable development goals address issues on health	15(1.9)	785(98.1)	1.02
8	Sustainable development goals include objectives on sociological advancement	177(22.1)	623(77.9)	1.22
9	Sustainable development goals cater for restoration and preservation of our environment	488(61.0)	312(39.0)	1.61
10	Teachers, educational stakeholders and adult in the Nigerian society must work together to achieve all the 17 goals before the stipulated time of 2030	536(67.0)	264(33.0)	1.67
	Weighted Mean			1.34

Table 1 shows teachers' level of awareness of sustainable development. The respondents were aware of the following: Education for sustainable Development addresses the need for improvement in the quality of education for all children (1.50), appropriate socialisation of young children is essential for sustainable development (1.53), Sustainable developments goals cater for restoration and preservation of our environment (1.61), teachers, educational stakeholders and adult in the Nigerian society must work together to achieve all the 17 goals before the stipulated time of 2030 (1.67). However, the respondents were not aware of the following: Sustainable Development has been able to improve the physical, social, cultural, political and economic aspects of the Nigerian society (1.21), Through sustainable development, Nigerian society will be able to maintain her environment from being exploited of renewable resources (1.29), sustainable development addresses the need for improvement in the quality of education for all children (1.48), sustainable development goals include objectives and economic advancement (1.12), sustainable development goals addresses issues on health (1.02), sustainable development goals includes objectives on sociological advancement (1.22). The weighted mean is 1.34 which is a numeric indicator that teachers' level of awareness of sustainable development was low.

Research Question Two: What is the level of teachers' understanding of the role of basic education in sustainable development?

Table 2: Table showing level of teachers' understanding of the role of basic education in sustainable development.

S/N	Item	Mean
1	Education Role	1.71
2	Economic Role	1.28
3	Sociological Role	1.07
4	Environmental Role	1.07
5	Health Role	1.04
	Weighted Mean	**1.23**

Table 2 shows the level of teachers' understanding of the role of basic education on sustainable development. The respondents agreed that basic education played educational role (Mean = 1.71) on sustainable development. However, the respondents disagreed that basic education played the following roles on sustainable development: Economic Role (Mean = 1.28), Sociological Role (Mean = 1.07), Environmental Role (Mean = 1.07), Health Role (Mean = 1.04). The weighted mean is 1.23 which is a numeric indicator that level of teachers' understanding of the role of basic education on sustainable development was low.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant influence of teachers' awareness of sustainable development goals on their understanding of the roles of basic education in achieving sustainable development goals.

Table 3: Summary of regression analysis showing influence of teachers' awareness of sustainable development goals on their understanding of the roles of basic education in achieving sustainable development goals.

Variables	Mean	SD	n	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	Sig.
Awareness	14.32	3.56	800	.414	.171	.170	165.117	.000
Understanding	30.64	6.76						

Dependent Variable: Understanding of the roles of basic education towards achieving SDGs

Table 3 shows the regression analysis of the influence of teachers' awareness of sustainable development goals on their understanding of the roles of basic education in achieving sustainable development goals. The result indicated that there was positive relationship between teachers' awareness of sustainable development goals and their understanding of the roles of basic education towards achieving sustainable development goals (R = .414) while the R-Square is .171 which means that the independent variable (teachers' awareness of sustainable development goals) explained 11.5% variation of the dependent variable (understanding of the roles of basic education towards achieving sustainable development goals). This indicates a good fit of the regression equation. Thus, this is a reflection that teachers' awareness of sustainable development goals significantly influenced their understanding of the roles of basic education towards achieving sustainable development goals ($F_{(1,798)} = 165.117$, $P < 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore rejected in the light of the result. This implies that teachers' awareness of sustainable development goals has significant influence on understanding of the roles of basic education towards achieving sustainable development goals.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in teachers' understanding of the role of basic education in achieving sustainable development based on specialisation.

Table 4: Summary of ANOVA analysis showing difference in teachers' understanding of the role of basic education in achieving Sustainable development based on specialization

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	17.143[a]	6	2.857	.861	.523
Intercept	333495.702	1	333495.702	100449.860	.000
Specialization	17.143	6	2.857	.861	.523
Error	2632.777	793	3.320		
Total	435472.000	800			
Corrected Total	2649.920	799			

Table 4 shows the difference in teachers' understanding of the role of basic education in achieving Sustainable development based on specialisation. There was no significant difference in teachers' understanding of the role of basic education in achieving sustainable development based on specialisation ($F_{(6, 793)} = .861$; $P > 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in the light of the result since the significant value is greater than 0.05.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference in teachers' understanding of the role of basic education in achieving sustainable development based on school type.

Table 5: Table showing the difference in teachers' understanding of the role of basic education in achieving sustainable development based on school type.

School type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Df	Sig.	Remark
Public School	625	23.05	.52	.768	798	.443	Not Significant
Private School	175	23.02	.30				

Table 5 shows the difference in teachers' understanding of the role of basic education in achieving Sustainable development based on school type. There was no significant difference in teachers' understanding of the role of basic education in achieving sustainable development based on school type (t = .768; df = 798; P > 0.05). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in the light of the result since the significant value is greater than 0.05.

Hypothesis Four: There is no significant difference in teachers' understanding of the role of basic education in achieving sustainable development based on years of experience.

Table 6: Summary of ANOVA analysis showing difference in teachers' understanding of the role of basic education in achieving sustainable development based on years of experience.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
Corrected Model	1.729[a]	2	.864		.260	.771
Intercept	306350.795	1	306350.795	92199.379	.000	
Experience	1.729	2	.864	.260	.771	
Error	2648.191	797	3.323			
Total	435472.000	800				
Corrected Total	2649.920	799				

Table 6 shows the difference in teachers' understanding of the role of basic education in achieving sustainable development based on years of experience. There was no significant difference in teachers' understanding of the role of basic education in achieving Sustainable development based on experience ($F_{(2, 797)} = .260$; P > 0.05). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in the light of the result since the significant value is greater than 0.05.

Hypothesis Five: There is no significant difference in teachers' understanding of the role of basic education in achieving sustainable development based on educational qualification.

Table 7: Summary of ANOVA analysis showing difference in teachers' understanding of the role of basic education in achieving sustainable development based on educational qualification.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	3.205[a]	2	1.603	.483	.617
Intercept	186474.140	1	186474.140	56152.587	.000
Education	3.205	2	1.603	.483	.617
Error	2646.715	797	3.321		
Total	435472.000	800			
Corrected Total	2649.920	799			

Table 7 shows the difference in teachers' understanding of the role of basic education in achieving sustainable development based on educational qualification. There was no significant difference in teachers' understanding of the role of basic education in achieving sustainable development based on educational qualification ($F_{(2, 797)} = .483$; $P > 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in the light of the result since the significant value is greater than 0.05.

Discussion of Findings

One of the findings revealed that teachers' awareness of sustainable development was low. This finding corroborates the assertion of Kanyimba (2002) who found that teachers in Namibia as well as school management have partial understanding of the concept of education for sustainable development and because of this little understanding, teachers are unable to integrate sustainability practices into their daily teachings. Also supporting this finding is a global survey of the SDGs done in 2016, involving 13 countries including the African countries of Nigeria and Kenya, the level of awareness ranged from 16% in Russia to 44% in India, with the African countries having 34% and 30% respectively. All his finding shows the low level of teachers awareness. The result is in dissonance with the findings of Burmeister and Eilks (2013) where they discovered that a larger percentage of teachers had a good understanding of sustainable development. Awareness of teachers is important to ensure that Sustainable Development Goals are achieved before 2030. This is in line with Boon Declaration (2009) which concluded that raising public awareness of the issues and linking the efforts of initiatives and their agendas, perspectives and goals will contribute to the reducing poverty and the impact of climate change, so broadening access to education and enhancing health care provision.

Another finding revealed that the level of teachers' understanding of the role of Basic Education in sustainable development is low. This finding was in consonance with Reunamo and Suomela (2013) who stated that teachers' understanding of the role of Basic Education in sustainable development was low because the issue of basic in sustainable development was not addressed as there was no specific content for education for sustainable development.

Also, finding showed teachers' awareness of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has significant influence on understanding of the roles of basic education towards achieving Sustainable goals. This finding is in consonance with Hungerford (2010) who noted that teachers have a responsibility to help learners develop and address the knowledge and skills needed, to enable them to understand complex sustainable development issues, and the sustainability challenges facing society. There is a need to ensure that teachers understand the importance of integrating sustainable development to basic education. This finding was supported by King, Newmann, Fred, Kappa and Bloomington (2000) where they asserted that teachers' awareness of a policy is important for efficiency in their practice. One would have expected that the teachers' field of practice would influence them to view the role of ECE in sustainable development from different perspective.

Finding also indicated that there was no significant difference in teachers' understanding of the role of Basic Education in achieving sustainable development based on their area of specialisation. This is not in agreement with the report of Sagdic & Sahin (2013) that teachers in thirteen different fields in the elementary school confirmed effectiveness of Education for Sustainable Development so as to improve students' critical thinking and future decision making abilities.

Also, finding revealed that there was no significant difference in teachers' understanding of the role of Basic Education in achieving sustainable development based on school type. This finding was not in line with Paris (2008) which stated the understanding of the teachers in public school about the role of Basic Education in achieving sustainable development differs from those teachers in private school.

Finding further revealed that there was no significant difference in teachers' understanding of the role of Basic Education in achieving sustainable development based on school teaching experience. This agrees with the position of Summers, Childs and Corney (2007) who stated that the year of experience of a teacher does not matter in the understanding of the role of Basic Education in achieving sustainable development especially if teachers are being trained in education from the scratch.

The last finding indicated that there was no significant difference in teachers' understanding of the role of Basic Education in achieving sustainable development based on their educational qualification. The finding does not agree with Chartzfotiou (2006) who expresses her concern about teachers' lack of training. Her main concern is that since many teachers are not trained in ESD, it is difficult to see how they can teach ESD effectively when they do not know what to teach and how to teach it. This finding is also not in support of Sheridan (2001) who lays emphasis on teachers' competence in any area of their operation. In order for teachers to play their role effectively in education for sustainability, they are expected to possess capacity to interact with the children from a democratic-pedagogic perspective.

Conclusion

The study revealed that many teachers were not aware of Sustainable Development Goals and the importance of Basic Education in achieving the sustainable development. United Nations sees teachers as the key player in achieving all the SDGs relating to education, it is therefore imperative that teachers are informed and educated about sustainable development goals. It was also revealed that there was positive relationship between teachers' awareness of SDGs and their understanding of the roles of early childhood education towards achieving sustainable development. This indicates a good fit of the regression equation. Thus, this is a reflection that teachers' awareness of sustainable development goals significantly influenced their understanding of the roles of early childhood education towards achieving sustainable development goals. This is an indication that walking towards realisation of sustainable development goals in Nigeria will demand that teachers at basic education level be well informed of the role of basic education as a tool to improve social, health, economic and environmental sustainability.

Recommendations

1. As this study shows, teachers had a low understanding of sustainable development, therefore government should make more investment in in-service professional development programme that will educate them on sustainable development
2. There should be enlightenment programme on SDGs to the public especially teachers. Government as well as school administrators should take the responsibility of putting in place enlightenment strategy like organising symposiums and seminars to boost teachers' awareness in order to increase their understanding of the role of basic education in the realisation of SDGs.
3. As regards teachers' low level of understanding of the role of basic education in realising sustainable development, government should always endeavour to recruit qualified basic educators to teach in pre-primary and primary schools. The current study revealed that most of the teachers are not fully grounded with the rudiment of what basic education stands for.
4. There should be an update of teacher training curricula to incorporate the new ways of thinking embodied in the Sustainable Development Goals.

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