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IMPLEMENTATION OF VALUE EDUCATION IN SOCIAL  
STUDIES CURRICULUM: THE PLACE OF SUSTAINABLE  
PEDAGOGICAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

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**Abstract**

*Expectedly, societies are bedevilled with diverse value-based issues which require functional educational curriculum activities to curb these moral, ethical and character issues arising in the society. This justified the emergence of a holistic approach to value-based education through an integrated Social Studies curriculum with a relevant sustainable learning environment to tackle the issues earlier raised. The paper relies heavily on the review of relevant pieces of literature to conceptualize values and value education and its philosophical perspectives; it discusses sustainable learning environment in the context of classroom instructional pedagogy and implementing value education as a holistic integrated Social Studies curriculum within the context of this sustainable learning environment. The study recommended the return of value-based education back into the curriculum with relevant blended learning environment as a holistic integrated Social Studies subject for the attainment of true national values reorientation and sustainable future for Africa.*

**Keywords:** *Sustainable learning environment, Value, Value education, Sustainable development, Education for sustainable development, Social Studies*

### **Introduction**

Operating in a more sustainable learning milieu to achieve sustainable development across spheres of life has become the topmost priority for researchers and policymakers across the world. Sustainable learning environment is an evolving teaching and learning concept based on sustainability values in which the school/classroom milieu interjects a more eclectic learning retention and transmission system. It is the processes of inculcating articulated learning experiences within a milieu conducive for classroom activities/experience to take place. In the value education context, it refers to value-based learning retention and transmission consequent upon prior classroom experience. It entails a scholarship process of recalling and applying constructed value knowledge and acquired skills. Thus, value education classroom activities need indicators like engagement/participation, usability, empowerment and support as a synergy for interactions between resources such as building, technology, external spaces, learners, educators, and content (Blyth, 2014).

Value education teaching and learning are complex and so expected affective, cognitive and behavioural impacts in learners can either be encumbered or developed depending on the learning environment sustainability. Apparently, sustainable learning milieu produces settings which mediate relationships to improve learner cognitive and perceptual outcomes which in turn impact on classroom learning (activities) experiences involving learner/teacher interactions, more effective pedagogical practices (the focus of this paper) and the overall learning outcomes. Thus, constructing effective sustainable learning environment requires a holistic grasp of pedagogical interactions as an integral part of the school process. It goes beyond copying educational models of existing successful cultures and civilizations but the integration of the enviable values of this successful cultures into the mainstream of our past and existing cultural values and, forming the superstructures that will

give us a definite identity as well as providing sustainable development that will make us continue to exist in our environment without losing the basis of what we stand for. Here education has to be linked to defining what value means to an individual society and how those values can be entrenched into the Social Studies curriculum via sustainable learning environment so that the desired sustainable development could be successfully achieved.

However, it should be noted that the Sustainable Learning Environment in the context of this paper refers to the suitable classroom instructional pedagogy for the teaching and learning of value education through the Social Studies curriculum. Indeed, it is not about a particular physical context and use but infers an instructional process of sustainable classroom pedagogical practices with the intent to initiate innovation involving sustainable teaching and learning methods of improving value education via the Social Studies curriculum. It is designed to mediate relevant skills and dispositions in the pedagogical (teaching and learning) practices involving value education which seems to be complex and dynamic. Using appropriate Social Studies pedagogy, learners are furnished and empower with relevant value-based knowledge, insight, skills, and traits required practising value (moral, character and ethical) concepts.

This paper examines the knowledge and evidence deficit regarding the teaching quality due to the inability of appropriate sustainable pedagogical practice environment for value education to thrive. Value education implementation lacks quality improvement to meet the new standards in teacher education and thus resonating the need for reforms for the sustainable pedagogical environment at all levels of educational levels via Social Studies as its bona fide base. Thus, it is pertinent to improve value education learning outcomes through developing sustainable learning environment.

To this end, this paper review relevant literature on the sustainable learning environment options and the impacts of such diverse learning environments as well as the way forward on learners' value reorientation. Also, there is a research deficit on sustainable learning environment regarding value education from

the Social Studies perspective. Prior research evidence and literature show total neglect of discussions on synergy involving sustainable development, education for sustainable development and sustainable learning environment pedagogical practice concerning value education as an integral part of Social Studies. To avert this knowledge and evidence lacuna, this paper is based on the following specific objectives of contributing to value education literature by (1) Conceptualizing: Sustainable Development, Education for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Learning Environment; (2) Understanding the Place of Sustainable Learning Environment in the Implementation of Value-Based Education as an integral part of Integrated Social Studies Curriculum; and (3) proposing the way forward

### **Conceptual Clarifications**

The concept of sustainable development was defined by the Brundtland Commission (formally the World Commission on Environment and Development) as ‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ (Brundtland, 1987). Sustainable development (SD) simply put refers to the maintenance of development overtime (Al-Naqbi & Alshannag, 2018). According to Nevin (2008), the movement started with an emphasis on the environment in development policies and later since the year 2002 evolved to encompass social justice and the fight against poverty as key principles of sustainable development. The concept emerges as a response to the growing concern about human activities and the environment. This got the attention of writers like Pigozzi who believed that for a nation to live a sustainable life lies in its ability to enforce education for sustainable development in its education system and public life (Pigozzi, 2007). In consonance with this, Adeyeye (2019) agrees that achieving sustainable development goals will require a renewed educational vision and commitment that could mean the integration of education for sustainable development practices in daily life activities of the people.

Education is one of the most crucial public services that are being provided by public administrators and government world over.

It plays a major role in a nation's development and the improvement of quality of life. The provision of quality education for all has formed the core of international development discourse and this has happened within the Millennium Development Goals and more recently within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), most notably as SDG 4 (Lane, 2017; Sterling, 2008;). Education has been identified and advanced by many studies as a critical tool in addressing developmental issues and a major key to the realization of SDGs (Sterling, 2008; Adeyeye, 2019).

The concept of Sustainable Development as it relates to education is targeted at ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education, effective collaborations among learners and the promotion of life-long learning opportunities for all. Education for sustainable development and sustainable learning environment are both birthed out of this concept in its broader agenda. These concepts may be in some ways interrelated but not the same and can be somehow confusing, misinterpreted or misconstrued. For instance, a sustainable learning environment is often interpreted or perceived to mean the maintenance of physical materials within the learning environment such as the physical classrooms, offices, laboratory and all other materials that could contribute to targeted learning goals alone. Whereas, the concept is more deepened and could mean the upshot interactions between the physical and none physical learning outcome indicators that could develop and improve the end-users cognitive, emotional, psychological, behavioural, physical and mental wellbeing (Blyth, 2014). This forms the basis why Learning environment was construed as a complex construct (Chang, Hsiau & Chang, 2010).

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is indeed a multi-dimensional rudiment that can be implemented to the benefit of all stakeholders in the society and ultimately the wider global community because the SDGs agenda is a global action plan that can be integrated into all human fields and activities. According to the United Nation Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2017), Education for Sustainable Development empowers learners to make informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability, and just society, for

present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity. It is about lifelong learning and is an integral part of quality education. ESD is a holistic and transformational education that addresses learning content and outcomes, pedagogy, and the learning environment. It achieves its purpose by transforming society. The fusion of these concepts would mean a blended mission that aims to meet the target learning outcome and the interest of sustainable educational focus targeted at creating effective learning and collaboration space for the present generation without harming the ability to provide for the needs of the future generations sustainably. It includes articulated planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling of educational operations to meet the entire needs of the public interests. The interest of the SDGs is not only particular about environmental issues but about policies that meet all the needs without leaving future generations with fewer resources than we enjoy. Sustainable development is not easy to come by; it often demands lifestyle changes particularly if we continue to use up non-renewable natural resources, as we do at present, if we ignore the plight of the poor or if we continue to pollute and waste, then we can expect a decline in the quality of life (Agenda 21: Programme of Action for Sustainable Development). Hence, Education for sustainable development (ESD) will help people to pursue sustainable livelihoods, to continue to learn after they leave school, to participate in community life, and to live sustainably. It will further make SDGs more relevant to the people and acceptable culturally by recognizing that fulfilling the local needs will contribute effectively and efficiently to global discourse and create positive consequences on the economy, society, and the environment. All these will only be easier to achieve if value education becomes a priority in the implementation of functional Social Studies curricula instructional activities as a holistic subject to develop pre-service Social Studies educators that will bring about value reorientation into the system.

### **Understanding the Place of Sustainable Learning Environment in the Implementation of Value-Based Education as an Integrated Social Studies Curriculum**

Value is a relative term which has its peculiarity entrenched in the social customs. As a societal norm, value derives its root from societal culture, traditions, attitudes, and philosophies which differ from one community to another (Langlois, 2019). Values generally are considered as the separation of good from bad, right from wrong, and the ability to identify acceptable from unacceptable norms within a given society. It is the innate or acquired principle in an individual that inform his behaviour and assist him in his sense of judgment on what is ideal and what is not (Lakshmi & Paul, 2018). The value of a thing could mean its worth or treasured posture which could be worth dying or living for (Idang, 2015).

The society we find ourselves in has a way of imposing on us certain values which are regarded as societal norms and values. This shows the position and place of value in every society and its relevance to the attainment of a sustainable environment. Values are expected to be sacred to maintain orderliness in society because it represents people's culture. According to Sahin (2019), all various definitions of value have a common convergence which combines common wishes, preferences, and beliefs that are effective in the psychological and sociological well-being of the individual and the society. Based on this, Sahin emphasized the need and importance of Value Education for the continuity of society.

Value education is relevant to the development of the students in all its ramifications to meet universal ethics, morals, and values instructions. Essentially, it is a learning process to develop learners in all dimensions to be able to serve society socially, cohesively, and responsibly. In the view of Shagufta and Mariya (2012), value education is the education of the heart which has been perceived globally as the solution to the challenge of strengthening the moral and social fabric of societies.

However, a critical issue in the attainment of well-conceptualized value education is the implementation through a sustainable learning environment. Such a milieu entails pursuing well-articulated pedagogical activities. It is a trite knowledge that

Value education is taught in Nigerian schools, through the separatist subject approach covering three (3) subjects (Security education, Civic education, and Social Studies). However, this study submits that Social Studies already embraced these other citizenship based disciplines and thus, developed with the mandate to examine extant diverse value decadence with the intent to holistically implement curricula instructional activities to develop pre-service Social Studies educators that will bring about value reorientation. This was in congruence with the submission of Ogunyemi (2011) that there is a need to promote sustainable citizenship education without compromising the philosophy and context of the Nigerian Social Studies. Ogunyemi sees the disarticulation of civic education from the Social Studies curriculum as more of an executive fiat rather than being a product of deep understanding and research which has a consequential setback on the true nature of education.

Based on the foregoing, redesigning the curriculum for the teaching of value education as a holistic integrated Social Studies is imperative and becomes a point of action for educational actors especially those in the field of national value orientation and related mandates to create and develop awareness about the significance of values and its role in societal development and help develop an adequately updated learning environment that is compliant with world best practices for its teaching and learning process. According to Ogunyemi (2011), Social Studies if well-conceived could provide a good curriculum platform upon which the goals of citizenship education could be achieved.

For a more effective and result-oriented citizenship and value-based curriculum to emerge, it will then be necessary for the existing classroom learning environment to adopt more students/teacher-centred based instructional approaches (Chang et al, 2010) which will require the integration of both traditional and modern methods, this will help the teachers to take control over the learning process on one hand and aid the students to take responsibility for their learning on the other hand. According to Chang et al “learning environment is a complex construct where instructional approaches are one of the mediating factors.” (p, 136). It refers typically to the



various instructional approaches that have been adopted in the teaching and learning process for effective learning outcomes.

### **Conclusion**

It has become apparent that the separatist approach through which citizenship and value-based education is taught in Nigerian schools is a disservice to citizenship development which is the fulcrum of the Social Studies curriculum. For Africa to achieve a sustainable future through the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will depend greatly on the renewal of the learning space for effective education collaboration that is built on functional educational curriculum activities aimed at curbing various moral, ethical, and character issues arising in the society. These contexts are critical to Africa to salvage the continent from chronic societal vices and moral decadence and to grow its educational space for sustainability. This now becomes imperative for the need and emergence of Value Education that is African centred as an integrated Social Studies in the school curriculum to tackle these issues. Value Education blended with sustainable education will encourage people to reduce their impact on the environment and serves as a key mechanism in promoting sustainable peace and tolerance among diversities across Africa.

### **The Way Forward**

There is need to return Value education as an integral part of integrated Social Studies curriculum rather than its present separatist subject approach covering three (3) subjects (Security education, Civic education, and Social Studies) taught in Nigerian schools. It is imperative to adopt and sustain a blended pedagogical practice by incorporating not just the traditional (or teacher-centred) and modern (or student-centred), but also the physical face to face and digital learning environment as part of the vital basis for the realisation of value education learning outcomes.

The digital pedagogical practice, which became inevitable due to the outbreak of COVID 19, requires improvement through the provision of technological gadgets and the internet in schools. Also, continuous professional development of both pre-service and on

the field teacher is inevitable through workshop/seminars to avail them of new initiatives, innovations and creativity in digital and physical interactive learning at a sustainable level

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